

THE ADVENT

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



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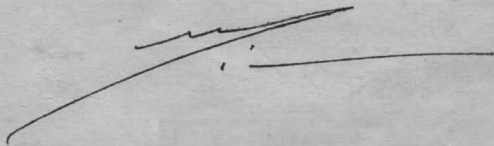
The Advent

It is through the Mother that
all things are attained.

SRI AUROBINDO

Do not ask questions about the details of the material existence of this body; they are in themselves of no interest and must not attract attention.

Throughout all this life, knowingly or unknowingly, I have been what the Lord wanted me to be, I have done what the Lord wanted me to do. That alone matters.



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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

A PARABLE OF SEA-GULLS

I

ON a sea-coast — a fairly large tract of land opening out on the vast sea and the infinite sky — among rocks and cliffs there lived a flock of sea-gulls, rather flocks of sea-gulls, — for they were almost innumerable, in hundreds and perhaps in thousands — a whole colony of them. Have you seen a sea-gull, at least in a picture? This beautiful bird spotlessly white end to end, and when in flight with outspread wings and its delicate supple body, so pleasing, so wonderful to look at! Do you know their routine, their daily pre-occupation? Of course the first thing in the morning for them to do was to fly out and look for food. Their food is naturally fishes. So these birds used to go to a certain distance upon the sea and from above look down and spot the swimming fishes below and dart down, catch them and fly up again; then they came back to their places and shared their catch among themselves. Naturally there was a good deal of scrambling and fighting but that was part of life. And there-

after, most of the time, they passed in dozing or sleeping, or at times flying out again upon the sea for a forage. And of course there was the item of mating and begetting children. That was their life and they continued it day after day, year after year. They were, I suppose, quite content with the life they were leading.

Now it happened that one of these sea-gulls thought otherwise. Yes, a thought entered into him. Why should not a thought enter into the head of a bird? A new thought, a faith did enter into the heart of a human child as reported in the Upanishads; so this bird, with his questioning thought found the ordinary bird-life quite un-interesting. He thought: why so much stress upon food and sleep and quarrelling and increasing the population? He found flying itself a beautiful adventure. Why fly just a few miles, only to come back, flop down and roost? Why not fly out, out into the vast sea abroad, and the limitless sky overhead? He thought he had wings strong enough to fly him far and high, he would try.

So from then he separated from his tribe and went out on his own for the joy of a long journey and long flight. It was pure delight for him and he increased the distance of his flight from day to day, from a hundred to a thousand miles or more. And he found himself gradually incredibly stronger in body, unbelievably happy within. Food or sleep or rest did not trouble him any more. When he was thus practising on this new adventure, two or three of his comrades noticed it and became interested. So they approached him and asked what the matter was. He explained to them what he was about, he was not happy with the old common life, he wanted a new, broader, more vigorous life. The new-comers were allured to the project and they wanted to join the new adventure. They were gladly accepted.

So these three or four friends joined together and resolved to start a new life. The new-comers were first taught the lessons of long flight — perhaps how they could fly some thousands of miles at a stretch without rest. One day the pioneer bird — let us give him a name 'Shobhanaka'¹ for he was very fine to look at — told his comrades: long flight is not sufficient; not only a horizontal flight but a vertical flight should be also our asset. So they attempted to fly up and up, up into the clouds and beyond as much as possible, as much as the

¹ à la manière de Panchatantra, e.g., Damanaka, Karanaka, Bhasunaka.

earth's atmosphere and gravitation would allow. They achieved this feat also and in doing it they found another mystery. Shobhanaka said: a long-distance flight, whether horizontal or vertical is not sufficient, we must increase our speed, the speed of flight. And the way to increase the speed is to speed down from above — darting headlong towards earth. In this way in place of a bare fifty or sixty miles per hour, they calculated they could attain the speed of sound. To break the sound barrier is indeed an achievement for bodily speed. Now they wanted to go farther on. Added to the flight they now learnt all kind of acrobatic movements of the body — exactly as expert pilots do with their aeroplane, that is to say, with their gathering speed they went through all movements of vaulting, somersaulting, twirling, twisting and so on. They made their bodies a wonderful mass of supple energy and even radiant energy.

At this point one day, all on a sudden, they saw at a distance a bird of their kind but somewhat different, more beautiful, more glorious. They approached him, or perhaps he approached them, and said: "I was observing you and I found that what you were doing is wonderful. Your achievement is really marvellous. But there is something more yet to do. I am come to teach you what you have still to do for your true fulfilment. Till now you were moving on the same plane, all your progress has been made in one direction. You have to change over to another plane, acquire another dimension. I will explain." — "You have learnt 'moving flight'. You have to learn now unmoving or still flight. This is a contradiction in terms? In the new dimension you have to reconcile or unify the contradiction. Listen carefully. I give you the mystery of still flying. It is getting as I said into another dimension of space — or another kind of space — it is better I give you a practical demonstration." "Come," he said addressing Shobhanaka, "stand here on your legs straight, firm and unmoving, by my side. Normally when you fly first you have the will to fly, then that will you put forth into your body, into your muscles and nerves, spreading it out as it were into your wings, making your wings mobile. Now what you have to do is an opposite movement. Instead of sending your will and energy outward, as if throwing it out, you gather the will and energy within yourself, that is, concentrate within you your will and energy instead of spilling them out. The whole

thing depends upon this concentration, this gathering up your energy and will on one point within you: and then just look, that is to say, with your thought or consciousness at the point where you want to go. It is like a strung bow with its arrow pointing at the target. And then let yourself go as it were. Indeed if your concentration is perfect you will leap straight into your target without it would seem, passing through the intermediate stages — telescoping as it were all the intervening steps into one single step — a long jump at a lightning speed. Now try to do what I told you. Feel what I am doing.”

Miraculous it was. Shobhanaka saw the Elder-one who had been by his side but was now there on another cliff. At the next moment the expert flyer was back at his place as before, by the side of his pupil. The pupil exclaimed in admiration: “It is an impossibility, but since you have done it I will try to do it.” “Yes,” the Elder-one said, “I too did not succeed in one day or in one attempt. It takes time, even a long time. But persistence, perseverance and faith undiscouraged will bring you the victory.”

“Here I give you the ultimate, the supreme secret,” the Elder-one continued, “the inner core of the teaching. This body, this substance made of solid matter that seems so rigid, compact, hard, is really not so; you must have realised it by this time. You cannot even say that this body material is an encasement for the storage and play of energy which is the true reality behind: it is not so. The body, the physical structure is only an idea, it is a perception: you perceive that there is a body, it does not exist outside your perception, your perception is an immaterial thing. The whole body so neatly outlined, so concretely static is only a combination of ideas and perceptions, a projection of your mind: from tip to tip your outspread wings consist only of your thoughts as if strung together. If that is so, you can naturally manipulate thought by thought, in other words, your body, that is what appears as your body, is at your mercy, which means at the mercy of your thought. You can move the body as you like, for you can move naturally thought by thought. So what is needed is a withdrawal of the mind into its thought-stuff and control it, make use of it from that centre. I have shown you how one can be this inner motive-thought and not be obsessed by its apparent material formulation. It is diffi-

cult to understand but by practice as I have shown you you will understand."

A few days passed. Shobhanaka was practising the new technique and was on the way towards success. The Elder-one came another day and said to the group of three or four aspirant-birds: "My mission is ended, I have taught you what was intended to be taught and you are on a fair way towards success. A last word you must remember. Your achievements are not for yourselves alone. You must go back and try to instil these new virtues into your comrades left behind, they too must share the joy and the glory of this new life. I have to go; for there are works still for me to do, and other and higher dimensions of real living. But help will always come to you whether I come or another one comes, you will always be companioned by happy helpers." So saying the Elder-bird flew up and up and gradually turned into a blazing point and disappeared among the stars.

II

Now these transmuted sea-gulls met and consulted together. They had to go back in the midst of their old comrades but how could they? Naturally they could not go back to the old mode of life. Besides they would not be accepted by their old community. They were ostracised and they were now an outcaste group. If they ventured into the society of their old comrades they were likely to be violently dealt with or perhaps even killed. However there was no option left, they were ordained and it was now their duty to go back and try to come in touch with their old friends and influence them, guide them with the new mode of life to whatever extent it was possible.

So they flew back to their old domain and as soon as they were in sight of their former friends, all those almost in a body rushed out and raised a hue and cry, sounded an alarm as it were: "the enemies are come!" But these new beings, a new type of sea-gulls were not daunted, they approached bravely and calmly without fear, without any intention of opposing or giving battle. They passed by over their ancient habitat sailing in a beautiful formation with their beautiful white, all-white body aglow with a new radiance, pulsating with a new charm. All who rushed out to engage in a fight and combat full of anger and

fury halted, stood agape in confusion and wonder.

Thus the battle was won, marvellously peacefully. The older race, specially the younger generation, could mark and appreciate the gait and the manner of flight in these new-comers. They now found out that the old mode of life was not interesting enough, there was no special joy in flying to procure only food-stuff, in merely catching fishes and gobbling them up: doing that eternally, repeating over and over again the same dull routine. Instead there was the joy in flying simply for the sake of flying, in flying far, far into the distant horizon, far into the infinite spaces overhead, into the unfamiliar and the unknown. Thus slowly the old community began to change its mode of life adding a new meaning to their movements — a new limb and dimension to their body and existence.

This healthy influence became more effective since they witnessed a strange and curious event happening in their presence.

A demonstration was being given by Shobhanaka of the art of flying, of all the difficult and artistic modes of flying. He was showing the speed with which one is capable of flying, literally lightning speed. A large crowd of spectators had gathered round an arena-like opening and was intently observing all the wonderful and almost impossible acrobatics and calisthenics. They suddenly saw the bird from one far corner of the sky speeding across to the other end and, as I said, beating lightning's speed, but suddenly one stray bird happened to be there up directly in the way of the speeding bird. In order to avoid dashing against the intruder, Shobhanaka swerved round but hurled himself straight upon ... Oh! what horror! a cry of pity and pain rose up from the crowd — in swerving away from the bird upon his path, Shobhanaka in his incredible speed dashed and crashed against a cliff that was blocking the sides. Every one thought that was the end of the poor flying expert, he must have been reduced to a pulp now. But what a miracle! Hale and hearty he was there flying up slowly and at ease, then gracefully descending upon the earth as if nothing had happened. Well, his body did not seem to be made of flesh and bone but of some ethereal substance, so supple, so elastic, so resilient that nothing offered any resistance to it. It could pass through like a beam of invisible light.

The upshot was that the old community gradually changed its

habits, slowly but inevitably they took to adventure and far-flights, over the unknown waves into the infinite blues. Many became experts and given to this new life they formed gradually a community by themselves and found for themselves another habitat nearby. Those old experts, Shobhanaka's group, the masters, were with them as teachers and guides. And thus new guides and new teachers arose and community after community leading this new life, a life in which the old and unclean habits were eliminated and there was a life of exquisite beauty and harmony among all.

Here ends my story. It is the story, rather a vision and aspiration in a beautiful symbol of a pilot, a real pilot who was flying real aeroplanes. When he flew with his hard, rigid, mechanical wings into other regions free from the earth's gravitational controls, he imagined or aspired to fly with other wings, golden wings, into other regions, golden regions of another kind of consciousness, super-human consciousness.

The symbol used here is very appropriate and meaningful. The sea-gull has normally a very beautiful appearance: its snow-white body outspreading its wings, all spotless white and its gracefulness in flight is indeed a delightful spectacle for the eyes to contemplate. Even so man, even this earthly creature has within him a beautiful being, snow-white in its purity and exceedingly graceful in its gait and movement; that being has to be brought out and displayed even as the sea-gull transformed itself — transformed its very nature and substance into a vibrating mass of light with its diamond sheen, its material body itself a packet of intense and yet controlled radiating energy.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

COLLABORATION AND SERVICE

"How to collaborate in all sincerity in showing to the world that man can be a true servitor of the Divine."

WE live today in a world which is "strongly marked with the stamp of inadequacy, suffering, evil."¹ Our life is inveigled in the triple web of the physical, vital, mental ego, and all our activities have the predominant motive of satisfying personal desires, of quenching vital passions and impulses. The entire globe is rocked by the wild dance of these unspiritual, egoistic, anarchic forces, which are striving to establish their supremacy over the world and the life of humanity. We are sinking in a whirlpool of our own making. If centuries of culture and its creations are to survive, a solution to this "evolutionary crisis," which has propagated itself in every sphere of human activity — politics, economics, education, morality, religion etc., — must be found soon. This can be resolved only if the fundamental cause of this disharmony can be first found.

The life of man has been one of vehement self-assertiveness — mental, vital and physical. The inner, spiritual life has been ignored, and thus instead of an upward ascent, the spiritual life has followed a curve of decadence. It is precisely this disequilibrium between the outer and the inner life that has infected humanity with this awful malady, and brought about a degeneration in the human consciousness.

Thus the most effective antidote to this imbalance would be a replacing of the old order of things by a new one, the supplanting of the old consciousness by a new superior consciousness. Man must realise that an inner spiritual conversion is the only cure, the only solution to the dismal state of human affairs. And it is precisely this realisation, this conviction that becomes the *point de départ* towards the manifestation of this new dimension of things — which seeks a spiritual deliverance in all the fields of human existence and strives to bring down the Divine Light, Knowledge, Power and Beatitude on the Earth. Mere mental conception or perception is not enough, it must be followed by an application of the idea into practice. How to work this idea out in life?

¹ The Riddle of This World (P. 82)

Sri Aurobindo's life is a perfect guideline, and His experiences should be strong enough to convince and inspire us and guide us to fulfil the mission. Life has to be embraced and not shunned, and with the new Knowledge and Light has to be transmuted and transformed. That Power and Light, which will enlighten us and illuminate the difficult path, burns within each human being and waits to be discovered. The soul or the psychic being is the vehicle, the temple of the deepest Truth of our being — it holds the Infinite, the Truth, the Divine. Once man can establish contact with this mysterious Force within, all the guidance will be received by him, and he has but to follow the dictates of that Divine Will. This arduous link established, the key to success in the critical enterprise of World-Transformation has been found. The soul is the infallible spark of Divine Light — the “beautiful flower of Cosmic Energy.” It carries within itself the Knowledge of the Divine Plan and knows the ways of divinising Life and bringing about the Supreme Manifestation. The more one tries to go inward, the more things become “profoundly luminous” and “intimately intelligible.”

Aspiration is the spring-board towards this awareness of this Divine Guide. Aspiration can open our being to that Light and make us ready for the new adventure of consciousness, but it has to be absolutely sincere, i.e., it must be accompanied by a disinterested giving up of one's personal claims and preferences — both in the work and in the result — by a complete stop to the pampering service of the Prakriti in us, and a total surrender to the Divine Will. It is only by becoming conscious of the Divine in us that we can qualify as worthy collaborators in the Transformation. Sincerity is the basis of all collaboration. As the Mother says, it is “the means, the way, and the goal, it is protection, safety, guidance, ultimately it is the transforming power”. What is true sincerity?

Well, it is an intense centralisation of all the parts of one's being around the Truth of one's Ideal, and when we become strongly conscious of this, then the Transformation of human life becomes an inevitable necessity. The task seems less arduous.

The average humanity is lost in the din and clamour of material life and the pits and quagmires of the vitalistic world, but if even a small number of persons grasp the Supreme's Intention — aspire

towards its realisation by a complete self-surrender into the hands of the Master, and become worthy servitors of the Alchemist to alchemize the earthly life of Falsehood and Ignorance into one of Truth and Light — it is sufficient to awaken the dormant humanity and completely change the course of events. For, then, each individual will rise from the petty, ego-centric roots of existence, discard all that belongs to the lower nature and recast his personality in the new Image. His activities will be performed in the Light of the New Consciousness. Everything will take new values, “not from itself, but from the consciousness that uses it.” Whatever a man’s work or vocation in life, if it is determined from within it will become a means of self-expression, of self-revelation and a sure and steady growth towards a greater perfection. The whole being will be directed towards the “conscious instrumentation” for the highest service to the Divine. Every individual will live in a Yogic Samata i.e., in an equality of the soul founded on “a sense of the one self, the Divine everywhere, seeing the One in spite of all differences, degrees, disparities in the Manifestation”. This is what, I suppose, Sri Aurobindo meant when he said whatever life one leads, when it has before it this Ideal, all life becomes Yoga, i.e., an attempt at union with the true Personality of our Being and through it with the Divine. Thus the best way of collaboration is to equip oneself with a central, steadfast sincerity and a fundamental humility, in our service to the Divine. To become a true servitor, we must shed off all grossness of being — desire, mental bias and preference, attraction, disgust, sympathy or antipathy, attachment and repulsion — and arm ourselves for the difficult battle, with an indomitable courage, a perfect sincerity, and a sincere self-surrender without any reservations or egoistic motives (personal aggrandisement, self-affirmation, material well-being and protection etc.).

When one becomes a Perfect Instrument of the Master, nothing can perturb us. The vision of life becomes spiritual — and everything is transmuted to that level of consciousness. Our consciousness widens and ultimately embraces all mankind in our seeking of the Divine. The Vedantic dictum *tat tvam asi* fulfils itself with *sarvam khalu idam Brahma*. Our consciousness heightens by the raising of all the levels of our being to that consciousness and the emancipation from the triple ignorance. This double movement of widening and heightening is

accompanied by the fundamental movement of deepening within, i.e. becoming more and more intimate with the Divine within.

The adventure is a perilous one, because the consequences will be disastrous if there is any loophole in the sincerity of our collaboration. The Path is strewn with thorns and the journey is painful and chequered, because "the Divine is concealed behind a thick veil of his Maya and does not answer at once to our call." Therefore a persistent will, perseverance and a patient labour are indispensable instruments in this adventure towards a purer Existence.

These are the necessary requirements for a sincere collaboration, and this sincere collaboration is the best example we can give to the world, in our service to the Divine.

MAURICE SHUKLA

SAVITRI: A STUDY IN DEPTH

Book I, Canto 4

The Secret Knowledge

'On a height he stood that looked towards greater heights.
Our early approaches to the Infinite
Are sunrise splendours on a marvellous verge
While lingers yet unseen the glorious sun'

ASWAPATHI rises high on the scale of consciousness but there are still greater heights to be climbed; he is just on the border where he catches a glimmer but that is not the whole light; in spiritual approaches it is quite possible to have a passing glimpse and the seeker may give up the quest satisfied that the goal is reached; but the marvellous still lies undisclosed; these are but the preliminary splendours that greet the eye before the sunrise.

'This world is a beginning and a base
Where Life and Mind erect their structured dreams;
An unborn Power must build reality.
A deathbound littleness is not all we are:
Immortal our forgotten vastnesses
Await discovery in our summit selves'

Matter is the first and the firm base on which have flowered in course of evolution life and mind; these in their turn proceed building up their little structures according to their dreams; these are impermanent and perishable; and the abiding and lasting edifice, the temple of God, has to be constructed by man on a self-realisation that he is not an evanescent creature that may at any moment become the prey to death but the immortal spirit with a plenitude of might and vastness lying undiscovered within.

'Neighbours of Heaven are Nature's altitudes.
.....

Too far from surface Nature's postal routes,

 Deep in us a forgotten kinship points

 Still we have parts that grow towards the light

 And Eldorados of splendour and ecstasy'

Cut off from all communications with the work-a-day surface self, there are the summits of the inner self as towering as the high altitudes of the mountains planted by nature on the earth; though unaware of them, there may be moments, when the kingdoms of bliss and splendour reveal themselves and establish their kinship.

'...sometimes when our sight is turned within

 Our souls can visit in great lonely hours
 Still regions of imperishable Light'

The extroverted senses with their mundane preoccupations can be little useful in establishing communication with the hidden kingdoms; it is only by a withdrawal from the without to the within that the lost empire could be regained; this introversion comes in moments of solitude; in self-contemplation the self emerges; the narrow envelope in which it is confined is torn; the tether tying it down to a pasture of the earthly is broken and it finds an escape into the regions of imperishable light.

'Sometime the inexpressible Mystery
 Elects a human vessel of descent.

 Stone-calm the body is a pedestal
 Supporting a figure of eternal Peace.

 And Nature trembles with the power, the flame
 A greater Personality sometimes
 Possesses us which yet we know is ours.

Then the small bodily ego thins and falls:

.....

It leaves us one with Nature and with God'

The Divine has his own standards; by his grace and not by the self-vaunted qualifications someone on the earth is chosen as the God's elect; he is possessed; sometimes becomes stone-still and the whole body, the pedestal for the divine descent may quiver and tremble as in the trance on the flame pouring down on the tender vessel; he feels that he is other than himself by the new awakened energies and faculties but at the same time he recognises himself though a changed being due to the transformation wrought by the influx; he achieves a vast self-extension; sheds the ego and becomes one with God.

'A ray of the timeless Glory stoops awhile
To commune with our seized illumined clay
And leaves its huge white stamp upon our lives.
Revealed to the closed prophet eyes of trance

.....

We hear what our mortal ears have never heard,

.....

Our minds hush to a bright Omniscient'

When the surface self is withdrawn into the profound deeps of the inner subliminal self and when he is in a tranced meditation, then the whole clay of the being is transmuted by the touch of the illuminating ray; it leaves a mark of immaculate perfection of the Divine; there is a sublimation and subtilisation of the senses which can hear and see what is not possible for the mortal; and the stilled mind becomes the audience to the outpourings of the Omniscient. 'It is only by an opening to our inner being or an entry into it that a direct intimate awareness can be added to the outer indirect awareness. It is only by an awakening to our inmost soul that there can be a beginning of spiritual knowledge with identity as its base.'¹

¹ *The Life Divine* I, p. 493.

'These signs are native to a larger self
That lives within us by ourselves unseen;

.....
It follows the line of sempiternal birth
Yet seems to perish with its mortal frame.

.....
Great, patient, calm it sees the centuries pass,
Awaiting the slow miracle of our change'

Mostly engrossed in the round of the drab activities prescribed by the desire surface self, man loses all contact with the subliminal to such an extent that the impulses of an ennobling and elevating nature coming therefrom, are mistaken by him to be those hailing from a stranger; though concealed behind the veils of the ego, it exercises an uplifting influence by sowing in man the higher aspirations; though the form perishes, its work continues; it is a silent witness continuing the unfinished work across the centuries in a patient manner assured of the apocalypse and the miracle to happen of man becoming divine and recognising the concealed stranger to be none other than himself.

'A living image seated in the heart,

.....
A Splendour in the tenebrous cloak

.....
A burning witness in the sanctuary

.....
And knows the goal of the unconscious world'

The Eternal seated in the lotus of the heart as the silent witness guides every movement of the man, furthering thus the course of evolution according to plan; it is his presence that lights up the body subject to decay; the sweets and the joys of life derive from that source; it is the guardian angel of man till the mission he is charged with, is discharged and knowing the curves and the lines of development, it remains unaffected taking mutation after mutation suitable for the advancement of his purpose in the endless stream of time.

'It needs the intuitive heart, the inward turn,

 Else to our waking mind's small moment look
 A goalless voyage seems our dubious course

 Our very being seems to us questionable

 Ever surround our brief existence here
 Grey shadows of unanswered questionings

 And meets not understanding why it came
 Or for what reason is the suffering here'

The whence and the why of existence are questions that naturally engage the attention of man because he alone has a thinking mind; but the answers to these questions are beyond the purview of a mere intelligence; the higher truths cannot be spelt out by reason; they must come as revelation or intuition. In the absence of this, everything is sought to be explained away as chance or mechanism; the suffering here and the fallibility of man's discoveries being displaced by the fresh ones after a time, suffer facile disposal.

'The Earth-Goddess toils across the sands of Time,
 A Being is in her whom she hopes to know

 Ever she nurses in her sleepless breast
 An inward urge that takes from her rest and peace.

 A few rare intimations come as guides

 A vision meets her of supernal Powers
 That draw her as if mighty kinsmen lost

 Passionate she prays to invisible forms of Gods
 What most she needs, what most exceeds her scope

 A Strength not forced to stumble by its speed

A Joy that drags not sorrow as its shade.'

The Divine has almost lost himself in the inconscience but for a single ray through which he wants to recover himself; it is this ray that makes life blossom in the inert matter and mind to appear in man; it is the same spark that creates up-lifting aspirations in man; mind which is a product of the clay sees the truth but sees it dimly and not from within and that is why its formulations of truth are shells deprived of the spirit; it feels the joy but it is the joy of a fleeting kind since it comes not from within but from the externals; the spirit within does not sleep; it drives the earth nature towards perfection; sends intimations of immortality and greater bliss; makes it strive not minding the frustrations; and this intense aspiration for powers beyond the human scope meets with an answering pull from the beyond by the supernal powers that recognise the earth as a long lost kinsman.

'It is a power within us the concealed divinity, that has lit the flame of aspiration, pictures the image of the ideal, keeps alive our discontent and pushes us to throw off the disguise and disclose the God-head in the manifest spirit life and body of this terrestrial creature'

'Heaven's privilege she claims as her own right.

.....

Our intuitions are its title-deeds;

.....

But few can look beyond the present state

Or overleap this matted hedge of sense

.....

This mass of unintelligible results

Are the dumb graph of truths unseen

.....

Yet a foreseeing Knowledge might be ours

If we could hear the muffled daemon voice'

All that man aspires for and which at present seems to belong to heaven, are indeed his; his claims and ownership to those higher poss-

² *The Life Divine* 2, p. 358.

essions are indubitably established by the golden moments of inspiration and intuition that he has; it is a pity that all cannot have this insight or assiduity to look into their title-deeds; they are confined to the prison house of mind and feel amazed at the turn of events; but those who traverse beyond the hedge of senses, know all and can account for everything; and they can hear the voice of the genius seated within giving them a foreknowledge of what is to happen.

'Our range is fixed within the crowded arc

.....

And rarely dawns the light of the Unknown
Waking in us the prophet and the seer.

.....

Mind keeps the soul prisoner, we are slaves to our acts
We cannot free our gaze to reach wisdom's sun.
Inheritor of the brief animal mind

.....

To a changing present is his narrow right

.....

A struggling ignorance is his wisdom's mate

.....

Only the Immortals on the deathless heights

.....

Hear, while the world toils on with its deep blind heart,
The galloping hooves of the unforeseen event,
Bearing the superhuman rider near

.....

As lightning leaps, as thunder sweeps, they pass
And leave their mark on the trampled breast of Life'

Functioning with only an infinitesimal drop of consciousness and that too fully engrossed in the preoccupations of the immediate present, man has hardly any leisure to keep companionship with the seer and the prophet that are neglected and kept aloof though near and inside; enveloped by inconscience, the mind finds a companion in the ignorance that cannot see beyond the senses; ignorant of the

past he struggles in the precarious present eking out a fleeting experience from moment to moment; to him the future is a receding horizon since it flies the moment it is reached; he is in reasonable doubt whether he survives or perishes like the previous mammal the mastodon; but the determinants of the evolution the Gods above, know the plan and watch its unfolding; sometimes they may come down to observe more closely; and to the surprise of the Gods and the mortals alike the evolutionary march may take a sudden jump, evident in the mark, the influence left on the world by a super-human coming swift as a wave and disappearing as a lightning.

‘Above the world the world-creators stand

.....

They watch the Bliss for which the earth’s heart has cried
On the long road which cannot see its end

.....

And to meet it guide the unheedful moving world’

The Powers on the high, charged with the execution of the divine plan are little deflected from their purpose by the deceptive appearances below; they are undisturbed by the clamour and the confused scene presented by humanity; they notice how everything obeys and develops according to a self-law implanted within; they show the patience necessary; through their higher perceptions they see and hear what may be missed by men in the rough and tumble of life; they patiently await the hour of fulfillment of the earthly longing for the bliss supreme; and guide the world, unseen and from behind for its realisation.

‘When darkness deepens strangling the earth’s breast

.....

As a thief’s in the night shall be the covert tread
Of one who steps unseen into the house.

.....

A power into the mind’s inner chamber steal

.....

And earth grow unexpectedly divine.’

Urged by the aspiration from within and helped by the outstretched hands above, the masked inhabitant gradually rises up; with the surreptitious tread of a thief, he steals into the chamber; the earth nature feels invaded by a tide of bliss, charm and beauty and while the learned discourse on God, he suddenly descends, clinching all doubt by his presence.

'A consciousness that knows not its own truth,

.....

Far from the original Dusk, the final Flame

In some huge void Inconscience it lives

.....

A message misunderstood, a thought confused

Missing its aim is all that it can speak

.....

For without context reads the cosmic page:

Its signs stare at us like an unknown script

.....

It wears to the perishable creature's eyes

The grandeur of a useless miracle;

.....

A river that can never find its sea,

.....

A hyphen must connect Matter and Mind,

The narrow isthmus of the ascending soul;

.....

Reconstitute the perfect word, unite

The Alpha and the Omega in one sound.'

Man is in the position of Lady Shallot; confined to the present only, he views the passing phenomenal world reflected on the dim glass of the mind; without the proper background he wants to read the cosmic page but does not understand the script; the several theories woven, conjectures made are more confusing than clarifying; beats about the bush and never arrives at the truth since he does not possess the context of the past and the future; unless he dives within, knows the origin and the goal of the existence, everything appears a

paradox; the enigma can be explained only by the inner knowledge that matter is the body of the spirit and that there is no gulf between them and that being and becoming are aspects of one Reality. 'The inconscience is a sleep or a prison, the consciousness is a round of strivings without ultimate issue or the wanderings of a dream: we must wake into the superconscious where all darkness of night and half-lights ceases in the self-luminous bliss of the eternal. The eternal is our refuge.'¹

'In a sense the whole of creation may be said to be a movement between two involutions, spirit in which all is involved and out of which all evolves downward to the other pole of matter, matter in which also all is involved and out of which all evolves upward to the other pole of spirit.'²

Thus by the very nature of his existence, a bubble on the infinity of time, he mistakes a wave for the ocean, a gleam for the sun, a fragment for the whole; he lacks the integral knowledge; truth ever eludes him: only partly conscious, he has not yet neared the goal of superconscience.

'The Spirit's free and absolute potencies
Burn in the solitude of the thoughts of God.

.....
They bend not to the voices that implore.

.....
A deep surrender is their source of might

.....
They look on our struggle with impartial eyes
And yet without them cosmos could not be.'

These cosmic powers are the emanations of the Supreme; they derive their strength from him by a spirit of surrender; they are in charge of the evolutionary plan; they look on the whole cosmic drama without being moved in the slightest; they cannot be won over by petitions or prayers; are not pleased by virtue nor repelled by sin; they are the executors of the divine decree and the main-

¹ *The Life Divine*, p. 571.

² *The Life Divine*, p. 120.

tenance of the cosmos is largely due to them.

'Their aloofness drives man to surpass himself.

.....
 Acquiescing in the wisdom that made hell
 And the harsh utility of death and tears

.....
 Careless they seem of the grief that stings the world's heart

.....
 The immortal sees not as we vainly see

.....
 He makes no haste to untie the cosmic knot

.....
 In Time he waits for the Eternal's hour'

The stings of suffering, the goads of pain are highly purposive; they are meant to make man shed his sloth, his inertia, to impel him to strive, to struggle and not to yield till the higher objectives are attained; the higher heights beckon him from the heights already reached by him; to reach the perfection, the transcendence of the higher cosmic powers, is the aim for attaining which he braves even death and tears; the Immortal does not precipitate his manifestation; he makes use of the good and the evil alike to serve his evolutionary design and patiently awaits his hour of manifestation. 'For the method chosen by her is a slow and difficult evolution of inconstancy developing into ignorance and ignorance forming itself into a mixed modified partial knowledge before it can be ready for transformation into a higher truth consciousness and truth knowledge.'¹

'And through the bitterness of death and fall
 An outstretched Hand is felt upon our lives

.....
 In its unshaken grasp it keeps for us safe

.....
 The crown of conscious Immortality.

¹ *The Life Divine*, p. 548.

Our errors are his steps upon the way

A mighty Guidance leads us through all.'

The divine guidance is always there for the struggling humanity; in all the vicissitudes through which man unlike the rest of the creation consciously participates in quickening the process of evolution towards the higher goal, he sees the cup of immortality held safe in the hands of the Eternal; and even the errors committed by him are the foot-prints of the divine experiment on the pathway to progress: and when the fibres of his soul are sufficiently fortified, the ever-wise compassionate Brilliances above, leap down to bridge the gulf, the abyss, dividing mind and spirit, with an integral knowledge.

'Here meanwhile at the Spirit's opposite pole

In this tragi-comedy of divine disguise

The conscious Force that acts in Nature's breast

Absolves from hour to hour her secret charge

Privy to a summit victory's vast descent'

Meanwhile the puissance of the divine, his deputy, who is taken into confidence of the entire cosmic design and the plan of His ultimate and complete manifestation, unflinchingly makes the necessary effectuations on the earth; witnesses the tragi-comedy of the multitude seeking for the One, the prime source, forgetting the fact that it is nowhere else except within; a labourer concealed in the dark robes of our ignorance, it toils on, unseen amidst all our trials and tribulations and discharges its duty of removing the obstacles and creates here a readiness and preparedness to receive God's bliss and oneness on the date fixed in the calendar of the Unknown.

'An unseen Presence moulds the oblivious clay.

A playmate in the mighty Mother's game,

To hide from her pursuit in force and form.

.....
 A shapeless Energy, a voiceless Word
 He was here before the elements could emerge'

Even prior to the cosmos coming into existence, the stable being exists; it works out a division of itself just for the delight of it and the cosmic drama is on; the one becomes the many; the being becomes the omnipresent and the indwelling, to escape from the playmate who comes seeking after him.

'He is the substance, he the self of things;

.....
 Dreaming she chases her idea of him

.....
 He is the vision and he is the seer
 He is himself the actor and the act

.....
 And light and darkness are their eyes' interchange
 Our pleasure and pain are their wrestle and embrace

.....
 The universe is an endless masquerade

.....
 Author and actor with himself as scene
 He moves there as soul, as nature she.'

The force of nature or Prakriti which has lost all track of her spouse unceasingly engages herself in making a number of figures and forms embodying her idea or image of him; He the Purusha is enshrined in every form; in fact he is the substance, the substratum of every figure; they exist in him; without him they have no existence; this is an endless masquerade since the divine puts on the mask of matter to elude detection by nature; even nature is a part of his force; and thus he is the subject and the object, the seer and the seen, the player and the play, the ignorance and the knowledge. 'God exists in Himself and not by virtue of the cosmos or of man, while man and the

cosmos exist by virtue of God and not in themselves except in so far as their being is one with the being of God.¹

‘We know not how shall run the drama’s course;

.....
She has concealed her glory and bliss

.....
He too wears a diminished Godhead here
He has forsaken his omnipotence

.....
To her he abandons all to make her great.
Incarnate, wedding his infinity’s peace
To her creative passion’s ecstasy.

.....
He leaves her the cosmic management
And watches all the witness of her scene.’

In this cosmic drama, all have their part to play without knowing the plot or the denouement; nature which is a part of the force, the shakti of the Eternal, hides the glory and the bliss that are hers allowing only a trickle to visit her creations; the divine forgets or abdicates his omnipotence in her favour to make her great; he sacrifices his infinity for the sake of satisfying her passion of creative ecstasy; and becomes the passive witness abandoning the cosmic management to his adored Prakriti who is now his regent of desire.

‘He leans on her for all he does and is:

.....
And trails his peacock-plumaged joy of life’

Not a prompter behind the scenes, not an actor on the boards, yet the Purusha or the silent witness may be considered as the unseen director of the entire play; he makes the great sacrifice of offering his being as the base for all her effectuations: he depends on her largess: her bounty of executing his will and design and in proportion to the same of her opening up the layer of consciousness proper to the grade,

¹ *The Life Divine*, p. 615.

the spirit peacock-like evinces the delight and the many-hued plumaged joy of existence.

'Happy, inert he lies beneath her feet:
 His breast he offers for her cosmic dance

 A partner in her evil and good,

 His sanctioning name initials all her works;
 His silence is his signature to her deeds;'

He follows the course chalked out by her; she takes the initiative and he the line of obedience; her whim is a law to him and his breast is the firm stage that can stand the pressure of her dance; the being and the becoming, the status and the dynamis are both aspects of the one reality; but for the one there can be no multiplicity. 'World existence is the ecstatic dance of Shiva which multiplies the body of the God numberlessly to the view: it leaves that white existence precisely where and what it was, ever is and ever will be; its sole absolute object is the joy of the dancing'.¹ Though all powerful, he allows himself to be dominated by her; subjects himself to her caprice; divines and obeys her intentions manifest in her gestures; her deeds have his mute acquiescence and actions his signature of silence.

'She through his witness sight and motion of might

 Her empire in the cosmos she has built
 He is governed by her subtle and mighty laws.
 His consciousness is a babe upon her knees

 He is carried by her from Night to deathless Light

 A creature made of perishable stuff
 In the pattern she has set for him she moves
 He is whatever her artist will can make.'

Deriving all her puissance from him and right under his observation she builds up a vast empire the marvel-veft of the Universe with Namarupa; his status, his immutability supplies her the necessary leverage for creating the several grades and forms; he is practically a babe in her hands having to grow from level to level of consciousness; he rises from inconscience of matter to life in plant, next to partial consciousness in man and thus he has to emerge slowly obeying the laws fixed for the cosmic progression and the pattern, the grade, and the mould set by her.

But the most agreeable feature so far of the evolution is that its tardy pace may be quickened by the appearance of man the most highly developed form of consciousness. We may quote from *The Life Divine* 'This was so because the evolution began from the Inconscience and the secret consciousness had not emerged sufficiently from it to operate through the self-aware participating individual will of its living creature.... Man has seen that there is a higher status of consciousness than his own; the evolutionary oestrus is there in his parts of mind and life, the aspiration to exceed himself is delivered and articulate within him ... the persistent endeavour in him is a sure sign of Nature's will for a higher way to fulfillment, the emergence of a greater status'.¹

'At play with him as with her child or slave,
To freedom and the Eternal's mastery

.....

She moves her seeming puppet of an hour.

.....

At last he wakes to a memory of Self

He sees within the face of deity

The Godhead breaks out through the human mould:

.....

Till then he is a plaything in her game'

During the period of nonage, the spirit follows the line of fancy, the curve of caprice drawn by nature; immortal he suffers mortality in the perishable forms; but when he arrives on the sill of majority if

¹ *The Life Divine*, p. 750.

not maturity on reaching the form of man, he begins a little of self-assertion; Prakriti in her turn is anxious for re-union with Purusha from whom she has been long back separated; she in her own way is helping him to transcend the limitations and discover himself; man too delves into the operations of nature; finds that his liberation is only in name and that he has to continue his dependence on nature whom he now discovers as his companion for making the necessary effectuation and giving the necessary will and strength for coming into the open from concealment.

‘His chosen partner in a titan game
 Her will he has made the master of his fate,

 In all experience meets her blissful hands;

 He revels in her, a swimmer in her sea,

 Whatever she desires he wills to be:
 The Spirit, the innumerable One
 He has left behind his lone eternity,
 He is an endless birth in endless Time’

During the period of nescience, Purusha is a puppet in the hands of Prakriti; but on coming of age in man, the spirit like Antony is in a state of infatuation with her; forgets his single blessedness of containing the many; becomes under her impulsion, the myriad; and is so completely under her despotism that he derives an equal Rasa from pleasure and pain alike. ‘States of consciousness there are in which death is only a change in immortal life, pain a violent backwash of the waters of universal delight, limitation a turning of the Infinite upon itself, evil a circling of the good around its own perfection’¹. ‘Thus in the duality of pleasure and pain, we have seen that pain is a contrary effect of the one delight of existence resulting from the weakness of the recipient, his inability to assimilate the force that meets him, his incapacity to touch the force of delight that would otherwise be felt in it; it is the perverse reaction of consciousness to Ananda; this is

¹ *The Life Divine*, p. 51.



shown by the significant fact that pain can pass into pleasure and pleasure into pain and both resolve into original Ananda.¹

‘The master of existence lurks in us
And plays at hide and seek with his own Force

.....
The Immanent lives in man as in his house:
He has made the universe his pastime’s field,
A vast gymnasium of his works of might.

.....
Immortal dallies with mortality.

The Omnipotent who is the ruler of the infinities of creation, shrinks to the smallest size; dwells as the immanent directive principle in all the forms, human and animal created by his force; he, the indwelling intelligence and she, Prakriti, his force together make the universe the field of their pastime, a gymnasium for the display of their marvellous power. ‘The Purusha, the inner self, is no larger than the size of a man’s thumb’² according to the Katha and the Shwetaswhatara Upanishads. ‘In certain images of the Upanishads the divine Purusha is described as the one fire which has entered into all forms and shapes itself according to the form, as the one sun which illumines all impartially and is not affected by faults of our seeing.’³

‘Space is himself and Time is only he,
.....
His image in the human measure cast
That to his divine measure we might rise,
.....
This transfiguration is earth’s due to heaven:
A mutual debt binds man to the Supreme:
.....
Our life is a paradox with God for key.’

The one who is the illimitable, the immeasurable contains himself in the several forms; what is contained within suffers a self ex-

¹ *The Life Divine*, p. 444.

² *The Life Divine*, p. 201.

³ *The Life Divine*, p. 353.

pansion in space and time; forsaking his glory and the splendour, he casts himself into the mould of man; for the sacrifice made by God, man should respond by an equal sacrifice of out-growing his earth nature; the mutual obligation of God's descent can be discharged by a return movement of man's ascent from the ignoble to lofty divine heights and the key for the paradox and the contradictions of existence, its dualities, can be found in the divine putting on the garb of man, the robe of ignorance so that man can discover his true identity in the divine. 'Space would be Brahman extended for the holding together of forms and objects; time would be Brahman self-extended for the deployment of the movement of self power carrying forms and objects, the two would then be a dual aspect of one and the same self-extension of the cosmic eternal.'¹

'He sits, unfelt by the form in which he lives

.....

He turns in a chiaroscuro of error and truth

.....

As one forgetting he searches for himself;

.....

As a sojourner lingering amid alien scenes

He journeys to a home he knows no more

.....

He explores the ceaseless miracle of himself'

The form enshrining the divine does not know the concealed presence; the supreme observes the rules of the game involved in his plunge into the inconscience; meanwhile existence appears a myth or a meaningless tale; man seeks for the divine in all the tracery of events; his intellect feels baffled for all his gropings; he is exactly in the curious position of ransacking the whole world for the transcendent who is in his possession; he is always on a voyage home, all track of which he has forgotten and wonders at the miracles wrought by himself.

'He is the explorer and the mariner

¹ *The Life Divine*, p. 325.

On a secret inner ocean without bourne:
 He is the adventurer and cosmologist
 Of a magic earth's obscure geography.

.....
 An unattained perfection calls to him
 From the distant boundaries in the Unseen'

The voyage is in the inner regions of the subliminal self which reveals itself to him as a boundless ocean; new powers come to him, new secrets of the complexity and the intricacy of nature stand revealed to him; but at no time is a certainty reached, the last word pronounced on the acquisitions made; the reached throws open the vistas of the higher reaches and there is no end to the experience and the journey: and the cosmos which appears a dream or a myth or a meaningless tale discovers a law of its own, a determinism and will imposed by the indweller.

'Timid initiate of its vast design

.....
 A trafficker in small impermanent wares
 At first he hugs the shores and shuns the breadths

.....
 He hazards not the new and the unseen.
 But now he hears the sound of larger seas
 A widening world calls him to distant scenes

.....
 And open markets for life's opulent arts

.....
 And transient splendours won and lost by the days.

A timid initiate of his vast design of evolution, the spirit involved in matter, in the course of experimentation from crude beginnings, at last touches on the consciousness of man which has rich potentialities; he is an adventurer on the sea lines but ventures not into the depths; is close to the shores, trafficking in impermanent wares and is more of a vital kinetic man, lost in the lures of the senses. But in course of time he develops a distaste for the petty coastal traffic; hazards into

the new and the unseen far-off perilous main; becomes the mental man feeling the call and yearning to visit distant shores and scenes; the narrow land-locked sea trade develops into the world's commerce in transient splendours by his becoming an adventurer on the perilous billows.

'Or, guided by a sure compass in his thought
He plunges through a bright haze that hides the stars

.....
A seeker of the islands of the Blest

.....
He has reached the world's end and stares beyond
At last he hears a chanting on the heights
He crosses the boundaries of the unseen

.....
To a new vision of himself and things.'

He finds a new heaven in storm troubled isles; yet he lacks the courage to sail beyond the familiar into dream distances; but the spiritual turn comes over him; he becomes the seeker of the isles of the Blest; it is the celestial and no longer the worldly that has a sway over him; secrets of the material world are won, but those relating to the spiritual still remain a mystery; he therefore now becomes an explorer of regions beyond thought; he sights the beyond and hears the music ethereal; a glance-back from the summit of consciousness reached, presents everything in a new revealing perspective.

'He is a spirit in an unfinished world

.....
His is a search of darkness for the light,
Of mortal life for immortality.
In the vessel of an earthly embodiment

.....
He looks out on the magic waves of Time
Where mind like a moon illumines the world's dark.'

To the new vision that has awakened, the world movement dis-

closes a purpose of a gradual development from insentience to sentience and from sentience to super-sentience; the mortal's struggle is a movement for the emancipation from the limitations imposed by the senses and the despotism of the dualities: the mind is but a feeble moon-light that can scarcely illumine the path full of briars and thorns.

'He voyages through a starry world of thought
On Matter's deck to a spiritual sun

.....
But none learns whither through the unknown he sails
Or what secret mission the great Mother gave.

.....
He carries her sealed orders in his breast.

.....
He sails through life and death and other life

.....
And never can the mighty traveller rest

.....
Till the nescient dusk is lifted from man's soul
And the morns of God have overtaken his night.
As long as Nature lasts, he too is there;

.....
There is a plan in the Mother's deep world-whim

.....
To evoke a person in the impersonal Void

.....
And the world manifest the unveiled Divine.

For this he left his white eternity

And laid on the Spirit the burden of the flesh

That Godhead's seed might flower in mindless Space'.

A voyage to the spiritual vasts, on the deck of inconscience the body is extremely trying and hazardous; but not counting the peril or knowing the whither, he pushes on through the thunder's roar and the windless hush, namely, the fogs and the hurdles of life, befriended only by the impulsions of the divine creatrix and the sure compass of his thought. This is a quest that keeps him sailing through life and

death and other life; this dynamis that is sparked gives him no rest till the dusk of ignorance is lifted from man's soul; and the morn of God is ushered. Being and becoming are ever together; though they appear as two, the one stable and the other active, they are aspects of the one, indivisible and immutable; the game is therefore not a jest but an earnest; even as from the impersonal inconscience have arisen the vibrations of matter, life and mind, so these in their turn must lead to the higher rhythm; unveil the divine; it is for this that the supreme has assumed the double poise of the passive and the active, and the fulfillment of the Spirit laying on himself the burden of the flesh can be brought about by his self-disclosure, by casting off the mask, by the being, becoming his true self on the earth, and by revealing the plenitude of his consciousness.

Y. S. R. CHANDRAN

THE SYNTHESIS OF YOGA (*An outline*)

CHAPTER V

THE ASCENT OF THE SACRIFICE — I

THE Integral Yoga is a sacrifice of knowledge, devotion and works. It results in union of our essential being and our becoming with the Divine Consciousness. It accepts all the activities of life, rather than seeking to withdraw from the field of works or limit action to traditional or religious forms. It strives not only to change the inner spirit and significance of all works, but also to change the outer form into a more perfect expression of the inner Truth. It aims at establishing a dynamic spiritual principle as the guide of outer life in place of a mental, ethical, religious or pseudo-spiritual formula.

This spiritual guidance comes by an opening of the human to the Divine Consciousness, an acceptance of the Divine's working in us, and a surrender to the will of His Shakti. But so long as there are stirrings of intellect, life impulses, physical needs and ego, there is always the possibility of being misled. The awakening of the light of the inmost soul, the psychic being, is the one sure illumination to guide us toward Truth during the transition period until the Divine Force has taken complete control.

THE WORKS OF KNOWLEDGE

Philosophy and Religion divide knowledge into two categories, the supra-physical knowledge of the Transcendent and Immanent Divine and the outward knowledge of the Divine in its many forms of world manifestation. The Integral Yoga accepts all knowledge within its scope. In the arts and sciences and all other fields the yogin must reject the seeking of the ignorant mental consciousness interested in surface phenomenon for their own sake and the satisfaction of Desire or the Intelligence. His seeking must be a conscious sacrifice, a seeking of the higher spiritual consciousness to discover the Divine within and behind its manifestation, to understand His workings in the world and to give creative expression to that vision. He pursues these acti-

vities not out of necessity, duty or personal motivation but for the spiritual joy of creation and expression or as an example affirming the value of all worldly works.

Usually the yoga begins with the offering of our natural mental activities in service of the Divine. Then there is an ascent to a higher consciousness and the descent of the higher Light to spiritualise and illumine the outer activities of the mind. This descent may bring with it an opening of new capacities of mental creation and new realms of knowledge. As the mind is transformed there comes a growing direct experience of the Transcendent and Cosmic Divine. The Divine himself becomes the knower in the individual.

When the mind has been spiritualised and universalised and has accepted its true role as an instrument of the Divine, a further ascension is possible to the Illumined and Intuitive levels and the Overmind culminating in the attainment of the Supramental Truth-Consciousness. At each stage of ascent there must be a transformation of all activities of knowledge informing them with the growing light.

THE PSYCHIC BEING

The human heart has a dual nature. In front is the false soul of desire, a passionate, egoistic and blind mixture of emotive heart and hungering vital. Behind in the depths is the true soul, the psychic being, which develops around a little spark of Divinity and is in direct contact with the Divine Truth.

The Integral Yoga accepts all emotions coming from the true soul or which aid in its emergence and rejects all feelings turned toward the satisfaction of the unpurified vital. It is not limited to any narrow category of religious emotions, ethical standards or religious-ethical ideals such as universal compassion, goodwill, love, service. For at best these represent a compromise between the spiritual and mental consciousness. Though they can lead to a widening and purification of the ego, they are not truly liberative or potent to change man's vital life and nature.

The psychic being in man is veiled by the functioning of the outer personality — the ignorant certitude of the mind, the desires and demands of the vital, the obscurity and inertia of the physical — and

normally exerts only a weak influence on the life. But when these elements are purified and silenced and man turns toward the Divine, the soul can come forward and take up the lead. It acts as a sure guide and intense will for realisation. It insists on Truth, on Will, Strength and Mastery, on Joy, Love and Beauty. Its most intimate character is love of the Divine and to attain this it rejects all lower attractions and the mixture of even the highest religio-ethical motives. It aspires for the transcendent Ecstasy and for the descent of that Love and Beatitude to transform the world.

GARRY JACOBS

OBJECTIVITY

HAVING written an introductory book on Sri Aurobindo for a certain American series — a book that succinctly surveys his life and his writing, and attempts to convey something of his magnitude and his importance for the world, — I have had good occasion to learn yet more of the character of the “intellectual”, who is still culturally dominant among us. For the editors of the book have been thrown into confusion (which they consider “sober judgment”) by my writing, not as an “objective scholar”, but as a disciple: as one, that is, who accepts Sri Aurobindo and the Mother as the latest and greatest Avatars, and tries to see, grasp and follow their evolutionary yoga. It is contended with the most tamasic insistence that a man “committed” as I am, a man who “identifies himself” with his subject, cannot make that subject sufficiently an object, as it were, and see it in the round from a sufficient distance, with his critical capacities brought well into play. I do not convey anything, it seems, but my own enthusiasm: when I should be informative I am solipsistic and bemused by my own literary cadences, just “poetical” and “knowing how to write” but without substance: and when I should be critical and analytical I am worshipful, burning incense and chanting from upon my knees.

It is true that I have chanted and burned incense in a Buddhist ambience; and if they knew this they would no doubt take it as an indication of my fickleness and my instability — additional reason for summarily turning away from any serious exposition of something outlandish, with something of its spirit, any powerful presentation of the fact that there are things for the grasp of which the presently accepted critical methods are inadequate. To refuse to try to see what is being conveyed is the easiest reaction, and the least affront to complacency. It is in vain that I have offered them a disquisition on “objectivity”, what it is and how it varies with the circumstances and the cases; they will have Sri Aurobindo treated in the usual mechanical externalistic scholar’s way, as a “subject” (or should I say “object”?) that has been “gotten up” by “research”. They are deaf when assured that in the case of Sri Aurobindo, indeed of any mystical writer, the “object” cannot be seen from the outside, but only in some degree by iden-

tity — at the least one must be beyond trying to intellectualize things, and cut them down to alien and lesser patterns and terms. One must understand that the mystics are not philosophers, to be criticized on the philosophical level, and that their writings are reports or attempted reports of experience, which one responds to as one can, and which one not having the response or the intuitive acceptance must accept tentatively by an act of reasoned faith — for he cannot intelligently *deny* what is being said — or leave alone. This is not acceptable to the scholarly people who in all their industrious and responsible maturity have put out a book on St. John of the Cross that reduces him to an aesthete with a fine way with words, and will not (or cannot) present his mysticism in its proper scope and terms, lest it “turn off” the modern reader — as it has perhaps already “turned off”, or found unreceptive the man who has undertaken to write on something all too evidently too far beyond him: the people who have put out a book on St. Teresa of Avila that concentrates wholly on her literary style, and leaves her mysticism out of account altogether. (Which is just as well, for it has been well treated elsewhere, and best of all in her own writings, and silence is preferable to bumbling, such as we usually get from scholars in such an area). To the objective judgment of such people, all I can do is fulsomely praise a man who cannot even *prove* that he is an Avatar and that there is a Supermind, and I do not even make *clear* — no more than he — what Nirvana may be, for heaven’s sake! (And they apparently do not suspect that, with all the scholarly study that has been made of Buddhism this hundred years and more, there is no *definition* of Nirvana current among the scholars — because it is not an “object” to be seen from the outside). In fact, it has been conveyed to me that it is possible to read a chapter in which I have dealt with *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *The Problem of Rebirth*, *The Mind of Light* and *Essays on the Gita*, and find nothing *concrete* at all. I should “stand back” and say continually, “not proven,” and “what does he mean by this”, and “perhaps questionable”, and “it may be found that the utility of Occam’s Razor is salient here”, and so on; then I might be accepted as a sober and trustworthy guide: not because I had grasped and conveyed anything of Sri Aurobindo, but because I had assumed the scholarly “discipline”, as they call it: that is, brought myself shamelessly to manipulate, or

just to throw in, go through the motions of employing, as if any serious man could take them seriously, the terms of discourse now obligatory for one who is to gain acceptance and advancement in the universities.

Realization of the Silent Brahman? What can it *mean*? And what about the Noisy Brahman? And then this Anandamaya stuff, and this Purushottama, all these unfamiliar words, and this multiplication of abstractions, just complicating things and throwing out veils of obscurity everywhere! Why Supermind, Higher Mind, Overmind and all that? Settle on one term and be precise, and stop maundering in repetition! And who the blazes is the Mother, how can she be a French lady and all that other stuff besides? And why try to tell us that the spiritual is neither the mental nor the emotional, anyway? What *is* it? So they react. It is lost on them that the book is not just a rhapsody of praise, but is an exposition of Sri Aurobindo, a presentation of what he has said, with suggestions on how to read him and what is required for understanding, and even the invitation to take it all as "just poetry" if one will: it still being the largest and most comprehensive world-view that any poet has ever given to mankind. A fundamental intellectual honesty is not always a prominent possession of the "intellectual", when he feels himself confronted with an alien largeness to which his judgments are not relevant; and nothing is easier than to tell someone that you do not understand what he is saying, that he is not clear and perhaps does not know what he means himself. It is a standard method, as it were, to dismiss anything the comprehension of which might require some effort; and the people most largely given to it are those who are capable of small clarity themselves. Living as I do in America, I shall not be surprised if by and by on some occasion I remark that there is a lamp-post on the corner, and my interlocutor professes not to know what I mean by that at all. Of course one can adjust and qualify terms and make serious effort at communication: but all effort is lost on one who does not *want* to understand; and when it comes to a phenomenon like Sri Aurobindo, and anyone who takes him seriously, the majority of the "intellectuals" are in that case.

And so, my editors. I do not know that they desiderate a *perfect* objectivity. In any case that is impossible, because "object" and

“subject” are interrelated, and each is meaningless without the other. There is no “subject” without the “object” that delimits it; there is no “object” without the observing or impinging “subject”. It is one of the “pairs of opposites” that one overcomes in a higher knowledge long before he comes to anything like the plenary knowledge that is Sri Aurobindo’s. This being so, the “object” is always seen “subjectively”. Everything humanity sees is seen according to the conditions of human vision, and by no two persons quite the same. There is also agreement of course, or there could be no community; the “tree out there” is about the same thing to most observers, “for all practical purposes”. Even colour-blind people can get along pretty well in the “normal” world. And then again, “objectivity” does mean something, and there are degrees of it: from the scientist making a controlled experiment subject to the review of others or the manufacturing of things to precise and minute specifications set by a mind that has put any irrelevant personality out of the way, to the man who can see nothing in the world that is not a projection of his own small, self-seeking consciousness. But things like nuts and bolts, stone walls and chemical quantities are relatively easy to standardize, and find agreement upon; though even here the painter, with his trained eye, will tell us how little people are wont to see of such objects — and then painters themselves will show a remarkable divergence here, and what the “true” object is is a philosophical question not readily to be resolved, and a rule of thumb must serve. The point is that there is no object without the subject that observes, whatever its capacity; and the difficulties increase as the object becomes more complex and less palpable. If Leigh Hunt “saw Shelley plain”, he did not communicate his vision; and no one else has claimed to have had it. Then there is Shakespeare, whose elusiveness not to say illusiveness has become almost an article of faith for the literary (though nevertheless there is pronouncement with confidence on disputed plays, which are his and which are not); he has been almost all things to all men these many years, and his “subjectivity” is an object more for conjecture than for contemplation. Yet he has given us one of our great objects, the world of his creation. And — (is it not a wonder?) — to be “objective” about this is so problematical that every scholar has his own view and opinion of it: and moreover is required to have, for it seems

that he would not be considered an "objective observer" if he agreed very much with someone else, and did not give his *own* view, in his own words. One almost suspects paradox. But then the pretty evident truth is that the object that Shakespeare gives us is not *the* world, or human nature *per se* and in perfect and exhaustive reportage, but a world of his own vision and creation, fed by his intimate knowledge of certain areas of the nature of humanity — some of the vital, a little of the mental, and none of the spiritual at all. Thus he gives us an abstraction, a selection artistically worked, and characters who are all facets of himself, projected with such freedom that they can be living powers of literature and thus formative influences upon one's life. Here there would be no objectivity at all, without the great subjectivity that informs it; and every man must take it as he can and make of it what he can. There can be no respectable pretence of having seen it fully and exhausted its meaning, and one who claimed to do so would be "subjective": which means that he would be locked in a subjectivity less than Shakespeare's, and that "objectivity" is a relative term, the difficulties of which are at least as great as its usefulness.

When we come to Sri Aurobindo and the world that he has given us, the difficulties become far greater. For he *does* understand human nature thoroughly, and thus makes many distinctions and expresses many things that are quite lost on those whose self-knowledge is primitive, and who think that Shakespeare had either an exhaustive knowledge of the "human heart", or at least the greatest that any man has had. The range and magnitude of Sri Aurobindo puts him out of sight, and those who cannot both stand back far enough — from their accustomed ignorance — and come close enough in intimate knowledge or awareness that expands their consciousness, most readily pronounce one who can see an object where they see nothing, to be seeing only himself. Their opinion of course is worthless; they do not know what he sees; and they can only complain that he insists that Sri Aurobindo, himself, really does see something. But nevertheless the competent reader of Sri Aurobindo (minimally competent, at least, for there are endless degrees) cannot doubt that he does so; and will find his vision expressed very eloquently, and as clearly as the nature of language, as presently constituted, allows. But language as an instrument largely of the logical mind allows but limited expression

to things beyond logic; and if a more adequate language were invented, discovered or brought forward, it would be even less intelligible to unspiritual mankind than the expression of spirituality is now, in largely alien terms. Poetry can work wonders here, but only in those who are prepared to receive the working, and can and will seek it and co-operate with it. And people know enough not to go to Shakespeare without preparation, or expect to grasp him in all his entirety without labour; yet they seem to expect of a writer on Sri Aurobindo, rather they are capable of demanding of him, that he make everything perfectly crystalline to their indifferent and perfunctory gaze. Even hostility is awakened in them by the fact that he is so new, so large and so difficult, and they *will* have it that there is nothing there. In short, their own "judgments" are quite subjective, and are only a playing with ideas of their own excogitation, with which they replace the object that they cannot see. Despite such champions of the "critical-analytical" approach, one who is capable can at least report accurately the essentials of what Sri Aurobindo has said, and give an outline of his great evolutionary vision, which may help others to grasp it, or lead them to his own writings; and if he is moved so to write, he will do so for the "fit though few", and expect certain others to impugn his clarity and his objectivity and his integrity and almost everything about him, and end triumphantly, against him and Sri Aurobindo alike, with the sophomoric cry "not proven"! Poetry is "proven on the pulses", and Sri Aurobindo's vision becomes gradually clear and authentic to the awakening and growing consciousness.

A very concrete stumbling-block is the idea of "subjectivity" some people have, an object much in the way of their understanding. So mystical experience is pronounced "subjective", and thus not "ontologically valid" and "cognitively certain" — something that can be set before others and tested by them, experienced by them and thus accepted or rejected, according to the lesser terms that are quite irrelevant. But if they would listen to the mystics, they might catch some glimmering that the fact is otherwise. Spiritual experience is more solid, concrete and sure than the stones one treads upon or perhaps knocks one's head against, and the "subject" that experiences it is at once the "object" of the experience: that is of a reality, and *is* a reality, that is the identity of all separate and individual and disparate

selves, and is ever beyond, the very possibility of further experience and divine growth. There is no question either of doubting it or of proving it; and while it can be conveyed in some degree to the fit, and expression of it can move others toward the finding of it, one must find it to know it, and it cannot be put into a simple formulation and made available to a non-spiritual consciousness. For those who are not sufficiently quickened in consciousness there is no "object" here, for there is nothing that can be seen from the outside, or so long as there *is* an outside. And this does not mean anything like "autistic withdrawal", or inability to function in "the world". But what it does mean is something that one must understand by a gradual growth, and not by reading a few (or a great many) words and learning to repeat a formulation. Words can be sign-posts and guides, for one who wants to be guided; and for one who wants to know what spiritual experience is, Sri Aurobindo has given the most comprehensive guidance that we have. But no guidance avails with people who do *not* want to be guided, and would rather say "I don't understand and you can't make me, and it's all your fault that I don't understand, too!", than tread the path. Nevertheless it remains a homely and quite concrete and objective fact, that one cannot enjoy a banquet by reading the menu; and that no description of unfamiliar food can give him any clear idea of its taste and substance. And in this area one must assimilate, as one assimilates food; he cannot stand back and observe only.

But hardly a scholar does want to do any such thing; and so among that breed a book that approaches such subjects (or objects) in the right way is not acceptable. And the fact that so many sterile and worthless books are now being perpetrated by university scholars may have something to do with this — (I should not say *entirely* worthless, for in the system that afflicts us they help the professors hold their jobs and gain promotion.) "Getting up" something by "research" is quite within the compass of a mediocre mind, without penetration, synthetic grasp or imaginative power; a mind that is "critical" and "analytical" naturally because it stands in externalistic fatuity understanding nothing, and "objective" because it never comes into a living relationship with the things observed, whether doggedly or perfunctorily, in pure purblindness. One thing is as good to it as

another for "study", for it is not competent with anything or committed to anything beyond "the job", and is without the light and power that can make scholarship really perceptive, and of cultural significance and value.

We have taken some glance at the "objective" art of the dramatist. Both a dramatist of greatness and an acute philosophical critic was Schiller, who like most creative men suffered in school, and learned to have small respect for the "Brotgelehrten" — those whose "learning" was only their means of getting bread, and so to the student was a mechanical and deadly imposition. In the course of his aesthetic studies he made an acute division of the artist into three types or kinds. The great artist shows the object: he has enough creativity to present something real and living before us, formed by his artistic which is more than his jealously personal consciousness. The mediocre artist shows the subject: that is, too much of a lesser self and personality intrudes, to diminish the artistic power and cultural importance, replacing vision with self-assertion. But the *bad* artist (or one may say, the non-artist): he shows the *material* only, not being able to shape it even "subjectively" to anything of importance; the medium itself dominates him and overwhelms him. Here austere I shall make no observations on modern art and literature: but will confine myself to suggesting that our scholarly preoccupation with "method" has gone further than should commend it to the cultured consciousness. The "objectivity" of one without sufficient "subjectivity" is a negative value.

The *good* books, the ones that do have cultural power, are not constructions (or heaps) that make a fatuous pretence to "objectivity" at all costs, and would ideally, we suppose, not need the intervention of a particular consciousness at all. They are books in which a *subject* of sufficient magnitude has been at work, and has come into relation with an object of sufficient magnitude, that has or can be found to have human significance: a subject that has been influenced by the object, and given the influence of his own high and cultured consciousness to the object, in a really significant degree that is important for humanity. We see what we are equipped to see, and in a larger than "romantic" sense we receive what we give; and the greater the magnitude and cultural significance of the object, the larger and more acute and refin-

ed the consciousness that is required for the adequate vision of it and the transmitting of it in some degree to others. It is the vision and the influence that the competent observer transmits, and not the object which itself is a focus and transmitter of light from beyond. The nature poet gives the poetry, not the nature itself; this is as true of the most "objective" haiku artist as it is of Wordsworth at his most "subjective", and daffodils are important not as daffodils but as they affect the inward eye; it is not a meticulously unimaginative reproduction of external features that the great painters give us, but *vision* in which these features have a part, and photography has become an art not by being able to "give the object", but by arrangement, selection and the manipulation of light — *subjective* things directed to the subjective response that is the only humanly important aspect of the object at all. And any book that will convey something of Sri Aurobindo must be a work of art; the job cannot be done "scientifically" at all, for there is nothing there to grasp with the measuring instruments that are confined to sense and logic, that is to the sensible world as the mind works upon it. And if he could be so treated, his great importance would be gone.

As for the *validity* of a large vision, that is not tested by weak eyes and small consciousness, and the bare fact that something is not in accordance with one's prepossessions or feelings of logical fitness or presumptions as to what is possible, all this raft and hassle of subjective things, is perfectly irrelevant. If one wants "objectivity" he will have to judge "objectively", and this cannot be a mechanical procedure, by rote and rule: he must himself know the subject at least as well as that object of his aversion, the writer in question. And he will have to have a certain humility that is not sufficiently in evidence among the professional "judges": he will have to understand that if he does not understand a thing the fault may not be the writer's but rather his own — and have the nice discrimination that shall tell him when the writer is abreast of a difficult subject and when he is only floundering. And thus few people who have only a "modern education" are equipped to read a competent book on Sri Aurobindo, or to recognize one when they see it. Whence comes it that certain scholarly people can compare Sri Aurobindo with Teilhard de Chardin, as if they were saying the same thing or very nearly so, and stood on the same footing

— a fine instance of sheer inability to see Sri Aurobindo at all.

But leaving Teilhard and all his tentative and groping science-fiction out of the question, I could point to more than one or two essays at Sri Aurobindo by university scholars philosophically trained, that are the veriest farrago of incomprehension. Their only merit here, these professors, is that they speak in terms that are intelligible to their colleagues, whereas Sri Aurobindo and his fit expositors do not. The remedy here is to learn the true terms, which means an expansion of consciousness. Sri Aurobindo is so large and weighty that he would absolutely smash the bed of Procrustes, if he could be laid upon it.

The perforce subjective view of Sri Aurobindo's would-be loppers is not respectable, not because it is subjective, but because it is less the vision than the personal construction of natures not sufficiently developed. Everyone puts "himself" into what he offers the world, and the greatest selves most greatly of all. Thus Sri Aurobindo: he expresses his experience of Nirvana in his own way, and though it agrees with other expressions it is individually his own. Thus to the plane of subject-object, and within its terms, it brings some light, hint and clue of the transcendence, to the fit reader. But a scholar's compilation, with "critical commentary", on Nirvana and the various expressions of it will only divide what is one, raise and codify false distinctions, and confuse further the many readers who, with such books, feel themselves in safe and responsible hands, giving them perhaps the illusion of *knowing* something about this invisible and impalpable thing that they have not experienced; unless they prefer to dismiss it as a tissue of contradictions perpetrated by untrained minds, and so on. Which is not to say that a collection of quotations may not be valuable; or that its value may not be enhanced by commentary such as was provided by Aldous Huxley in his fine book that has done good service, *The Perennial Philosophy*: commentary written by a man with insight, before he degenerated into supposing that drugs can give spiritual enlightenment. The "intellectual" unfortunately is not easily amenable to discipline that would help him to rise above his intellect; and when he feels the call of something greater, or something "mysterious", he either stifles it with his "proper pride", or looks for the quickest, easiest and cheapest way,

and the way that least unsettles his "thinking" from its mechanical grooves.

Perhaps one may write about Sri Aurobindo, with at least a minimum competence, without being a disciple of his; but one will have to be "on the path", or at the very least well acquainted with the fact that reports of experience are not to be denied by lack of experience, and that even for it to question them is futile. Knowing this and knowing something of the large field of mysticism with at least some intuitive sympathy or responding chords, one may see how much larger and more comprehensive Sri Aurobindo is than the rest, and how very great his import is for mankind at this present juncture. Not trying unintelligently to intellectualize things that are beyond the intellect, he will recognize that Sri Aurobindo, with his giant intellect, is as great a precision as is possible in these matters, and that he does not multiply his terms recklessly and without "technical competence", and call for Occam. But at the risk of repeating myself I should like to record my observation that what we have gotten from the professors who have essayed to approach him is most lamentable. They have not even made a beginning, and their "criticism" has been only a sad display of their own limitations and lack of grasp. And with this there goes a positive *unwillingness* to understand him: for the intellect hardly cares to relinquish its pride of place and assumption of leadership as the highest power; and its favourite activity of "criticism" for its own sake it will continue, though it is something not indulged in by the serious mind that is endeavouring to grow beyond such preoccupations and the illusion of understanding that is given by the familiar terms, and come to a direct vision of the truth and reality. The intellect does not want to believe that there is any such thing, beyond its own ideas and ways of thought and expression. So instead of trying to find this vision, under the guidance of one who has it—provisionally accepting that he *does* have it—the "intellectual" would "analyze" whether it is possible or not, analyzing if necessary his own ignorance in a vacuum, and forever demand "proof", as if one could "prove" the taste of coffee—and so on and on, around in the circles to which he is accustomed. There is of course nothing that one cannot make countless and endless objections to, if one does not have better use for one's time and

energy; but the mind that makes the objections is a would-be self-sufficiency that is never stable and really sure, and can *be* sure only by becoming the docile servant of a higher light.

G. K. Chesterton has acutely observed that Christianity arose, and finally triumphed, not among credulous and uncritical people, but among people who had grown tired of criticizing everything. And now, with the increasing recognition of the fact that our problems are not solved by the intellect playing with its own terms, or the "objectivity" of those without personal substance, kindling insight and mature engagement, the world may grow tired again, of the negativity that destroys every prospect either by flat denial or by corruption, and turn to the great source of Light that has now come among us. Not for a new religion, but for direct spiritual experience and growth, men may find the way to the solution of their most pressing and fundamental problems. Their souls (which are *not* their minds) will awaken with aspiration, and their critical faculties, not abrogated but given due place in the larger nature, will yield to the inspired synthetic vision that can lead them to the realization of their greatest possibilities. Sri Aurobindo tells us that a new world is at hand: it is the giving of some expression to this one great fact, that may help one to turn seriously toward Sri Aurobindo or move one to do so, that has been the primary object before me in the writing of the book. Certainly it expresses something of Sri Aurobindo's influence upon me, and I should be sorry if it did not; certainly it is *my* treatment of the material, and no attempt to give it "pure", as if no treatment, no arrangement were needed; but though its faults are my own, they are not those of a rhapsodist who has brought forth a god from his own fevered imagination, and bids the world fall down. If I could bid the world I should bid it to stand up, indeed, and stop grovelling and wallowing, and walking the old treadmill of the unenlightened mind. Such a book is of course not for every man, much less for Everyman; it cannot speak to the majority, and least of all can it speak to those who *will* not hear, and *will* misunderstand, and the more the more explanation is given, *ad infinitum*: that will insist on clarification and reject every attempt to supply it, with cries of "sophistry!" and "tautology!" and "abstraction!" and "rationalization!" and "just poetry!" and anything that may conveniently

come between the "critical analyst" and the development of his higher nature that is required for comprehension of the subject that he is unfortunately required to try to make an object of, by an anomaly like myself, without reputation or official position and thus without leverage in this land of promise.¹ But if the book is allowed to see the light, it will speak to those who can respond, in some degree, to the call of the evolutionary nature now given such an impetus as can make humanity greater than it has thought possible in its noblest dreams.²

What I have said here of course will not "communicate" anything to those to whom the book itself does not communicate; and if they were to read these my remarks, they would probably dismiss them as just a shriek of pain or a bellow of wounded pride; in any case as just a lot of special pleading without substance. They will not compromise their dignity as "intellectuals" (such as it is), come what may. I am not surprised by all this, for I know how limited even the intellectual development is of the "intellectual" just now, and somewhat more than two decades ago I elected, myself, not to put myself in danger of becoming one of that tribe — or in the unhappy position of trying to work in the midst of it — by pursuing a university career : for indeed the sterile externality had no attraction for me, of the "objectivity" of the preoccupations of that ambience. More and more, it seems, those who flourish there, when they attempt to approach something of genuine cultural importance, reveal themselves to be like the hunters of the snark, with whom "the bowsprit got mixed with the rudder sometimes." Sri Aurobindo has written for intellectual people certainly, for people whose minds are well developed; but unfortunately few of our "intellectuals" qualify in this area: and if he should be "taken up" by them — if the universities (which thought we may hope is preposterous) were to have a "boom" on the Avatar, it would no doubt be the veriest snark-hunt imaginable, or not so. There we might expect Sri Aurobindo to be fragmented more than Osiris; or rather replaced by fragments that did not belong to him at all. Yet we may hope, in this Hour of God, that that most un-

¹ America

² It has now seen the light in India, Published by the Sri Aurobindo Circle,

expected of things shall happen: that a higher light shall penetrate Academiá and that under its influence a real about-face shall come—before indeed Academia collapses under its accumulating weight of rubbish.

JESSE ROARKE

SRI AUROBINDO'S CONCEPT OF HUMAN UNITY

"Unity the race moves towards and must one day realise"

Sri Aurobindo

IT is a matter of common experience that men are not satisfied with their present human situation. There are strifes and struggles, conflicts and clashes among individuals and individual groupings which make human life melancholy and miserable. It seems that there is something wrong more with the man himself rather than with the chaos or cosmos. Man's basic error has been not so much in seeing diversity as in his failure to see the unity. The history of mankind evinces a constant effort towards human unification but the failure to realise the same has been because the ideal of human unity is still a vague notion to be clearly thought out and attempted and also because the attempts so far made were more at political, administrative and economic levels rather than at the psychological and spiritual levels. To achieve this end what is required is not so much a change in the material circumstances but a change in the heart and mind of all human races.

The problem of human unity seems at first more or less an insoluble one. The individual wants freedom, the fullest possible freedom, for without freedom life would appear to lose most of its flavour. But he also wants security, which in effect means security for the aggregate of human beings, and which in fact puts a check on individual freedom. The problem is to effect a balance between these two poles of existence, freedom for the individual and security for the aggregate. The balance has to be effected or else either the individual dwindles into an automaton or the aggregate splits up into a million fragments and thus perishes.

Sri Aurobindo tackles the problem of human unity both as a historian and as a social philosopher, both as a practical statesman and as an architect of the future. He firmly believes that unity of mankind is a part of nature's eventual scheme and must come about. Referring to the inevitability of human unity he writes:

“But the blind natural forces still have power;
And the ascent is slow and long is time;
Yet shall truth grow and harmony increase.
The day shall come when men feel close and one.

Sri Aurobindo bases his belief on metaphysical as well as practical grounds. He writes, “Unity is an idea which is not at all arbitrary or unreal, for unity is the very basis of existence. The oneness that is secretly at the foundation of all things, the evolving spirit in Nature is moved to realise consciously at the top, the evolution moves through diversity, from a simple to a complex oneness.” Not only is mankind destined to achieve the unity, the present political turmoils and the necessity of their immediate solution for the sake of the survival of man also make it utterly essential, even in spite of the opposing and antagonistic conditions.

Having thus begun with the thesis that human unity will be achieved as it is evidently a part of nature's eventual scheme, Sri Aurobindo traces the different stages in this urge towards unity, enumerates the failures, the partial successes and relapses with a view to erecting the future on a firm foundation both of accurate historical knowledge and spiritual insight into the true destiny of mankind. The ideal of human unity has sought in the past to realise itself first by the development of a central authority, second by bringing about a measure of uniformity in the administration and third by achieving to a greater or lesser extent the transformation of that authority from the governing class into that of a body whose proposed function was to represent the thought and will of the whole humanity. But the working out of this ideal has had an arrested and even a perverse development in the form of two world wars. The Hague Court and the League of Nations and the Kellogg Pact all have proved powerless to bring about the permanent outlawry of war and the U.N.O. also seems to be treading a similar path of futility.

Sri Aurobindo having closely watched the development of human history, diagnosed the causes for the failures of efforts at unification and pointed out that it was because these efforts were only at the physical level which did not provide lasting bonds for unity. That is why social, political and administrative unification of mankind has not been

approved of by him as an ultimately desirable end. All external forms of unification crush human freedom, mar human variedness and result in stagnation. The State is only a clumsy convenience for our common development. It is not an organism but a machine operating without tact, taste, delicacy and intuition. It crushes human freedom and initiative and tends to uniformity, which is death and not life. A natural variation is impossible to its mechanical nature. All States and empires foster an external unity which is mechanical, lifeless and unreal. They owe their continuance not to human freewill but to a force imposed on their constituent elements or to a political convenience felt by them. The political unification is always based on force and compulsion and hence it endangers human liberty, introduces rigidity and enforces a mechanised and unprogressive system of life.

Sri Aurobindo points out that there are only two possible institutional means to effectuate the scheme of unity of mankind. First, there can be a centralised unitarian world State but he rejects it because due to its mechanical orientation it leads to stagnation. If it is a strong federal organisation, it tends to destroy the spirit of national variation and multiple self-expression. A loose confederacy, on the other hand, may lead to eruption of centrifugal forces. It cannot be permanent much less desirable unity, and may end either in centralisation or disintegration. The idea of a world state, therefore, is inadequate as it will not unite humanity nor will it hold together its hegemony. Sri Aurobindo points out that such states or empires, founded on compulsion and ruled from centre have decayed and fallen throughout history. While it is true that in the 20th century because of closer communication, freer intellectual ideas, wider emotional sympathies and advance in mutual knowledge the possibilities of political, economic and administrative unification have increased, the bond of unity is only physical which does not provide a lasting basis. Of course such a unity is better than having no unity at all, but it is not and cannot be an ultimate end. It is only worth pursuing in so far as it provides a means and a framework for a better, richer and more happy individual and collective life.

As an alternative to the physical bonds of unity, Sri Aurobindo puts forth a spiritual bond of unity which is at bottom a psychological one. He terms it as a 'spiritual religion of humanity' or 'Vedantic

nationalism' concerning the individual and the group life respectively. It consists of free groupings of mankind on the basis of their natural affinities and national sentiments. He points out that the true basis of the unification of mankind is the national unity which alone is real, internal and lively. Even if the national unity is broken up by circumstances at a particular point of time it never gets annihilated and preserves a tendency to recover and reassert itself. He firmly believes that the nation is a persistent psychological unit which nature has been busy developing throughout the world. Even there have been instances in world history where the political unity of a nation had been destroyed, yet the nation persisted and moved inevitably towards its realisation and therefore he puts forth the idea that a true unity of the human race should be achieved in the same fashion in which the unity of a nation is realised. In this unity, unlike the political unity which is unity only in outer life and body, there will be an inner unity of the soul.

Today the ideal of human unity is more or less vaguely making its way to the forefront of our consciousness. The same urge for unity, which joined the warring tribes in the larger aggregates of great nations is moving to join the nations of the earth in a world-union. The same process which worked to bring the ideal of union to the forefront of human consciousness will bring forward the ideal of world-union. That union when fully formed and realised will enjoy all the devotion once reserved to the nation, the latter not yielding in the process anything that will not be to its benefit. In it the individual and the groupings of individuals in the form of nation, society and world-union will live and be free in a diverse unity. The whole process of nature depends on a balancing and constant tendency to harmonise the two poles of life, the individual whom the whole or aggregate nourishes and the aggregate which the individual helps to constitute. Human life forms no exception to this rule. The perfect society will be that which most entirely favours the perfection of the individual and the perfection of the individual will be incomplete if it does not contribute towards the perfection of the social aggregate to which he belongs, and eventually to that of the largest possible human aggregate, the whole of a united humanity.

According to Sri Aurobindo social evolution of the human race

is necessarily a development of the relations between three constant factors, viz., 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 fulness and its expression in the outer life but this he can only accomplish through his relations with other individuals and the various kinds of communities, religious, social, cultural and political to which he belongs and to the idea and need of humanity at large. The community must seek its own fulfilment but whatever its strength of mass-consciousness and collective organisation, it can accomplish its growth only through its individuals, other communities and humanity. Mankind as a whole has at present no consciously organised common life. It has only an incoherent organisation determined more by circumstances than by human intelligence and will. And yet the idea and fact of our common human existence, nature and destiny has always exercised its strong influence on human thought and action. Nature works always through these three terms and none of them can be abolished. She starts from the individual and its aggregates, from the totality and its constituent units and creates intermediary unities between the two without which there can be no full development either of the totality or of the units. She always creates the three terms of genus, species and individual. Unlike the animal groupings, human communities are formed not so much by the instinctive herding together of a number of individuals of the same genus or species as by local association, community of interests and ideas, and these limits tend always to be overcome in the widening of human thoughts and sympathies brought about by the closer intermingling of races, nations and cultures, thus displaying a unity in diversity. Thus the ultimate aim of nature is to develop the individuals to their fullest capacity and also all the communities to the fullest expression of that many-sided potentiality which their differences are created to express, and finally to evolve a full and integrally united life of mankind.

Sri Aurobindo warns us that 'unity the race moves towards and must one day realise' but unity should not be confused with uniformity. Uniformity is not the law of life. Life exists by diversity. Existence is only one in its essence and totality is its play. It is neces-

sarily multiform. Absolute uniformity would mean cessation of life. Diversity is essential for power and fruitfulness of life, unity is necessary for its order, arrangement and stability. Unity we must aspire for but not uniformity. The vigour of the pulse of life is measured by the richness of the diversities it creates. If man could realise a perfect spiritual unity, no sort of uniformity would be necessary, for the utmost play of diversity would be securely possible on that foundation.

Referring to the nature of the ideas of human unity Sri Aurobindo writes that its realisation would mean that the problem of human unity would be approached at once on a rational and sound moral basis. It would be a recognition, on the one side, of the right of all natural groupings of man to live and to be themselves, on the other, an adequate sense of the need for order, help and a mutual participation in a common life of the united human race.

The unified progress of mankind would thus be realised by a general principle of interchange and assimilation between individual and individual, and again between individual and community, between community and community and again between smaller community and the totality of mankind, between the common life and consciousness of mankind and its freely developing communal and individual constituents.

As a matter of fact although this interchange is what nature even now contrives to bring about, life is far from being governed by such principle of free and harmonious mutuality. There is struggle, an opposition of ideas, impulses and interests, an attempt of each to profit by various kinds of wars on the others etc. This is the aspect of life which humanity in its highest thought and aspiration knows that it has to transcend but has either not yet discovered the right means or else has not had the force to apply it.

In spite of the failures of mankind to achieve a desirable unity Sri Aurobindo does not feel despaired because he firmly believes that the unity of mankind is a part of nature's eventual scheme and must come about. Only it must be under other conditions and with safeguards which will keep the race intact in the roots of its vitality. The only way to achieve a true social perfection and harmony lies through a deep and profound spiritualised understanding of the individuals

and the communities culminating in spiritualised humanity, united in the internal consciousness by world brotherhood. Sri Aurobindo therefore taught the gospel of one world and inner oneness of man which can be called universalised nationalism. He calls it political Vedantism. He talks of Swadharma of each nation in the fashion of the *Gita's* ideal of Swadharma of each individual.

This religion of humanity has to make its home in the hearts of each and every individual and has to be a rule of life. Unless it becomes practically effective it cannot prevail over its principal enemy which is egoism, the egoism of the individual, of the class and the nation. Unless this egoism is won over, one cannot attain the spirit of universal brotherhood, which alone is the basis of the ideal of human unity. This brotherhood exists only in the soul and by the soul and it can exist by nothing else, for it is not a matter of physical kinship or of vital association or of intellectual agreement. It is the realisation of divinity in every man. There cannot be the realisation of equality of all men unless there is the recognition of the same soul and the same godhead in all beings. It is the same divine vision which Sri Krishna demanded of Arjuna in the *Gita* and which Sri Aurobindo also experienced in the Alipore Jail. Such a vision or cosmic consciousness alone can provide the basis for a religion of humanity or an equivalent sentiment, much more powerful, explicit and universal than the nationalist's religion.

All liberty, individual, national, religious, social and ethical takes its ground upon this fundamental principle of our existence. 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 fully our harmony with our environment. Order and not artificial regulation is the law of life, and the soundest order is that which comes from within, as the result of a nature that has discovered and found its own law and the law of its relations with others. Therefore the truest order is that which is founded on the greatest possible liberty, for liberty is at once the condition of self-finding as well as vigorous variation. Sri Aurobindo points out that nature secures variation by division into groups and insists on liberty by the force of individuality in the members of the group. Therefore the unity of the human race to be entirely sound and in consonance with the deepest laws

of life must be founded on free groupings. The dangers and disadvantages of liberty, the disorder, strife, waste and confusion to which its wrong use leads are indeed obvious. But they arise from absence or defect of the sense of unity between individual and individual, community and community, which pushes them to assert themselves at the expense of each other instead of growing by mutual help. If a real, a spiritual and psychological unity were effectuated, liberty would have no perils and disadvantages. This is an ideal which it is certainly impossible to realise under the present conditions or perhaps in any near future of the human race, but it is an ideal which ought to be kept in view, for the more we can approximate to it the more we shall be on the right path.

Regarding the requirements of human unity, Sri Aurobindo declares that until the average and the aggregate man, becomes more of an intellectual, moral and spiritual being and less predominantly a vital and emotional half-reasoning human animal there cannot be any basis for lasting human unity. To conclude in his own words:-
"The ideal of human unity would be no longer an unfulfilled ideal but an accomplished fact and its preservation given into the charge of the united human peoples. Its future destiny would lie on the needs of the gods and if the gods have a use for the continued existence of the race, may be left to lie there safe."

RAJNI CHHABRA

A MENTAL PATTERN FOR THE PLANET¹

Far I dipt into the future, far as the human eye could see,
Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonders that
would be;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly
bales;

Heard the heavens filled with shouting, and there rained a
ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing
warm,
With the standards of the people plunging thro' the thunder-
storm;

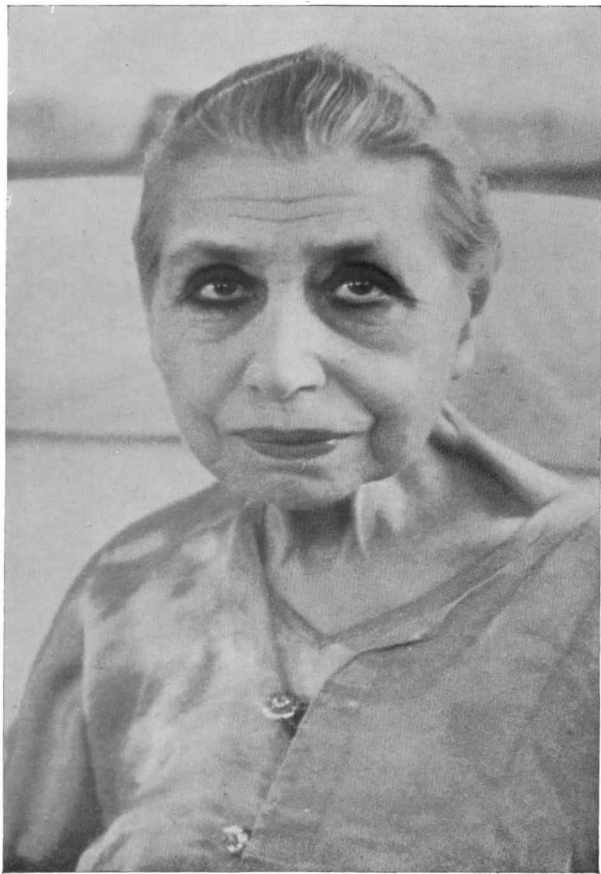
Till the war-drum throb'd no longer, and the battle-flags
were furl'd
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm
in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.

I. PLANNING : SUBJECTIVE AND OBJECTIVE

TODAY man's conception of man is undergoing a major change. Out of the new concept of man will emerge the neotypal idea that will shape our new culture. In the world that is now in process, man is learning to think of himself, not in egoistic terms as an absolute entity, but as a part of a single, planetary being, with

¹ The present article constitutes Chapter One of the author's forthcoming book, *Cosmic Humanism and World Unity*, to be published this next year by Gordon & Breach Publ. Co., New York and London.



the human race developing as the tip-end of the vast brain-nerve system of animate nature. Subtly united with his cosmic environment, man is moving toward a higher bio-social integration in which radio and television and satellite hook-ups appear as precursors of the circulatory processes of the emerging giant earth organism. Such, perhaps, is the new concept of humankind that man is framing of himself.

This conception not only adds a novel dimension to reality — it presents us also with a unique view of the meaning of history. This theory, as it unfolds, will reveal the “cross action” of the “magnetic moments” of human evolution — the pattern for the gradual emergence of the giant organism of which mankind is the developing cerebral cortex. In a sense, the embryonic form of this super-organism is the morphogenetic field of *GAEA* — Mother Earth, the first born of Chaos, according to Greek mythology — now coming into full consciousness.

According to the view here striving to become articulate, the meaning of history is to be found in the onward and upward spiral towards the appearance of something completely new in social evolution: the development of a “specific organ of civilization” for the mobilizing of our energies and the unification of our social purposes. In a word, *human DNAs need to put together a marvelous new organ, the World Sensorium*. All this is required if man is to give human evolution meaning, thrust, and a sense of direction.

There is no road back. We must face the future. Perhaps we are too timid. As William James once put it, men are continually putting themselves in prison. The tremendous shocks to human consciousness in the coming years will find us unprepared, unless we learn that our plans for the future must keep men’s minds open to guided change. Today we fumble because we lack vision. And because we lack creative imagination, there is still much defeatism in the world, and we search for methods to boost the sagging “morale” of an exhausted humanity.

The truth is that, much as we talk about it, we have not thoroughly analysed the nature of morale. In the long run there is only one secure morale — the morale of enlightenment. This morale is not the phony stuff of the military mentality, nor the morale of the clergyman’s

incantations, nor yet the morale of the politician's promise of economic abundance. To build the morale of a planetary humanism — a super-national morale — requires time, and already the time is short for the job we have to do.

According to the theory of a cosmic humanism, the darkening clouds of social disaster curving over the great mass fields of the human drama cannot be dispelled until we synthesize a world outlook in which religion, science, art, and philosophy are coordinated with economic-political mechanisms to give common human life meaning and direction.

II. THE MORALE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

The cultural synthesis we have just referred to must provide a time-binding unification of the "magnetic moments" of history. The morale of enlightenment — planetism and global thinking — always seeks the threads of historical continuity: it recalls that at least twenty-five hundred years ago Mu-ti said, "Let one love another as one's self; let a nation love another as its own. Let a sovereign love his subjects as himself." This ethics, enunciated in the religion and the philosophy of the ancient East, was restated centuries later in the ethics of Jesus, wherein the divinity in man is transformed into the symbol, "The Father," and this, as the English critic Fausset realized, means "*all the potentialities of the past.*"

Today the great masses of humanity no longer have a holding ground in the form of living memory. The "Christian" nations will hold on to Christmas; but then — in the absence of the GREAT VISION — there must eventually come the tidal downsweep, after which no one will listen to anyone, and we will have a "semantic suicide."

III. PLANETARY INTEGRATIONS

What we suffer from is a disintegration of culture arising from the fact that men have been made sick by too much revolving around their egocentric axes. Today the only axis worthy of its pivots is a global axis centered in a cosmic humanism. What the world needs

are virtuosi who can evoke the manipulative genius of all mankind. If someone with creative vision could come along and dissolve old habits of thought, free men from their solidified mental patterns, he could emancipate the world from the financial and political prisons of our enslaved society.

If we could form the GREAT VISION, there could be a tremendous uprush to the cosmic humanism idea—the group upsurge to social creativity and unfoldment. The central difficulty with past humanisms is that they have tried to put an immensely simple message into WORDS, whereas such a message can best be written into the choreography of a universal picture language. The job is to find a layout, a picture-kinesis basis, so simple and so huge that it is seeable by anyone who has mastered the movies or can punch a radio-television panel. If it were possible to use the full play of international techniques made possible by a United Nations Communications Satellite System (for example, *The Prometheus-Krishna Project*), an all-world drama could lift up the inner lives of peoples to their own transfiguration by sheer evocation of spiritual powers from within.

Our creative semanticists have said that “a magnificent humanity awaits upon a magnificent language”; but this language must be able to shrink all knowledge so that it can be put on an all-history, all-world basis for invariant transfer across the social wholes. Professor H. N. Wieman and Harold Rugg have tried to envisage a language whose devising shall constitute the major task of our great transition. In our topology of humanity this appears as a language of motion — a psycho-social motion or spiritual traveling. When this new language medium is created the energy of dynamic humanism — a group sublimation — will stream happily on its way, secure in the knowledge of the BIG IDEA behind it all.

IV. ORTHOSYNTHESIS AND SPHERICAL HARMONICS

This is a methodization for democracy whereby man may know what to yield to and what to resist, producing peaceful change and resolving the mountain-molehill patterns existing throughout lifespace as directed vectors of change. People have failed to realize that deve-

lopments in theoretical physics, in psychical research, in semantics, are as compulsive as industrial, economic and political events — and indeed sometimes accelerate them — so that the new culture perforce must be a social-semantic no less than an economic-political unification.

The world that is coming towards us is one that will provide a maximum of freedom from special linguistic frameworks. Mental shackles are forged by verbal habits, and a higher mental-verbal world will come with a broadening language-logical emancipation. In Indo-European civilization the basic structure has provided a common logic, a limited two-valued logic of “true” and “false.” All “Aryan” tongues are akin, and anyone born to one, such as English or French, is already cousin to another of the same family. But certain types of Oriental thought were never thus restricted to the *either-or* logic, and have in this respect possessed a greater measure of freedom from limitation.

But what is to be the new invariant symbolism, free from special linguistic frameworks? It is a curious fact that thus far mathematical symbolism and musical scoring are the only international “languages” that Western civilization has developed, and this suggests that perhaps music promises to satisfy better than any other medium the requirements of a universal aesthetic language. This is especially important if the object of the study of science, the Cosmos, and the object of emotional apprehension, music, turn out to be applications of a more fundamental science of mathematical logic, the study of abstract ordersystems.

An interesting application of this idea is afforded by the study of what Pythagoras, in the days of ancient Greek culture, called the “music of the spheres,” but which in modern thought is studied under the general heading of *spherical harmonics*. For our part, we would like to see included in this our favourite musical-mathematical concept of the *music logarithmic spiral*. In spherical harmonics one studies how functions are spread over spherical surfaces. The result, in some cases, may look like a globe’s lines of latitude and longitude — in general, symmetrical patterns. This method not only has wide applications in electricity, but, as will someday appear, has possibilities of development through the treatment of electromagnetic fields of

force at work in biological and other super-physical phenomena.

V. ENERGY FIELDS AND GLOBAL SEMANTICS

The formative figures of the future will be creative semantists. The problem of global semantics — that of social communication across the world-whole, speaking to all races and nations as one — is bound up with the problem of developing a technique for releasing one of those great energy-burstings, or social orgasms, necessary to the creation of a new World Form. This, we believe, is the problem of mobilising human energies and guiding them constructively through the head-heart-hand syntheses. Surely the endless stirrings of today are symptomatic of the accumulation of the tremendous emotional reserves of humankind. They are the forerunners either of a sadistic destruction of all existing forms, or the prelude to the coming into being of some giant form of the future. Which it is to be, man must decide.

To attain this new form, what is needed is wave on wave of "great striking acts" — energy-bursts that sweep over walls and tunnel through barriers and give history a new perspective. We must learn how to muster an authority capable of casting a spell over humanity and creating a new design for planetary existence. We are approaching the climax for which we have been building a rich memory bank and resources.

As an alternative to Marxism, we propose a more futuristic orientation — the theory of planetary humanism. Our view is that the coming universal civilization will have to fuse many of the features of a variety of political, economic, and religious systems. In this planetary culture the religions and the philosophies of the Orient will have their contributions to make. In its functioning the World Sensorium, the formal organ of integration for this planetary civilization, will transcend many of our present fragmented social mechanisms and concepts. For the present, our basic problem is that of envisaging the projective geometry capable of producing the synthesis of psychobiological forces and social vectors. This is also, and more fundamentally, a matter of forming an imaginary map of a territory-to-be.

The Cosmic Humanists believe that they have some of the im-

portant pieces of this map. Their formulations, they hope, are a portent of the highly effective idealism that men must have, if the presently non-existent territory is to be brought into the domain of social reality. While this view takes as its point of departure a map of an actual territory, and in that sense rests upon a factual world as this is now revealed by science, it soon leaves the world as it is and moves into the world of ideals as sought-for realities. Cosmic Humanism seeks to create a space-time drama of epic proportions which shall embody and express the social analogue of Minkowski's space-time continuum in the geometry of a four-dimensional matrix. But Cosmic Humanism finds a need for higher meta-dimensional realities and concepts.

In brief, just as the physicist now interprets physical events in terms of field structures curling the space-time continuum, so in our psycho-dynamics social adjustments, like spatio-temporal relations, are also held to express curvature; no human act is isolated — it, too, is a part of a *Psi*-field continuum and moves back upon itself through a kind of social karma. Following this conception, Cosmic Humanism seeks to discover those relations which, like public time, are transposable across the social whole, which in the broadest context is Humanity in its collective unity.

VI. THE SPIRAL OF HISTORY

The future of man rests with man in relation to cosmic guiding fields, and when man have mastered the art of bending the curve of the field continuum into the world-encircling spiral of a time-binding synthesis, he will, at long last, have brought into being the higher dimension of a giant world organism, the emergent World Sensorium that we shall be studying in the following chapters. To bring into being this world organism requires not only an ecstatic urge — an energetic streaming as a form-creating social organism — but it requires also intelligent planetary planning to guide the embryological development of the organism-to-be. We repeat : in order to attain planetary goodness and beauty, we need VISION, a vision so wide and so compelling that it transcends all narrow limitations and triumphs over all separatist tendencies.

When we get that vision, and the new balance of forces expressive of that wisdom, we shall have the psychological revolution to which all history is the build up. Once the consciousness of universal relationships is planetarily established, we shall find that the idea of a common destiny for all mankind is no mere phantasy of wishful thinking, but a legitimate objective of human aspiration. Indeed, the vision already seems to have been proclaimed by Alfred Lord Tennyson in his famous lines in Locksley Hall (as quoted at this chapter's head), where, like Walt Whitman's bard "who walks in advance," the poet paints a vision of the future.

Tennyson's preview of the kindly earth resting under the reign of universal law will demand immense constructive work for its consummation. But surely one important step in the direction of the attainment of the "parliament of man" is a psychological revolution to sublimate and transmute the technological revolution. This is the task of the new alchemy. If history is to have any meaning at all, we humans must project creatively the curve of biocosmic evolution and weave the fabric of a higher consciousness. Man's greatest mission is to salvage the pageant of history from the dark domain of frustration and insanity and give history a time-planning purpose—and this can be done only by cross-webbing the cultures of the peoples of the earth into the Federation of the World. How the globe's geophysical field-reversals have assisted in the weaving of the woof and the warp of the evolving patterns that are the "magnetic moments" is the problem and the challenge of our study. The meaning of history is not "writ in the heavens" — completely — it is also the lure of the "one, far-off divine event" toward which our own spinning galaxy is moving in time's logarithmic music spiral.

This would embody the Ideal of Human Unity as Sri Aurobindo envisioned it and help bring to fruition the objectives of Auroville as an international community.

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THE SECRET OF THE VEDA

VEDA IN INDIAN TRADITION

SRI Aurobindo, it may be remembered, began the *Arya* volumes with a series of essays on "The Secret of the Veda" along with those on "The Life Divine". This, one may venture to suggest, was no mere coincidence. A divine life on earth is the distant promise contained as in a seed in the cryptic verses of the Veda; to reveal their secret was thus a necessity for the fulfilment of the promise.

Veda has been revered in Indian tradition, with certain notable exceptions as in the case of the Buddhists, the Jains and the materialists, as revealed scripture, *śruti*, the repository of the highest wisdom attainable by man. The word itself is derived from a root, *vid*, which means both to know and to find or obtain. Veda is thus knowledge, the supreme knowledge of God and man and the world; it is also the means to obtain whatever man desires, in this world and the next, spiritual gains or material riches and well-being.

It is this double aspect of the Vedic hymns, the *mantra*, that led the ancient Indian students of the Veda to make a distinction between Jnanakanda and Karmakanda, its power for knowledge and its efficacy in action; this corresponds in fact to the *double entendre* almost always implied at least in the hymns of the Rigveda, the *śruti par excellence*. The Rishis or seers of the hymns, as some of them expressly declare in the Veda itself, meant them to be and used them as hymns of prayer and God-attraction, hymns of praise and God-affirmation, hymns of God-attainment and self-expression. At the same time, the Rishi was also the priest and officiant in the public sacrifices of Vedic times and his hymns were meant to be sung or chanted as part of the Vedic ritual.

We may therefore easily surmise that the hymn served a double purpose: one, the spiritual progress of the seer himself or of his descendant and disciple whom he chose to initiate into its secret, and two, the obtaining of the material gains for which the ritual of the external sacrifice was gone through; *jñāna* and *karma*, spiritual enlightenment and ritual act, were both fulfilled through the *mantra*. What these two implied in their actual content we shall see as we

proceed. Here it may suffice to say that owing to the progressive obscuration of the esoteric sense, — it was difficult enough in the beginning and became almost unseizable when the meaning of the symbols in which it was couched ceased to be intelligible owing to the legend and myth in which it came to be encrusted as early as the age of the Brahmanas, — the *mantra* came to be used exclusively for the ritual act and for obtaining material rather than spiritual riches, and Veda came to be regarded exclusively as Karmakanda. This “secularisation” of the sacred ancient hymnal became complete when the medieval commentator Sayana and the modern scholars from the West, with their vast array of verbal scholarship and little insight into things spiritual set the seal of finality on the meaning of the Veda.

But in spite of it all, the ancient tradition that the Veda contained sacred lore of the highest import persisted. Something of its secret was revealed to Swami Dayananda who founded a new religious order in the second half of the 19th century, the Arya Samaj, on the basis of what he could recover of the true Veda. It was left to Sri Aurobindo, combining in himself the highest spiritual attainment with a vast Sanskrit and classical European scholarship, to bring out the entire sense of the Veda, in its double aspect of *jñāna* and *karma*, understanding the terms in their widest connotation. We shall follow Sri Aurobindo giving here his main findings, and confine ourselves primarily to the inner esoteric sense of the Veda. As this esoteric sense is the dominant *motif* of the Rigveda, we shall in the main be referring to this particular compilation when using the more generic term; our justification will be that the other Samhitas, the Samaveda, the Atharvaveda and the Yajurveda, either derive their esoteric substance almost entirely from the Rigveda — this is the case of the Samaveda, — or else base themselves on the same body of spiritual or occult knowledge as the Rigveda.

As we shall see, Veda is the fruit of a long epoch of inner, spiritual seeking, confined, as was natural to expect at that early stage of human development, to a small élite, whose utterances, the fruit of this seeking, are recorded and have come down to us almost unaltered in metrical forms of great poetic merit or in rhythmic prose (as in the Yajurveda and parts of the Atharvaveda), known to Indian tradition as *mantras*. The Vedic Mantra is not a “spell” or magic formula. It

is, as the seers themselves describe it, — and we have to presume that they knew what they were talking about — a spontaneous utterance swelling up from the heart and taking shape in the mind; it is born of an inner revelation or inspiration, something intuitive and no construction of the thinking mind. And it is charged with power; the sound itself produces vibrations in the inner subjective world of the hearer as well as in the world of material forms.

VEDA IN THE MODERN VIEW

Veda, according to modern scholars, is the record of a primitive mentality, poor in knowledge, superstitious and full of awe for the vast Unknown that surrounds man, anxious to propitiate through prayer and praise and a complex ritual of sacrificial worship the Powers of the physical world, the Sun, Moon, Heaven and Earth, Fire, Wind, Rain and Storm, the Sacred Rivers and a number of other gods and goddesses who were supposed to preside over the workings of Nature. The boons that were demanded of these deities were purely material blessings, such as plenty of cows, horses, fighting men, sons, food, wealth of all kinds, protection, victory in battle, the rain of heaven, the free flowing of the seven rivers of the Punjab where it is supposed the scene was originally laid. The cult of the sacrifice dominated the scene. The people for whom the Veda was composed by their priests to be used as a prayer book for the sacrificial rites, had entered the Punjab through the north-western passes; they were an "Aryan" people kin in language and race with other such people whose descendants the Romans, the Greeks and the Persians were.

Here in India they found themselves face to face with a much more highly developed civilisation, the creation of Dravidians who were gradually driven by the Aryan onslaught beyond the Vindhya hills into the South. These Dravidians were black-skinned people whom the fair-skinned Aryan despised as slaves or thieves, *dāsa*, *dasyu*. It was to aid them in their constant war against these indigenous inhabitants of India that the Aryans invoked the aid of one of their principal gods, Indra, who would smite the enemy with his weapons, recover for the Aryan worshipper his cattle stolen by the

Dasyu, wage war against the strongly fortified cities of the Dasa. It was partly in order to make their life and possessions safe against the enemy that the magician cast his spell, the medicine-man used his mumbo-jumbo, of which the Atharvaveda is full.

The Aryan people lived in village or farm, away from the Dravidian cities. They tilled the soil, tended their flocks of cattle, sheep and other domestic animals; the cow and the bull were their most precious possessions. They had developed handicrafts of sorts of which a long list is to be found in the Yajurveda, and knew some barter and trade; it is even suggested they could navigate the sea. Their political life was still in the tribal stage, with an elective kingship and free participation by all freemen of the tribe who also formed the hosts in war. Warfare was a constant feature of this political life, and the Atharvaveda leaves us in no doubt that the wars could be brutal enough with no quarters given to the defeated foe. Social relationships were based on certain well-recognised standards; the woman enjoyed a position of near-equality with men; and caste had not yet settled into shape. Life was joyous and for the most part quite uninhibited as many of the similies used in the Rigveda would go to show. In sum, the social institutions were in a state of fluidity and allowed a great freedom.

Of the high things of the spirit, there is little evidence according to the scholars, but for some isolated speculations in the later portions of the Rigveda and Atharvaveda. It is even suggested in some quarters that these may have been borrowed from the civilised Dravidians. The persistent Indian tradition that Veda is the repository of the highest knowledge, that it is *śruti*, revealed scripture, must in this view be dismissed as pure legend and moonshine.

But it is just possible that the meaning of the Veda has not been grasped by the moderns in its entirety; it is in fact admitted on all hands that many passages in the Rigveda are not fully understood. We need not be surprised at this confession after a hundred years of painstaking study by a galaxy of acute minds. For, as the Veda itself says, it speaks "secret words, seer-wisdoms that speak out their sense to the seer", *ninyā vacāmsi, nivacanā kavaye kāvyāni* (Rigveda IV.3.16). The *mantra* which the Rishi or *kavi* of the Veda utters is described by one of them as existing in the supreme Ether "in which all the gods

are seated”, and he adds, “one who knows not That, what shall he do with the Rik” (*Ibid.* I. 164. 39).

How for an instance are we to understand verses like these (in *Rigveda* IV, 58. 1, 5) which given their literal meaning would read as follows: “a honeyed wave climbs up from the ocean, ... that wave is the secret name of immortality.... Streams of clarified butter (*ghṛta*) move from the heart-ocean; penned by the enemy in a hundred enclosures they cannot be seen”. Obviously, they do not mean that a wave or flood of wine comes mounting up out of the salt water of the Indian Ocean or even from the fresh water of a Punjab river and that this water is the secret name for clarified butter. Nor does the next verse suggest that rivers of ghee or of water either, rising from the heart-ocean or any ocean were caught on their way by the wicked Dravidians and shut up in a hundred pens so that the Aryans could not even catch a glimpse of them.

We may, in spite of the incongruities implied in the current interpretation of the Veda, — and Sayana the great medieval commentator has his full share of absurdities which in fact drove the modern European scholars to find their own meaning in the Veda based on philology, comparative religion and mythology, — accept in part the modern interpretation of Veda. Its aim was to use the Veda as the earliest available source book for social anthropology, a study of primitive man in his early historical setting. It must be conceded that the modern interpreters, no less than Sayana, have succeeded in their respective aims to a remarkable degree; for even though they have both missed the real purport of the Veda, the picture of primitive society reflected in the Veda which they so painstakingly present is on the whole a fairly accurate picture, in spite of certain glaring defects.

“The mass of men at the time, it is quite evident”, suggests Sri Aurobindo, “lived entirely on the material plane, worshipped the Godheads of material Nature, sought from them entirely material objects.”¹ This may not be palatable for those among us who would like to believe that the Vedic Age was the glorious Satya Yuga of ancient tradition; it was certainly not so if we consider only the life of the common man. It is to the credit of modern scholarship to have brought out the real facts, whatever be its misplacement of emphasis. But here too, one or two points need elaboration, in regard to the

religious attitudes of the Vedic peoples. In the first place, fear played but a small part in their religion; the only god the Vedic worshipper feared was Rudra, with the rest he was on very friendly terms. As Sri Aurobindo observes, "over it all there was the "Aryan light", a confidence and joy and a happy, equal friendliness with the Gods which the Aryan brought with him into the world..."² And secondly, even in this "primitive" form of religion, there were elements that prepared the masses for a higher stage of development. For example, the Rishis took particular care to train them "to develop their ethical nature, to turn towards some initial development of their psychic being, to conceive the idea of a knowledge and truth other than that of the physical life and to admit even a first conception of some greater spiritual Reality which was the ultimate object of human worship or aspiration. This religious and moral force was the highest reach of the external cult and the most that could be understood or followed by the mass of the people."³

The most glaring defect from which the modern interpretation of Veda suffers, apart from its total want of appreciation of the esoteric or mystic element, is the theory of an "Aryan" invasion of a Dravidian India as the starting-point of the Vedic lore. This theory is now beginning to be discounted in India, though still in a very hesitating manner because of the array of a seemingly indisputable mass of philological evidence put forward in its support. We cannot here enter into a full discussion of the points involved. It may however be pertinent to observe with Sri Aurobindo that "the philologist has nothing to do with ethnology. The philologist has nothing to do with sociology, anthropology and archaeology. His sole business is or ought to be with the history of words and of the association of ideas with the sound forms which they represent."⁴ History must be based on verifiable facts, not on conjectures, and philology is still for the most part a conjectural "science".

The only certain fact that emerges from the Veda is that there were at the time two distinct types of culture and religion, which may for the sake of convenience be described respectively as "Aryan" and "Non-Aryan", without attaching any ethnic significance to the terms.

"The one thing that seems fairly established," says Sri Aurobindo in this connection, in an article written for the *Arya* in 1915-16, "is

that there were at least two types of culture in ancient India, the "Aryan" occupying the Punjab and Northern and Central India, Afghanistan and perhaps Persia and distinguished in its cult by the symbols of the Sun, the Fire and the Soma sacrifice, and the non-Aryan occupying the East, South and West, the nature of which it is quite impossible to restore from the scattered hints which are all we possess."⁵ Perhaps one may hazard a guess that the non-Aryan type of culture was that represented by the subsequent archaeological finds at Mohenjodaro and Harappa in the West and latterly in the East (Buxar District of Bihar) and some places in the South. "We may," adds Sri Aurobindo, "if we like, suppose that there was a struggle between two different cults in India and that the Rishis took their images from the physical struggle between the human representatives of these cults and applied them to the spiritual conflict, just as they employed the other details of their physical life to symbolise the spiritual sacrifice, the spiritual wealth, the spiritual battle and journey."⁶

"It is urged that the Dasyus are described as black of skin and noseless, in opposition to the fair and high-nosed Aryans. But the former distinction is certainly applied to the Aryan Gods and the Dasa Powers in the sense of light and darkness, and the word *anasa* does not mean noseless. [What it means in fact is 'devoid of life or power']. ...Even if it did, it would be wholly inapplicable to the Dravidian races; for the southern, nose can give as good an account of itself as any 'Aryan' proboscis."⁷ The distinction between Aryan and un-Aryan on which so much has been built, we may conclude with Sri Aurobindo, represents not a racial but a cultural difference.

THE RISHI AND HIS ASPIRATION

Indian tradition ascribes the hymns of the Veda to men (there are some women too) whom they call Rishi. Many stories are told in the Great Epics and in the Puranas about some of these Rishis and their prowess, as of their failings. About three hundred names have come down in the traditional lists of the authors of the Vedic hymns.

What does the Veda say about the Rishi? He is known as *kavi* Seer-poet. The two powers of the Rishi, the Kavi, the Seer of the Truth, are *ṛṣṭi* and *śruti*, truth-vision and truth-hearing: *ṛṣayah*

satyaśrutah, says a text.⁸ “*Kavi*”, as Sri Aurobindo explains, “means possessed of the Truth-consciousness and using its faculties of vision, inspiration, intuition, discrimination.”⁹

To what purpose these powers were applied we shall best understand if we keep in mind the aim of the Mystics and the ancient Mysteries everywhere, in Egypt, and Chaldea, in Persia and in Greece as in India. “The preoccupation of the Mystics was with self-knowledge and a profounder world-knowledge; they found out that in man there was a deeper self and inner being behind the surface of the outward physical man, which it was his highest business to discover and know.... They found also a Truth, a Reality behind the outward aspects of the universe and to discover, follow, realise this Truth was their great aspiration.”¹⁰

“The superconscient, the sea of the subconscious, the life of the living being between the two, — this is the Vedic idea of existence.”¹¹ Our ordinary unilluminated sense-activities of life have their roots in the vast subconscious. The whole struggle of man is to replace this action by the luminous working of mind and life which comes from above through the mental existence. “The Vedic idea was that the subconscious darkness and the ordinary life of ignorance held concealed in it all that belongs to the divine life and that these secret riches must be recovered first by destroying the impenitent powers of ignorance and then by possessing the lower life subjected to the higher.”¹² The conquest of the divine Truth, the superconscient world of Swar, is the real aim of the Vedic Rishis and the subject of their hymns. The two requisites on which the Vedic Rishis always insist are Light and Power, the Light of the Truth working in the knowledge, the Power of the Truth working in the effective enlightened will.¹³

“The life of man is represented as a sacrifice to the gods, a journey sometimes figured as a crossing of dangerous waters, sometimes as an ascent from level to level of the hill of being,... But the journey, if principally of the nature of a quest, the quest of the hidden light, becomes also by the opposition of the powers of darkness an expedition and a battle.... This journey or march proceeds along the path discovered by Sarama, the hound of heaven, the path of the Truth, *ṛtasya panthāḥ*, the great path, *mahas pathaḥ*, which leads to the

realms of the Truth.... And it is effected by the Soma-wine and the sacred Word."¹⁴

At every stage of the journey, the Gods are invoked, their protection sought, their help obtained through the offering of all that the seeker has through the spontaneous utterance of his soul's deepest needs, by the power of the *mantra*. For it is the Gods who effect the victory for man, and pour on him the endless bounties of the spiritual realms. Thus understood, "the whole Rigveda is a triumph-chant of the powers of Light."¹⁵

(To be continued)

SANAT K. BANERJI

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- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 265.

REVIEW

Integral Education: Pub. Integral Education Society, Bhubaneswar. *Ed. Dr. R. N. Pani.*

“AN integral education which could, with some variations, be adapted to all the nations of the world, must bring back the legitimate authority of the Spirit over a matter fully developed and utilised.” Basing itself upon this Message of the Mother, the Integral Education Society at Bhubaneswar has commenced its mission to give a new direction to educational change and educational development. The first number of their Quarterly before us, a bilingual journal (English and Oriya), assembles in its pages some of the key-writings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo on the true foundation of education, the right object of education and the science of living. In this approach the whole of life is considered an education, the training given in the classroom being only concerned with laying the right base for the development of the body, life, mind and soul of the individual. There are papers dwelling upon the course of studies followed in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram where this system is being perfected. Naturally the system developed at the Ashram is not expected to be copied in all details in every place outside. The necessary adaptations have to be made in keeping with the local conditions, state of development of the general life etc. It is also to be noted that this approach does not reject the high points of other systems but assimilates them in its wide scheme and adds more values to it keeping in mind the fuller destiny of man as the bridge between the Spirit and Matter.

This inaugural number of the journal makes a very good beginning in projecting the integral vision of new Education.

M. P. PANDIT



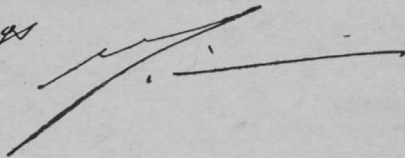
The Advent

The only hope for future is
in a change of man's consciousness,
and the change is bound to come

But it is left to the men to
decide if they will collaborate for this
change or if it will have to be enforced
upon them by the power of crashing
circumstances.

So, wake up and collaborate!

blessings



The ADVENT

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And all grows beautiful because Thou art.
Sri Aurobindo

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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

I

A CANADIAN QUESTION

It is written in A Practical Guide to Integral Yoga¹ on page 179:

“The physical nearness to the Mother is indispensable for the fullness of the sadhana on the physical plane. Transformation of the physical and external being is not possible otherwise.”

My question is: How are we to interpret these words in the light of the Mother's recent passing? Does this mean that a full transformation is no longer possible to the aspirant? Or has discipleship on the material level in the path of the Integral Yoga come to an end?

¹ Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, 1970

ANSWER:

OBVIOUSLY, the immediate programme of a physical transformation is postponed — not cancelled.

But what we have been given is not less of a miracle. Mother has prepared for us her new body in the inner world, in the subtle physical which is as living and tangible as her physical body even though not as concrete. In one of her last Notes¹ she refers to this new transformed body and she describes it as presented to her vision. That body she has built up in her long arduous labours, built up in a complete form and left with us and with humanity.

This new body of hers, prepared behind the material curtain, she sought to infuse into the material form, even press into it or force into it this new element; but Matter and man's physical nature were not yet ready: Earth still considered it as an intrusion, as something foreign. The material casing broke down in consequence — perhaps not broke down, rather broke through; but that must be another story.

But it is there living and glorious in its beauty and power and is still at work within us, and around us in the world, incessantly, towards the final consummation of its material embodiment.

What is expected of us is to see this golden Mother within us and try to become, as she always wanted, her golden children, within and without.

Sri Aurobindo speaks of an inner mind, an inner vital, an inner physical. Only the other day the passage was read out at the playground-meditation.² The golden body, the new body, is formed out of an inner mind, an inner vital and an inner physical, renewed and reshaped. We can show our love for her, requite the debt that we owe to her Grace by admitting her Presence into our physical being and allowing her to do the work she has undertaken to do.

(2)

For us now it is time to make amends for the lapses of

¹ Notes on the Way: Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education — August 1972 (Notes on 25-3-72).

² Sri Aurobindo: *Letters on Yoga*, (Cent. Ed.), Vol. 22, pp. 307-8.

the past — there were lapses, indeed, grievous lapses. So long her physical body was our protection; we did not suffer the full consequences of our Karma because her body acted as buffer: it broke the force of the impact of the karma and reduced its evil effects to a minimum. Her body bore our burden and relieved us of the misery otherwise due to us. Mankind, the world even, does not know the saving Grace that her material frame brought to them. They would have gone down to destruction and dissolution but for the presence of the Divine Body.

The world has survived, mankind has an assured future, that is the work done by her body. It aimed at a little more, to show us something of the concrete form of the future, but evidently that was not to be, because something from us also, from the world and mankind, some helping hand in the labour was needed — we remember her ringing words: “Si l’humanité consentait à être spiritualisée”¹ — well, that is the minimum, that minimum was also not granted to her body. Her body was made so easily available to all without any trouble and effort on our part that we lost all sense of the precious things brought to us, brought to our very door. We did not know how to make use of it and have the true benefit out of it. Many a time she did say something to us to that effect regretfully, we wasted a treasure like the pampered prodigal son.

It is regrettable but she has left no cause for our regret. She has left with us the true source of her protective power, her living Consciousness concretised in the earth’s atmosphere, in the personal atmosphere of each one of us. We have only to open our grateful eyes and see it. The ladder has been taken away, but she has come nearer to us and a little uplift will re-place us within her arms.

Since we have no longer the support of her body on which we depended almost exclusively, we are compelled to seek the true support, the support of her consciousness, the inner reality — her inner presence, her living Person within — which her body represented, whose acquaintance we were not careful enough to cultivate. Now we are thrown upon the only alternative available. The way will be arduous; we could have much more easily mounted up the ladder of consciousness with the aid of her body, almost playfully like chil-

¹ “If only mankind consented to be spiritualised.”

dren. Now a little bit of austerity will be needed to go on our own, the austerity will be needed to bring our external life and physical consciousness in line with her own consciousness, to prepare them, to make them ready. Her material body offered an unconditional help and protection, now all that will be conditional — conditional upon our willing cooperation, our happy and conscious collaboration — of course the Grace will be always there. Once she asked us point-blank, for the crisis was upon us — Are you ready? Almost unthinkingly, in a gesture of bravado and gallantry, many answered “yes, we are.” But we were not in fact.

The task then for us and for the world is to make ourselves ready, that is to say, make our physical being and consciousness free of the old reactions, instilling into them the consciousness that she is, with which she still embraces us — so that when the next call comes, although the call is always there, we may answer with truth on our lips — “We are ready.”

II

THE MOTHER ABIDES

IF it is a *pralaya*, even a *mahāpralaya*, all is not lost, all is not washed away. Something remains, untouched, deathless, the divine part in you, the Mother’s part in you, the consciousness incarnate and articulate.

Indeed it was your soul that she salvaged out of the Inconscience and established in you as a living reality. That was her first and primary task and She has fulfilled it. It was there always — true; but it was a far-off, very distant and almost inactive point of light, an unknown and an uncharted star not yet come into the ken of human measure and potency. She has brought it nearer home and established it in our living and dynamic consciousness. She has buoyed it up from the unconscious depths, or brought it down from vague ethereal nebulous regions, gradually developed it and nourished it and given it a firm dwelling in our inner regions. She moulded it into a personality with a name and a form. If we do not recognise it often or always, it is because the outer shell of the senses has not yet been

fully opened to it. But it is still there as our inner ruler and guide in spite of and through all obscurities and aberrations.

Exactly the next step, the second part of her work was to build around this soul, the inner being, a body, a material vehicle to express it. To give a concrete divine shape to this sole reality was her labour at this point. The soul was there, but a god has to come and inhabit it; this godhead, that is to say, a Power, a Form of the Mother's own Personality has to be brought down and the soul integrated into it. Apparently it was left off at that point and not completed.

The purpose and aim being not an individual realisation or even a realisation in a few individuals, but an achievement of the human race which means a large or a significant part of it, the effort has had to be directed to that end. The level of the human consciousness has to be lifted up to an extent that it might be capable of holding and embodying the inflatus that was coming into it for the change. Otherwise an individual representing the human level and forming part of the material consciousness would not be able to do it. Not only the earth-consciousness but the material constitution of the earth has to be transfigured. For the human body, the individual human body to pass through and complete the stages of transformation must have parallel echoes in other individuals — not necessarily the whole of humanity, but as I said, presumably a sizeable part of it. Otherwise the purpose of the change, a global, collective change will not be fulfilled. An isolated individual supramentalised body upon earth would be a freak of Nature, a forced miracle as it were, an anomalous object in Nature, and a humanity even at its topmost rung would not find any relation or kinship with it.

So, the earth-nature has to be prepared for that end in view, first of all the earth-consciousness in the physical substance and then the raw substance itself. This has to be done as our immediate and urgent business of life.

(2)

I said the earth-consciousness was not quite ready yet for the final transformation of the Mother's body, that is to say, the material substance of the body. Therefore it could not accommodate the

incoming transforming force — and it broke: in breaking it must have broken through, through the hard dense outermost crust of Matter — with what results, time will show.

As for us who survive, let us begin from the beginning. Let us start from a scratch as it were. We remember Mother's own story, what she had done for herself when she came to Sri Aurobindo. She effaced altogether her old personality, her achievements and accomplishments, made a clean slate of her consciousness and laid herself at the feet of Sri Aurobindo like a new-born babe, innocent of the past. Let us also in the same way face the day with our baby-soul in front, for that little being is the Mother's Presence in us, still aglow with Her consciousness.

In conclusion let me quote two passages from Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* which clinch the issue definitively—and so beautifully.

“Although our fallen minds forget to climb,
 Although our human stuff resists or breaks,
 She keeps her will that hopes to divinise clay;
 Failure cannot repress, defeat o'erthrow;
 Time cannot weary her nor the Void subdue,
 The ages have not made her passion less;
 No victory she admits of Death or Fate.
 Always she drives the souls to new attempt;
 Always her magical infinitude
 Forces to aspire the inert brute elements;
 As one who has all infinity to waste,
 She scatters the seed of the Eternal's strength
 On a half-animate and crumbling mould,
 Plants heaven's delight in the heart's passionate mire,
 Pours godhead's seekings into a bare beast frame,
 Hides immortality in a mask of death.”¹

*

*

*

“But when the hour of the Divine draws near,
 The Mighty Mother shall take birth in Time

¹ Book IV. Canto I. (The Centenary Library, Vol. 29, p. 354).

And God be born into the human clay
 In forms made ready by your human lives.
 Then shall the Truth supreme be given to men."¹

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

¹ Book XI, Canto I. (The Centenary Library, Vol. 29, p. 709).

SAVITRI: A STUDY IN DEPTH

Book I, Canto V

The Yoga of the King:
The Yoga of the Spirit's Freedom
and Greatness.

This knowledge first he had of time-born men.
.....
He found the occult cave, the mystic door
Near to the well of vision in the soul,
.....
He shore the cord of mind that ties the earth-heart
.....
The body's rules bound not the spirit's powers
.....
There in the hidden chamber closed and mute
Are kept the record graphs of the cosmic scribe,
.....
Significant of the movements of our fate
.....
And the secret code of the history of the world
.....
Of the dark agreement by which all is ruled.
.....
To clothe the Everlasting in new shapes.

A SWAPATHY is the first among men to know That by knowing which everything is known; generally the image is conveyed to the mind by means of a translation into thought by the senses; this curtain between the object and the mind is displaced by his direct perception; he knows the source and the origin of the object in and by itself without the intermediary and obscuring media of the senses; he enters the occult cave, the very centre of consciousness, severing all ties with the base of the Inconscience. His spirit is no longer ruled by the lower trinity; they continue to function in the usual

fashion even though he suspends their activity; he therefore is able to enter with great ease the chamber where, in charge of the various cosmic functionaries the arche-types that are to manifest on earth, are in a state of slumber or gestation; there are also the record graphs of the cosmic scribe, revealing the order in which these vibrations and possibilities have to effectuate on the earth, the law and destiny which should govern their movements and the agreement and the interaction between the Purusha and the Prakriti by which the cosmos comes into existence.

He could re-read now and interpret new

.....
 And recognise as a just necessity
 Its hard conditions for the mighty work,—
 Nature's impossible Herculean toil

.....
 The will to live under a reign of death

.....
 The thirst for a rapture in a heart of flesh,

.....
 The mystery of God's covenant with Night.

.....
 And the opening verse of the tragedy of Time

.....
 Who builds in ignorance the steps of Light

.....
 He read from within the text of the without.

• The inner principle once grasped, its outer working according to God's covenant with Night and the opening verse of the tragedy of Time, becomes clear, how the Infinite has become the finite; the friction of the dualities reveals itself to be a pathway hewn for the Infinite to re-emerge from the finite; in this return movement, man has to produce his credentials, his passport of deserts for admission to higher regions by the cosmic powers; it is for reaching a higher destiny that man amidst the most disheartening circumstances, shows an indomitable will to exist and feels in the drop of his little joy, a

foretaste of the enduring ecstasy he aspires for; the directive operation of the Omniscient is seen in all which in ignorance is attributed to chance and he sees a lurking wisdom even in failures which are made a stairway to Light.

He raised his eyes to unseen spiritual heights,
Aspiring to bring down a greater world.

.....
The infant soul in its small nursery school

.....
Outgrows its early grammar of intellect

.....
Its earthly dialect to God-language change

.....
And learn the logic of the Infinite

.....
His height repelled the lowness of earth's state:
A wideness discontented with its frame
Resiled from poor assent to Nature's terms.

Aswapathy wants to bring down the glory he has glimpsed; not the taper of intellect but the heavenlier sun of realisation can dispel the dusk of Nescience; he must advance from the nursery stage of the grammar of intellect to the real man who can change over from the earthly dialect to God-language; 'he must set out to find the real man; without that he would be stopping short at Nature's primary education and never go on to her deeper and larger teachings; however great his practical knowledge and efficiency, he would be only a little higher than the animals'¹ the supra-terrestrial cannot be understood by an application of the logic and the rationale governing the earthly; he must meditate over the infinite for divining its laws; then can be known the principle of unity embracing the multiplicity, the spirit activising the clay, and a covert consciousness working in the animate and the inanimate alike. Aswapathy sees, though through a fog of obscurity, the peak of the eternal Spirit; understands how it has exiled itself into the universe and taken multiple shapes,

¹ The Life Divine p-619.

thus voluntarily clipping its own freedom; but Aswapathy who has attained the higher consciousness, feels repelled by the lowness of the earth's state and is reluctant to assent to nature's terms for a diminished existence.

Only beginnings are accomplished here;

.....
 Or we saddle with the vice of earthly form
 A hurried imperfect glimpse of heavenly things,
 Guesses and travesties of celestial types.

The intellect is a poor instrument to explain the riddle of the cosmos; it gives us travesties of the celestial types when saddled with the vice of earthly forms or language; the aesthetic conceptions or representations fare no better; they give mimicries of framings of beauty; love which ought to be the cementing principle of unity is reflected as in a broken mirror sundered and twisted; and the apparent unity is not natural but brought about by the force of circumstances into a tassellated whole.

There is provender for the mind's satiety,
 There are thrills of the flesh, but not the soul's desire.
 Here even the highest rapture Time can give
 Is a mimicry of ungrasped beatitudes,

.....
 For all we have acquired soon loses worth
 An old disvalued credit in Time's bank,

.....
 In each success a seed of failure lurks.
 He saw the doubtfulness of all things here
 The incertitude of man's proud confident thought

.....
 An island in the sea of the Unknown
 He is a smallness trying to be great

.....
 And yet a greater destiny may be his

The mind always feeds on the provender of material possessions and pursuits; misses the soul and the bliss that it has with princely prodigality diffused all over the cosmos like air or sunshine or ether; it is satisfied with a brief felicity of mind or sense that is a caricature of the enduring delight; several such counterfeits are available in the seraglios of ignorance; but these pleasures become stale; they become cloying and thus these cheques on Time's bank are dishonoured.

All his efforts also are doomed to a similar disappointment for the seed of failure lurks in each success; incertitude and doubt are the shadows that pursue even his most confident thought and his proudest achievements suffer a transience.

In the large ocean of an unthinking world, man is an island of consciousness for he is the only mental being surrounded by the infra and sub-conscious orders of creation; though an animal there lurks a God in him; that is why he is a smallness trying to be great; with the help of the slender consciousness, that like a torch is lit when he is born and is extinguished when he dies, he strives unsuccessfully to reach the star of hope that glows before him, from cradle to the grave; but there is a greater destiny awaiting him, in spite of all this frustration and he can re-make himself and the world around him. 'The finite cannot remain permanently satisfied so long as it is conscious of a finite greater than itself or an infinite beyond itself to which it can aspire. Man is such a finite-seeming infinity and cannot fail to arrive at a seeking after the infinite. He is the first son of the earth who is vaguely aware of God within him, of his immortality or of his need of immortality and the knowledge is a whip that drives and a cross of crucifixion until he is able to turn it into a source of infinite light and joy and power.'

His soul retired from all that he had done.

.....

The Silence was his sole companion

.....

A figure in the ineffable Witness' shrine

Pacing the vast cathedral of his thoughts

.....

A golden influx flowed through his heart and brain

A current from immortal seas of Bliss

Aswapathy with the new-born consciousness cuts away from the old pegs, the moorings of the petty self; he retires into the loneliness of the vast inner self; develops a passivity, a detachment that is possible to one who has procured an admission into the sanctum of the witnessing spirit which observes everything without participating in anything; disports himself in the immensitudes and the amplitudes of the boundless self; keeps companionship with its thoughts and feels an on-rush of golden bliss bathing his entire being.

The Immobile's ocean-silence saw him pass,
 An arrow leaping through eternity
 Suddenly shot through the tense bow of Time
 A ray returning to its parent sun.

His intense aspiration meets with a corresponding descending grace of the Divine; his centre of ego becomes the shrine of the Reality diffusing its effulgence; but swift as an arrow released from a tensely drawn bow, he escapes to eternity, even though the dragon of nescience lashes its tail in fury at him.

He mounted burning like a cone of fire.
 To a few is given that god-like rare release.

.....
 And left the little lane of human Time

.....
 He treads the vestibules of the Unseen
 Or listens following a bodiless Guide

.....
 He lives in a hush before the world was born

.....
 The moulds of forms and persons are undone

.....

He journeys to meet the Incommunicable

.....
In the eternal courts of Solitude

One of the God's chosen, Aswapathy from that peak of consciousness realises that death is not the frightful thing it is on the earth but the needed rest given to the individual soul before it reincarnates; he mounts as swiftly as a cone of fire heavenwards; he races forward through the vestibules of the Unseen and the primordial silence before the world has come into being, for snatching the prize divine; he follows the guidance of the shapeless within; he is bent on meeting the Incommunicable in the courts of solitude, a mind devoid of all thoughts for hearing the Transcendent and the moulds and the forms so vital to the earth nature are dissolved in the fire of his passion for the Reality. 'When the divine force working secretly in us has devoured these growths of desire, when in the image of the Rigveda the fire of God has burnt up the shoots of the earth, that which is concealed at the roots of the pains and pleasures, their cause and secret being, the sap of delight in them, will engage in new forms not of desire, but of self-existent satisfaction which will replace mortal pleasure by immortal ecstasy.'¹

His being towered into pathless heights,

.....
Naked of its vesture of humanity.

.....
A strong Descent leaped down, a Might, a Flame

.....
His nature shuddered in the Unknown's grasp.

.....
In a whirlwind circuit of delight and force

.....
And underwent a new and bourneless change

Aswapathy has the unique distinction of being the precursor of the evolutionary movement of the earth Godward; he passes

¹ The Life Divine p. 99.

through the realms where he sees the subtle and the seed state of the would-be gross forms to be manifested on the earth; he passes into the pathless ethereal disburdened of all the material and the worldly; he is seized by a Might, a Flame of a preternatural kind; is whirled about on the rounds of delight and undergoes a transformation.

His wakened mind became an empty slate
 On which the Universal and the Sole could write.
 A fire that seemed the body of a god
 Consumed the limiting figures of the past
 And made a large room for a new self to live

The new awakening wipes off all the writings of the past and makes of his mind a clean slate; it has now become a page to take in the script of the message of the Universal; his individuality is now lost in the cosmic self that is now boundless; the petty ring of the ego having a limited range of pursuits and enjoyments, widens into a cosmic centre, feeling itself everywhere, and in everything, thus having within itself both the universal and the individual.

Strange energies wrought and screened tremendous hands
 Unwound the triple cord of mind and freed
 The heavenly widening of a Godhead's gaze.

.....
 The little ego's ring could join no more;

.....
 The body now seemed only a wandering shell,

.....
 His mind the many-frescoed outer court
 Of an imperishable Inhabitant

The higher powers with their unseen hands work out the miracle of breaking the triple cord of Aswapathy's mind limiting its range to thought, feeling and sensation; it is endowed with a wider God-vision; the enclosures of the ego have no more any confining power; the body and the mind which have at one time loomed so important, pale into the insignificance of a garment and a painted window

respectively; it is the soul that breathes life into them; they exist because of That and That does not exist because of them.

The fixed immovable peripheries
Effaced themselves beneath the Incarnate's tread.

.....

The guardian darknesses mute and formidable,
Empowered to circumscribe the wingless spirit

.....

Vanished rescinding their enormous role

The boundaries of darkness below and silence above, which have been fixed and which have appeared so rigid as to be immovable, are now violated and completely erased by the spirit which has not only awakened but has become fully self-assertive; the guardians authorised to keep the spirit confined in the narrow cell, beat a retreat abrogating their power all-along exercised.

Once figure of creation's vain ellipse,

The expanding zero lost its giant curve.

The old adamantine vetoes stood no more:

Overpowered were earth and Nature's obsolete rule;

.....

Abolished were the scripts of destiny.

There was no small death-haunted creature more,

.....

The soul and cosmos faced as equal powers.

He saw unpathed, unwall'd his titan scope

Confined once to the narrow curve of consciousness, Aswapathy reaches a wider consciousness where, in the expanding circle of the giant self, the curves and the boundaries are lost sight of; the rock walls of determinism built up by nature are demolished by the liberated spirit; its fiat of authority runs no more; he has transcended nature so much that its laws cease to have any application to him; he is no more the hunted prey of death; there is no further any necessity for him to protect himself against the cosmic forces since he has

attained oneness with the cosmos; he is himself the cosmos and defensive measures against himself are uncalled for; breaking the walls of division or separation, he realises the titan, the universal, the vast that he is.

A secret Nature stripped of her defence,

Lay bare to the burning splendour of his will.

Her potencies of marvel-fraught design
 Courted employment by an earth-nursed might.

The scales have fallen from the eyes of Aswapathy; nature deprived of all her defences, is self-exposed; the intricacies of her workings, hitherto a safely guarded secret in a shadowy chamber, stand helplessly revealed to his searching gaze; the wizardry of her effectuations, the invincibility of her strength derived from the subtle physical, vital and mental forces, become obvious; nature becomes servile to the earth-nursed might and seeks employment under the mortal Aswapathy.

An almighty occultist erects in space

He builds bodies for his shapeless energy;

His sorcery of solid images,
 Achieves unerringly an inexplicable
 Creation where our error carves dead frames
 • • Of knowledge for a living ignorance

The universe appears to our ignorance a product of a soulless energy or chance; its workings strike the naked eye as a marvel; the occult force behind is masked by matter; the pervading consciousness chooses the appropriate media for its expression; its development follows a pre-charted line determined by its in-dwelling intelligence; it achieves with a baffling precision its objective; and the ignorant engage in the hobby of erecting reason-structures with the

spirit banished and a shell of formula to explain the inexplicable.

She too as sovereignly creates her field

.....

As if her rash superb wagered to outvie

The veiled Creator's cosmic secrecies.

The rapid footsteps of her phantasy

Amid whose falls wonders like flowers rise

Are surer than reason, defter than device

And swifter than Imagination's wings.

Prakriti, a power of the Lord, creates by her workings an impression of her autonomy; it seems to be governed by no other law than her own caprice; she too partakes of the occultism of the Supreme; works behind the veils; all that is staged or projected is the product of a long toil behind the curtain and this accounts for the track of phantasy followed by nature, being strewn by flowers of achievements that are a challenge to human understanding, capability or imagination.

Mind is a mediator divinity:

.....

The leaden grip of Matter it can break;

.....

Can liberate the Energy, dumb and pent

.....

It makes the body's sleep a puissant arm

.....

This giant Ignorance, this dwarfish Life

It can illumine with a prophet sight

In our body arouse the demon or the god,

.....

Awake a forgotten Almightyness within

Part matter and part spirit, mind is the link connecting both; it is a superficies, a projection of the vast ocean of the supernal within with a gateway to superconscience and the subconsciousness; it can

with proper discipline break away from Matter; for instance the body may perish but not the idea for which man may dare death; he can by summoning the necessary will, call to his aid, sleeping energies; by a withdrawal into the inner zone of silence, he can arm himself with the strength of a god or demon; he can even discover his self-identity, recall his Almighty. 'It is this inner being which we must regard as our subliminal self and set apart the subconscious as an inferior, a lowest occult province of our nature. In the same way there is a superconscient part of our total existence in which there is what we discover to be our highest self and this too we can set apart as a higher occult province of our nature.'¹

In its own plane a shining emperor,

.....
 She meditates upon mighty worlds and looks
 On the unseen links that join the parted spheres

.....
 Here where he stands, his feet on a prostrate world,
 His mind no more cast into Matter's mould,

.....
 She carries their magician processes

.....
 Till heaven and hell become purveyors to earth
 And the universe the slave to mortal will

Mind is not entirely the slave it is supposed to be of Matter; a link between the terrestrial and the supra-terrestrial worlds and a child of the subliminal, she reveals herself a shining emperor; she discloses her powers, her secrecies to one who has thrown off the shackles of materialism and developed a heaven-ward look; she places at the beck and call of a man like Aswapathy who has fortified himself with an indomitable will, not only her powers but even those of heaven and hell and earth itself becomes a slave ready to carry out his behests. 'We arrive at a knowledge that our waking mind and ego are only a superimposition upon a submerged subliminal self or more accurately an inner being with a much vaster experience; our

¹ The Life Divine., p.498.

mind and ego are like the crown and the dome of a temple jutting out from the waves while the great body of the building is submerged under the surface of the waters.'¹

A mediatrix with veiled and nameless gods

 Imitating the World-Magician's ways

 All worlds she makes the partners of her deeds,

 From every source she has taken her cunning means,

 Pell-mell she shepherds her occult mightinesses;
 Her mnemonics of the craft of the Infinite,
 Jets of the screened subliminal's caprice,
 Tags of the gramarye of the Inconscience,

 And peeps and lightning-leaps of prophecy

 Have woven her balanced web of miracles
 And the weird technique of her tremendous art

Prakriti though a delegate, has the full freedom of the Supreme; she cuts her own grooves of manifestation giving an appearance of determinism; some of her creation's tour-de-force cannot be effected unless she borrows the cunning of extra-cosmic powers; the worlds being graded, there is an interconnection, interaction and inter-play; she has a wonderful weft of knowledge drawn from varied sources; this compendium of divine invention is shown in her creativity; she has a memory of the infinite emerging from the inconscience to the finite; she draws her art and technique from the subliminal and the inconscient and weaves the web of her marvels; it is she that through her craftsmen sends intimations and prophecies and in all and in many other ways she shows the weird workmanship of her art.

¹ Ibid., p.496.

She turned against the evil she had helped

A greater despot tamed her despotism.

She yielded in a vanquished ecstasy,
 Her sealed hieratic wisdom forced from her

The regency is now cancelled; the Purusha is fully awake in a consciousness of his omnipotence; his deputy surrenders; she is freed from her weary toilsome upward path from the involution in the inconscience; the powers exercised on his behalf and for his freedom, are placed at his disposal; she steps back to her former position of subordination to the Purusha, shorn of all her glory and grandeur that have been hers during the period of soul's minority and passivity.

A border sovereign is the occult Force.

She has canalised the outbreaks of the Gods
 And cut through vistas of intuitive sight
 A long road of shimmering discoveries.

Behind her an ineffable Presence stood:
 Their lion forces crouched beneath her feet;

This was a forefront of God's thousandfold house
 Beginnings of the half-screened Invisible.

Its bodies signalling the Bodiless

The little fronts unlocked to the unseen Vasts.

Standing on the dividing periphery of the earth and the beyond, is the Shakti, the occult Force who makes the Gods above active to exercise their influence on the universe; she also hews out pathways of intuition making men have the flashes and intimations of the higher and long for ideals unreachable; behind her looms the presence of

the Everlasting and below the feet of this Durga, crouch the lion-forces, the powers that can fly at her orders to shape the world according to her designs. The terrain is frightening with infernal depths of Nescience and the inspiring altitudes of the Divine; but the power, the fascination of the idea is such that it makes men dare and have the thrill of adventure; Aswapathy is in the magic porch of entry to the edifice of the Eternal; it is dimly lighted so that he may not be overpowered and can pick his way; he now becomes aware how the unseen vasts have been locked up in the little fronts of his outer self; he also sees how the formless assumes forms and the single becomes the multiple.

A giant order was discovered here
Of which the tassel and the extended fringe
Are the scant stuff of our material lives.

.....
A map of subtle signs surpassing thought
Was hung upon a wall of inmost mind.
Illumining the world's concrete images
Into significant symbols by its gloss,
It offered to the intuitive exegete
Its reflex of the eternal Mystery

The light of intuition discloses to him that the world is but a fringe of a giant order; the graded planes of consciousness are matched by an ascent, a corresponding descent and integration, leading again to the higher planes with a repetition of the same process; the Eternal's plunge into time, stages a climb back through life's adventure and delight and Matter's shapes and hues.

The serried kingdoms of the graded Law
.....
And rich with life's adventure and delight
.....
Climbed back from Time into undying Self
Up a golden ladder carrying the Soul,
Tying with diamond threads the Spirit's extremes.

Each leaned on the occult Inconscient's power,
 The fountain of its needed Ignorance,
 Archmason of the limits by which it lives

.....

Each lifted tops to That from which it came.

The Eternal who has taken a plunge into the Inconscience for the sheer delight and the adventure of it, stages an ascent back to his undying Self; every rung of the ladder takes the pilgrim of the soul to a higher level of a luminous consciousness; at each stage it has to be re-fashioned by the archmason of ignorance, determining the proportions of darkness and light; each is a step to That from which it has come, the origin of all that has ever been.

The light began of the Trinity supreme.
 All there discovered what it seeks for here.

.....

At last clutched passionately the body of Truth

.....

A reconciling Wisdom looked on life;

.....

A mighty oneness its perpetual theme,
 All the great Words that toiled to express the One.

The pilgrim marches from the lower to the higher trinity, the last high world where all words meet, where Sachchidananda reigns; here the vain searchings of man on earth have their fulfillment; the long gropings after truth are rewarded in its body being passionately clutched; the inaudible the inarticulate music of the lower world, finds its distinct articulation and soulful harmony here; a reconciling Wisdom, a mighty Oneness, resolve all the dualities and the contradictions into a harmony and unity; all the great Words of the scriptures of the world toil to express the great Truth of the oneness of the Reality; this is the revelation of every creed with a difference of accent only.

Above were the Immortal's changeless seats,

.....

And the stupendous gates of the Alone.
 Across the unfolding of the seas of self

Affranchised from the net of earthly sense
 Calm continents of potency were glimpsed;

Sunbelts of knowledge, moonbelts of delight
 Stretched out in ecstasy of widenesses

There he could enter, there awhile abide.

Himself being immutable, the Being, the Alone, is seated above and beyond his unfoldings, his becomings of numerous selves; transcending his limitations, Aswapathy reaches calm continents which surprise his vision with beauty, bliss and knowledge; he enters and abides there awhile in those sunbelts of knowledge and moonbelts of delight.

Y. S. R. CHANDRAN

DIALOGUES AND PERSPECTIVES

WHAT IS RIGHT ?

IN this fast changing world outside and in the faster changing one within myself, I have often wondered if there are any real "rights" and "wrongs". I have it on good authority that this is a world of relativities and nothing can ever be always what it appears to be or what it is taken to be. I ask myself what after all is Right? The Right, answers Sri Aurobindo, is Truth in action. Necessarily then the action has to vary according to change in circumstances. At any rate the form in which the truth applies itself must change if it is to be living and dynamic. And it does change. What was true and right for me ten years ago is no more so today. Was I wrong then in the past? Was I deceiving myself? Can a rule which we erect as a working of the truth in certain circumstances hold good in a totally different set up? Are we to be guided by the letter of the Shastra or its spirit? These and other questions came to be focussed before me this morning when I happened to be present at a dialogue and later to participate in it.

Let me first reconstruct the dialogue or, more correctly, the trilogy. Let us leave out the personalities and have X,Y,Z, as the participants in the lively debate.

X: Normally you sit beside my shelf. If one day I find that a book has been left on my shelf, I naturally presume that you may have left it there. What will you say when I ask you whether you have left it there?

Y: Naturally, if I have left it there, I say I have left it. If I have not, I say I have not left it.

X: But if I say I do not believe that you have not left it, what would you say then?

Y: I will repeat that I did not leave it.

X: But if I still persist in expressing my disbelief?

Y: Then it will depend upon who asks me that question. I may simply say "may be" and go away.

X: In that case you are telling a conscious lie!

Y: I do not know. I only know that there are circumstances

when it is more circumspect and safe to agree or appear to agree with the questioner and get away. For instance, think of a situation between a domestic servant and his master. If the employer insists that the servant has done a particular thing and would not accept the latter's denial, what other course is left to him except to accept his master's verdict? Has he to insist on maintaining his truth at the cost of his master's displeasure and possibly dismissal from the job? There is such a thing as discretion. One cannot always afford to throw truth into everybody's face.

At this point I liked to agree with him, for an incident from my past came alive to my mind. It was during my younger — and perhaps less responsible — days. Something had gone wrong in our office due to a mistake on the part of somebody. It never occurred to me that the fault could be mine. I got angry and started berating my assistant. As I was getting more and more excited, she immediately admitted her negligence and expressed her regret. Tempers cooled down and matters were smoothed out. Sometime later, I discovered that the mistake had been really mine and not hers. I felt highly contrite and asked her why she took the blame on herself when she was not really responsible for it. Her answer was disarming and has ever stood green in my memory. "I did not want you to be further disturbed and lose your peace of mind. And I saw that the only way to prevent things from getting worse was to provide a scapegoat and I volunteered to own the fault. My purpose was served."

Now am I to convict her of falsehood? Can I forget that this seemingly wrong procedure on her part has served to teach me to be more conscious and more responsible in life than any blunt truth would have done? Her wrong has promoted the right in me. What have you to say to that?

To come back to the narrative I joined the discussion as Z.

Z: He is right from the practical point of view. For there are occasions when it is not wise to tell the whole truth. One has to withhold the truth in order to avoid worse situations. But spiritually X is right in insisting that one cannot deviate from the truth under any circumstances. Agreed. But is it always compulsory to express the truth, whole and entire? I do think a distinction has to be made

in these matters: what is imperative in the spiritual setting and what is permissible in day-to-day life in the world. I concede there are strong possibilities of self-deception. It is a matter of one's sincerity and commonsense in striking a balance.

Y: X can afford to take his rigid stand because he does not have to deal with people in the world outside. We who have to rub shoulders with them every day and are confronted with all kinds of situations have to take a flexible approach.

X: Maybe. The Divine knows who is to be placed in what circumstances for his growth. But you forget that you and I are also placed together. There must be a meaning in it also.

Z: Quite so. Sri Aurobindo has explained this phenomenon in the life of spiritual seekers, in his letter on *evil persona*. He explains that it is part of the occult economy of Nature to always place in the environment of the seeker someone who represents the very opposite of his strong points. The purpose is to pose before him difficulties which he needs to solve and work out before his development can be integral. Almost always, it will be observed, the other person sums up in himself contraries which are needed to test and perfect the qualities in him who strives to exceed himself.

Ultimately all agreed that there is a purpose in everybody's being in the situation he finds himself in and each one has to act, react and develop according to his dharma. That again brings us back to the world of relativities. And I am still left undecided on whether there is or there can be an absolute right and an absolute wrong. I prefer to be open minded about it and assess things in each situation as they arise. As X said, one must act in complete sincerity and do one's best, or, as the Mother has repeatedly asked, one must strive to act always from one's highest attained consciousness.

M. P. PANDIT

ESSENTIALS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIAN ART

WE live to-day in an age of commerce and technology — steeped into the obscuring deeps of materialism and solely motivated by principles of utility. It is an age bent on depriving life of all its flexibility, its organic spontaneity and charm. By mechanizing and ordaining the entire arena of human activity and thus turning it into a “glorified ant-heap or bee-hive” the very significance of life has been mercilessly crushed and neglected. The frightening tendency to over-emphasize the value of the merely useful and ignore the truly beautiful which had suddenly cropped up after the Industrial Revolution has now become excessively rampant. In the future task of laying down the foundations for the future it is essential that art, poetry and idealism are given an equally important place side by side with science and commerce and any neglect of these arts would prove fatal and should not be tolerated. The exaggerated importance given to science, economics, etc., does make one suspicious of the sanity of this new course adopted, by fulfilling and satisfying the most clamorous wants of humanity — i.e. material prosperity, vital gratifications of passions and cravings and by arming them with justification in the confused struggle of conflicting interests and aspirations, “which are now working with solvent and corrosive effect throughout the world”.

The value of the other side, i.e., Poetry, Idealism and Art, seems to be unfortunately ignored. Their profound subtle workings elude the general mass which is ready to grasp anything sensational in character, but which falters in doubt when it comes to non-sensational miracles.

Without the latter, civilisation would be plunged into a perilous state, and it is absolutely essential — for the good of humanity and the rich security of the world — that these should be preserved and fostered and revived with utmost diligence and sympathetic precaution.

This depreciation and degeneration of Art to-day has deeper and more far-reaching implications in so far as Indian Art is concerned. If Indian Art is ignored and left to perish, it would not only mean the loss of the soul of a nation, but an irreparable and an

irretrievable loss for the entire world. Civilisation would be robbed and deprived of one of the most priceless gems of human achievements and the Divine's manifestation would be incomplete and imperfect, if any attempt to ignore this glorious heritage is encouraged. This sad state of affairs on the cultural scene issues forth from two fundamental errors.

First — the bedazzling of the East by the gaudy materialism of the West, which has veiled her eyes to her own subtleties and refinements. Second — the failure to recognise the cultural significance of Indian aesthetic creation and its unique greatness.

Although the question of India being civilised once asked not only by the layman — but by those so-called intellects of the West — is no longer there in the minds of the people, yet attempts to explain such a formidable treasure-house of art are not very convincing and illuminating.

It is not a matter of trivial significance either for this country or for the West that Indian artistic ideals have been thus misunderstood and misinterpreted. There was a time when such great intellectuals like Ruskin and Macaulay, unable to attune themselves to Indian culture — especially its Art — had assailed it lumping together all her greatest achievements, religion, philosophy, music, sculpture, painting, the Upanishads, the Mahabharata, the Ramayana in one wholesale condemnation as a repulsive mass of unspeakable barbarism. But at the turn of the century, this estrangement of East and West, and the difficulty of any attempt of *rapprochement* between the two had considerably been mitigated.

Art affords a revelation of national thought and character. The misapprehension or depreciation of its ideals by an alien mind must inevitably sow intellectual, cultural, even political antipathies, not less dangerous because they are often unconscious ones, which aggravate racial prejudices, create obstacles to the intimate harmonious relationship without which a perfect understanding between different races is impossible, and which are detrimental to those ideals of human unity which have emerged on the horizon and which are struggling for fulfilment.

If any cultural understanding has to be roused — and it is being gradually roused — art critics, whether of the West or the East,

have to shed their western academic prejudices and prepossessions and in the Indians themselves a love and loyalty to their own art has to be kindled. The cultural values and ideals of India should not be forgotten, for with the obliteration of the cultural life-centre, the soul of the nation would perish too. What would remain then would be a "rationalised and westernised India" — a contradiction in terms—a brown ape of Europe who in a violent fit of amnesia had forgotten all her spiritual, religious, intellectual, poetic and artistic opulence, content to be ruthlessly crushed by a mechanised rationalistic utilitarian civilisation.

It must be clearly understood however that for the integral perfection of the human race, for the "completeness of the human movement" — both the tendencies of the East and West are necessary and it would be foolishness on our part — a retrograde step in the evolutionary curve — to neglect one or the other.

Whether civilisation and India are incompatible is no longer a debatable issue — those possessing a certain profundity of perception and even a little sense of the good and the beautiful have recognized the distinct greatness of this country and have marvelled at its unsurpassed diversity and aesthetic opulence. Some attempts — although devoid of amplitude, whole-heartedness, and clear sight — have however been made to resuscitate our declining art and to project a healthy picture in the right light of appreciation.

In the field of religion for example, the influence of European Christianity has considerably been mitigated in the wake of the revival of Hinduism. With the emergence of the Theosophical Movement and the advent of Swami Vivekananda on the Western scene Hinduism became an evolving, luminous and self-assertive way of life.

To the Western concept of civilisation, based solely on outward progress and the cult of materialistic reason, anything that goes above this conventional standard, anything that seems unintelligible to this materialistic mind and escapes its ken is not the offspring of civilisation but the freaky product of a "crudely subtle barbarism". Any culture which dallies with the Eternal and the Infinite and the super-rational and is obsessed by Powers and Beings that exceed the Reason, is most unworthy of being called civilised, according to the canons

and qualifications of a Western mind. The bewildering absurdity and short sightedness of this definition needs no explanation.

If a permanent secure happiness is the prime objective of man on earth, then the finding of the right balance and harmony between the spirit and body or body and mind would be the key to all our human paradoxes and tormenting problems of existence. Now, a culture should be judged in the light of how far it has succeeded in seizing this vital harmony and expressing it in the ordinary material life and traditions of that particular society. This aim could be pursued either from a purely or mainly material perspective like the West, or with a predominantly mental and intellectual like the ancient Graeco-Roman people, or else with a predominantly religious or spiritual standpoint — like the consistent culture of India.

Fundamentally, as in almost every aspect of the two civilisations — Indian and European — no true comparison can be made between the Art of the Orient and the Art of the Occident. Each starts from a different origin, aims at a different power and arrives at a different end. Once we are able to grasp this, then much of this misunderstanding of Indian Art arising chiefly from the disparity between the two ways of life will disappear and the ground for a mutual sympathetic understanding and interchange be prepared. This will also help us to apprehend and appreciate with a more judicious and cosmopolitan eye the essential motives and the indisputable grandeur and magnificence of Indian Art.

For any real and fruitful criticism of Art — two things must be taken into account: first and fundamental, the spirit or the originating impulse from which all artistic creation starts and secondly the expression of that underlying spirit in significant forms.

- Every art has its distinctive spirit and without an understanding of this basic spirit which is paramount — the conflict of various cultures now reduced to a conflict between East and West, between Asia of which India is the quintessence and Europe, will tend to become violent and unprofitable.

“India’s concept of evolution is basically spiritual”, said Sri Aurobindo, “it believes in an eternal spirit encased in Matter, involved and immanent in it and evolving on the material plane by re-birth of the individual up the scale of the being till in mental man, the

consciousness enters the world of ideas and conscious morality." This victory over unconscious Matter is progressive and with the flow of Time, it develops, enlarges and elevates its levels until the "increasing manifestation of the sattwic or spiritual portion of the vehicle of mind enables the individual mental being in man to identify himself with the pure spiritual consciousness beyond Mind."

Her Art too, like Philosophy and Religion, has been an attempt to seize this Higher Power which will be the key to all our tormenting paradoxes. All her aesthesis has this upward yearning. This artistic impulse gripped India when that wonderful intuition flashed upon the Indian Mind, that the soul of Man is eternal and that all men are the manifestation of the Supreme Soul — the Brahman — the Lord and Cause of all things — the perennial source which they strive to discover through noble and exalted paths of Devotion, Knowledge, Work and Art.

Progress in Indian terminology is not primarily the advance in science or an ever-increasing material efficiency and prosperity, but more and essentially the inner progress — the progress of the soul and the evolving consciousness within. Indian Art, based on this lofty conception, was an élan towards the Infinite, the Eternal, the Intangible — the supreme divinity within us, around us and beyond us and artists sought to project life from this spiritual perspective. It is precisely this ingrained, latent spirituality which constitutes the distinctive value of her Art and explains the secret of her amazing persistence and "perpetual force of survival and revival."

It is the seizing of this alchemizing Ananda through the splendour of Beauty in and around us that will lift humanity out of its animal slumber and indifference and help it embark into the "adventure of consciousness." Art is a means of spiritual growth — a path for the realisation of the Ultimate Reality. In ancient India it was always associated with Religion. It is said that Art turned inwards was Religion and Religion turned outwards was Art. Shaping life in the image of the God within us and to find a strong and secure basis of living with the higher truths of the Spirit, have been the primary preoccupation of Indian artists.

“Their divine foundation was above even while they stood below, let its rays be settled deep.”

Indian Art is thus essentially idealistic, mystic, symbolic and transcendental. All artistic creation must originate from the soul. The artist, as Sri Aurobindo tells us, must see first in his own self the truth of the thing he must express and to create its forms from the intuitive mind. The mental instruments are subordinated in the work of transmission and assist only partially in the giving of colour and shape. And therefore, it is primordial that it has to be seen with the “intuitive and spiritual eye.”

“A European mind comes to Indian Art with a demand for something other than what its characteristic spirit and motive intend to give” and therefore, says Sri Aurobindo, “is not prepared to enter into another kind of spiritual experience and another range of creative sight and imaginative power.”

The whole of modern European academic art teaching has been based upon the unphilosophical theory that beauty is a quality which is inherent in certain objects, forms of matter, a quality first apprehended by the Greeks in the old world and rediscovered by the artists of the Renaissance. This is an attempt by the Occident to arrive at a scientific standard of beauty by the selection of what appeared to their physical senses, most admirable in natural forms and appearances. Thus in the West Art became more a pursuit of Beauty in the material physical world than an attempt to disclose something of the Infinite Divine Godhead within through its living finite symbols and through its manifold expressions. They never sought to project life which is within us and without — life in all its fulness and mystery. “European Art seems to have its wings clipped off — it knows the beauty of only earthly things.” It does not like the Indian soar into the Elysian heights and depths of our being — to attempt to bring down to earth something of the beauty which is within us and above — a beauty which is supra-sensuous, supra-physical and supra-rational. All great artistic expression is triggered off by a flash of intuition — a sudden apprehension of some profound truth of existence. The European artist is struck by a lightning flash, by a suggestion that originates from an appearance in outward life and nature — from the

outer physical world. When in moments of some high intense spiritual excitement, the idea surges up from the soul, even then he tries to bring it down to the workings of the ordinary rational mind — which appears to be his eternal point of reference. Without giving an external support, without conferring upon the inspiration some external associations, he does not feel contented. His intellectual ideas and vital imagination are vested with the authority and freedom to clothe it with “a mental stuff that will render its forms to the moved reason, emotion and aesthesis.” Speaking about the helpless slavery of the Western mind to the external form, Sri Aurobindo tells us that “he is arrested, fascinated by the form and lingers on it, and cannot get away from its charm, loves it for its own beauty, rests on the emotional, intellectual, aesthetic suggestions that arise directly from its most visible language, confines the soul in the body; it might almost be said that for this mind *form creates the spirit*, the *spirit depends for its existence* and for everything it has to say *on the form*.”

The appeal of a European *chef-d'œuvre* is rarely to the inward spiritual eye, but more often to the superficial vital, imaginative and emotional being. The “unveiled presence of the Infinite” is not given sufficient attention, as it is not considered indispensable for achieving the highest perfection.

Indian Art on the contrary holds the opposite view. It is symbolised in the conception of the Buddha sitting on his lotus-throne, calm, impassive, his thoughts freed from all worldly passions and desires and with both mind and body raised above all intellectual and physical strife, yet filled with more power than human power, derived from a perfect communion with the source of All-Truth, All-Knowledge and All-Strength.

There is an Olympian grandeur and magnificence in this country's art unlike the Japanese and Chinese art. It does not offer such sensuous delights as some other Arts do; it is pinnacled among the highest Himalayan solitudes never trodden by human feet, often shrouded in mist and cloud only seen sometimes from afar — as in a vision in the rosy light of dawn or when the last rays of the sun light up *its furthest deeps* with burnished gold and show to our wondering gaze the gates of Heaven.

The Indian artist has a more comprehensive view of his field of

creation, because Beauty for him is subjective. It is not inherent in form or matter but belongs to the spirit and can only be apprehended by spiritual vision. The beauty does not lie in the thing itself but in the "divine idea" which is impressed upon those human minds or souls which are turned to receive it. The more perfectly our minds are tuned to this divine beauty, the more we perceive this beauty and the more capable do we become as artists of expressing it. To devote oneself wholly to studying form and matter with the idea of "extracting beauty" then is "as vain as cutting open a drum to see where the sound comes from." The true aim of the artist is not to *essay* beauty from Nature but to reveal the life within life, the Noumenon within phenomenon — the Reality within unreality and the Spirit within Matter. When that is revealed, beauty reveals itself. To cultivate this spiritual vision, these powers of intuitive perception was the main endeavour of Indian artists.

Bhakti or Devotion permeates the whole atmosphere of Indian Art and is the originating impulse of all its aesthetic creation. There is an intense sincerity, a pure devotion, a total self-surrender and a depth of spiritual or religious conviction — without the slightest parade of virtuosity. It is only when this element of self-giving and bhakti is absent or lost that Art is superseded by the modern commercial instinct. The Indian artist therefore was also a yogi — without being which he could never have achieved the complete harmonious identification or self-projection into the object of his intuition or the surging idea that is yearning within him for self-expression. The merging of the consciousness of the painter or sculptor or architect with the consciousness of that aspect of Nature which he wishes to portray, is paramount for any truly inspired *creation of Beauty*. The personality of the artist is merged in his own creations. Therefore, of the Indian artist as an individual little is known. The Indian artist, whether a Hindu, Muslim or Buddhist "walks through the pages of history — a vague indefinite elusive being" and that is why Indian Art is often called an anonymous art — art that is not self-conscious. Without this fundamental attitude, he could never have fashioned those remarkable treasure-worlds of Sanchi, Ajanta, Elloranta or Ellora, nor grasp the truth he aims at with such a calm and effortless ease.

To appreciate Indian Art is no doubt difficult and it is a domain that does not give easy access to all viewers. The only way to arrive at its heart is through an intuitive perception that can be cultivated by meditation — *dhyāna*, and which helps the critic to make himself one with the spiritual life-throb of the particular piece of art. “The physical seeing then becomes a step — an opening into the vaster and more significant spiritual or psychic worlds” from which a real understanding and an intimate revelatory communion might be established. It is only then that this artistic estrangement between the East and West will disappear and mutually bring each other in to an all-embracing clasp of Beauty and Harmony.

I would like to illustrate the point that I have made by giving certain basic ideas of Indian fine arts, i.e., architecture, sculpture, and painting, along with some illuminating perceptive examples that Sri Aurobindo has cited in his *The Foundations of Indian Culture*.

We will begin with Architecture. We have to see Oriental art — whether it be architecture, sculpture, painting or music — in the light of the inner spiritual glow and to discover in it the great limitless self of the Brahman behind the symbol in all His grandeur. To appreciate Indian architecture this inner discovery is even more essential and at the same time difficult. It does not reveal itself easily.

Critics of Indian Art have condemned it as “shockingly primitive”, and staggering in its lack of unity and exaggerated ornamentation and detail. Dravidians have invoked in them, by their massive “gigantic barbarism”, a sense of horrified awe.

When visualised from the right angle and setting, and not from the fatally foreign canons of Western Art, all these apparent defects vanish into thin air. Through the excessive ornamentation and massiveness, one will then glimpse the infinite unity and multiplicity of the Cosmic Godhead — the “teeming inexhaustible plenitude” of that titanic Self of the Universe. “An original oneness, not a combined or synthetic or an effected unity, is that from which this art begins and to which its work when finished returns or rather lives in it as in its self and natural atmosphere.”

“The temple”, says Sri Aurobindo, “is the most significant and typical monument of Indian architecture and admirably sums up the subtle spiritual value of our culture.” It is a *tirtha*, i.e., a

source of release in a concrete, tangible form created by the human mind. It emanates a mystery that gives mystic suggestions of the Mystery that envelops the Universe and the Divine spirit that shines behind the veil of Mystery and pervades and illumines the world. "An Indian temple to whatever Godhead it may be built is in its inmost reality an altar raised to the divine self, a house of the Cosmic Spirit, an appeal and aspiration to the Infinite," seen in its natural surroundings, "the oneness to which this Nature aspires in her inconscient self-creation and in which she lives, the oneness to which the soul of man uplifts in his conscious spiritual upbuilding, his labour of aspiration here expressed in stone, and in which so upbuilt, he and his life work are the same and the soul motive is one."

The architectural languages of the South and North are different but their spiritual motive is the same. The North Indian temples have a singular grace and power, despite their luminous etheriality and exquisite lightness and delicacy. "The great mosques," goes on Sri Aurobindo, "in the same vein, embody often a religious aspiration lifted to a noble austerity. The tombs reach beyond death to the beauty and joy of Paradise. The buildings of Fatehpur Sikri are not monuments of an effeminate luxurious decadence," as some Western critics have condemned it, "but they give form to a nobility, power and beauty which lay hold upon but do not wallow on the earth." They have an immaterial subtle charm and an enchanting magical beauty of the middle world, and in their religious mood touch "with a devout hand the skirts of the Divine."

SCULPTURE — Whereas the Greek conception of the human form confined Beauty to Realism in conformity with our conventional conceptions of realistic beauty, i.e. right proportion and right perspective — the Indian Artist makes no distinction between the beautiful and the ugly, between the good and the evil, as popularly understood but strives to reveal the all-embracing Divine Idea in both which envelops them and at the same time transcends them both. The subtle inspiration of Indian spirituality animates the lifeless stones and makes one feel that it is not a cold monument of marble but the Divine Himself who lingers in all his inexpressible and inalienable charm and power upon the earth. Compared with the Indian conceptions of the Universal, the anthropomorphic gods

of Greece and Rome seem puny and devoid of imagination. The baseless condemnation that Indian Art is deficient in technical achievement for lack of anatomical knowledge appears appallingly absurd to one who has sounded the depths of the Infinite immensity and the subtle suggestions that surge up before a perceptive eye. "The sculptural art," says Sri Aurobindo, "is static, self-contained, necessarily firm — one cannot trifle with ease in this sterner material. The latitude which is possible in painting is forbidden in sculpture. The sculptor must always express in static form the idea. Eternity seizes hold of time in its shapes and arrests it in the monumental spirit of stone or bronze." What was sought and attempted in the Indian statues was not a naturalistic physical beauty but a spiritual one, to achieve which, the artist "eliminated and suppressed all unnecessary details and rendered it to an almost bare austerity and purity of line and form."

Some illustrations from *The Foundations of Indian Culture* will suffice to reveal the spiritual significance of Indian Art which Sri Aurobindo has grasped with remarkable profundity and depth.

"The figure of the Buddha achieves the expression of the Infinite in a finite image — the illimitable calm of Nirvana in a human form and visage. The Kalasanhara Shiva is supreme not only by the majesty, power, calmly forceful control, dignity and kingship of existence which the whole spirit and pose of the figure visibly incarnates, but much more by the concentrated divine passion of the spiritual overcoming of time and existence which the artist has succeeded in putting into eye and brow and mouth and every feature and has subtly supported by the contained suggestion, not emotional but spiritual, of every part of the body of the godhead and the rhythm of his meaning which he has poured through the whole unity of this creation. Or what of the marvellous genius and skill in the treatment of the cosmic movement and delight of the dance of Shiva, the success with which the posture of every limb is made to bring out the rhythm of the significance, the rapturous intensity and abandon of the movement itself and yet the just restraint in the intensity of motion..."

Indian painting has very recently emerged on the artistic horizon of the West. Those works of art, which less than a few decades ago

were considered as "curious" are now seen as forms of Indian aesthesis, worthy of serious study. Indian painting like the other two visual arts was meant not only for a narrow coterie of literati — its intention was to make the central ideas of Hindu spirituality — religion and Yoga, — intelligible to all, from the unlettered but not unlearned Hindu peasant to the intellectual Pundit. Therefore we find a simplicity in Indian Symbolism.

The peculiar art of Ajanta springs, says Sri Aurobindo, from the remarkable inward spiritual and psychic turn. They reveal an amazing technical skill in the fertility of invention, and a power of expression of her lofty spiritual ideals. It expresses in a lavish delight the opulence of the spiritual vision "revealing the pure intensities of meaning of the universal beauty" and the eye's free play in gratifying its desire for exuberance and perfection of form and colour. These combine to transmute the piece of art into a means of "an enlightenment of the inner being, through the power of a certain spiritually aesthetic Ananda."

Sri Aurobindo, describing the Adoration Group states: "If we look long at the adoration group of the mother and child before the Buddha, one of the most profound, tender and noble of the Ajanta masterpieces, we shall find that the impression of intense religious feeling of adoration there is only the most outward general touch in the ensemble of the emotion. That which it deepens to is the turning of the soul of humanity in love to the benignant and calm Ineffable which has made itself sensible and human to us in the universal compassion of the Buddha, and the motive of the soul-moment the painting interprets is the dedication of the awakening mind of the child — the coming younger humanity, to that in which already the soul of the mother has learned to find and fix its spiritual joy"

These arts should be safeguarded against the alarming onslaught of Modernism and the so-called artistic revolution. Its resurrection is indispensable, so too the revival of the profound spiritual ideals which have been the eternally underlying foundations of Indian life and culture and of which Indian art is a sublime expression.

MAURICE SHUKLA

PLAYS BY SRI AUROBINDO: A SURVEY (OR) TRIUMPH OF LOVE IN SRI AUROBINDO'S PLAYS

SRI Aurobindo is one of the foremost writers in the field of Indo-anglian literature in general and Indo-anglian drama in particular. An institution by himself, he was a great patriot, the fiery evangelist of Nationalism, a great scholar, the interpreter of the Veda, the critic of life and literature. Here we consider him as a 'man of letters in excelsis, a master of prose art, and a dramatist and poet of great power and versatility.'¹ With his wonderful mastery over languages like English, Sanskrit and Bengali, "Sri Aurobindo produces in one the impression that he is a born lord of language."² All his writings bear testimony to his genius and knowledge of the Eastern and the Western thought.

Sri Aurobindo is the author of many plays of which only five are complete: *Perseus the Deliverer*, *Vasavadutta*, *Rodogune*, *The Viziers of Bassora* and *Eric*. *The Hero and the Nymph*, a blank verse is a rendering of Kalidasa's *Vikramorvasiyam*. All the plays underline the need for love, which is the great solvent of all varieties of evil and can defy death and turn dross into gold. Aslaug sings in *Eric*,

Love is divine
Love is the hoop of the gods
Hearts to combine.

All the plays of Sri Aurobindo are steeped in poetry, romance and prophecy, and are recognizably Elizabethan in cast. But they recall the spirit and flavour of the distinctive dramatic type exemplified in different ways by the Sanskrit dramatists Bhasa, Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti — though, of course, all have Aurobindonian overtones. Though these plays form only a fragment of Sri Aurobindo's phenomenal writing, his contribution to the Indo-anglian Drama deserves a significant mention.

¹ Dr. K. R. S. Iyenger: *Indian Writing in English* — Asia Publishing House, 1962. Page 117.

² Dr. K. R. S. Iyenger: "Sri Aurobindo as a Literary Artist" in *Sri Aurobindo Mandir (Second) Annual*, Calcutta, 1943. Page 89.

PERSEUS THE DELIVERER

This is a play in five Acts, which belongs to the early period of Sri Aurobindo's literary activity. The legend of Perseus is made just the nucleus, around which have grown the scenes of a romantic story of human temperament, and life-impulses on the Elizabethan model. The legend passing through the pen of the playwright finally emerges with the message that love and compassion ultimately defeat hatred and terror and in the words of Perseus,

"...let the shrine
Be cleansed of its red memory of blood,
And the dread Form that lived within its precincts
Transfigure into a bright compassionate God"

and further,

"Man most must change who is a soul of Time;
His gods too change and live in larger light"

also,

"...little by little earth must open to heaven"

that is, man become *superman*.

According to the legend, Acrisius, the Argive King, warned by an oracle that his daughter's son would be the agent of his death, hoped to escape his doom by shutting her up in a brazen tower. But Zeus, the King of the Gods, descended into her prison in a shower of gold and Danaë bore to him a son named Perseus. Danaë and her child were exposed in a boat without sail or oar on the sea, but here too fate and the gods intervened and, guided by a divine protection, the boat bore her safely to the island of Seriphos. There Danaë was received and honoured by the King. When Perseus had grown to manhood, the King wishing to marry Danaë, decided to send him to his death and to that end, ordered him to slay the Gorgon Medusa in the wild, unknown and snowy North and bring to him her head,

the sight of which turned men to stone. Perseus was aided by Athene the Goddess of Wisdom, who gave him the divine sword Herpe, winged shoes to bear him through the air, her shield and the cap of invisibility. Thus he got success in his quest after many adventures. On his way back he came to Syria.

Here the play begins. First there is the *Prologue* in which a heated argument is held between the cruel god Poseidon and Athene, the Goddess of Wisdom. In the end of the Prologue, Athene bids farewell to Poseidon, "...until I press My feet upon thy blue enormous mane. And add thy ocean to my growing empire."

The whole of Syria is filled with terror created by Polydaon, the priest of the cruel god Poseidon. The Syrian King Cepheus and the Queen Cassiopea have a beautiful daughter by name Andromeda and a son Iolaus. Polydaon with his evil design, is waiting for a chance to create complete chaos in Syria in the name of Poseidon and, if possible, become its ruler. Meanwhile, Phineus, King of Tyre wants to marry Andromeda and thereby try to usurp the Syrian throne.

Tyrnaus and Smerdas, the merchants of Babylonia are saved from a ship-wreck on the coast of Syria by Perseus who arrives there. The prince Iolaus happens to meet Perseus and makes friends with him. Meanwhile, the two merchants are bound by Polydaon's men at his behest and taken to the temple of Poseidon as sacrifice at the altar. The news reaches the ear of the compassionate Andromeda. She secretly goes to the place and releases the merchants.

Enraged at this, Polydaon goes to the King's Court and demands "justice". Further, he creates confusion and terror throughout Syria in the name of the angry god Poseidon. Many men, women and children were killed. Exploiting the situation, he wins the people over to his side and starts executing his plans. Supported by the mob, he forcibly arrests Andromeda to be finally tied to the rocks near the seashore so that the monsters eat her body. He also plans to put an end to the lives of the King and the Queen after Andromeda's death.

Perseus suddenly goes to the shore and, with the aid of the favours granted by Athene, kills the sea-monsters. Andromeda is thus saved. Meanwhile, the Priest unable to bear the shock and frustration falls dead. Then the powerful Perseus saves the King, the Queen, the Prince and the merchants. The people are moved by the bene-

volent acts of Perseus and again they become obedient to the Syrian throne.

In the end, Perseus rejects all the offers made by the King as a token of gratitude, except the hand of the fair Andromeda. But, when Perseus and Andromeda were about to marry, Phineus, the King of Tyre challenges that he will forcibly take away and marry her. When he and his soldiers lift their hand against Perseus, they were turned into statues by Perseus with his acquired power. In the end, Perseus the Deliverer is praised by all.

The legend of Perseus favourably compares with our Indian legends. (For example, the birth of Perseus and the birth of Krishna). Thus such a story which ought to have been a powerful tragedy, is made to have a happy ending by the intervention of the supernatural. At the same time, the playwright never forgets to give a modern psychological touch to plot and characterisation.

The story of the play is straightforward. There are no puzzling intricacies in the plot, no psychological conundrums to tax the mind. The story finds a parallel in the play *Thesmophoriazusae* by Aristophanes, in which Mnesilochus, bound to a plank is at last rescued by Euripides. Also it reminds us of a Celtic myth according to which Devorgilla, the daughter of the King of the Isles is redeemed by Cuchulainn; and also of our Indian myth of Krishna who responds to Rukmini's appeal, eliminates his rival and marries her.

In the play, Perseus, is of course the hero. Though he does not appear as often as he ought to have appeared as a hero, he makes his presence and also conspicuous absence felt by all. The audience cannot fail to notice his acts of bravery and compassionate dealings. Similarly, Andromeda, the heroine of the play risks her life for a noble cause and becomes the cynosure of all eyes, not by her beauty alone. Polydaon the wicked Priest of a wicked God, is the symbol of corruption ever practised in the name of religion.

Then there are many minor characters well-portrayed, viz., the sincere prince Iolaus; the honest merchant Tyrnaus (as opposed to the selfish greedy, miser Smerdas); Phineus with evil designs; the Queen Cassiopea who unable to control her emotions, speaks wrecklessly at times; Cydone the faithful mistress of Iolaus; and a host of other characters.

There is good suspense in the play as the special powers of Perseus are not known in the beginning. Next, the Priest Poseidon successfully overpowers the King and snatches away Andromeda to punish her cruelly. Can there be a better climax to the story? Then the audience will be stunned to observe the unexpected dénouement. The tempo of the play is maintained throughout and the title is very significant.

Indeed the play bears testimony to the intellectual calibre of Sri Aurobindo. In the words of Mr. Gibert Norwood, it is a

“charming love-story full of romance and poetical loveliness.”

THE VIZIERS OF BASSORA

This play ('A Dramatic Romance') of 5 Acts by Sri Aurobindo is also Elizabethan in cast. The theme is again the triumph of love.

Haroun al Rasheed is the Caliph of Baghdad, having full religious authority over the Muslim kingdoms; Jaafar is his vizier. Alzayni, Haroun's cousin is the King of Bassora. Alfazzal Ibn Sawy, noted for his goodness, is his Chief Vizier, and the wicked Almuene bin Khakan, his second Vizier; Nureddene is the son of Alfazzal and Fareed, the son of Almuene, notorious like his father in cruelty.

Those were the days when slave-girls were bought and sold according to whims and fancies of rich men. Anice-aljalice, a beautiful Persian slave-girl is bought by the Chief Vizier with a view to present her to the King. In spite of the strict guard kept over her at home, Nureddene meets her and both fall in love. Reconciling himself to the situation, the Chief Vizier grants their wish. The wicked Almuene and his son Fareed, an unruly idiot give all sorts of trouble to Nureddene's family.

Meanwhile, the Chief Vizier has to be away from Bassora on an official work for some time. During the period his son Nureddene incurs heavy debt and loses everything except his slave-girl Anice. At last, he is advised to sell her too on a temporary basis. Almuene tries to catch hold of this opportunity at the slave-market; but he falls down at an encounter that follows there. Nureddene returns home with Anice.

To take full revenge on Nureddene, Almuene poisons the ears of the King, who issues orders to bind both Nureddene and Anice with ropes and present them to his Court and also to raze the Chief Vizier's mansion to the ground. Ajebe, the good nephew of Almuene secretly arranges for their escape to Baghdad.

In Baghdad, Nureddene and Anice happen to become guests of the hypocrite Ibrahim, the gardener of the Caliph Haroun al Rasheed, the Commander of the Faithful. Smelling the unusual activities in Ibrahim's house, the Caliph goes there disguised as a fisherman selling fried fish. Surprisingly enough, he asks for Anice, and sends Nureddene back to Bassora with a letter to the Sultan directing the latter to vacate the throne in favour of Nureddene.

But Nureddene is charged with forgery by the scheming Almuene and the ill-advised Sultan orders the execution of Nureddene. The good Ajebe argues in vain in his favour and is imprisoned.

The Chief Vizier returns to Bassora in time, but his appeal to stop the cruel punishment to his son falls on deaf ears. Finally Jaafar the Caliph's Vizier himself arrives at the spot with his troops, saves Nureddene from danger, makes him Sultan and returns Anice safely according to the Caliph's instructions.

The play, as the playwright himself calls it, is a pure 'dramatic romance'. The love-theme is excellently handled. There are characters of shining contrast: the good Alfazzal Ibn Sawy, the Chief Vizier of Bassora and the wicked Almuene the second Vizier; Nureddene who though full of youth is good like his father and is a thorough contrast to Fareed, who is a lusty tyrant; the Sultan who is wicked enough to be guided by Almuene; Ajebe who is noble unlike his uncle. Above all, there is the kind Caliph, 'the Commander of the Faithful', 'Allah's Vice Regent' who "puts down all evil and pluck the virtuous out of danger's hand." One note-worthy thing is that almost all the women characters — Ameena and Khatoon (both are sisters), Alfazzal's niece Doonya, Anice the heroine of the play and other slave-girls — are exceptionally good.

Though Elizabethan in cast, the play at times shows the influence of Sanskrit poetry on Sri Aurobindo — particularly in the description of Baghdad in Act IV Scene 1. Also we get an echo of the Indian Philosophy in the words of the hypocrite Ibrahim (Act IV Scene 1)

“hanker not unlawfully after perishable earthly goods; for verily, they are a snare and verily they entrap the feet of the soul as it toileth over the straight rough road to heaven.”

Both prose and blank verse are effectively employed. The very good suspense maintained is one of the chief attractions of the play; thus the fourth and the fifth Acts demand greater attention and interest from the audience. Unlike in other plays of Sri Aurobindo, lengthy speeches are interspersed with brief conversations here and there in the play. Staging the play will be rather difficult in view of its length and the number of characters.

VIKRAMORVASIE

OR

THE HERO AND THE NYMPH

Though this is a blank verse rendering of Kalidasa's Sanskrit play, *Vikramorvasiyam*, it is more than a translation in Sri Aurobindo's hands. As the author himself explains in his introduction on *Translating Kalidasa*, he has shown the talent of his original writing in English: “toning down of strangeness; reproduction of the exact image and not of the exact words, of associations and poetical beauty and flavour of the original; employing verbal expressions instead of sound to render certain impressions created by the dreamy movement and whispering assonances of the lines, sometimes discarding the original image altogether and replacing it by a more intelligent English image, giving importance to a closeness of word-value, not to oneness of word-meaning.”

King Pururavas helps the gods and shows his valour. Urvasie, “the ornament of Eden and its joy”, half-nymph and half woman is rescued by him from the hands of a Gandharva. Both fall in love with each other. Meanwhile, while staging a play in heaven under the direction of the preceptor Bharata, Urvasie unconsciously utters the name of his lover Pururavas. Enraged by this, Bharata curses her that she should go down to the earth. Thereupon Indra, the Lord of Gods takes pity and limits the curse. According to it, Urvasie goes to the earth, lives a married life with Pururavas and disappears after begetting a son. Stricken with unconsolable grief, the king

wanders in the forest nearby like a madman. At last, the compassionate gods grant him a passage to Indra's Kingdom by making him immortal to be ever united with Urvasie.

As Dr. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar remarks, "In *Urvasie* as well as *Love and Death*, indomitable love is presented as beating against the gates of mortality and gaining a victory over Death in one or another way." Pururavas is romantic unlike the tragic hero Lear of the storm scene. Pururavas is a true lover like Ruru who willingly barter away half his own life to live the other half with his restored wife; and Urvasie is truly worthy of his love. The playwright seems to imply that unlike his Savitri, Urvasie fails to transform our earth-nature and therefore seeks only personal happiness. Anyway, the story is quarried from the ranges of deathless Romance; embedded in the *Rigveda*, first embellished by the great poet Kalidasa, it is further refined by Sri Aurobindo in his own way.

VASAVADUTTA

According to the Editor of *The Collected Plays* of Sri Aurobindo, *Vasavadutta* exists in several versions, not all of them complete. What seems to be the last complete version has this note at the end: "Revised and recopied between April 8th and April 17th, 1916." An earlier version has a similar entry at the end: "Copied Nov. 2, 1915 — written between 18th and 30th October, 1915. Completed 30th October. Revised in April 1916, Pondicherry." The first edition was published in 1957 and reprinted in 1965.

The story of Vasavadutta traceable to Somadeva's *Kathasaritsagara*, dramatised by Bhasa in his Sanskrit play *Swapna-Vasavadatta*, has been given more psychological treatment by Sri Aurobindo and the romance is heightened in the play. Vuthsa Udayan, the hero of the play, is the young king of Cowsambie; and Yougundharayan, his wise old Minister and until recently his regent. Mahasegn, the king of Avunthie is his principal political rival and Vasavadutta is his beautiful daughter. With the help of his son Gopalaca, he has Udayan kidnapped and keeps him in jail under the vigilance of Vasavadatta, in order to make him a slave and in future a vassal of his empire acknowledging his superiority. But love works

making the jailor herself a prisoner. Then, to be free from the bondage of Mahasegn, both Udayan and Vasavadutta escape into Cowsambie with the hearty assistance of her other brother Vicurna, her captive princess Munjoolica, and others. This prestige-hurting event increased the wrath of Mahasegn, who suddenly sent his forces to capture Udayan again, but in vain. Meanwhile Gopalaca consoles him with wise words —

“No dishonour tarnishes the deed
 But as a hero with a hero’s child
 Has Vuthsa seized the girl. We planned a snare,
 He by a noble violence answers us.
 We sought to bribe him to a vassal’s state
 Dangling the jewel of our house in front;
 He keeps his freedom and enjoys the gem.

.....
 Let there be love’ twixt Vuthsa’s house and us.”

Then reconciling himself to the situation, King Mahasegn sends Gopalaca to endorse Udayan’s freedom and make Vasavadutta his queen.

As usual in Sri Aurobindo’s other plays, there is redemption by love here also. As both Udayan and Vasavadutta have already heard of each other and are thus mutually infatuated, the romantic audience may rather be disappointed for want of surprise or dramatic development of love between the two, except in the fact that forgetting her promise given to her father, Vasavadutta becomes fully enamoured of Udayan. There is not much suspense apart from their successful attempt to escape.

Excepting the character of Udayan, other characters are well drawn. Even with all his heroism and prowess, he seems to be inactive in the play. To the modern mind far removed from the chivalrous days of yore it may seem unwise to accept the friendship offered by his enemy’s son, much against the will of the ever-cautious Minister Yougundharayan. He is so innocent and good as to find that ‘earth is honey’. But he knows his position and thus surrenders everything to Vasavadutta, except his free kingdom; he says — “No, queen.

What's wholly mine, that wholly take. But this belongs to many other souls". On the other hand, Vasavadutta shines as a lively character. First being obedient to her father, she promises to keep Udayan as her slave and gradually subdue him to the status of vassal. But Nature conquers her and she becomes passionate. She is now prepared even to allow the wheels of Udayan's "fame go trampling over my house's head" and thus she becomes one with him in freeing themselves.

King Mahasegn is characterised as one determined to keep Udayan under subjugation by hook or crook, thus tries to make Vasavadutta his tool and is satisfied with her reply — "My duty to my country and my sire shall rule me". His queen Ungarica is presented as one helpless before his wrath, though she can understand the heart of her daughter. His sons Gopalaca and Vicurna shine by contrast in loyalty to the prestige-stricken father. Opposing the unjust conditions laid down by Mahasegn, Vicurna boldly flings remarks at him —

"Thus are vassals made?

Thus empires built? This is a shameful thing.

Release him first, then with proud war subdue."

Gopalaca, in spite of his support to his adamant father, shows wisdom in giving him a right advice in the end.

In Yougundharayan, we see a wise and cautious person with all the qualifications of a Minister. A 'wise deep-seeing statesman', he rightly expects some harm from Gopalaca (in Act I, Scene 2). Similarly, he demands bona fides of Munjoolica in Act V Scene 5 in spite of his anxiety to get some information about Udayan; he questions her —

"But who art thou and where shall be my surety

That thou art no Avunthian sent to lure

Our force into an ambush?"

Then, we get a host of minor characters duly portrayed: Koomanwath the loyal captain of Udayan's army; Rebha the sincere Governor of Ujjayinie; Munjoolica the tactful captive princess serving

Vasavadutta; Umba her faithful handmaiden; and others.

Again Sri Aurobindo shows himself as the master of blank verse in this play also. Further, as in other plays of the playwright, the directions of movements and actions are left to the imagination of the reader here also.

RODOGUNE

Dated February 1906, *Rodogune* belongs to the end of the period of Sri Aurobindo's stay at Baroda. It was posthumously published first in Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual, 1958, and also issued in book form in the same year.

This play in 5 Acts is located in Syria of the playwright's imagination, not the Syria of history and geography. Rodogune, the Parthian Princess is captured by Syria and made attendant of her queen Cleopatra. Antiochus and Timocles, the sons of Cleopatra by her first husband have been brought up in Egypt by their uncle Ptolemy. At the death of Cleopatra's second husband, they return to Syria. The selfish queen mistakes fulsome flattery for real love and rejects Antiochus. He revolts to claim the throne of Syria; and both Rodogune and Antiochus who are mutually attracted by love, join together in this venture. Timocles too falls in love with Rodogune; but temporarily he submits to the Chancellor Phayllus' cunningness and his sister Cleone's seductions. A civil war takes place between the brothers in respect of Rodogune and the throne of Syria. At last, Antiochus returns to Syria with Rodogune and gives up his claims to the throne, but not to Rodogune's love. Knowing that Timocles too is enamoured of Rodogune, Phayllus exploits the situation to meet his selfish ends and gets Antiochus secretly killed. Unable to bear the unexpected shock, Rodogune also dies. Realising the utter futility of his attempts, Timocles now turns upon Phayllus and Cleone and kills them. Thus the tragic end of the play has only Cleopatra and Timocles left to suffer for their misdeeds.

The plot is powerful and the characters of the play are well-drawn. Antiochus is a hero subjected to fate. But, he is frank and straightforward enough to climb the throne 'not by vulgar riot, not by fratricidal murder, but up the heroic steps of ordered battle.'

Even caught in danger, he turns not his back 'lest the proud Fate avert her eyes from me'; and he likes to face a 'hero's death' if he cannot win the battle. Though brought up along with him by Ptolemy his brother Timocles is different from him and thus becomes a victim to the net spread by the wicked Phayllus and Cleone.

Cleopatra's mother-love is selfish and possessive and she resembles King Lear of Shakespeare in her behaviour towards her sons. The main attraction of the play is Rodogune herself who is 'the haunting creature of beauty and romance and tragedy.' She fully responds to Antiochus' love and in her words:—

I have no country, I have only thee.
I shall be where thou art; it is all I know
And all I wish for.

Then there are other interesting woman characters, viz., Cleone the scheming woman and Eunice the undemanding princess. Other minor characters help the movement of the story.

The play shines with some tense, dramatic situations; for example, the situation existing just after the murder of Antiochus (Act V Scene 4). Further there are many eloquent passages which will be ever-green in our memory. For example, Cleopatra to Rodogune in Act I Scene 3.

"My life begins again,
My life begins again in my dear sons
And my dead husband lives. All's sweetly mended.
I do not wish for hatred any more.
The horrible and perilous hands of war
Appal me. O let our people sit at ease
.....
Peace, peace, let us have peace for ever more."

Antiochus to Rodogune in Act II Scene 3.

"O, play not with the hours, my Rodogune,
Why should brief man defer his joys and wait

As if life were eternal? Time does not pause,
Death does not tarry."

As Dr. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar remarks, "his long soliloquy (Act IV Scene 4) on the eve of his decision to return to Syria and throw himself on his brother's mercy is well-sustained."

The play abounds in crisp talk which accelerates the action.

ERIC

This play in 5 Acts was written by Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry in 1912 or 1913. Several drafts were made of some of its Acts and each carries its own later corrections. The play was first published in *Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual*, 1960, and also issued in book form in the same year.

Eric is a very powerful dramatic romance which transports us to Norway of ancient times. Eric is the elected king of Norway, a veritable 'Man of Destiny'; and Swegn is his enemy. Aslaug, the sister of Swegn and Hertha his wife, come to Eric's court, dressed as dancing girls, in order to put an end to the life of Eric. But Eric falls in love with Aslaug and she cannot resist her response in spite of her determination to kill him. Even the tactful Hertha becomes helpless. In a highly exciting scene, Aslaug lifts the dagger and lowers it twice, then flings it on the ground falling on her knees at Eric's feet. Eric is bold enough to offer a chance to Aslaug to 'dance with the dagger' and fulfil her design, but love triumphs. In the ensuing battle Swegn is defeated by Eric but left alive according to his promise. Further, Eric honours him with his lost titles and wife and marries Aslaug.

Thus as Sri Aurobindo desires, all are redeemed by love. As Eric says,

"...some day surely.

The world too shall be saved from death by Love."

As Dr. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar writes, "Love triumphs over Hate, Freya over Thor, even as Pallas Athene triumphs over Poseidon in *Perseus the Deliverer*."

The whole play almost revolves round Eric and Aslaug; Swegn and Hertha just assist to further the action. Unlike Swegn, Eric is a powerful king, at the same time bold and straightforward. Even after knowing Aslaug's intended aim, he offers her a chance to 'dance with the dagger.' Aslaug's character is also well-drawn. The other characters, viz., Hardicnut, Ragnar, Gunthar and Harald pale into insignificance.

The conflict in the mind of Aslaug is well presented by her throwing of the necklace and taking it back (Act I Scene 3). The situation takes a dramatic turn in Act II, Scene 1. Eric is presented as the Man of Destiny and fate is the dominant element in the play. As Aslaug says in Act III Scene 2 "Fate orders all". Further the necklace presented to Aslaug by Eric appears to be symbolic. Aslaug rightly remarks in Act III Scene 1;

"The necklace? I will bring it.

Rubies of passion! Blood-drops still of death!"

Though there is sufficient action in the play, the long Elizabethan speeches and soliloquies reduce scope for much action. The blank verse artistically employed shines throughout the play. Regarding description like 'antelope eyes' in Act I, Scene 1, and granting three demands, the play-wright seems to have been influenced by Sanskrit poets and the Ramayana respectively. Whatever be other factors, there is the triumph of love in Sri Aurobindo's plays.

S. KRISHNA BHATTA

SRI AUROBINDO ON EDUCATION DURING CHILDHOOD

THE present system of education lays over emphasis on curricular material and neglects the medium and instruments of education. Sri Aurobindo has emphasized the need of mastery of the medium of education during the early period, instead of introducing a variety of subjects from the beginning. Sufficient opportunity has to be provided to the child for acquiring the necessary command over language, which would serve as a strong foundation for subsequent learning. Such training in language is possible through the medium of books based on child-interest, which the child selects and reads of his own accord without any outside compulsion. The uninteresting spelling, grammar and reading books have to be replaced by interesting narratives, tales and stories which appeal to the imagination and fancy, facts about nature which satisfy his intellectual curiosity and the inborn spirit of inquiry. During this period, apart from the mother tongue "all other study should be devoted to the perfection of mental functions and the moral character."¹ The natural tendencies of the child have to be utilized for introducing him to the new vistas of knowledge. As Sri Aurobindo says "Every child is a lover of interesting narrative, a hero worshipper and a patriot. Appeal to these qualities in him and through them let him master without knowing it the living and human parts of his nation's history. Every child is an inquirer, an investigator, analyser, a merciless anatomist. Appeal to these qualities in him and let him acquire without knowing it the right temper and the necessary fundamental knowledge of the scientist. Every child has an insatiable intellectual curiosity and turn for metaphysical enquiry. Use it to draw him on slowly to an understanding of the world and himself. Every child has the gift of imitation and a touch of imaginative power. Use it to give him the groundwork of the faculty of the artist."²

For such education, in addition to the mastery of the mother tongue the need for training for the proper development of mental functions is imperative. Sri Aurobindo has stressed the importance of

¹ Sri Aurobindo: *A System of National Education, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education*. Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education 1960, p. 28.

² *Ibid.*, p. 28.

sense training as the basis for such training, as the clarity of perception depends on the accuracy and sensitiveness of the senses. This education of senses involves two stages — first the reception of correct information by the sense mind through the agency of the nerves and second the transmission of the undistorted impression from the sense mind to the intellect. This training according to Sri Aurobindo is not merely a mechanical process but is rather associated with the development of steadiness of nerves, discipline of emotions and purification of moral habits.

Training in attention and concentration by arousing the interest of the child in the objects is a pre-requisite for efficiency of sense organs. Still another significant feature of visual sense improvement pointed out by Sri Aurobindo is the drawing of objects seen as he says "It is also very desirable that the hand should be capable of coming to help the eye in dealing with the multitudinous objects of its activity so as to ensure accuracy."¹ "Imitation by hand ensures accuracy of observation. This is one of the first uses of drawing and it is sufficient in itself to make the teaching of this subject a necessary part of the training of the organs."²

The sense training serves on one hand as foundation of the education for the perfection of mental functions on which rests the capacity for all learning, and on the other hand forms the basis of the vital education by enabling the child to appreciate and create the harmony of colours and forms and the rhythm of the sounds.

Sense training as the preliminary mental education helps in accuracy and precision of observation. For the training in observation Sri Aurobindo has stressed the importance of arousing interest which would lead to spontaneous concentration of attention towards the object observed. He suggests that the study of the various aspects of science should start with observation as he says "The observation and comparison of flowers, leaves, plants, trees, will lay the foundation of botanical knowledge without loading the mind with names and that dry set acquisition of information which is the beginning of cramming and detested by the healthy human mind when it is fresh from nature and unspoiled by unnatural habits. In the same way by the observation of stars, astronomy, by the observation of earth,

¹ Ibid., p. 36.

² Ibid., p. 36.

stones, etc. geology, by the observation of insects and animals automology and zoology may be founded. A little later chemistry may be started by interesting observation of experiments without any formal teaching or heaping on the mind of formulas and book knowledge.”¹

Incidentally through such observation the child can be trained in comparison, contrast, classification of things, judgment of the various classes of objects, with comparison and contrast the ability for analogical reasoning is bound to develop e.g. the child may be able to draw the analogy when comparing heat produced in the body with the heat produced in burning. Opportunity for drawing analogies may be made available to him while he is comparing plants and animals.

Imagination is another aspect which has to be developed in the child. “It may be divided into three functions, the forming of mental images, the power of creating thoughts, images or imitations or new combinations of existing thoughts and images, the appreciation of soul in things, beauty, charm, greatness, hidden suggestiveness, the emotion and spiritual life that pervades the world.”²

The most significant feature stressed by Sri Aurobindo in the training of observation, comparison, contrast and the other mental functions is that these faculties have first to be exercised on concrete objects and later on abstractions i.e. on words and ideas so that the child may be assisted in getting a clear understanding of exact word meanings and in distinguishing between subtle differences in the meanings of similar words and the finer differences between ideas. Through comparison, contrast, the child has also to be helped to understand the differences in the construction and rhythm of different sentences.

R. K. JOSHI

¹ Ibid p. 38-39.

² Ibid p. 40.

REVIEWS

Gems from the Veda by *M. P. Pandit*, Ganesh & Company, 1973.
Rs. 6.00

With at once a sense of the cosmic and the simplicity of a thirsty flame, light too intense for common sight has been brought within a natural eyefield. This is an emblem of the work of Sri M. P. Pandit. *Gems from the Veda* is another such offering.

Show not beyond us, come.

(*Rig. Veda*, 1.4.3)

There are several ways in which the Divine responds to the call of the ardent seeker. The response may be direct or it may be indirect. The Divine may reveal itself in flashes of illumination that are beyond the ready understanding of the human mind. This calls for a further effort on the part of the seeker to grasp and assimilate its message, an effort which may or may not be entirely successful. That is why the seer prays to the Divine to come down to him, to his attained level so that he may commune fruitfully with its consciousness, become one with it in his being.

Ascent of the lower is seconded and fulfilled by the descent of the higher.

Selections for the opening and passage to the spiritual consciousness and life are presented from Sri Aurobindo's translations with transparent commentary founded upon his interpretation. Thus, the explanations identified with his revelation of the Riks inner radiance provide meditative themes for an aspirant.

*By the truth in their thoughts
they brought to birth the Dawn.*

(*Rig. Veda*, 7.76.4)

The Dawn is the outbreak of the Divine Light on the being emerging out of the Night of Nescience and Igno-

rance. It is the herald of the glories of knowledge, power and bliss to come. But this Dawn does not appear all of a sudden. Its advent has to be prepared for, conditions created in one's being and nature that make it ready for the revelation. The seeker has to open himself systematically to the reign of truth, rejecting the rule of falsehood. His mind and its activity of thinking must be filled with the movements of truth. Truth in thought, truth in feeling, truth in speech, must become normal to his life. It is only then that the Dawn consents to manifest and open the gates of Delight.

Perhaps the ultimate appreciation of the work is that in Sri Pandit's hands the brightnesses and strengths of the body of truth which has issued in a voice of light from the Source, from the Vedic Rishis, from Sri Aurobindo, has been held and given purely.

TATSAT

The Quest, The Drugs, and Yoga By *S. K. Ramachandra Rao*.
Indian Institute of World Culture, Bangalore 4. Price Rs. 2.00

In this striking address on the subjective turn of humanity and the routes taken to arrive at the basic Reality of existence, the author analyses the ways of escape from the din and noise of the world and the more positive means offered by spirituality to live in the midst of the struggle for progress and peace. Inevitably he discusses the question of drugs and the claim made on their behalf as doors of perception of the inner worlds and as providing the easiest means for the exploration and conquest of the realms of the larger consciousness and being. He exposes the untenability of this claim and in pointing out the vast difference between Yoga and the cult of drugs, underlines the superficiality of the changes effected by the latter. To quote his own words:

Drug action is essentially negative. Its effect is temporary and its impact is by no means lasting. The level at which it works is

strictly physical and the changes it involves are but chemical.

In yoga the visions are not in the nature of hallucinations; the individual is aware of his own subjectivity and can at will withdraw from the visions, unlike with drugs where the individual is a hapless victim to the hallucinations.

The purpose of all yoga is to render the mind utterly passive, to dispossess it and relax it, to loosen it from all thought-activity. Psychedelic drugs do exactly the opposite.

The senses do not function in samadhi whereas in the psychedelic experience the senses are extraordinarily active in their organisational function.

The 'illumination' that occurs by the drug intake is merely a shift in one's perceptual field; there is only a boundary shift in the awareness and the body-awareness does not in any way get disturbed or dissolved. Yogic illumination eliminates the body awareness altogether for without this detachment the highest purity of mind in perfect concentration (dharma-megha) is not achieved. A mere distortion of spatio-temporal perception should not be mistaken for revelation of reality or what the yoga styles as ritambhara.

Dr. Ramachandra Rao further points out that the drugs only extend — or appear to extend — the normal consciousness; they do not change the order of consciousness and even these extensions are temporary whereas the 'transcendences' in the yoga-states have the effect of steadily drawing the normal consciousness into their own state and transmuting it gradually.

A cogent exposition of the subject deserving wider publicity.

Can One be Scientific and Yet Spiritual? *Swami Budhananda.*
 Pub: Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati (U.P.) Rs. 2.00

Discussing this question in a series of talks, the author traces the developments in the realms of science and religion from the primitive times and underlines the price science had to pay at the hands of religionists for every important discovery made. Rightly he pays tribute to the undaunting spirit of the scientists who bore the brunt of the attack, especially in Europe, and records with gratitude the services rendered by science in exploding many of the supersti-

tions fostered by organised religion. Citing from the utterances of some of the modern renowned scientists, he points out how the best minds among them have come to recognise that further development of science can only be possible in the light of the Wisdom of the Spirit.

We wish the writer had made a distinction between religion and spirituality. Much of what he writes regarding the services of religion and the future vistas opened by it really applies to spirituality. His effective 'imaginary dialogue' between the scientist and the religious person gains conviction only because it draws upon the spiritual experience and realisation of saints like Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

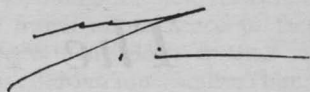
The book concludes on the right note: "Neither 'surface scientist' nor 'surface spirituals' are going to show mankind ways of solving the problems of existence. A time has come, a new time, when we require an altogether new structure of thought, a new realism, a new idealism, and more comprehensive terms of reference to face our highly complicated problems which are today global in their setting, and bewildering in their ramifications Man must address himself to these tasks simultaneously — the conquest of inner and outer nature; in other words, to being spiritual and scientific in one."

M. P. PANDIT



The Advent

No joy can be greater
than that of serving the Divine



The ADVENT

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The intellect is not all ;
a guide within awaits our question.

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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

OUR SWEET MOTHER

LORD, this morning Thou hast given me the assurance that Thou wouldst stay with us until Thy work is achieved, not only as a consciousness which guides and illumines but also as a dynamic Presence in action. In unmistakable terms Thou hast promised that all of Thyself would remain here and not leave the earth-atmosphere until earth is transformed. Grant that we may be worthy of this marvellous Presence and that henceforth everything in us be concentrated on the one will to be more and more perfectly consecrated to the fulfilment of Thy sublime Work.

THE Mother's prayer to Sri Aurobindo — so beautiful, so poignant and so true — we, her children, now turn round and re-address to Her own sweet self.

The new creation that the Mother embodied is not lost, it is not wiped out with the disappearance of the material body. It has

been a true creation and is indelibly implanted in the earth-atmosphere and will remain there for eternity. And it is not merely a static structure, it is a living and growing entity. It is not in the earth's atmosphere a mere image or a lifeless picture transfixed there as on a canvas strip. It is living and growing — living and growing not only in itself and for itself, but making its habitat the atmosphere also live and grow in new dimensions, that is to say, transforming it in accordance with its own developing truth and reality. It is growing and characteristically growing downwards, that is to say, extending itself more and more towards an earthly manifestation or incarnation. It is like the ashwattha tree spoken of by the Rishis of old that stands upside down, the roots upward and the branches spreading out downwards — indeed it is growing downward — drawing its life-sap from above. The physical embodiment, the materialisation of the inner formation will happen in course of time inevitably. It will touch the ground, the very ground of the earth and stand as its marvel-creation — through a process of calamities and catastrophes perhaps — which may indeed be minimised if circumstances permit and the Grace admits; but however the process, the end is decreed, for the decree is that of the Divine and it is the destiny of earth-consciousness.

(2)

This is however the Mother's part of the work and she is doing it perfectly, on her side. But what about ourselves? What is our share of the work? For it is intended that we, her children, should be collaborators in her work, so that we too may be integrated into the Divine realisation. The Mother herself has indicated the line of service we can render to her in the communication I just read out to you:

“... henceforth everything in us be concentrated on the one will to be more and more perfectly consecrated to the fulfilment of Thy sublime Work.”

The situation has somewhat changed since then and has become more difficult. On the departure of Sri Aurobindo, sometime after,

Mother gave us a message, an admonition, pointing to us the difficulty:

“Pour suivre Sri Aurobindo dans la grande aventure de son yoga intégral, il fallait toujours être guerrier; mais maintenant qu'il nous a quitté physiquement, il faut être un héros.”

24-II-1952

(To follow Sri Aurobindo in the great adventure of his integral yoga, one needed always to be a warrior; but now that he has physically left us, one needs to be a hero.)

24-II-1952

At present when the Mother too is no more there — apparently — we seem to be abandoned children, what are we to do or be? It is no longer sufficient to be a warrior, not sufficient even to be a hero, What should we be? Something greater than the hero. One must be a Yogi. The yogi is one who has the Divine Consciousness or the Mother's consciousness. If you find that it is not so easy for one to be a yogi, even if one tries sincerely, I suggest to you another alternative. It is to leap into another dimension: to be a child, a child of the Mother.

I give you this subject for meditation: on becoming ... a child, an ideal child of the Mother.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

CONSCIOUSNESS

CONSCIOUSNESS is not an unaccountable freak or a chance growth or a temporary accident in a material and inconscient universe.

It may so appear on the surface and physical science, since by its very terms it is limited to the examination of appearances and must start from the surface phenomena, may choose or may have no alternative but to treat it on that basis. But surface appearances are not the reality of things, they may be a part of the truth but they are not the whole reality. One must look beyond the external appearances of things before one can know things in themselves: especially first appearances are apt to be deceptive. It is not by regarding a flash of lightning as a chance ebullition of fiery temper in a cloud that one can know the truth of electricity. We must go far and dig deep before we can get at the truth about the Force that manifested the lightning. Consciousness may similarly appear as a phenomenon, an outbreak of sentience in the obscurity of an originally nescient being; but we must go far beyond that specious appearance if we would know the true nature and origin and discover the entire possibilities of this apparently strange and anomalous force. For anomalous it is, since it occurs in a fundamentally inconscient universe of Matter and strange and curious it is in its reactions, aberrations, workings, destiny.

Physical science — and psychology in its present methods is only an extension of physical science — conducts its search into things from down upwards; it regards Matter as the foundation and the bottom of things and having searched into that foundation, got as it thinks to the very bottom, it believes, or once believed, it has by that very fact understood their depths, their centre, their height and top. But this is a naïve error. The truth of things is in their depths or at their centre and even at their top. The truth of consciousness also is to be found at its top and in its depths or at its centre; but when we enter into the depths of consciousness or when we try to reach its centre, we go off into trance and likewise before we get to its top, we go off into trance.

Our searches into Matter also are vitiated by the fact that in Matter consciousness is in a trance and gives no apparent response to

our probings. In living Matter, not yet mental, still subconscious, it does give sometimes a reply, but not one that we can understand, and, as for mind in the animal, it is only consciousness half-awakened out of the original trance of inconscient Matter: even in the human being it starts from an original nescience, its expressions, its data, all that we can ordinarily observe of it, are the movements of Ignorance fumbling for knowledge. We cannot understand from these alone what consciousness really is nor discover its source or its supreme possibilities or its limits if indeed it has any limits and is not like being itself, infinite and illimitable. Only if we can get away from this imperfection and ignorance to some top of its possibilities or to its latent depths or some hidden centre, can we discover its true nature and through it the very self and reality of our being.

How do we know that there is a top to consciousness or an inner centre, since these are not apparent on the face of things? By its supernormal, not its normal manifestations and phenomena, for the top of things is always supernormal, it is only the bottom and what is near to the bottom that are normal, at any rate to our ordinary consciousness in the material universe. Especially we can know by the supernormal becoming normal to us — by Yoga.

1st September 1947

SRI AUROBINDO

our probing. In living matter the vital mental will subordinates it, does give sometimes a reply, but not one that we can understand, and as for mind in the animal it is only a consciousness half-awakened out of the original trance of unconscious matter, even in the human being it starts from an original restlessness its expressions its desires all that we can ordinarily observe of it, is the movement of ignorance, jumping for knowledge.

ON SADHANA

(A LETTER)

THERE is indeed something preparing to descend and the dream was probably a suggestion to you to stay so as to receive its touch after which your sadhana could proceed at home without difficulty, as there would be something else within you doing the sadhana with your constant assent as the one necessity. The only difficulty in the way of health is a certain obscurity in the body consciousness itself which makes it consent readily to habitual touches of the force that makes for illness; otherwise if the body consciousness as well as the mind and vital were open, any illness that came would immediately be dissipated. Keep a quiet and steady will for the opening of the consciousness and the union and do not allow depression or any idea of frustration. Keep also a concentrated call in the heart. With those two things the result is sure.

18-9-1934

SRI AUROBINDO

SAVITRI: A STUDY IN DEPTH

Book II, Canto 1

The World Stair

A limitless movement filled a limitless peace.

Where Space is a vast experiment of the soul,

In a deep oneness of all things that are,

The universe of the Unknown arose.

ASWAPATHY enters the unknown universe; but it is not altogether unknown since though not seen actually it has a resemblance, a kinship to all that has been visualised in dreams or imagination; it is pervaded by an unlimited peace and an illimitable movement; and the vast space seems to be a laboratory for the soul's unending experimentations.

A self-creation without end or pause

It poured into the Ever-stable's flux

A bacchic rapture and revel of Ideas,

The Eternal offers himself as the stable base; his force, the creative force in the vortex of its dance and its ecstasy, pours forth the seeds or the subtle truth formulations that sprout up in their gross forms in the universe; the Stable thus becomes the dynamis; the Being the Becoming and in the process of the bacchic rapture and the revelry are flung a myriad energies containing the principles of their self-determination and self-development; it is a self-creation since it is the same Brahman who is present in both the passive and the active aspects, and it is a self-extension.

The Eternal's stillness saw an unmoved joy
 His universal Power at work display
 In plots of pain and dramas of delight
 The wonder and beauty of her will to be.

.....
 Here all experience was a single plan,
 The thousandfold expression of the One.

The Supreme in his poise of stillness, witnesses in an unruffled, detached fashion the plot, be it a comedy or tragedy, unfolding; its culmination in pain or pleasure convey to him the same delight since he has the capacity of drawing an equal rasa; they are a single movement; the various experiences flow from the One in the many; the positive is concealed in the negative. 'For the positive and the negative exist not only side by side, but in relation to each other and by each other; they complete...and explain one another. Each by itself is not really known; we only begin to know it in its deeper truth when we can read into it the suggestions of its apparent opposite. It is through such a profounder catholic intuition and not by exclusive logical oppositions that our intelligence ought to approach the Absolute.'¹

He was one spirit with that immensity.

.....
 Aspects of being donned world-outline; forms
 That open moving doors on things divine,

.....
 The symbols of the Spirit's reality,
 The living bodies of the Bodiless

The One in his vast self-expansion appears an immensitude; the Being dons innumerable forms, but the material form itself is a symbol of the indwelling reality; the bodiless assumes several bodies; the world itself and the myriad formations are a frame-work to contain the uncontainable; they are the peep-holes disclosing the spirit draped in the manifest.

¹ *The Life Divine*, p. 341.

The heaven-hints that invade our earthly lives,
 The dire imaginations dreamed by Hell,

 Were set in their sublime proportions there.

The joys of heaven, the tortures of hell that are pictured or imagined are seen there in their absoluteness; their unmitigated or undiminished reflection on the earth may prove devastating; the instrumentation is too weak to stand the impact.

They crowded the widened spaces of his mind,

 These now became new portions of himself,

 Or the embroidered tissue of his sense:
 These took the place of intimate human things
 And moved as close companions of his thoughts,

All things that have remained occult, remote and strange to the normal consciousness of the human mind, have now become familiar; they have become so intimate as to form part of the tissue of the overmind consciousness that has dawned on him; they move as bosom companions sharing his thoughts.

Unnumbered tones struck from one harmony's strings;

 Brought notes of some perfection yet unseen,

 Only was missing the sole timeless Word

 The integer of the Spirit's perfect sum
 That equates the unequal All to the equal One,
 The single sign interpreting every sign,
 The absolute index to the Absolute.

The multi-formations are the different notes struck to produce a single harmony; they are the several orchestrations to create a sym-

phony; they are the signs and the symbols of a perfection to come and still hidden; each has a part to play in the advancement of the design, a brick to contribute in the construction of the mansion of Perfection; there is something missing: a principle of equation between the one and the many who exceeds the one; "This incoercible unity in all divisions and diversities is the mathematics of the Infinite, indicated in a verse of the Upanishads — 'This is the complete and That is the complete; subtract the complete from the complete, the complete is the remainder,'"¹ there is not yet found the index to the Absolute, the master-key that can open the mystery of every form, unriddle and interpret.

'Brahman, as he exceeds the passivity and the activity, so too exceeds the unity and multiplicity. He is one in himself, but not with a self-limiting unity exclusive of the power of multiplicity, ... he is not the mathematical integer, one, which is incapable of containing the hundred and is therefore less than the hundred.... One in himself, he is one in the many and the many are one in him."²

He saw a lone immense high-curved world-pile
Erect like a mountain chariot of the Gods
Motionless under an inscrutable sky.

Aswapathy in his heightened consciousness sees a number of subtle worlds walled in the inner self; the graded order of the worlds appears clearly to his mystic vision; they stand one over the other producing the impression of a mountain chariot of the Gods towering into unimaginable heights.

Climbing with foam-maned waves to the Supreme

.....
As climbs a storeyed temple-tower to heaven
Built by the aspiring soul of man to live
Near to his dream of the Invisible.

.....
It marries the earth to screened eternities.

¹ *The Life Divine*, p. 307.

² *The Life Divine*, p. 516, 517.

The heights to which these worlds rise are like the waves, each of which is higher than the preceding, invading the sky or they are like the man-built temple towers representing an attempt, an aspiration to reach the Beyond, to unite the earth and the heaven, to establish a communion with the Divine, to emerge from the lower to the higher nature.

Alone it points us to our journey back

.....

Planted on earth it holds in it all realms:

It is a brief compendium of the Vast.

This was the single stair to being's goal.

The higher has its foundation on the lower; all the potential is there concealed in the Inconscience; the light is concealed in the darkness; ignorance is the crust of wisdom; the earth is a compendium of the Vast; it is from the basic foundation of the earth that ascent and aspiration are possible since the One has taken a leap and has to re-enact his come-back through the several stages of his descent 'these grades have marked her giant downward plunge'.

It models in us our diviner parts,

.....

Makes yearn this life of flesh to intangible aims,

.....

If earth were all and this were not in her,

Thought could not be nor life-delight's response:

.....

This higher scheme of being is our cause

And holds the key to our ascending fate;

In the earth nature is the hidden spark; it is this which creates constant dissatisfaction; it is the irritant that makes him feel his insufficiency; cherish higher yearnings that satisfy not the body alone but the spirit also; if that has not been the aim, this life of flesh cannot have the higher urges to model itself on the divine; the design of moulding itself on a higher pattern affords the key for man's aspira-

tion and struggle; if it has been the intention to permit him to wallow in the mire of obscurity, of darkness of inconscience, there is no need for the thinking mind, an unquenchable thirst for the Beyond and a hunger for perfection.

Our life is a holocaust of the Supreme.
The great World-Mother by her sacrifice
Has made her soul the body of our state ;

.....
An idol of self is our mortality.

.....
An atavism of higher births is hers,

.....
And her return to immortality ;

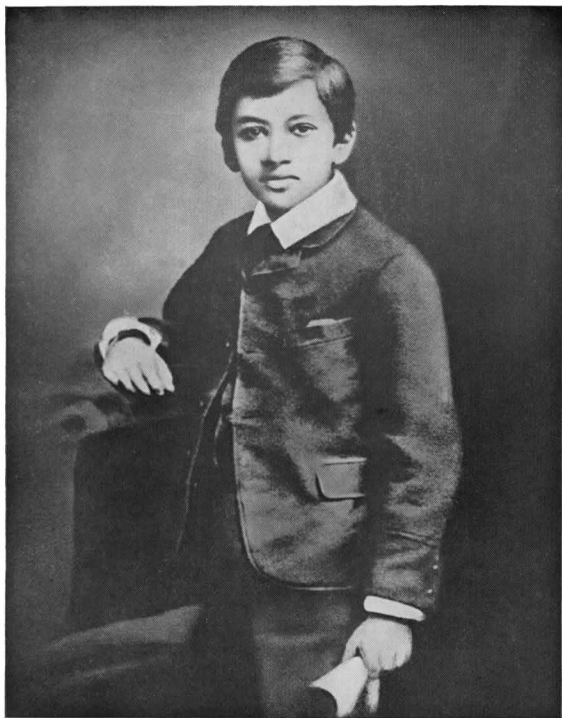
The Supreme has made the sacrifice by his downward plunge and omnipresence in every form created by his puissance, his Shakti; she gives the shape, the abode for his indwelling; man therefore is not alone and need not grow despondent in his strivings; the Immortal himself is there lodged within and can guide him aright; the earth itself is not an isolated fragment but is a part of a wider fabric of interconnected, subtle and unseen worlds; the urges from above, their pressures on his life are always active on him; the spirit has a memory of its higher births; man therefore can be a conscious partner in the movement for a return to immortality taking advantage of the guidance of the spirit within and the urges from above.

His vast design accepts a puny start.

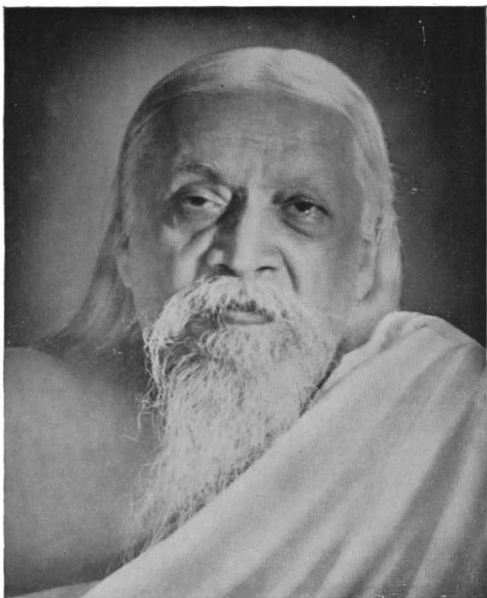
.....
Yet some first image of greatness trembles there,

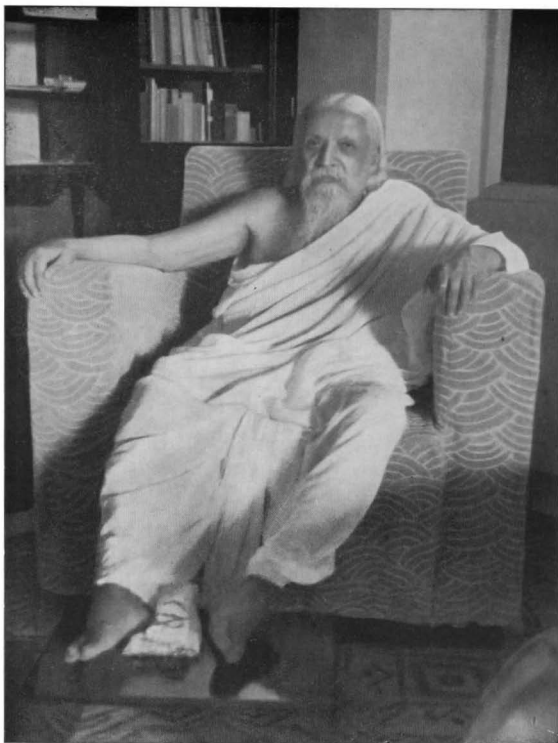
.....
This faint and fluid sketch of soul called man
Shall stand out on the background of long Time
A glowing epitome of eternity,
A little point reveal the infinitudes.

The inconceivable and vast design of the Almighty starts with a









OUR HOMAGE

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puny beginning of obscurity and inconscience; but even there in Matter, the quiverings of the concealed bright image is not undisclosed to the knowing eye of intuition; man, the individual soul is a time bubble sailing on the vast sea of the timeless, sucking in the experience in the several cycles of his mortality; he is an infinite-seeking finite; he is a speck but the whole universe is contained therein; he is a drop but it encloses the whole ocean and this discovery takes an aeonic struggle.

A Mystery's process is the universe.

.....
 Where zero held infinity in its sum
 And All and Nothing were a single term,
 An eternal negative, a matrix Nought:

The whole process of manifestation presents itself as a mystery too deep to be probed by human reason; there are so many layers of consciousness, the material, the vital and the mental and behind there are a number of subtle worlds acting and reacting on each other; man may be assailed by a doubt when he looks at the variegated phenomena whether there is any meaning in what appears illogical and haphazard; he may be stricken by a wonder whether there is any destination for all this movement; it is only a higher intuition that can find a binding unity in what appears to be so disjointed; it sees the fundamental sameness on which occurs the play of the difference; it is possible to yield to a temptation that everything comes from and sinks into a zero; it may be asserted that the world is Nought and that everything after a fitful glow has its rest there; but nothing comes out of nothing and the apparent zero has all the potentialities that manifest themselves; from the swoon of Inconscience, each form comes into existence bespeaking or symbolising the glory of the eternal of which they are a part. 'The Absolute is not a mystery of infinite blankness nor a supreme sum of negations; nothing can manifest that is not justified by some self-power....'¹

A slow reversal's movement then took place.

¹ *The Life Divine*, p. 291.

Upon earth's new-born soil God's tread was heard.

.....
 Across the thick smoke of earth's ignorance

A Mind began to see and look at forms

And groped for knowledge in the nescient Night:

After the plunge into the inconscience, the reverse movement from involution to evolution commences; a gaseous explosion, the star dust and the solar system and the earth and in the all-encompassing smoke of Ignorance, the consciousness looks around trying to come back to its own; but feels helpless and held down by the stone-grip of Matter.

Because eternal eyes turned on earth's gulfs

.....
 And saw a shadow of the Unknowable

.....
 Creation's search for self began its stir.

.....
 A miracle of the Absolute was born,

Infinity put on a finite soul,

All ocean lived within a wandering drop,

.....
 To live this Mystery out our souls came here.

Matter slowly struggles into life; life into mind; the mental man becomes aware of something within which is greater than life and mind; this leads him on his voyage of strivings; the quest is reuced by a dim reflection of the Infinite's image on the earth's gulf; this self-look of the Lord makes man restless to reach beyond the shadow to the substance; the mental man wakes into the spiritual man; he realises that the goal to be reached, the mystery of existence to be solved, lies in his self-recognition, self-discovery that he is the infinite embodied in the finite, an ocean confined in a drop, the concrete that should grow into the absolute, a little point that has to reveal the infinitudes.

A Seer within who knows the ordered plan

.....
 Inspires our ascent to viewless heights
 As once the abysmal leap to birth and life.

.....
 Bearing the burden of the world's desire.

.....
 Above him was the white immobile Ray,
 Around him the eternal Silences.

.....
 World after world disclosed its guarded powers,

.....
 But still the invisible Magnet drew his soul.

The same seer wisdom that has a pre-vision of the entire scheme, the purpose and the goal, that has precipitated the fall of the spirit into the abyss, led to birth into life, now impels him on to traverse the spiral of the ascent back to the original station of superconscience pure; he bears the burden of mankind on his shoulders; he represents the aspiration of humanity for liberation from ignorance to knowledge, limitation to boundlessness, mortality to immortality; no period is set for this limitless ascent; he is companioned by none but the gleaming steady white Ray which is his guide; as he climbs, the different worlds, disclose their powers; but still, there are worlds and worlds beckoning him; rest is not for him; the unseen magnet is there pulling him on further and further; and he trudges on supported by the strength that flows to him from the silence and the profound of his being.

Canto 2

THE KINGDOM OF SUBTLE MATTER

In the impalpable field of secret self,
 This little outer being's vast support
 Parted from vision by earth's solid fence,

.....

And found a life that lived not by the flesh,

 There dwell earth nature's shining origins:
 The perfect plans on which she moulds her works,

 Unsullied by the attainment of mortal thought

The massive structures built by man draw their strength from the deep-laid foundations that are unseen and buried in the earth; similarly the gross physical being derives all its sustenance from the subtle inner being; Aswapathy transcends the separative wall between the outer and the inner man; enters the region of the secret self; finds a life that lives without the trappings of flesh or body; though the life there is immaterial and therefore impalpable, he could with the help of a new consciousness see it clearly; that world has a kinship with ours with a difference that it is the origin and source of everything manifest here; the earthly has its perfection and beauty there; they shine in their unsullied and untainted brilliance in that region.

This brilliant roof of our descending plane,

 It shields our ceiling of terrestrial mind
 From deathless suns and the streaming of God's rain,
 Yet canalises a strange irised glow,
 And bright dew drops drip from the Immortal's sky.
 A passage for the Powers that move our days,

 Is hidden by a tapestry of dreams;
 Heaven's meanings steal through it as through a veil,

 Some high original beauty forfeiting,
 Thence exiled here consents to an earthly tinge.

The dense coating of ignorance acts as a roof protecting us from the lightning glare of the sun and the deluge-rain of the Gods above; it acts as the gates of a barrage regulating the flow of the descent so

that the human instrumentation can stand and benefit by it; only a glow of the prismatic flashes, the drips of a few dew drops from the Beyond are permitted to reach the earth; dreams are made the routes through which the communications from the heights may reach the man; what takes a shape on earth is an apology for the original; it is an exile putting on a meagre beauty consistent with its earthly habitation; its glory forfeited, it has to live in subdued splendour.

In its antechambers of splendid privacy
 Matter and soul in conscious union meet
 Like lovers in a lonely secret place:

 And mingling make the high and the low worlds one.

 The spirit's leap towards body touches ground.

 Already it wears outlasting death and birth,

 A covering of its immortality

 Fit to endure the rub of Change and Time.

 And bears the soul from world to higher world,

The immutable Being and his executive dynamis have their rendezvous in the private antechambers of subtle matter; they enter into a lover's compact by which they become one and united; they together create the high and the low worlds, but there is a oneness connecting them and that base is provided by the Purusha; the spirit takes a downward plunge; animates and lends a lustre to the dull and inert Matter; it wears a covering of immortality that can stand the wear and tear of its passage through several mutations; it is this inner subtle spirit that is more real and enduring than the outer physical form; and when the sheath of the body is cast off in death, it can ascend to the higher regions freed of the burdensome body.

Then its return resumes that heavier dress,

A lucent envelope of self-disguise
 Was woven round the secret spirit in things.

Fair on its peaks, it has dangerous nether planes;

Invests with grace the demon and the snake.

A heaven of creative truths above,
 A cosmos of harmonious dreams between,
 A chaos of dissolving forms below,
 It plunges lost in our inconscient base.
 Out of its fall our denser Matter came.

The spirit freed of its mortal entanglement flies after death to the peaks from which it has descended; is no longer covered by any vestures; shines in its transparency; but on its return to earth it has to don the heavy dress of Matter; but prior to its assumption of a gross body, the subtle body is always in existence: it is the technique of the atomic void that gives it the lucent envelope;

Therefore we arrive at this truth of Matter that there is a conceptive self-extension of Being which works itself out in the universe as substance or object of consciousness and which cosmic Mind and Life in their creative action represent through atomic division and aggregation as the thing we call Matter'.¹

The subtle body survives death; it enters the wonderland where all the meticulous care is bestowed on perfection of form and expression only; but these glittering peaks have their infernal depths where a grace and charm are given even to the snake and the demon; it has therefore to steer clear of these perils:

'The principle and the power of perfection are there in the subconscious but wrapped up in the tegument or veil of the lower Maya, a mute premonition emerging as an unrealised ideal; in the superconscient they await, open, eternally realised, but still separated from us by the veil of our self-ignorance. It is above, then, and not either in

¹ *The Life Divine*, p. 220.

our present poise nor below it that we must seek for the reconciling power and knowledge.... The subconscious has this life of the All and the superconscious has it, but under conditions which necessitate our motion upwards. For not towards the Godhead concealed in the "inconscious ocean where darkness is wrapped within darkness," but towards the Godhead seated in the sea of eternal light, in the highest ether of our being, is the original impetus which has carried upward the evolving soul to the type of our humanity.¹

The creations and the dissolutions that take place on the earth have their roots in the subtle physical; the gross matter acts as a diluting agent so that their impact may be in the right measure on the earth; our iridescent rich imaginings may be traced to that covert front; but due to the imperfect conveyance or medium through which they are transmitted, knowledge is tainted by error and beauty by ugliness; thus the subtle physical looks like a three storied building; at the top is the superconscious having all the creative truth; in the middle is the haze of dreams or visions through which they may reach the earth; and the lowest is the base of the Inconscience where they meet a dissolution.

This fallen world became a nurse of souls
Inhabited by concealed divinity.

.....
All here is driven by an insentient will.

.....
This mire must harbour the orchid and the rose,

.....
As if a slain god left a golden trust
To a blind force and an imprisoned soul.
An immortal godhead's perishable parts
She must reconstitute from fragments lost,
Re-word from a document complete elsewhere
Her doubtful title to her divine Name.

The plunge of the Divine into Inconscience makes the earth, a field of nescience, the theatre for his manifestations; the immortal

¹ *The Life Divine*, p. 199.

conceals himself in all the perishable forms; the gulf of nescience struggles into life and thought by his impulsions; the creative force of the Eternal has subconscious memories of a happiness that has been hers once; she struggles in all formations to recapture or approach that Bliss; the orchid and the rose take their shape on the mire of the earth on this principle; the inert and the dull earth yields under the pressure of the spirit which feels itself an alien in Matter.

‘The Inconscient to our perceptions is the beginning and the end; the self-conscious soul seems hardly more than a temporary accident, a fragile blossom upon this great, dark and monstrous Ashwatha-tree of the universe. Or if we suppose the soul to be eternal, it appears at least as a foreigner, an alien and not over well-treated guest in the reign of this vast Inconscience. If not an accident in the Inconscient Darkness, it is perhaps a mistake, a stumble downwards of the superconscient Light.’¹

It looks as if a blind force and an imprisoned soul, have divided between themselves the responsibility of administering a trust, left in their hands by a god that has been slain; the struggle of the Supreme to come back to his own, may be interpreted in two ways: Purusha and Prakriti may be seen struggling to piece together the broken parts so as to reconstitute his complete image, or endeavouring to fill in a document, complete elsewhere with the available material, so as to establish their claim, their title to immortality.

She has accepted as her nature’s need
And given to man as his stupendous work
A labour to the gods impossible.

Nature though endowed with tremendous energies has to work through petty forms and with frail blunt instruments; at last she has been able to hit upon man; she cast upon him the giant burden, a work that is beyond the capacity even of gods; earth is the scene of evolutionary activity; the law of progression is from the lower to the higher and even the highest; man therefore or the earth is the necessary and the unavoidable base to take off to immortality; even the gods cast in the rigid typical moulds have to forfeit the felicities of the

¹ *The Life Divine*, p. 433.

higher regions and come to the earth to reach the ultimate goal.

A fragment here is caught of heaven's design;
Else could we never hope for greater life

.....
Even in this prison-house of outer form,

.....
The enthusiasm of a divine surprise
Pervades our life, a mystic stir is felt,

The complacency of man, his self-sufficiency with the little he has in life, is disturbed by the divine design sometimes flashing on him; even the outer form of the body which is the prison-house of the spirit is invaded by a divine rapture; the whole being feels a stir; and he catches certain intimations from the invisible.

Then sinks the sacred orgy of delight,

.....
Earth's eyes half see, her forces half create;
Her rarest works are copies of heaven's art.

.....
Her forms hide what they house and only mime
The unseized miracle of self-born shapes

.....
His genius born from an inconscient soil.
To copy on earth's copies is his art.

The ecstasy is short-lived; it recedes as fast as a tide and leaves him flat; little remains but a glow in which he vainly struggles to recapture that fleeting experience; the heavenly impulse gone, the radiance is sought to be confined in a form; but the vesture hides more than displays the brilliance; this is the fate of genius which is an outgrowth from the soil of Inconscience; the forms on the earth are a copy of the original, the archetype in heaven; man copies the copy and therefore it is twice removed from the original.

And hardly with his heart's blood he achieves
 His transient house of the divine Idea,
 His figure of a Time-inn for the Unborn.

.....
 Beyond our reach the eternal marvels blaze.

The persistent efforts of man to enshrine the divine Idea prove fruitless; the idea considered final for the time-being has to yield ground in the course of advancement of knowledge; further discoveries dislodge the theories once considered infallible; therefore our figurations of truth are like way-side inns on the long road of time to the as yet un-sighted home of truth; the marvel is beyond reach and calls us on by its blaze.

Only when we have climbed above ourselves,
 A line of the Transcendent meets our road

.....
 The figures of eternity arrive.

.....
 They espouse our mortal brevity awhile,

.....
 These glimmerings point to the secret of our birth

.....
 What we are there and here on earth shall be

.....
 Our nature's glass shows not our real self;
 That greatness still abides held back within.

The gleams of the Beyond, the figures of eternity, can be caught even for a brief while in a vision that transcends the earthly hedges and the material fences immuring the soul within the narrow shell of the ego; the mortal life feels a sense of liberation during those fleeting though golden moments; they reveal the roots, the origins of our being and its present possibilities; our nature has not the transparency that can reveal the real self; it is opaque and holds back and conceals it within,

A vast Unknown is round us and within;
 All things are wrapped in the dynamic One:
 A subtle link of union joins all life.
 Thus all creation is a single chain:
 • We are not left alone in a closed scheme

But there is an ambience of the Omnipresent, an immanence of the Invisible; everything that has the appearance of an individual unit, of a difference on the surface, has a basic sameness; the envelope may vary but the energising principle is common; man is fundamentally the same but races may differ; the chain of oneness, therefore binds the entire creation; man is not left to shift for himself or thrown to the mercy of the inconscient Force; he need not feel a sense of isolation from the Eternal; he is not destitute as he imagines; he is in a graded world and is bound to receive a pull upwards.

Our being looks beyond its walls of mind
 And it communicates with greater worlds;

 There is the unfallen height of all we are

 Dreams to transcribe and make a part of life
 In its own native style and living tongue

 Worlds are there nearer to those absolute realms,

 And spirit is not hampered by its frame

• Travelling beyond the outpost of mind, man places himself in contact with greater worlds; there he discovers the true nature and grandeur of his being, undwarfed by the contaminating and the restrictive influences of Nescience; what he sees is the dream he ardently desires to translate into the reality and make it a part of his life; in the higher world the spirit is un-encumbered with a body, impeding its suppleness and activity; accomplishment never lags behind the response to truth and perception and performance are simultaneous,

The rapid net of an intuitive clasp
Captures the fugitive happiness we desire.

Adopts the seeing of immortal eyes

Pursues the spirit of beauty to its home.

Following his rapture in things as sign and guide;

A genius of creative Immanence,

Makes all creation deeply intimate:

A fourth dimension of aesthetic sense

Where all is in ourselves, ourselves in all,

The ineffable bliss that is fitfully experienced by man, cannot be caught in the meshes of reason; it is only when man rises above the mind into the domain of intuition that he can make an effort with partial success perhaps of capturing the fleeting happiness; but the experience, the taste of that delight, puts him always in pursuit of the Supreme; the route to the Lord is unknown; however he picks up the route guided by the sign-boards of the rapture and beauty provided in the Almighty's creation; the common inhabitant of the indwelling intelligence, establishes an intimacy, a closeness between all; a new dimension opens up with the dawn of the spirit of identity; the separative walls between the seer and the seen crumbles down and he becomes both the subject and the object.

In us too the intuitive Fire can burn;

But rarely burns the flame nor burns for long,

A veil is kept, something is still held back,

Lest, captives of the beauty and the joy,

Our souls forget to the Highest to aspire.

The inadequate instrumentation that has come to the human lot, can be subtilised; he can adopt the seeing of the immortal eyes; he can

strive to retain the fire of intuition; but unfortunately intuition visits not all in the first instance; it visits only the chosen few; even in them, it stays for a short spell and flits away; it does not disclose the entire vision, lest its fascination and joy should enthral us and make us oblivious of the Eternal, the highest goal of our aspiration.

In that fair subtle realm behind our own
The form is all and physical gods are kings.

.....
All is a miracle of symmetric charm,
A fantasy of perfect line and rule.

.....
An intricate rapture riots in a small space:

.....
Content to be, it has need of nothing more.

.....
It had no room for fault, no power to fail.

In this subtle physical which is behind our surface self in the subliminal, the perfection aimed at is one of form only; everything has a wonderful symmetry, a miraculous charm; there is a dream-like grace, a fantasy of beauty touching even the smallest; in whatever shape or size they are found, they all reveal a workmanship, an artistry that makes us enraptured; there is no scope for any blemish or any fault to creep in.

He moved in a divine, yet kindred world
Admiring marvellous forms so near to ours

.....
A captive of its own beauty and ecstasy,

.....
The spirit stood back effaced behind its frame.

.....
Life in its boundaries lingered satisfied

.....
And thought not of a greater work undone.

.....

The beautiful body of a soul at ease,
 Like one who laughs in sweet and sunlit groves,
 Childlike she swung in her gold cradle of joy.

Aswapathy lingers for a brief while in this world of physical perfection; it has lines of similarity to our own world, the only difference being that the form at this end has an excellence that is earth's despair; but this world also has its limitations; the spirit here is framed almost to a self-effacement by the beauties and the charms of nature; the Purusha seems to be in a stupor of self-satisfaction; both nature and the spirit seem to run away from the larger work, the higher task; both seem to revel in the beauty and the delight of the splendour of a shell; in an easy-going fashion, they repose in sunlit groves and swing in the gold cradle of joy; they avoid the adventure of straying from the set grooves or abandoning the familiar and the trodden paths.

Our spirit tires of being's surfaces,
 Transcended is the splendour of the form;

 He left that fine material Paradise.
 His destiny lay beyond in larger Space.

The spirit cannot be lulled into sleep for long by the external surface splendour; it gets tired and cloyed; Aswapathy stays for a time admiring its material perfection and moves beyond into the larger space for his aim is the Reality and not the misleading, deceptive, though enchanting surface sheath.

Y. S. R. CHANDRAN

MY DEBT TO SRI AUROBINDO

IT was in winter 1944 that I first came across "The Life Divine", the *magnum opus* of Sri Aurobindo. I don't remember how I came across the book. I only remember that I very much wanted to read him and even felt his greatness in the air urging me to know more about him and thus get closer to him by studying his works. At that time I had gone to OTS Kakul to finish my training as an officer in the army. I was much younger then, full of zest for life, and having a sort of career before me. The training was, as usual, very tough and tiring and left little time for study. Yet I remember reading Sri Aurobindo in the evening sitting on the G.I. Steel trunk facing the fire-place, lit with glowing embers, while outside all lay covered with snow.

And what an experience it was! I went into ecstasies as I read "The Life Divine," with great avidity page after page and wondered how a mortal could write like that.

It reminds me of a similar experience, when, as a student in Govt. College, Lahore, I first saw Uday Shankar dance in the Plaza in the late thirties. On that particular evening Sir Henry Craik, the then Governor of Punjab, presided over the function. And I remember, for a few seconds, I could not breathe for joy when I saw the first few steps of the great dancer, and exclaimed to myself "how sublime is Indian culture."

However, I found Sri Aurobindo's expression not only lucid, thought-laden and eloquent; the sweep of his spiritual comprehension was simply super-human. I was filled with the joy of discovery as he brought forth gems of spiritual thoughts, rare and serene: and the psyche within me rejoiced identifying itself at once with our sublime and ancient heritage. And it appeared to me as if I had got the very thing I was looking for all these years, the very thing that would give my life a sense of fulfilment. It was a soul calling unto soul.

I was also filled with great national pride (for then we were being ruled by foreigners and the nation was straining at the leash for complete Independence) that here was a noble son of India who could express himself in English so wonderfully and thus open before us

the vast and limitless treasures of ancient Indian spirituality that could lead the country and humanity from darkness to light.

Sri Aurobindo came into my life when Independence of the country was in the offing. There was the national upsurge in the country. And we were young and full of enthusiasm. Being officers in the Army we used to come into contact with the rulers, could exchange ideas with them and could often plead with impunity, Englishmen as they were, the justness and the fairness of the cause. "Bliss was it in that Dawn to be alive". To give a concrete example: first time in 1947 at a dinner in Poona attended by a senior British General leaving for England we drank a toast: "Gentlemen, the President" instead of "Gentlemen, the King" and first time the band in attendance struck "Jana Gana Mana" instead of "God save the King!" And I remember small-sized as I am, I felt a few inches taller that evening, elated and with head held high.

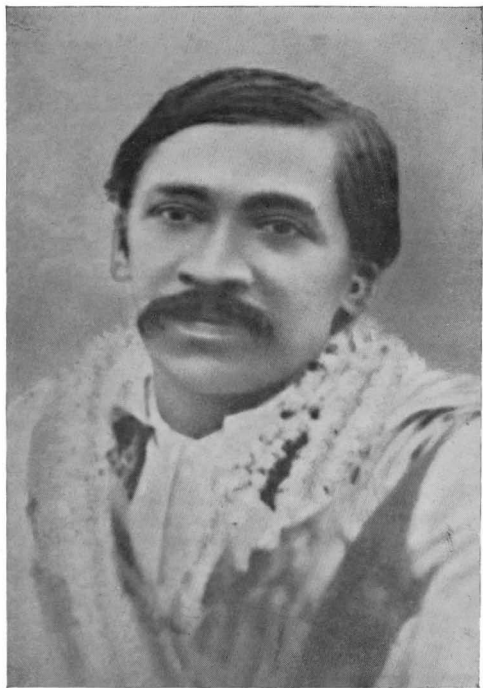
In 1950 I met in Darjeeling, where I was then posted, a theosophist lady from England who was on her way back from Tibet where she had gone looking for some 'Mahatmas'. Being interested in such subjects I invited her to tea and heard her experiences. She was deeply interested in the Mahatmas and the Yogis. She was returning to England. And I told her that the biggest thing about India was Sri Aurobindo, and she took me at my word and went to Pondicherry from where she wrote to me her wonderful experiences saying:

"I have seen the Master, and he is as I had seen him spiritually all-wise, all-powerful and infinitely serene. He has white hair and blue eyes...reflecting the Infinite. I was fortunate indeed to have come here though I could but get a glimpse of him for a moment.... I shall be in Pondicherry all the month of August. Probably shall dissolve in Bliss near Sri Aurobindo." This is just to show how some sensitive souls reacted to the gracious Presence of the Master.

I had planned to go South in 1950 (in December) to set my eyes on this god-like man, but to my great dismay, the Master passed away before I could make it.

THE MESSAGE OF BEAUTY AND DELIGHT

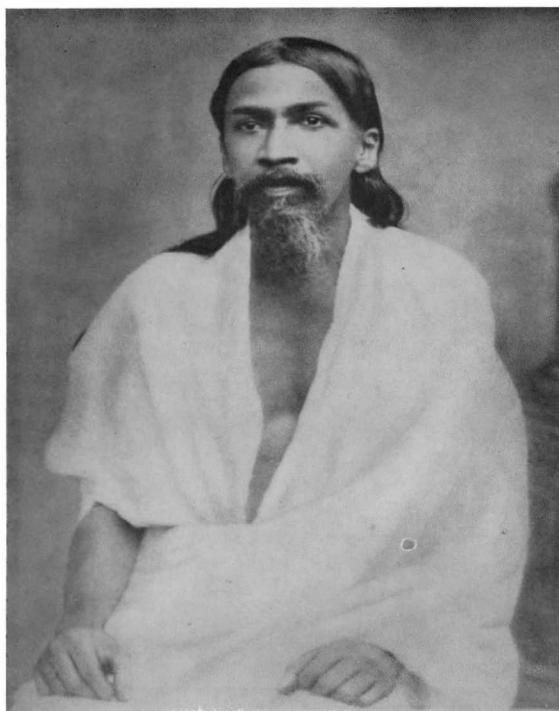
In his booklet, "The National Value of Art," Sri Aurobindo gives

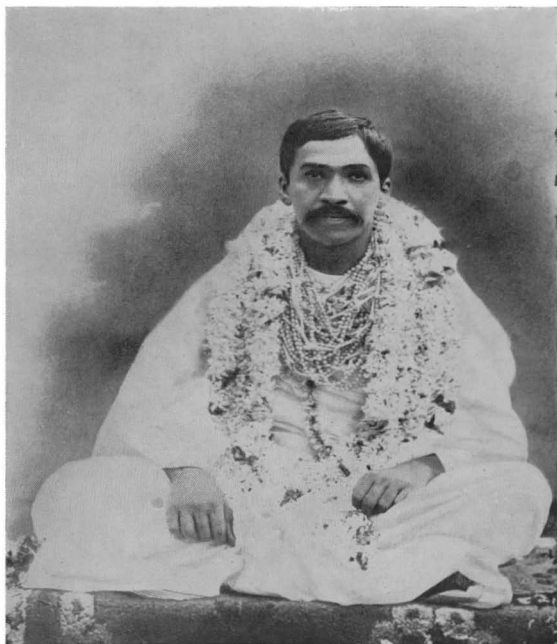


OUR HOMAGE

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is a significant definition of progress in life in terms of Beauty and Delight. He says, "the object of existence is not the practice of virtue for its own sake but Ananda, delight; and progress consists not in rejecting beauty and delight, but in rising from the lower to the higher, the less complete to the more complete beauty and delight."

We are told that an average man is interested in the lower sensual pleasures for the satisfaction of his sense organs and vital desires. Gradually he goes up the Jacob's ladder by cultivating his feelings and emotions through "social culture, and restraint in action and expression."¹

Later on, his aesthetic sense is developed through liberal education, and the arts like music, painting and sculpture. Thus developed, he "enjoys the poetry of life, the wonder, the pathos, beauty, terror and horror of life, of man, of Nature, of the phenomenal manifestation of God."² But Sri Aurobindo hastens to add that this is not the highest development. Complete metamorphosis takes place only by "bringing body, heart and mind into touch with the spirit — the Spirit in which all the rest of the human being reposes."³ The most wonderful thing that happens at this stage of spiritualisation is that this fully integrated person starts seeing beauty in everything. It is here that man stands on the threshold of godhood and obtains to perpetual joy.

Now this perception of beauty everywhere is very significant. In the final stage of evolution the artist has become mystic or a sage. Now he remains in a state of perpetual Ananda. He roams the earth "with inward glory crowned." He becomes the 'Lord and owner of his face,' a fully emancipated being. Now he has no use for art, for all the time he is perceiving the inexhaustible and varied beauty of creation. As is stated in the Kouran Sharif "wheresoever ye turn, there is the face of Allah." So in the final attainment, this experience of *Vismad* becomes accessible to man!

EFFICACY OF THE VISION OR THE VISION IN ACTION

This total involvement with Great Beauty, this process of being taken up by something greater and vaster than ourselves is very

^{1 2 3} *The National Value of Art.*

meaningful indeed. This involvement with Great Beauty invariably leads to enlightened action. This is the moment when some one's glance can make a poet of us. It was the visionary glimpse of Beatrice that set Dante on his fateful journey leading up to Paradise. It was during such moments that Bhai Nand Lal perceived the glory that was Guru Gobind Singh. These are occasions when a 'moment becomes eternity'. Other examples of vision in action are Christ delivering the Sermon on the Mount, Prince Siddhartha walking away from his palace, and Guru Gobind Singh riding his blue steed into the battlefield.

INTEGRAL OR PURNA YOGA

This new emphasis on the concept of Integral Yoga is one of the major contributions of Sri Aurobindo to Indian thought. It is as modern and bold as it is expressive and true.

Now Yoga, — the art of attaining to the Divine — is something peculiarly and distinctly Indian and our country's unique contribution to the world culture. The Yoga is the fulfilment of the infinite longings in man to transcend the limitations of mortality. Here the seemingly mortal man leaps forward to immortality. It is the birth of godhood in man, a transition from men to gods as mentioned in the Gurubani.

Mostly the method employed for this attainment is meditation, that is, concentration on a particular spiritual symbol accompanied by 'Japa', audible or inaudible, of a holy 'Mantram' or WORD.

In India, this ancient and sacred knowledge, in due course of time, 'blossomed into a hundred flowers' such as Jnana, Karma, Bhakti or Hatha Yoga or Tantricism, and various Buddhist schools of meditation.

In these olden schools of Yoga, emphasis is laid on the development of some particular aspect of human personality. For example, in Hatha Yoga 'body is almost deified'; in Jnana Yoga emphasis is on developing the mind, making it calm and serene; in Tantra it is the Kundalini that is awakened.

Sri Aurobindo, the master of the Integral Yoga, brings out the one-sidedness and inadequacy of the old systems which often led to

lop-sided development. Sri Aurobindo maintains that the ultimate aim of life is the complete self-integration in which *action*, *love* and *wisdom* the salient features of Karma, Bhakti and Jnana Yoga are equally emphasized. Thus the Integral Yoga as expounded by Sri Aurobindo "represents the crowning fulfilment of the traditional yoga systems of India,"¹ for it incorporates their inherent truths in a higher synthesis.

Throughout Sri Aurobindo emphasizes this trinity of *action*, *love* and *wisdom* in his Integral Yoga. This brings love and wisdom in human relations and the ability for efficient action or what the Gita says the 'skill in works'. So while discussing yoga we should not lose sight of the wood for the trees. The object of yoga does not stop at mere realization of the Divine. This must lead to enlightened action informed by wisdom and love for humanity and "for all sentient creatures."

Those who abjure action and rest content with personal salvation have a negative approach to society which is waiting to be reformed by them. Hence the necessity for Integral or Purna Yoga—balanced union of action and meditation. Simultaneous growth of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual facets of human personality, "the full flowering of the total individual" alone will lead to the performance of the dynamic and enlightened action. An enlightened action, selfless and fruitful is the most important manifestation of the evolved and integrated personality.

It is very essential to apply in the sphere of daily living and social action the light and power of meditation.

"Man is essentially an historical being. He cannot completely fulfil himself without actively relating himself to the march of history?"² Transformation of society and creation of a new set of values in a decadent order, "fighting with such forces of evil as despotism and tyranny and social injustice are the demands of the divine will operative in history." Here Sri Guru Gobind Singh's bani becomes understandable to us: "*The Lord sent me to this world to uphold Dharma.*" Here the divine will becomes operative in history. Hence the creation of the Punj-Piaras, (New Men or, the twice-born) and the Khalsa for the job allotted by the Divine.

¹ H. R. Chaudhuri — "*Integral Yoga*".

² H. R. Chaudhuri — "*Integral Yoga*".

Get hold of the tyrants and the evil-doers and destroy them. Thus a fully integrated personality at one with the Eternal becomes an effective instrument of the Divine for upholding Dharma; for complete regeneration of society by up-rooting the old corrupt order, "to destroy the Corrupt order root and branch."

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF AN INTEGRATED PERSONALITY

It is interesting to behold the wonderful metamorphosis that takes place in one who aspires to the Divine through harmonious development of the various faculties:

- (a) In him the soul and the body, "the flesh and the spirit are reconciled." Process of meditation becomes effortless and spontaneous.
- (b) He obtains to "waking union with the Divine," — perpetual contact with the Source (Sat-Chit-Anand) — is maintained; "ceaselessly worship the flame of spiritual fire kindled in the heart."
- (c) "Has Cosmic consciousness and deep urge for Cosmic welfare", what we call goodwill for all and welfare of all.
- (d) Inward spiritual growth leads on to varied and richer experiences opening new vistas of beauty and delight. My Lord is ever fresh—new and ever Beautiful, concept is revealed.

This is what Sri Aurobindo unfolds before us in his exposition of integral yoga—a balanced union of meditation and action.

SAVITRI—THE CONQUEST OF FATE

'Savitri' — a legend and a symbol is the last work of the Master and my latest love. This eight-hundred-page poem has been described as "the Word of Sri Aurobindo". The late Sir Younghusband regarded it as the greatest poem of the century.

While going through the sublime work in ecstatic delight, I would jot down my reactions as and when they would come on the

back of the cover or on the fly-leaf. I was still in the Army. One day the brain-wave came; I got these jottings typed out and sent them to the Secretary, Pondicherry Ashram, Shri Nolini Kanta Gupta (considered an authority on "Savitri" and one of the leading intellectuals in the country) just to make sure that I was on the right track and understood the inner significance of the great poem. That was in October, 1968. Prompt came the reply that read like this:

Pondicherry-2

11-10-1968

Dear Sir,

Your v. interesting note.

I am particularly glad to learn that you like "Savitri" and have taken to it as your guide. I am an adorer of "Savitri"...

Your Comments are absolutely correct and I am sure you are on the right track. You have simply to follow on.

With cordial greetings and Good Wishes,

Nolini Kanta Gupta

I must say that on receipt of this note my vanity was tickled to an extent and I became more confident of myself.

Anyway, here are, please, some of the observations on "Savitri" that were sent to Pondicherry by me:—

1. SAVITRI 'The Book of Heavens'.
2. In "Savitri", sorrow and suffering is transcended. Fate is defeated.
3. This book tells you about the working of Nature in life and later on, reveals to us the Reality, the God behind this show. Thus it brings out in such great poetry the nature of the World, the Universe, the Cosmos, and the gods that control them.
4. Above all, it brings out the relationship between the human and the divine soul and convinces us that man is, in reality a Superman, and can transcend Nature and cosmos and be one with God. Thus the poet opens out splendid possibilities for the spiritual Venture of man,

5. Innumerable thought-laden spiritual phrases, original and expressive, constitute the great beauty of the poem. The poetic diction of this great poem can be of immense help for translating 'Gurubani' into English correctly.
6. The message of the poem is that man is stronger than Death and greater than Fate.
7. The poem has a peculiar resemblance to 'Divine Comedy' describing the progress of soul, and its pilgrimage to Paradise through Hell and Purgatory.
8. The book is a treasury of Para-vidya — Sacred knowledge.

THE GURUBANI AND THE STUDY OF SRI AUROBINDO

I have perceived that a number of major concepts of Gurubani have been dealt with, on his own, and in his own way, by Sri Aurobindo in his works steeped in deep spirituality. Consequently, *the study of Sri Aurobindo has meant for me better understanding of the Sikh Scriptures*. To give one concrete example, in his 'Essays on the Gita', Sri Aurobindo in two consecutive Chapters (ten & eleven) discusses the Vision of the World Spirit (Time the Destroyer) and The Vision of the World Spirit (The Double Aspect of the Divine). These two Chapters very adequately express the correct connotation of the famous lines of Guru Gobind Singh. The Chapters beautifully bring out the significance of the word "Maha Kal and Kalika" Moreover, they throw light on the nature of the Guru's sadhana at Hemkunt wherein he attained to complete oneness with the Absolute.

As one goes through these two Chapters one feels as if they were a commentary on the significance of meditating on "Mahakal" who is Time, who is Death, who is Rudra the Dancer of the calm and awful dance, who is Kali with her garland of skulls trampling naked in the battle.¹

Sri Aurobindo tells us that "The weakness of the human heart wants only fair and comforting truths; it will not have truth in its entirety, because then there is much that is not clear and pleasant and comfortable, but hard to understand and harder to bear"; for example, "Thousands die of hunger and misery, that too is Thy blessing,

¹ Sri Aurobindo: "Essays on the Gita",

O giver of gifts." is a truth difficult to understand and still more difficult to bear. Sri Aurobindo tells us "We have to see that God the bountiful and prodigal creator, God the helpful, strong and benign preserver is also God the devourer and destroyer."¹

* Mahakal is the manifestation of the Godhead as Time. The God-head says, "I destroy the old structure to build up a new mighty and splendid kingdom."

"Destruction is the first condition of progress. Inwardly the man who does not destroy his lower self cannot rise to a greater existence."

Now these lines of the sage in the same Chapters throw a flash of light on the significance of the creation of 'the Punj Piaras' (The five Beloved ones — The Twice-born) by Guru Gobind Singh which was nothing but the destruction of lower self by "Bhagwati" in the form of the flaming sword of the Guru Gobind Singh, the giver of new life.

The weaker section of the Sangat or Congregation then had left the assembly in panic when the Guru demanded the human sacrifice with a drawn Sword thinking that the Guru wanted to kill and destroy his disciples unnecessarily. The people (the weaker section) were afraid when they saw the terrible aspect of the creative action that invariably involves destruction. But the intention was to replace the old by creating the new — a race of pure of heart invincible saint-warriors.

In the Gita, the terrible aspect of the Godhead is described in very impressive and poetic language; "It has mouths that gape to devour, terrible with many tusks of destruction and it has faces like the faces of Death and Time. The kings and the captains and the heroes on both sides of the world battle are hastening into its tusked and terrible jaws and some are seen with crushed and bleeding heads caught between its teeth of power. The nations are rushing to destruction with helpless speed into its mouths of flame like many rivers hurrying in their course towards the ocean ..."²

Here again Sri Aurobindo gives us a quotation from the Gita

¹ Sri Aurobindo: "Essays on the Gita".

² Sri Aurobindo: "Essays on the Gita".

that throws lot of light on the personality of Guru Gobind Singh (and his meditations at Hemkunt).

“This greater form, this double aspect of Reality that is the terrible and the beautiful aspect (the Godhead repeats) *is to be revealed only to the rare highest soul.*

Now this is the form (the Terrible and the Beautiful), this vision of the World Spirit in its double aspect, that was meditated upon by the Guru (the rare and the highest soul) at Hemkunt.

After the study of the Chapters another very important aspect of the Guru's life, the historical aspect becomes so very clear to us. So as he meditated upon the destructive and constructive aspects of the Supreme Godhead — which only the rare highest soul can do — he witnessed the working of these forces in the drama of his own life.

If we review the life-history of the Guru, it becomes obvious that both these constructive and destructive forces displayed their wares in the course of his life-span, the aspects of the same Godhead that he had meditated upon before he came to this earth to take up his mission of life (to uphold Dharma and start a ‘new path,’) as desired by the Divine Will. The Guru lost his father, mother, children and closer disciples and the family fortunes. But this destructive aspect of Godhead made the Guru face these tribulations and set-backs not only with equanimity and cheerful acceptance but made him sing a soulful song of love of the Lord without whom life was an intolerable burden to him.

(Convey to the Beloved the message of Love from us *humble bondsmen*).

During this dismal darkness when evil forces' sway seemed supreme we see the glorious constructive achievement of the Guru — the creation of the Khalsa (The five Beloved ones, the saint-warriors).

And lo and behold, within two years of the Guru's disappearance behind the veil, the tide of tyranny was stemmed and the march of events reversed with the sack of Sirhind.¹ This is the fulfilment of which the Godhead says in the Gita “I as Time have to destroy the old structure to build up a new mighty and splendid kingdom.”

¹ The Sikhs sacked Sirhind in 1710 under Banda Singh Bahadur and ‘shook the Mughal rule to its foundation.’

THE SUPREME SECRET

Now I invite your attention to an extremely important portion of the Gita which Sri Aurobindo discusses towards the end of his "Essays on the Gita" in the Chapter, "The Supreme Secret." In this chapter Sri Aurobindo explains to us what he calls "The Secret of Secrets" something which is entitled to our whole attention.

After giving out all the laws, the Dharmas, the Gita suddenly declares that there is yet a supreme word. This secret of secrets, the Teacher will *tell* Arjuna as his highest good because he is the chosen and beloved soul.

It is the last, the closing supreme word of the Gita expressing the highest mystery ... "*It was this for which the soul of the disciple was being prepared all the time.*"¹

Thus runs this secret of secrets, the highest, most direct, message of the Ishwara to man:

"Become My-minded, my lover and adorer, a sacrificer to Me, bow Thyself to Me, thou shalt come to Me, this is My pledge and promise to thee for dear art thou to Me. *Abandon all Dharmas and take refuge in Me alone.* I will deliver thee from sin and evil, do not grieve."

Now if we scan a little deeper the significance of the "Secret of Secrets" of the Gita and study the Guru's life of ceaseless struggle against the darkness of tyranny and social injustice in the light of his 'Shabd' we find that the *Will of Godhead becomes the prayer of Guru Gobind Singh*. Thus there is complete identification of the Son with the Father.

So, in my humble opinion the message of the Gita finds complete fulfilment in the life of Guru Gobind Singh.

Any way this is a subject for a separate and elaborate study by the same scholar — that the message of the Gita finds complete fulfilment in the life of Guru Gobind Singh. Here the point is that the study of Sri Aurobindo enables us to understand much better the significance of the Guru's life and his Gurubani—our great spiritual heritage — "a veritable national asset", as Sri Aurobindo calls it in his book "The Renaissance of India."

¹ Sri Aurobindo: "*The Essays on the Gita*".

Obviously, in this respect my debt to Sri Aurobindo is immeasurable.

CONCLUSION

I will be failing in my duty and almost committing a sin of omission if I won't mention Sri Aurobindo's observation on the nature of spiritual Truth. In 'The Life Divine' while dwelling upon the 'Evolution of the Spiritual Man' he says:

“Spiritual Truth is a truth of the spirit, not a truth of intellect, not a mathematical theorem or a logical formula. It is a truth of Infinite ... and it can assume an infinite variety of aspects

The truth of the spirit is a truth of being and consciousness and not a truth of thought

Without growing and being there can be no true spiritual knowledge.”

Therefore, unless we grow spiritual through contact of the consciousness with the soul or through intuitive experience we cannot make any headway in spiritual knowledge.

For a student of literature, Wordsworth's famous and much-written-upon poem 'The Intimations of Immortality' expounds to an extent the significance of Sri Aurobindo's observation regarding the urgency of this inward spiritual growth of evolving man aspiring for contact with Reality.

And you will agree with me that *without this inner spiritual growth* all this talk and discussion about matters spiritual becomes only vanity and weariness of the spirit.

If some one were to ask me to put in one sentence the essence of Sri Aurobindo's message, (and if that is possible to do), I will quote this famous line of the Mother:

“Look life in the face from the soul's inner strength and become master of circumstances.”

To conclude, I would say that the sage not only tells us how to become the master of circumstances and thus solve the multifarious and puzzling problems of life, but also unfolds before us the joys that await us if we become the Participants of the Great Feast. As Gurubani says:

“Come along my dear self, let me show you the path to ineffable Bliss: come and partake of the rare delicacies of the Royal Banquet.”

Thus to grow spiritually, and ultimately to become the Participant of the Feast, says Sri Aurobindo, is our birthright.

LT. COL. DULEEP SINGH

SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENT AND THE PRESENT EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

EDUCATIONAL efforts have been merely wasted as today the education aims merely to provide knowledge and skills for acquiring job proficiency and status. The need for the understanding of life is completely ignored and thus the individual becomes an automaton governed by his unregenerate blind impulses. The outcomes of scientific development instead of being utilized by the higher nature for expansion of the consciousness are being put to the service of the lower vital for catering to the insatiable desires, ambitions, wild abominable sensuous orgies which pull down the consciousness, increase the inertia of body and mind, deaden awareness and sensitiveness, bringing about the sleep of reason. This leads to bedimming of the surface consciousness and a tremendous upsurge from the unconscious which is the dark store-house of ignorant forces, primitive blind urges and all that is gross, unevolved, and ugly.

In the absence of intelligent understanding life becomes a playfield of the dark forces and the individual with all his material possessions remains a mere puppet in the hands of the animal urges. The reason becomes a handmaid to whatever is low and debased in human nature. Individual's possessions no more remain his own but are in the firm grip of the wild forces within him. The conscious mind is continuously filled up by the uprushing forces from the dark recesses and is thus increasingly dominated by the wild gyrations and tyrannous mandates of the remnants of the animal in him which keep it in a state of constant tension and turbulence. Thus the tremendous creative energy of the individual is continuously smothered which leads to a sense of inner emptiness, frustration and lack of purpose resulting in progressive disintegration of personality and inability to face the realities of existence. The frustration resulting from the suppression of creative urge finds overt expression in the form of violence.

What is more alarming is that the individual communicates this contagion to others. The widespread tension, conflict and violence today is the overt expression of the interaction among the robots operated by the dark forces of ignorance. The collective upsurge and strengthening of unconscious forces is bound to result in a severe

catastrophe unless drastic measures are taken to revolutionize the present set up of education.

The lopsided emphasis on mere scientific advancement ignoring the imperative need of a complete change in education is bound to this catastrophe nearer with a tremendous increase in its intensity. bring The superstructure of technology is already threatening the very existence of man with its outcomes in the form of guided atomic missiles, hydrogen bombs and other destructive weapons on one hand and the environmental pollution, of alarming disturbance of the equilibrium of nature due to large scale destruction of natural fauna and flora, use of artificial fertilizers which is alarmingly impoverishing the fertile lands and providing food deficient in important minerals which is bound to prove to be a still more serious menace to health due to the poisonous insecticides. On the other hand the lower nature of man is being progressively strengthened due to the progressive increase in the material outcomes. This collective strengthening of the animal is bound to bring about colossal destruction unless education comes to help by bringing about a radical change in man. The discovery of the hydrogen bomb is the symbolic warning of Nature to man to face destruction if he refuses to transform himself and the discovery of the peaceful uses of atomic energy is a hint towards future possibility if man transcends his present limitations.

Thus having reached the zenith of achievement so far as the scientific analysis of the externalities of the nature is concerned man has to transcend his limited mind and transform himself completely into a new species. This may appear to be a mere chimera — a phantasmagoria. However the seemingly unconquerable summits can be reached by making small beginnings through climbing immediate steps. The first step towards the summit is the step to the ultimate victory.

The journey of man towards transformation has to begin with the change in the traditional outlook regarding education as mere development of innate capacities which has completely overlooked the necessity and possibility of bringing about a change in the nature of man. Education has to be understood as a conscious and deliberate process to bring about progressive transformation in the nature of man. The first step towards transformation would be to provide edu-

cation for the understanding of the significance of life. Such education cannot be imparted through instruction — it is beyond the books, which can be useful aids only when the child gets a truly refined human surrounding constituted by teachers and parents who are deeply aware of the educational needs of the growing child and are deeply conscious of the imperative need of educating themselves continuously towards a progressive understanding of life. Books, learning material and other educational aids can be meaningful only when the child is in communion and communication with a parent or teacher who is intensely aware of the need of educating himself continuously as a pre-requisite for the education of the young ones. Only such enlightened teachers and parents can provide a truly enriched environment.

Books and other learning aids would be ineffective if the parents and teachers involved in self-seeking pursuits do not express the higher values in their own lives, which would be possible only when they are awakened to the need of their continuous self-education leading to progressive self-understanding thus liberating their mind from the limited vision bedimmed by prejudice, bias, tradition, dogmas and ego-assertion. All attempts to educate the child, on the part of parents and teachers, while they are themselves steeped in deep ignorance, are bound to prove futile. It is only when the parents and teachers have the flame within them that the same can be kindled within the child.

Thus the process of understanding the life is primarily important for the parent and the teacher, who have themselves to be educated throughout their lives for fulfilling their role as educators.

Rousseau rightly located the debasing social environment as the cause of bad education and thus pleaded for isolating the child from the corrupt society which is an impossible proposition. There is however the possibility that at first individual and later groups of parents may awaken to the imperative need of a deep change in their attitude towards life as the fundamental pre-requisite for the education of their children. A family with enlightened parents would be the fundamental school with a refined, enriched and ennobling environment catering to the developmental needs of the children. A community built up by such families would help in further expansion of the boundaries of the "family school" by reinforcing and widening

the educational experiences. Education has thus to be understood primarily as an individual effort to overcome the limitations with progressive understanding of life, leading to collective effort of the community to accelerate the process of social transformation through inner change in the individual consciousness. With the overcoming of a single limitation by the individual other shortcomings become weaker in him. There is continuous perceptible as well as imperceptible interaction between the individual and the community. Naturally the change within the consciousness of the individual is bound to bring about its reciprocal effect on other community members. Herein lies the significance of collective effort towards transcendence of limitations.

Such effort is bound to result in progressive refinement and enrichment of the environment the need of which is imperative for bringing about an improvement in the quality of education.

Efforts for improvement of the quality of education have failed till now as the educationists have tried merely to improve the teaching methods, instructional material, teaching aids, and teacher training courses etc. but completely overlooked the imperative need of bringing about a change in the home, community and social environment from which the growing child draws his nourishment for its physical, motor, mental, social emotional, moral and spiritual development as a plant absorbs its food from the soil where it grows. Such change in the immediate environment which envelops the child is possible not by mere addition of books, play materials etc. but through a progressive inner change in individuals resulting from the awareness of the educational needs of children on part of parents whose sole interest in life is the welfare of their offspring.

It cannot however be expected that such a change would be possible all over the world at once. Still some groups of enlightened individuals may form communities and such communities which may be small and few in number may later on expand and increase in number. Such awakened communities in addition to their pre-occupation with education are expected to diffuse the light of understanding outside.

These communities will not unite the elements of the past and present culture, but will utilize it for the enrichment of life by

progressively evolving new dimensions through creative expression. The varied and rich culture of East and West both past and present will form the basis of discovering new harmonies for uplifting the life — it will be a platform for taking a leap into the luminous dimensions hitherto unexplored.

R. K. Joshi

REVIEWS

Sri Aurobindo: A Garland of Tributes. Ed. *Arabinda Basu* Sri Aurobindo Research Academy, Pondicherry; August, 1973, pp. viii, 252. Price. Rs. 17-50

THE volume, compiled in honour of the Birth Centenary of Sri Aurobindo, is a collection of essays, studies and communications from twenty-four contributors, nearly half of whom are members of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, the others being chiefly scholars connected with universities in India, England, America and Japan. Most of the articles are on Sri Aurobindo or some aspect of his work; all are concerned with spiritual philosophy. The volume contains two photographs of Sri Aurobindo, and is launched with this special message from the Mother:

“Sri Aurobindo is an emanation of the Supreme who came on earth to announce the manifestation of a new race and a new world: the Supramental.

Let us prepare for it in all sincerity and eagerness.”

The editor's introduction, clear and concise and with generous quotations from the source, presents Sri Aurobindo as Rishi-Kavi, Yogi and Avatar: Seer-Poet, spiritual Mystic and Divine Descent. It is instilled with a fine, restrained enthusiasm. All too brief is the contribution of Nolini Kanta Gupta, pointing with a quiet authority to the sunlit path: not in intellectual fumbling, groping and doubting, the vagaries of the lower mind, but in quietness and the dawning of the higher, the supra intellectual mind, and the opening, the awakening of the pure heart, through which one can progress in a clear, illumined faith and assured serenity. From Sisir Kumar Mitra the well-known historian we have a serviceable short sketch of Sri Aurobindo's external life, with a salutary warning against the mind's too great eagerness to speculate on the significance of the passing of such an unparalleled figure, unique in the world's history. Nirodbaran, with remarks on the guru, who, more than just a teacher, is a direct channel of divinity, rather the Truth itself, and the inner

Guide, gives us something of his own relation with Sri Aurobindo in more external matters, in an attempt to adumbrate something of the "unification of the spiritual with the mundane." From Nagin Doshi we have letters from Sri Aurobindo on Avatarhood, thought-formation, and the mind and its levels. A sketch of Sri Aurobindo's writings is provided by M. P. Pandit, with mention also of some of the Mother's writings, and those of disciples on Sri Aurobindo or some aspect of him. From Jagannath Vedalankar we have a clear presentation of some of the inner meaning of the Veda, in the light of Sri Aurobindo. The psychology of India is given a glance by Indra Sen, as a comprehensiveness that would understand thoroughly man's nature, his possibilities and the means of effecting them; which, he seems confident, has been brought to its fulness in the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo, with the Psychic Being as integrator. A. B. Patel has contributed a succinct presentation of the great promise for the realization of the ideal of human unity, and the great difficulties in the way: emphasizing the acute necessity for a change of consciousness. The agile pen of K. D. Sethna has given us an interesting letter on narrative and epic poetry, with reference to *Savitri*, Sri Aurobindo's master poem; and with remarks, illumined by quotations from Sri Aurobindo on the English language, as a vehicle for mystical and spiritual poetry. A close-knit, solid and richly profound paper by M.V. Seetaraman glows with a contained fervour for beauty, which he affirms as a divine thing, coming most purely and fully through the awakened nature of the sadhak, beyond the clutch of the egoistic false consciousness. The world is raised and harmonized from truth to greater truth by the divine artistry, it is all the growing expression of the spiritual effulgent power, in Beauty, Love and Ananda. The reviewer considers this the best article in the book.

These are the members of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram who have contributed. Going further afield, to the Indian universities, from Sisirkumar Ghose we have an engaging and forceful paper concerning a "civilisation of consciousness": the truly *spiritual* development that we need so badly, if our society is to progress and even to live. Full spirituality is not world-denying, but world-enveloping and world-redeeming. It must be emphasized that it is not *religion* that

we need, but spirituality itself. In the opinion of Kali Das Bhattacharya, Sri Aurobindo is the most profound and comprehensive of modern Indian philosophers. But his treatment of Sri Aurobindo's "philosophy" is too much intellectualized, and is compromised by his overlooking of the fact that Sri Aurobindo is not a philosopher, as academically understood, but a Seer. The article has been translated by the editor from the original Bengali. Giving us "a small feeble pointer to a great problem and its sublime solution", Swami Pratyagatmananda Saraswati (who has now left the body after a long and rich life of yoga) affirms that thorough investigation of Matter, Life and Mind may bring us to their ultimate source, which is transcendent. He refers the reader to *The Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo's major prose work, for the "most complete and consummate Answer" to our most pressing problems.

From England there are two contributions. Edith Schnapper has written on the "challenge of the opposites" in the Integral Yoga: going beyond the dualistic ego-nature into larger planes, until there is no "paradox" and the One can be the many without obstruction of limited consciousness; so that eventually one can come to the cosmic synthesis envisioned by Sri Aurobindo as by none before him. John Hick makes a stumbling attempt to see how some form of the "doctrine of reincarnation" might be accepted by Christianity. Aside from his evidently limited understanding of the "doctrine", one may question the importance of the possibility, now that, as the Mother tells us, the time of the religions is past.

America has given five offerings. Haridas Chaudhuri writes of how mysticism and existentialism can be harmonized in a higher synthesis, in the supramental consciousness, and how this is the one hope for a radical solving of the fundamental problems of mankind. From Robert M. Kleinman we have a learned and perceptive if somewhat stiff treatment of philosophical views of Nature, East and West, culminating in the Integral Advaita of Sri Aurobindo. With liberal reference to Sri Aurobindo's writing, H. P. Sullivan expounds the Supermind as the indispensable link between the higher and lower hemispheres of the manifestation. His treatment is highly intellectualized, however; and the intellect is not high enough for such a purpose. So Supermind is begrudged its real status as some-

thing *supra*-mental, that is, beyond the mind, and is even spoken of as Divine Mind. Here it may be noted, *apropos* of Professor Sullivan's use of the word "noumenal", that this word, however hallowed its usage may be in Western philosophy, is inadequate as a designation for Being, or Reality: because "noumenal" means "of the mind." Perhaps the difficulty here can be laid to the door of the prevalent notion that consciousness can be only *mental*. According to Sri Aurobindo, Supermind is not even the very ultimate essence of Mind, but is something of a different and higher order: something of which mind is an inadequate translation in the lower hemisphere. Professor Sullivan apparently knows this, but he does not always write as if he does. Also he seems to confuse the universal and the transcendent. We are away from Sri Aurobindo entirely in Gerald James Larson's study of a technical point of the Sankhya philosophy; though he hints at "auditory mystical traditions" and emphasizes the creative power of sound, a genuine knowledge of which (an experienced, a working knowledge, and not merely something theoretical) is certainly a part of Sri Aurobindo's yoga. With a succinct survey of the intellectual or theoretical suppositions of modern physical science, J. W. Smith forcefully presents a "holistic" view, in which oneness reigns in harmony for the actualization of being. This view he finds in the Vedanta, and in Sri Aurobindo. The paper is rich, in its way, and of dense texture, and is especially difficult to characterize in a few words.

The contributions of Professors Smith and Sullivan raise a question which it may not be out of place to consider here. Professor Sullivan compares Sri Aurobindo to some extent with Plotinus and John Scotus Erigena, while Professor Smith has led the editor in a note to distinguish carefully between Sri Aurobindo and Whitehead. Such comparisons may easily begin proliferating in the academic world. Sri Aurobindo and St. Thomas Aquinas, Sri Aurobindo and Ashvaghosha, Sri Aurobindo and Xenophanes, Sri Aurobindo and John Fiske, Sri Aurobindo and the Emperor Julian — the possibilities are endless. But what value such activities may have for a serious mind is another question. Such a mind, having become acquainted with Sri Aurobindo, can hardly treat him as just another philosopher; and the practice would seem to have little to recommend

it, of making comparisons with a figure who is incommensurable.

The sole contributor from Japan is Hajime Nakamura, who has made some comparison of Buddhism and Christianity as means of "therapy"; which is salvation and emancipation. The paper has been edited by Professor Robert H. L. Slater.

There is also a letter from Isobel Cripps, the widow of Sir Stafford Cripps, concerning Sri Aurobindo's public adhesion to the proposals of the Parliamentary Mission in 1942. The correspondence between Sri Aurobindo and Sir Stafford is included. The shortest contribution to the volume is a tribute from O. C. Gangoly, the noted art critic, with his regrets that he is in no position to make a larger contribution. Those to whom his work is known may add their regrets for his recent passing.

The book is well designed and serviceably bound, and for the most part well printed, though the inking is sometimes faint, and the horizontal alignment is not always perfect. The proof reading has been good, except in the passages from *Savitri*: here on pp. 3 and 152 there are serious misquotations, and the reader should correct them from the text. Also, on p. 140 the French Revolution has been moved from the close of the eighteenth century to the close of the nineteenth: that is, if the reviewer has understood the text aright. And a purist might object, on p. 33, to having Bergson called "Henry". Again, on two occasions (pp. 95 and 135), *Savitri* is referred to as the longest poem in English. This is an idea that has somehow gotten currency, but is at variance with the facts. At least three poems are longer: Spenser's *Faerie Queen*, the *Psyche* of Joseph Beaumont, and the *Festus* of Philip James Bailey. Lastly, the index might have been longer and more comprehensive.

• • It remains to recommend the book, which the reviewer can conscientiously do. The editor has done his work well, and has added notes on four of the contributions, forestalling certain criticisms that might have been made. Though the articles are mostly philosophical, and there is very little about the *yoga* of Sri Aurobindo and what it means to practise it or attempt it, for most of its contents at least the volume should be a worth-while addition to the library of any cultured person who is concerned with human potentialities and the future of mankind.

JESSE ROARKE

Pen Portraits By C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar. Rs. 2.00 Transactions of the C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation, 1970, Rs. 3.00

Sir C.P. is always a literary artist whatever the theme of his writing or speaking. The present collection of 25 pen-portraits of eminent men in history — ancient and modern — is a treat. Shakespeare, Whitman, Kalidasa, Tiruvalluvar, Churchill, Sardar, C.R., and many others come in for deft character-sketching.

The *Transactions* are largely lectures delivered under the auspices of the Foundation by competent authorities on subjects of special importance like Taxation in Growing Society, Ramanujam and Mathematics, Rights of Citizens etc. They also contain popular talks like the one by Sir C.P. on Law and Letters in which he speaks of “an illustrious lawyer who afterwards became a Judge and who, having seen a copy of Morley’s Compromise on the table of a friend of his, wanted information as to whether the latest cases were reported therein!”

Kalyan (Sri Ganesh Anka). Gorakhpur (U.P.) Price Rs. 12.00

Keeping up the high standards attained by this Journal in bringing out special Numbers of lasting importance, the present issue on *Ganesha* is all that could be desired. In over 500 pages almost all the aspects of the subject are covered. The origins of the Ganesha concept, the development of Ganesha traditions down the centuries through the Vedas, Upanishads, Tantras, Puranas and even secular literature, are traced by competent authorities.

It is happy to note that a number of writers emphasise that Ganesha is essentially a Vedic Deity who has undergone a number of modifications in several ages, in several parts of the country. Ganapati in the Veda is Brahmanaspati, Master of the Word. He is the embodiment of OMKAR, the primordial Word. In the Tantras he is seated in the Muladhara presiding over both the Earth and the Ether principles.

In the course of a learned article, Pandit B. Ramakrishnacharyulu notes the changes of vehicles, *vāhana*, of Ganesha in the succeeding ages: In the Krita Yuga, it is Lion; in Treta, it is Peacock;

in Dwapara, it is Mouse; in Kali Ganesha is two-armed, smoky in hue — evidently with no vehicle.

A comprehensive reference book, a compendium of ritual and worship and meditation on Ganesha, this volume preserves an important tradition of our land.

M. P. PANDIT

Gems from the Gita by *M. P. Pandit*; Publisher, Ganesh & Company, Madras; pages 128, cloth bound, price Rs. 6.00

Students of the Gita are aware of the fact that there is perhaps no other scripture in the world which is so widely, so esteemably and so severally commented upon as the Gita, and from a great variety of viewpoints both by the genius of the hoary past as much as by the genius of the modern age. This fact itself shows how rich its contents must be, and how universally appealing. In the words of Sri Aurobindo the Gita is an inexhaustible treasure of gems, an ocean whose depths are infinitely rich with them, so rich indeed that even a whole life endeavour to dive into the depths of it is not enough to approximate its bottom, even a hundred years' search into the limitless treasure of its gems is not enough to obtain even a thousandth part of it. The Gita as such invites and ever encourages us to draw from its bounty as abundantly as we are capable of and thereby make our existence rich and high and noble.

Sri M. P. Pandit is already well-known to his readers for his collection of 'gems', and for making them available to all 'gem' seekers. His 'Gems from Sri Aurobindo' in four sets, 'Gems from the Tantras' in two sets and 'Gems from the Veda' delivered so far in different instalments have already won for him a reputation as a 'gem collector'. The present set of 'Gems from the Gita', nicely studded one on each page of a neatly bound attractive book, is inviting to all lovers of the Gita, 'gem' lovers in particular.

This book contains a collection of hundred and twenty eight 'gems', their names being alphabetically arranged from 'Action' to 'Yogin', each name serving as an important topic under which Sri Pandit brings a significant quotation from the Gita, either a phrase or a line or a whole verse. The original quotation from the Gita being in

devanāgarī script, there follows its English rendering and then an explanatory note, concise, straight, pertinent, suggestive, each note speaking of the author's comments on the 'gem', each note being characteristic of the author's simple style. All the topics selected for the present set of the 'Gems' are valuable in their own way.

The present book of 'Gems' is obviously a book of 'gems', not only because each 'gem' has been drawn from the Gita, but also because the explanatory notes contain, and naturally so, some hues on them from the light of Sri Aurobindo. The author makes no preface to this collection with the result that one simply feels a directness with the 'Gems'.

To any reader this book is likely to serve as window-openings into the vast fields of the Gita's richness. To the scholarly seekers it may even serve as an invitation to dive into the Gita's depths for making their own collection of 'gems' from it. The Gita being the Gita, one might look forward for further sets of 'Gems' resulting from a series of such attempts.

It would add to the value of this collection if an index of Sanskrit terms pertaining to all the topics could be provided at the end of the book; along with their English meaning the same index could also serve as a useful glossary.

H. MAHESHWARI



The Advent

Above all preferences
we want to be at the
service of the Divine.



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

SWEET MOTHER

(7)

(A talk to young children : 12.8.74)

WHILE coming to you, I saw your beautiful display of excerpts and quotations from the writings of Mother and Sri Aurobindo on the walls all around. Yes, it was a beautiful picture — and the sayings and mottoes and lines of poetry were, needless to say, precious treasures dear to us. But — but left at that, to see, admire and pass on, well — they are dead things — words, words, words — lifeless skeletons. They have a meaning and they serve their purpose only when you come in contact with the life and consciousness in them, when you live them with your own life and be the consciousness that is there.

You know the well-known phrase: the letter kills, the spirit saves. Without the spirit, the word is only a dead shell, even a mantra

is a dead thing — a mere jumble of sounds, if it is not enkindled, enlivened with the spirit. Now I say you are to breathe your own spirit into the apparently dead or lifeless forms. For children are nothing but spirit: spirit means new consciousness, living light. It is not a tall claim I make on your behalf. I will explain.

You children who are here, who have been here for sometime, are a privileged class of human beings. You do not know it but you will know one day. You must have seen the Mother, many perhaps had her physical touch, while there are others who continue to breathe in the atmosphere where her body still endures. You have within you the rare thing hardly found elsewhere, the spark of which I was speaking — it is a particle of the Mother's own consciousness, her own life and her own subtle body-consciousness. You have imbibed it in you with your breath and are still imbibing.

It is there, you have to be conscious of it and realise the full benefit out of it. You are to be the living, not merely echoes and imprints but embodiments of the Word of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. You are now only an embryo, a rudimentary particle of the new life — but it is there — you have in you the thing needed essentially — I only remind you to make you conscious of it, — even as you have budding gymnasts or athletes among you, the playground makes you conscious of it, offers you the opportunity to cultivate and develop and bring it to fruition.

Now in a general way children all over the world are a privileged class. They possess what old age, even mature age does not possess or has lost. I mention two essential qualities pre-eminently belonging to the green age or to the "salad days": (1) Happiness — a child is ever happy — in spite of its occasional weepings and wailings — and happiness means a radiant smile. To the old people I have often said, "Always smile. Mother has taught us how to smile in all circumstances." Well, that is the natural gift of the young. A smile makes your life's journey smooth. In no other way can you remove so successfully the obstacles that beset you. And also that is the lever to lift up your consciousness — it has a mysterious power that automatically relieves you of much of the burden of life, lightens you and leads you into a higher sphere. For smile is a divine quality. Next to Happiness, the natural virtue of a child-consciousness is Freedom.

It does not find any barrier anywhere, it can do anything.

These two characteristic virtues of childhood themselves spring from another fundamental quality of young nature — simplicity, a spontaneous outflow of energy without any thinking of before or after — none of mind's complexities and hesitations.

In this sphere too, we have here for the play of these natural youthful qualities, opportunities and advantages that are not easily available elsewhere. The atmosphere of freedom that we enjoy is *incomparable* — Mother herself told us once.

As you grow, you must carry with you these fundamental qualities and you will remain ever young.

Now, to carry over — that is the trouble. And that problem Mother has solved for us here. This is what I was telling you just now, — the special privilege that we enjoy here, granted to those who are here. Added to the fundamental natural virtues of youthfulness, we have been given a supplementary boon, that of consciousness, Mother's own consciousness. It is this additional element that has given a special turn and temper in the atmosphere here and has brought about a change not only in the degree but in the kind of the ordinary youthful qualities. I am speaking of your soul-consciousness, which is the gift of the Mother's body-consciousness. I say you may not know it or recognise it by your mind and intellect, but it is there. And I say also, you will never lose it, whatever happens to your outer life. That will lead you ultimately to the supreme Realisation, Immortal Life on Earth. It may be clouded for the outer mind, but it is always there behind.

Exactly so I come back to the point from where I started. The mottoes — the writings displayed on the wall — are to be displayed as living entities in your being — in your consciousness, and in your life, even in your body. That is the better part of your work — indeed, the essential part.

Today a new consciousness is abroad. The earth-atmosphere is filled with the new spirit. But here the Mother has left with us not merely her consciousness but a conscious being — a part of her living personality in us, that is the divine legacy we enjoy. We must not simply be proud of it but try to prove ourselves worthy of it. The Divine Personality will grow everywhere but the path-finders,

forerunners are among you.

Naturally there will be formations of the new life in all climes and countries but the patterns, the norms will have been set by you, for the Mother was here in her physical material body.

So the mantras you declare as divine words, you must make them living powers, gods themselves embodied in you. The basis is here: the Mother has laid the foundations here for her creation — the roots from where the shoots and branches are to emerge and spread out abroad and everywhere. In any case, here or elsewhere, as the Mother has announced in her own voice:

Built is the golden tower, the flame-child born.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

A NEW PATH FINDER TO THE SPIRITUAL SUMMIT

THE cosmic process is ever on the move. That which exists forever can have neither a beginning nor an end. Nor can Existence ever become Non-existent.

Evolution is the mode of the cosmic process and is therefore always on. It can never stop. We human beings habituated to think in terms of seemingly static things have to realise that we are in the midst of evolutionary forces and are their playthings. It is good for us to know and understand, and if possible, participate consciously in the evolutionary process of life, of being-becoming, of this great drama and Divine Sport.

* If we want to understand Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, their philosophy, their Sadhana or spiritual discipline, their teaching, their spell on the thinking and feeling mind, we have to realise that man is evolving, the whole being of man is evolving. Normally, by evolution we mean biological evolution, mainly physiological. But in the case of man who is already a psychic being living in the psychosphere, psychological evolution is predominant; because the most important aspect and element in man is his consciousness. Physical and physiological evolution is far less important for him, as he can and has invented tools and gadgets which he can use and or misuse for fulfilling his immediate needs and achieving certain of his physical and vital aspirations. This tool-making and tool-using capacity however, has made him a totally social being, and a human being is no longer an individual as such.

Another important thing to remember is that along with the evolving man, his philosophy, his outlook, his Sadhana and all that, is bound to evolve. Let us not think therefore that all thinking and feeling and willing in this great and ancient land of India has already been done in the past by great seers and sages and there is nothing much or more to add or interpret further or anew. To use the words of Sri Aurobindo himself, we must de-hypnotise ourselves of the subtle superstition that all the achievements in Vedanta, Yoga, and spiritual realisation have already been there, thanks to great Masters. In fact, however, each Master has tried to point the way to higher aims, to ever-expanding aspirations, and to greater goals to be achieved.

That in fact is the essential function of Masters from age to age.

I have already said that what is important in man, in fact the most essential element in him is his consciousness, the capacity, the power to know, to store knowledge, to think, to feel, and to will. It is true that he has a body and his life. He has the senses, the means of physical and other knowledge — the Jnanendriyas, and the limbs, the means of action — Karmendriyas. But all these are there as means to serve his consciousness. In fact, man lives in his consciousness and not where his body exists and moves and has its being. Shorn of his consciousness and its focussing and coordinating core and centre, which we call the soul or self, man is so much vegetable and nothing more. A man who has lost the functions of consciousness and still breathes and lives is rightly said to be 'vegetating'. Medical science has recently come to the conclusion that a human being cannot be pronounced to be totally dead unless his centre of consciousness functioning in the brain has ceased to function about six or seven minutes after stopping of the heart-beat!

I need not mention here the states of consciousness or the layers in it which psychologists refer to. But we are concerned here with the dimensions in which man's consciousness generally functions.

One of the immediate, direct, and extensive dimension in which man's consciousness is working actively and functioning, is that of cognising and collecting information and knowledge about the material and other things it comes across and has contact with, and disseminating it to others through various channels of communication, including mass media, namely, newspapers, film, radio and television.

The second dimension is the investigation into the laws of nature which make things function in a particular way, and using as well as manipulating that knowledge for satisfying his own desires for comfort and convenience for deriving pleasure from such action.

Man has advanced far enough in these two dimensions. In fact, he has made so much progress in these activities that it is proving almost dangerous for him to proceed further without adequate self-control and safeguards which moral and spiritual considerations alone can provide. The result has been that the unbridled passions, lust, power-hunger, elementary vital urges and so on of man have rendered the world of man into a den of fear, hatred, insecurity, tension, tur-

moil and an uncertain destiny.

If the first two dimensions are being served by science and technology in the hands of unscrupulous, hungry and competitive human beings, it is because man's consciousness is not sufficiently powerful and active in the matter of control of forces which are called beastly or Asuric, Rajasic and Tamasic. The innermost and yet universal human aspirations point out the direction to the third dimension. Long long ago the seers of India gave utterance to the human-divine aspirations of man in the following words: —

Lead us from Falsehood to Truth.

Lead us from Ignorance to Knowledge and Wisdom.

Lead us from Darkness to Light.

Lead us from Death to Immortality.

Lead us from Sorrow to eternal Bliss.

Lead us to Reality. Living in the light of Reality is bliss itself.

Man is in quest of peace, peaceful harmony, happiness which bubbles up from the eternal spring of Existence, Sat-Chit-Ananda. That happiness is of the nature of supernal unending bliss and it is deathless — Amrita. All action of whatever kind physical, vital, mental, moral, aesthetic, spiritual in that state of consciousness is like the sportive joy of children — they dance and sing out of that kind of joy. That is the region of the spirit and the Spiritual Summit belongs to that region. The highest and yet the simplest term in which it can be described is Sat (Eternal Being-Existence), Chit (Pure unbroken homogenous consciousness, 'Samvit-Eva' of Raman Maharshi), Ananda (Pure undiluted joy and delight). Sri Aurobindo has also pointed out the personal aspect of Sachchidananda in several ways, as Vasudeva, as Shri Krishna, as Purushottama (Uttamah Purushah). Man has to strive to attain a state of consciousness in which he can hold communion with Purushottama and be in that state so that thereafter his actions are part and parcel of Divine action and or cosmic action.

Redemption, salvation, Mukti, Nirvana are words which connote the negative aspect of the highest state. The positive content of the state is that which Sri Aurobindo emphasises. He speaks of divinising

life itself here and now, not merely hereafter. He speaks of the Superman as well. But it is not Nietzsche's or Shaw's superman — which is only man writ large to enormity!! Sri Aurobindo's superman is the Man who has attained Divinity. He is one who is capable of divinising all terrestrial life, who can transform even Matter itself to serve the end of divinity. It is not an escape from materiality but a spiritualisation of Matter in order to be an adequate instrument of divine action and even terrestrial existence, which can be perfect in every detail and which would reflect the glory of Heaven and of divinity on earth.

It is said that God made man in his own image. But as if to reciprocate, man has all along tried to fashion God or gods in his (man's) own image! Man has *humanised Divinity* throughout history, by giving him anthropomorphic shapes and forms. Here is Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's call to man, to *divinise humanity* itself here and now on earth. His is a call not for individual or partial salvation of a part of man, or of a group of men, but of the whole of humanity. No single individual can attain salvation unless and until the whole of humanity attains it. The Divine Plan cannot be partial, perfunctory and discriminative.

If such is the Spiritual Summit which man is called upon to attain in order to commune with Purushottama, what is the Sadhana for it?

At this stage, let us remember the basic difference between philosophers and philosophes. Anyone who presents a logical system of thought which explains the categories of existence (for our purpose, Jeeva, Jagat and Ishwara) is a philosopher, it is a Darshana. But Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are not mere philosophers like Kant, Hegel, Heidegger, Whitehead and others but are deeply interested in attaining in their own consciousness the highest state which they have envisaged. Therefore, they have a Sadhana, a Spiritual Discipline to offer to mankind for attaining the summit.

The overall Sadhana offered by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother can be called the Integral Yoga. Yoga is not new to India. Millennia ago some of the yogas, Raja Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Bhakti Yoga were practised in India as spiritual disciplines and altruistic and mystic ways of attaining the highest state of consciousness, often called Samadhi, a state of divine ecstasy or blissful joy. But here too Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have added something very original and in consonance

with the evolving mankind of the 20th century.

Some original features of Integral Yoga may be mentioned here. In the first place, this Yoga is not to take man away from life but it is for life and to enrich life by bringing the Divine into the terrestrial work, to perfect it in every way. In the second place, its practice cannot be said to be complete till the last man is perfectly divinised. The third thing is that all the faculties of man and the total man is involved in this Yoga, unlike other Yogas in which particular faculties are more involved than others. The fourth aspect is, this Yoga begins with a total surrender (Samarpana) to the Divine. Thus the very first step is determined communion with the Reality which is Being-Becoming simultaneously, and of the nature of Sachchidananda. This raises the simplest action of the Sadhak to the level of the highest worship. This ennobling and sublimation of every act, be it ever the humblest, is a reward worth the effort of will.

Man is an instrument in the hands of Divinity or the cosmic forces. To be consciously an instrument of the Divinity is the way to give content to that truth of life and reap the benefit. Man is not only conscious but is self-conscious. He has developed conscience — a witness unto himself and a discriminating power over himself. Hence, man has come of age. So, it is his duty and responsibility to participate in his own evolution towards higher levels of consciousness. Evolution is on. Sri Aurobindo says, all life is Yoga, because, man is evolving. He wants us to be deeply aware of this fact. What man is called upon to do is to participate consciously and intelligently in that Yoga. After all, Yoga is conscious evolution, a science and art of life by which we are to engineer all our energies to attain higher reaches of Existence, and ultimately the Spiritual Summit.

R. R. DIWAKAR

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MAN'S RELIGIOUS SENSE

*There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will ...*

Hamlet

IF we equate man's cultural evolution with one hour, over 55 minutes of that hour are occupied by the Stone Ages. This is why we still use flame throwers on each other.

Since man became what in some cases we laughingly call sentient, he has wondered about the point and purpose of this strange and mysterious process of which he finds himself of necessity a part. His wonderings fall into four stages. In accordance with evolution each stage is higher and more complex than the one before it and makes better sense.

The first stage is still anthropologically available for study among the world's very primitive peoples; it shows man interspersing his daily behaviour with ritual highlights. These embody rhythm, pattern and symbols — masks of the gods or totem poles of forces personified in animals. These primitive rituals often involved fire and drums and were sacrificial and orgiastic as rhythm and sexual libido were violently stimulated to tap the deepest roots of the life force animating all. But a chief point is that these rituals purged fear and brought freedom from fear — they gave a rough rudimentary discrimination, rudimentary understanding and pulled people together whom life had been pulling apart — they integrated and calmed.

Primitive man did not work his magic haphazardly. It was made out of the living tissues of his experience, but chiefly he felt his way, drawing on his emotion rooted deep in the old brain. Only later with the emergence of the newer cortical brain did he rationalise. It was those who were most *sympathetic* to nature who produced the most satisfactory rituals; these became the embryo priesthoods, the link between the mass and the gods.

As pleasure was most intense during the ritual, the artistic process itself became important as well as the catharsis it produced. As the whole affair facilitated survival and involved distinguishing between the hostile and the helpful, a sense of obligation on behalf of collective

security was also nurtured. So here we have not only the behaviour but its causes, Artistic and Moral clarifying experience, the beginnings of Art and Ethics.

The second stage is that of the rise of the polytheistic religions, pre-eminently the Greek. With Greek civilisation and its greater and more refined complexity the personifications were not only of forces at work in Nature but in Man himself. This was a great advance as emphasis now shifted to *conduct* — those aspects which destroyed or helped man.

It is psychology which shows the inner force responsible for the rituals, the inner force of fear rooted in insecurity and leading to frustration intensifying to violence, and the antidote of understanding leading to action removing the various sources of frustration — leading to freedom from fear and to security.

We know now that the personifications in the rituals and religions illustrate — whether consciously realised or not — sexual, carnal, reproductive energy sublimated to produce social and domestic effects in the evolution of higher levels of life. The aim is greater mastery of the environment through greater mastery of the self, in the interest of survival. The activity is chemical, biological, and sentient and constitutes a transaction between the internal gene complex and the external environment. What room is left for Free-Will? When we get what we want we feel free, but this feeling is entirely subjective and really the result of this transaction.

Some well-known symbols from the third or Monotheistic stage may illustrate this. The apples of Eve — the cockney's apples and pears up the stairs — signify "forbidden" fruit, however seductively ample, in other words an invitation to expend carnal energy; the serpent in Adam's context is masculine and suffice it to say it came between them. Excessive expenditure of energy carnally left insufficient energy for other things, hence the Fall instead of the Rise to a higher level of existence. The consequence was not freedom, but guilt, not harmony but discord, not peace but war, not integration but disintegration.

With monotheism a single Godhead replaced the many divine sources of force or power. This did make more sense but left a major unresolved paradox. In fact where the Devil is given equal credence

with God we do not really have monotheism at all. However it was maintained that God was the source of life and the Devil His opponent destroying where He created. Man was exhorted to invest in God rather than sup with the Devil as a matter of immediate self-interest. Prometheus merged into Jesus who, whether as man deified or God incarnate, gave the gift of eternal life and personified the behaviour necessary for this gift. The simplification of monotheism resulted in a further identification of man's behaviour as "good" or "bad" with a commensurate increase in the need for personal responsibility even as behaviour was still seen as subject to external intervention by an arbitrary God or Devil.

But this situation left an unresolved contradiction — of an omnipotent and good God who yet permitted evil and its consequent suffering. This paradox was further complicated by Hamlet's realisation that nothing is good or bad but thinking makes it so.

Gradually, with the abandon of Falstaff or the denials of Faustus, the way was cleared for the next or fourth stage of development. This came along with the advent of the scientific method, Darwin's Theory of Evolution, and the theory that the life force ebbs and flows to give alternating periods of integration and disintegration as adumbrated by the leading thinkers of the 19th Century and by such as Arnold Toynbee. Instead of guessing the patient's temperature, now we read the thermometer.

These two forces, of concentration and integration, and diffusion or disintegration are still God and the Devil, but now they work symbiotically together. When we ask questions we go to pieces in fear and violence; but in struggling we evolve the greater complexity needed to achieve greater understanding which eventually enables us to answer the questions and we emerge to a higher level of awareness.

The fourth stage now involves a Devil working with God as one and the same force, disintegration leading at last to re-integration and so on *ad infinitum*. When concentration predominates the result is peace, romantic art, philosophical synthesis, liberal and humane legislation and religious confidence: when diffusion predominates war, realism, analysis, doubt, denial, uncertainty, violence and promiscuity are the effects. Both forces are simultaneous but each predominates alternately. Concentration is God, the Preserver; Diffusion

or the Destroyer, is hate, or the Devil, but God is the senior partner. Thus the paradox is resolved in a single force producing through periodic destruction, periodic growth — while the water supply is not cut off.

The other concept that must be taken in conjunction with this in this the latest stage in the evolution of man's religious awareness, his understanding of what life is all about, is the concept of universal immanence.

This maintains that the creative force is not arbitrary and operating intrusively from outside but is operating from *within* everything created. The Creator puts Himself into his material as a novelist into his novel or an Artist into his Art.

Nothing is left to chance. All is predetermined as man emerges as a kind of televised substance, the sun a kind of filament, the iron-cored magnetic Earth with its ionosphere, Heaviside and Appleton layers, a kind of a node in a vast and infinitely complex tube. We are being projected in a kind of color television show.

In *Fields Within Fields*, number 12, page 56, in an article entitled "How Fields Affect Us", James B. Beal writes: ...as a product of the Cosmos we are all 'tuned in' and our biorhythms react accordingly to EM and ES fields, low radiation, ions, and other as yet unknown factors.

In the same issue, page 58, in another article entitled "Light and the Human Environment", Henry L. Logan notes: Human beings are electromagnetic organisms operating in a mesh of interrelated and interacting electrical field patterns, principally generated (directly or indirectly) by the Sun.

The aim seems to be to bring man into union with the Creator who is the immanent Self towards which every individual struggles in eliminating self-deception. As Emerson said, the purpose of life seems to be to acquaint Man with himself.

As a species we still have a very long way to go.

DESMAND TARRANT

SAVITRI: A STUDY IN DEPTH

Book II: Canto 3

I

THE GLORY AND FALL OF LIFE

And entered wide obscure disputed fields
Where all was doubt and change and nothing sure,
A world of search and toil without repose.
As one who meets the face of the Unknown,
A questioner with none to give reply,
Attracted to a problem never solved,

.....
He travelled through a land peopled by doubts

.....
A far retreating horizon of mirage.

A SWAPATHY reaches the land of the subtle vital; it is a half-lit field of controversy; everything has an existence under a cloud of doubt; nothing is final; everything is subject to debate; there is an un-ending toil, an indefatigable search for the verities and the values of life; there is a fluidity and nothing fixed; it is like the experience of facing the unknown from whom no reply can be elicited for a shower of questions; the country is heavily populated by doubts; it is dense with a wild of problems of an attractive nature; the solution seems to be nigh; within reach appears the goal, but it proves a deceptive mirage, a receding horizon.

A vagrancy was there that brooked no home,

.....
She accepts disaster as a common risk;

.....
She wrestles with danger and discovery

.....
Moves on unsatisfied, unsure of its end.

.....
 Now master of herself, now toy and slave.

.....
 In a gallop of thunder-hooved vicissitudes
 She swept through the race-fields of Circumstance ...

Life here is ever on the move; it does not have a fixed home like the nomad; it risks danger and disaster by abandoning the settled forms in search of the untried and the unknown; she without repose continues her experiments; deriving satisfaction from none, she moves on to another, ever unsure of its end or aim; in all the varying phases of its tempestuous career, its ups and downs, sometimes it gives the impression of a top-hand and sometimes of an underling; once she appears a master and at another time she looks a slave of circumstances; the Life-force seeks to be but in what manner and in what shape is not known to her and she is impelled by the Indweller who discards each formation in preference to a higher and a more developed one.

She writhed, a worm mid worms in Nature's mud,
 Then, Titan-statured, took all earth for food,
 Ambitioned the seas for robe, for crown the stars

.....
 Then wantonly enamoured of Sorrow's face,
 She plunged into the anguish of the depths
 And, wallowing, clung to her own misery.

Propelled by a desire, the life-force has embodied itself in several formations from a worm to a Titan; she has the characteristic impulses of the embodiments; she navigates the seas and is on the wing for the conquest of the worlds; in a mood of perversity, she takes a plunge into the Inconscience to wallow in its misery.

A scene was planned for all her numberless moods

.....
 But none could offer a pure felicity;

.....
 Something remained dissatisfied ever the same

.....
 She needs the spur of pleasure and of pain

A perverse savour haunts her thirsting lips:
 For the grief she weeps which came from her own choice,
 For the pleasure yearns that racked with wounds her breast;
 Aspiring to heaven she turns her steps towards hell.

Yet pure and bright from the Timeless was her birth,
 A lost world-rapture lingers in her eyes ...

But none of these variations in manifestation and the scenes of its activities convey to her the felicity planned for; the sense of dissatisfaction remains ever the same; she cannot do without pleasure or pain; she requires the spurs of both; her taste is so whimsical that she out of her own choice creates a situation that fills her with grief; she wantonly pines away for a pleasure that can be acquired at a terrific cost of pain; ambitious for heaven, she wends her steps to hell; she is so restless, perverse and dissatisfied because she is part of the Eternal and the transient repels her; there is that nostalgic rapture for the lost world in her eyes.

Even in changing worlds bereft of peace,

He saw the image of a happier state,

As far as heaven, as near as thought and hope,

Glimmered the kingdom of a griefless life.

Above him in a new celestial vault

An archipelago of laughter and fire,

Swam stars apart in a rippled sea of sky.

And gleaming spheres of strange felicity

Floated through distance like a symbol world.

While treading this soil, bereft of peace and unsafe with a flux of

movement, Aswapathy catches a glimpse, the image of a happier world, a kingdom of griefless life; it is very far, as far as heaven, but very near, as near as thought and hope; this world wears the appearance of an archipelago, reflected in the sea of the sky; each island is as bright as a star; they swim producing ripples of laughter in the sky; they are spheres of a strange felicity, floating in a distance almost inaccessible, but near enough for human aspiration to reach.

Unmoved, untouched, looked down great visioned planes

.....
They shone like images thrown from a far scene

Too high and glad for mortal lids to seize.

But near and real to the longing heart

.....
Are the hidden kingdoms of beatitude.

.....
Immune from the harsh clutch of Death and Time,

.....
For ever wallowing in bliss they lie.

These higher planes, self-absorbed in their own felicity, look down on all the activities of the lower plane, in an untouched and unmoved manner; they are like the reflections of images cast from a distance; they grip the heart with a yearning for what obtains there; those kingdoms of beatitude are free from the dualities of birth and death, joy and sorrow; they wallow in bliss and though they are beyond the present human capacity, they are within, open for discovery and enjoyment by a sincere aspirant.

In dream and trance and muse before our eyes,

.....
The figures of the perfect kingdom pass

.....
Unreal-seeming yet more real than life,

.....
If dreams these were or captured images,

.....
Dream's truth made false earth's vain realities.

We experience a glimpse of these higher realms in a trance or a dream or a vision; the inhabitants of that kingdom pass before us; they leave a blazing trail on the memory; they may be discounted by the materialist as unreal; but they are more real than what we are accustomed to consider as real and the verities of the dream expose the shallowness and the vanity of the earth life.

Or imagination's comet trail of dream,
Took now a close shape of reality.

.....
The wonder-worlds of life were dreams no more;

.....
Whose boundaries jutted into a sky of Self
And dipped towards a strange ethereal base.

.....
Out of that formless stuff Time mints his shapes;
The Eternal's quiet holds the cosmic act:

.....
He props her dance upon a rigid base ...

What has always been a dream, a glittering prospect that is unrealisable, has now taken the shape of a reality; its extreme boundaries have their projections in the vaults and the vasts of the inner Self; behind this periphery and on the immutable base of the Self takes place the cosmic and the manifold creation; the creatrix draws upon the infinite potential of the seemingly indifferent but observant and witnessing, quiet and passive Self.

Out of the Void's unseeing energies
Inventing the scene of a concrete universe,

.....
She sees by flashes of his all-knowing Light.
At her will the inscrutable Supermind leans down
To guide her force that feels but cannot know,

.....
And life obeys the governing Idea.

The cosmic force mobilises the energies diffused in the universe; she starts minting the multiple shapes; though she gives the impression of a mechanical movement in all her activities, she is governed by the indwelling real Idea; she is helped by the flashes of a divine light and her kinesis is supported and guided by the Omniscient, and the static being.

That Nescience may become omniscient:
Transmuted instincts shape to divine thoughts,

.....
The Master of the worlds self-made her slave

Is the executor of her fantasies:

She has canalised the seas of omnipotence;

She has limited by her laws the Illimitable.

The aim behind all her activities is to replace Ignorance with knowledge, to transform the instinct into divine thought; for this purpose the Master of the worlds has voluntarily made himself her slave obeying her whims; she determines and lays down the lines of development; she, in advancement of her aim, carves out channels, regulating the flow of omnipotence for the irrigation of the earth into the divinity and in pursuance of this end, she makes the unbounded, the bounded, the infinite a finite.

The worlds, the forms her goddess fancy makes
Have lost their origin on unseen heights:

.....
These too can to the peaks revert or here

Cut out the sentence of the spirit's fall,

Recover their forfeited divinity.

The difference between the governing idea and its effectuation becomes quite obvious here; the gulf between its pristine beauty and its malformation or deformation in the process of reaching and manifesting itself on the soil of inconscience is clear; but even these perversions from the original, even these failures are utilised by the creative force, for there is no waste in the cosmic scheme; these misformations

are once again pressed into service to advance the evolutionary purpose and those that have served the purpose or are useless are discarded or withdrawn into their source.

Above was a monarchy of unfallen self,
 Beneath was the gloomy trance of the abyss,
 An opposite pole or dim antipodes.

.....
 Her head lay on the breast of amorous Death,

.....
 To taste the savour of bare opposites.

.....
 Have woven his being's mutable design,

.....
 His soul a moving picture's changeful film,
 His cosmos-chaos of personality.

Creation is a movement between two poles of inconscience and superconscience; above is the splendour of the divine and below in the nether region is the gloom of the abyss; it is the savour for toil and strife, a perverse desire to have the experience of dwelling in his opposites, that makes the being take a leap, a plunge from perfection to imperfection, from immortality and bliss to mortality and suffering; he conceals himself in the mixed web of the dualities; he dwells in man who is a fickle-minded and changeful personality subject to pulls in opposite directions towards the divine and the undivine; the upward and the downward urges make him the picture of cosmic-chaos.

But here were worlds lifted half-way to heaven.
 The veil was there but not the Shadowy Wall;

.....
 Some passion of the inviolate purity
 Broke through, a ray of the original Bliss.
 Heaven's joys might have been earth's if earth were pure.

.....
 But she has stabled her dreams in Matter's courts

And still her doors are barred to things supreme.
 These worlds could feel God's breath visiting their tops;
 Some glimmer of the Transcendent's hem was there.

.....
 To force on them the happiness they refuse.

Aswapathy observes higher planes of existence half-way to heaven; there are veils no doubt but they are not the dense walls preventive of their illumination reaching the lower planes; in dribbles the purity and the bliss pour down; earth's lot could have been better and it too could have shared those felicities, had it not been for its vitiating impurities; everything has to pass through Matter and suffer in the process, a taint and blemish; unless it learns to rise above the physical limitations, it is barred from the supreme; but here the glimpses of the hem transcendental are caught and he sees how Love enforces an identity, taking in its forgiving fold the rebel and waif alike, allowing none to escape its grasp.

The cry of the Birds of Wonder called from the skies.
 To the deathless people of the shores of Light.

.....
 Marvel and rapture wandered in the ways.
 Only to be was a supreme delight,

.....
 A vision of grandeurs, a dream of magnitudes
 In sun-bright kingdoms moved with regal gait:

.....
 All objects there were great and beautiful,
 ••• All beings wore a royal stamp of power, ...

Spirit has a fuller play since it is not clogged by Matter as it is on earth; beauty in its unsullied purity shines there; delight has its undiluted expression; the dualities which so much bedevil us with their contradictions, live like companions having no hostility; falsehood which is the cover or the armour of the weak has no place there; in those realms of Truth, the strong have no need to resort to the prevarications and the subterfuges characteristic of the weak; similarly

ignorance too vanishes and light in its full intensity is released unlike on earth where it has to be shaded and diminished by intervention of ignorance; in short it is a world peopled by dignitaries of power, glory and wisdom; and existence itself is bliss supreme in that realm.

There met the ardent mutual intimacies
Of mastery's joy and the joy of servitude

.....
The ruler there is one with all he rules;

.....
There were realms where Knowledge joined creative Power

.....
An immortal moth in happy and endless fire,
She burned in his sweet intolerable blaze.

There is a bond of love linking the master and the subordinate which removes the distinction between them, yielding an identity of joy in either position; the pleasure of service is matched by the privilege of obtaining it; similarly the gulf between the ruler and the ruled is bridged by a strong identity knitting them together; the weak draw on a strength that feels well-utilised; obedience is not the badge of inferiority but a coronet and privilege, a field of self-discipline and training ground for the princes and the rulers; knowledge and power are not the dividing provinces they are on the earth; but they are the coordinates; power consecrates itself to the task of effectuating whatever is given to it by knowledge; she is an immortal moth in happy and endless fire of Knowledge; there is an equal cooperation between mind and the life-force; one is ineffective without the other and it is only when the instrumentation of both is adequate that there can be the proper effectuations.

There work was play and play the only work,
The tasks of heaven a game of godlike might:
A celestial bacchanal for ever pure,
Unstayed by faintness as in mortal frames
Life was an eternity of rapture's moods:
Age never came, care never lined the face.

The body here becomes more supple and plastic; it casts off its sloth and inertia; it is no more a dead weight for the flights of the mind, on the other hand it keeps pace with the mind and becomes a heavenly instrument; the mind itself becomes care-free, lays aside its obscurity and material hankerings; they wear a halo around them, indicative of their liberation; they are fit for divine gambols of love, beauty and bliss without a sense of fatigue; they now take to work in such a spirit that they know not how to tire; work becomes a sport to them; this new movement of beauty, bliss and puissance is the banner they carry into space.

There reigned a breath of high immune content,

A flood of universal love and peace.

A sovereignty of tireless sweetness lived

Like a song of pleasure on the lips of Time.

There freedom was sole rule and highest law.

Life played at ease with her immense desires.

A thousand Edens she could build nor pause;

In her nature housing the Immortal's power,

In her bosom bearing the eternal Will,

No guide she needed but her luminous heart:

Each act was a perfection and a joy.

••• There is a direct access of knowledge without any need for it to labour its way through the instrumentation of speech and mind; being the early child inheritors of God's instincts, the inhabitants there still retain the bliss and consciousness which are not yet dimmed by the onset of Nescience; they feel a strong urge to release their streams of happiness without any hindrance; they are not, however, unaware of the love and peace that reign above; the discipline and the order found there are not the creations of any external force but a spontaneous self-upsurge. Life-force enjoys an untrammelled freedom; plays

at ease with her immense desires and creates according to fancy without having to bother about the limitations of the material; without pause she can build a thousand Edens; she is unimpeded by Nescience; the Immortal and his Will housed in her nature are ever at her service; hers is a dance of fertility and she brings out of the Infinite, a myriad truths and gives them shapes.

This world of bliss he saw and felt its call,
But found no way to enter into its joy;

.....
All this seemed only a bright desirable dream

.....
Although he once had felt the Eternals clasp,
Too near to suffering worlds his nature lived,

.....
A dire duality is our way to be.

Smitten with a desire to enter this world of bliss, Aswapathy feels balked since he finds no way; though he has been favoured with a fleeting clasp of the Eternal, his earth nature has not been completely displaced; the needed transformation has not yet come in; he is still too near the earth to lodge the heavenly flame to eradicate the habitual pulls and responses and therefore in a wistful manner, he has to content himself with a feeling that what has been seen is an alluring prospect, a bright and desirable dream.

In the crude beginnings of this mortal world
Life was not nor mind's play nor heart's desire.

.....
And nothing was save a material scene,
Identified with sea and sky and stone
Her young gods yearned for the release of souls
Asleep in objects, vague, inanimate.
In that desolate grandeur, in that beauty bare,

.....
Heavy was the uncommunicated load
Of Godhead in a world that has no needs;

For none was there to feel or to receive.

In the beginning the world is a scene of Matter; there is neither a pulse of life, nor a throb of desire, nor the glow of mind; the God-head feels oppressed by the heavy load of uncommunicated and undistributed divinity; there is none as yet sentient to feel the need or have the capacity to receive his intimations and in the material forms are the powers, feeling imprisoned and clamant for release.

The Spirit lost its statuesque repose.

.....
 Passioned for the movements of a conscious heart,
 Famishing for speech and thought and joy and love,

.....
 The poised inconscience shaken with a touch,

.....
 They cried to Life to invade the senseless mould
 And in brute forms awake divinity.

The spirit cannot be confined for long in the folds of inert matter; its passion for movement, hunger for speech and consciousness cannot brook any further restraint; therefore the statuesque immobility gives way; the inconscience is shaken; an appeal, a cry goes forth to life to descend and energise matter.

Something pent up in dead insentient depths,

.....
 Turned as if one asleep since dateless time.

.....
 It yearned to know, to aspire, to enjoy, to live.
 Life heard the call and left her native light.

.....
 As comes a goddess to a mortal's breast
 And fills his days with her celestial clasp,
 She stooped to make her home in transient shapes;
 In matter's womb she cast the Immortal's fire ...

A dormant potentiality long since asleep in the abyss of inconscience, makes a somnambulist movement; it has memories of the self from which it has fallen; is now seized with a yearning, an aspiration to reach back; life hearing its appeal makes a generous gesture; even as a goddess out of love clasps a mortal's hand, she leaving her native home and brilliance, seeks a home in the ephemeral matter.

Alive and clad with trees and herbs and flowers
 Earth's great brown body smiled towards the skies,
 Azure replied to azure in the sea's laugh;
 New sentient creatures filled the unseen depths,
 Life's glory and swiftness ran in the beauty of beasts,
 Man dared and thought and met with his soul the world.

Due to the touch of life the desolate grandeur of the earth, puts on a picturesque and multi-coloured raiment of herbs, flowers and trees; earth's face wears a smile towards the sky; the azure of the heavens meets with a matching response in the sea of nescience, now filled with living creatures; life manifests its glory in the beauty of swift running beasts; man with a more developed consciousness, dares the challenge of the world with his soul.

Before her gifts could reach our prisoned hearts,
 A dark ambiguous Presence questioned all.
 The secret Will that robes itself with Night
 And offers to spirit the ordeal of the flesh,
 Imposed a mystic mask of death and pain.

.....
 And all her glory into littleness turned

.....
 To feed death with her works is here life's doom.

.....
 A myth of being that must for ever cease.
 Such was the evil mystery of her change.

But unfortunately for the human race, before life has reached the earth and unloosened her precious gifts, there intervenes the first

settler, a dark Presence of Nescience who is in possession of the earth; he questions her right and title; life therefore is forced to accept a compromise; impose on herself the mask of death and pain; obey the laws of Inconscience; diminish her glory; she finds her desire brutally maimed and mangled for she is doomed to feed death with her toil of creations; her existence itself seems a myth since it is of a transient nature; but behind, there is the all-governing supreme Will that can mould out of the contraries a higher consciousness and work out a transformation to transcendence even out of these apparently disheartening hurdles.

Y. S. R. CHANDRAN

“MAN AND SUPERMAN”

SRI Aurobindo's philosophical reflections are based on his mystical experiences. He has perceived the Truth behind the Universe like the ancient Indian Seers and Sages and so the method of his philosophy is not only rational, but it is also idealistic as well as practical, because it is derived from personal realisations.

Man is one of the fundamental philosophical problems of this age, and some of the greatest philosophers of this century have taken the man as the central point of their speculations. Sri Aurobindo is the greatest philosopher and mystic of India in the modern age of Science, because his reflections on Man and Superman are based both on scientific laws of the present age and on the experiences of the Vedic sages and Upanisadic mystics.

Darwin and some other scientists have proved the evolution in nature and think that man has come into being through a natural process of evolution in Matter. Sri Aurobindo also justifies this process of evolution in the nature, but he differs from the Western scientist and propounds the theory of spiritual evolution which opposes the theory of material evolution of the West, and he derives this spiritual evolution from the Indian sources and particularly from the mystic experiences of the ancient Indian sages.

Man is a mental being and Superman is a still higher being. Man has evolved from the lower animals, because mind has evolved in life. Superman has to evolve in human consciousness, when the Super-mind will be evolved in the Mind. Shri S. K. Maitra holds that the Supermind is the culmination and consummation of Mind. ('An Introduction to the Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo', Pb. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1965, p. 19).

Man is not the last being who has evolved in this world, there is a great possibility that in future the Superman will evolve because there is a continuous process of evolution and man has the capacity to evolve himself consciously for the attainment of the higher consciousness which may be called the Supramental Consciousness which is the most powerful and the culmination of spiritual evolution in man.

For the present, man is not aware of that higher consciousness, because human knowledge is a limited knowledge and all our know-

ledge is mixed with ignorance, that is why we may have a doubt about the future evolution, but still logically we may say that if evolution is continued in nature there must evolve some higher consciousness than that we have at present. Sri Aurobindo also describes that we are so fixed in the experience of our ignorance we even insist that the one can be known only by its vestiges and the other cannot be known, because the future is not yet and the past is no longer in existence; yet are they both here in us, the past involved and active, the future ready to evolve in the continuity of the secret spirit. (*The Life Divine*, pp. 502-503)

There are various grades of consciousness or various planes of consciousness. We as human beings, are not directly aware of them, but sometimes we realise that there are different forces in our being which work at different times in different ways. Sometimes, we behave as an extrovert or completely materialistic person, and sometimes we behave as an introvert or completely spiritualistic person. Many times we forget everything, and many times we remember everything. It shows that there are different Powers in man which are working within us. So according to Sri Aurobindo, man is in his self a unique person but he is also in his manifestation of self a multiperson, he will never succeed in being master of himself until the Person imposes itself on his multipersonality and governs it: but this can only be imperfectly done by the surface mental will and reason; it can be perfectly done only if he goes within and finds whatever central being is by its predominant influence at the head of all his expression and action. (*Ibid.*, pp. 798-99)

There is no doubt that human-consciousness is also a fragment of the Universal Consciousness as it is seen in the Gita (XV.7), or it is like a spark of the Eternal Fire as it is found in the Mundaka Upanisad (II.1.1), but the divinity of man is hidden behind the surface mind which is the main source of all our external relations. We can evolve our inner being and can touch the Divine within our own consciousness, if we are ascending towards the Divine in all aspects of our existence. The Divine is not away from us, He is existing within our soul and we have to perceive Him within. The more we make effort to evolve our consciousness, the more we can realise the Divine ascent and this is a way for man towards the

super-manhood. Sri Aurobindo holds that the descent of the Supermind will bring to one who receives it and is fulfilled in the truth-consciousness all the possibilities of the divine life. (*The Supramental Manifestation*, p. 86)

Man is confined to his emotions, passions, etc., because his personality is predominated by the mind which itself is overpowered by the lower faculties in our organism. Sri Aurobindo also justifies this truth by saying that man is a mental being and the mind is a leader who is much led by his followers and has sometimes no other will than what they impose on him. (*The Life Divine*, p. 800) In the Brhadaranyaka Upanisad, the truth of human existence is also revealed. It is said there that this Purusa is Manomaya (V.6.1). It means that man follows the dictates of mind.

But this is the position of the common man. The man of reason is not predominated by the mental faculties, he follows the dictates of reason and feels a little more freedom than the common man who is a slave of his emotions and passions. The rational being may be superior to the irrational or ignorant person, and may be a man of morality and wisdom, yet he is not a superman in any respect. After all our reason or understanding is also limited and may guide us on the basis of the moral principles which are not useful for the realisation of Spiritual Truth, but they only have to bring peace and order in our society. All these moral and religious principles belong to the lower grades of our being; their main purpose is to make man free from the emotional element. They are not fit for the attainment of the higher consciousness, because they make man only a rational being and have no power to touch the suprarational faculty which is only attainable by the superman who is a being of the Divine world where everything is coloured with divinity and the presence of the Divine is realised directly, and this is the aim of our life which is not known to the moral or religious man, and so he is also ignorant like the other persons who are slaves to their emotions. Therefore, Sri Aurobindo says in *Savitri*:-

“He is ignorant of the meaning of his life,
He is ignorant of his high and splendid fate.”

(Vol. I, p. 53)

All human knowledge is confined to particular time and space, because whatever we think ourselves to be is the result of our surface consciousness, so we can have a knowledge of one thing at one time, our experience is also limited in the same way. But a person who realises the Divine Presence in his mind, surpasses the ordinary subjective and objective limitations, because the Divine Consciousness, according to Sri Aurobindo, is not so particularised, nor so limited it can be many things at a time and take more than one enduring poise even for all time. (*The Life Divine*, p. 135) The principle of Supermind is much superior to human mind or surface mind. It has three such general poises of its world-founding consciousness. The first founds the inalienable unity of things, the second modifies that unity so as to support the manifestation of the Many in One and One in Many; the third further modifies it so as to support the evolution of a diversified individuality which by the action of ignorance, becomes in us at a lower level the illusion of a separate ego (*Ibid.*). So, human consciousness or knowledge is a phenomenal consciousness which is the form of empirical ideas or rational reflections and beyond that it has no approach, while the supramental consciousness is a Divine Consciousness and has the capacity to know everything through the knowledge of identity with the Divine Being which has manifested the whole universe out of itself and is realised directly by the Superman who is a Divine Man.

Although man is a part of the Divine Nature, yet he is a mixture of good and evil, virtue and vice, divine and undivine. But we can make an effort to come out of this double nature by aspiring for the Divine and by ascending towards the supramental consciousness which is beyond the approach of the surface mentality. If we do not touch the higher planes of consciousness, and are satisfied with the present mentality, then there is no hope for the descent of the Divine in the form of super-human consciousness. So Sri Aurobindo says: 'It would follow that there can be no final solution until we have turned our inconscience into that greater consciousness, made the truth of self and spirit our life-basis and transformed our ignorance into a higher knowledge'. (*Ibid.*, p. 558)

Even then man is superior to all other living beings, because he is aware of his limitations, he can know his ignorance and has the

capacity to remove it through the attainment of the pure knowledge of his own being. Human imperfection is not inherent in his nature, it is relative to certain conditions of our being and sources of knowledge. The more we realise the Divinity in us, the more we become perfect. A time may come when the man will become a divine man and in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, that time must come when the Divine will manifest Himself in man. But that Man would be different from our present race and would be free from human limitations. That Man is called the Superman in Sri Aurobindo's terminology and his consciousness is called supramental or gnostic consciousness.

Sri Aurobindo has made a prophecy that as there has been established on earth a mental consciousness and Power which shapes a race of mental beings and takes up into itself all of earthly nature that is ready for a change, so now there will be established on earth gnostic consciousness and Power which will shape a race of gnostic spiritual beings and take up into itself all of earth-nature that is ready for this new transformation. (*Ibid.*, p. 859)

Supermind is superior to mind, life and body in the workings of the Spirit in nature, because it lives in unity within all diversities, and mind has no power to perceive unity within the whole play of nature. The supermind or the Superman lives in the spiritual consciousness, the man or the mind lives in superficial consciousness. The fundamental nature of this supermind, according to Sri Aurobindo, is that all its knowledge is originally a knowledge by identity and oneness and even when it makes numberless apparent divisions and discriminating modifications in itself, still all the knowledge that operates in its workings, even in these divisions, is founded upon and sustained and lit and guided by this perfect knowledge by identity and oneness. (*The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 732) But the mind cannot have this identity with the Absolute Spirit, because all its perceptions are based on division and separation. There is always doubt and uncertainty in mental knowledge, while the supermind is the truth-consciousness and is inherent with the divine Consciousness and its knowledge is always true knowledge and cannot be touched by any kind of uncertainty.

Just as human mind is confined to certain limitations, similarly human reason is also confined to ordinary logic and it cannot go

Beyond the knowledge of diversity. Human intuition is also physical, vital or emotional. But the supramental reason, in Sri Aurobindo's view, is of the nature of spiritual, direct, self-luminous, self-acting, will and intelligence, not mental, *mānasa buddhi*, but supramental, *vijñāna buddhi*. (*Ibid.*, p. 763) Same is the situation of supramental intuition which is direct and self-illuminated.

The supramental sense is also superior to mental sense in various respects. The former is pure, spiritual and infinite, while the latter is emotional, finite and limited. Regarding the nature of the supramental sense, Sri Aurobindo says that this sense even at its lowest power is luminous with a revealing light that carries in it the secret of the thing it experiences and can therefore be a starting-point and the basis of all the rest of the supramental knowledge — the supramental thought, spiritual intelligence and so on. (*Ibid.*, p. 807)

Thus, we see that Man and Superman have much distinction in their nature, the former is limited, finite, victim of the worldly circumstances, and has uncertain knowledge of the reality of his own being, while the latter is the truth-consciousness and divine consciousness which can perceive everything directly and is not the victim of any superficial knowledge, because its knowledge is perfect, its being is perfect, its bliss is perfect, it is self-illuminated and there are no limitations of any kind, it also perceives God directly and even perceives the Oneness of the Absolute Spirit through the knowledge of self-identity. Man has evolved in the workings of nature, but the superman has to evolve still in its full consciousness in the same nature. Sri Aurobindo propounds the theory of the Supermind and Superman on the basis of the scientific truth and on the basis of the experiences of the ancient Indian sages, that is why that, on the one hand, he uses scientific language and gives scientific arguments for the manifestation and evolution of the new race on this earth and, on the other hand, he gives many quotations from the Vedas, the Upanishads, etc. to clarify and justify his own realisations. So he says:

We are sons of God and must be even as he:
His human portions, we must grow divine.

(*Savitri*, Vol. I, p. 60)

Again, he says:

Man must overcome or miss his higher fate.

This is the inner war without escape.

(*Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 93)

A mightier race shall inhabit the mortal's world.

(*Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 329)

There are many other lines which are completely optimistic in their essence and give a hope for the divine manifestation in man who will become a superman in the future. Then all men will live a divine life, there would be, then, no death, no ignorance, no pain and no worldly troubles. There would be light and bliss and divinity everywhere.

DR. R. D. NIRAKARI

EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC OUTLOOK

DEVELOPMENT of the scientific method of investigation has been a major experiment by nature for the furtherance of evolution. This method has now permeated most of the disciplines outside the formal science subjects. The results of the application of scientific method have yielded fruits in the form of progressively effective utilization of the material energy which has appreciably helped in bringing about the nations closer externally through the various means of transport and communication. However mere external proximity in absence of the dissolution of inner barriers due to the lack of change within man has till now resulted in conflicts, strife and exploitation of weak nations by the strong. The basic outlook of the scientist towards his problems which helped in acquiring tremendous knowledge regarding the external nature and appreciable control over it, has to be understood and directed towards the problems of life so as to help the individual in developing right attitude towards the issues of life which implies the ability of the individual to look at these issues impartially without favour or opposition with an open mind.

The basic outlook of the scientist towards his problems includes the following characteristics:

1. Non acceptance of facts on the mere basis of authority.
2. Keeness to explore without anchorage to rigid notions, fixed beliefs and opinions.
3. Readiness to revise mental notions and to accept new truths on the basis of evidence of their validity.
4. Absence of self-involvement in viewing issues.
5. Freedom from personal preferences — bias and prejudice towards issues.
6. Absolute sincerity in attempting to understand issues.
7. Honesty in dealing with problems.
8. Objectivity in arriving at conclusions.

Such outlook obviously excludes personal involvement and is perfectly detached and would prevent the accumulation of prejudice, bias, dogmas, fixed beliefs, rigid notions, and limited opinions and the con-

stant conditioning influences from the environment which prevent the understanding of life and lead to tremendous dissipation of the mental energy. Scientific outlook towards the life would thus help in liberating the mind from the bondage of preconceived structure, rigid attitudes, limited constructions projected thoughtlessly by each of the preceding generations to the next one for thousands of years. This liberation of mind would help in conservation of the mental energy and would thus provide impetus to thoughtful action in life.

This freedom of mind is a state of enquiry and disinterested pursuit of truth which opens the limited mental vision to higher and wider realms of consciousness and the inspirations and revelations from these summits are spontaneously deciphered by the mind as creative expression. This communion is the source of the highest joy and purest bliss and opens the gates to luminous paths leading to hitherto unknown vistas of existence.

The attainment of freedom of mind is not an event in the space time — it is a long drawn process of clearing off the continuously accumulating smog of experience in the field of ignorance — which is the reaction of the ego to the environmental stimuli resulting in renewed storms and clouding of mind by latent ambition and the accompanying rain results in dense fog and extinguishes the fire of enquiry filling up the mental space with smoke. The inner fire has to be lighted up again with the help of aspiration. The ultimate victory over the ignorance would however need a persistent and untiring arduous effort towards which this freedom which helps in understanding life, constitutes the earliest step.

The truths of science lead to unexplored paths of spiritualism if one is open instead of being confined to the four walls of science. In fact the anchorage to the present limited scientific knowledge and the resultant scepticism of the materialist is diametrically opposed to the wide scientific outlook which encourages detached enquiry instead of denying the truth which is beyond.

R. K. JOSHI

REVIEWS

Meditations by M.P. Pandit. Dipti Publications, 1974. Rs. 8.00

MEDITATIONS offers a service like the moon that by reflection recalls and radiates the Sun's light. The original illumination and the themes for the introspections are from *Words of the Mother* (First Series). Published in 1938 and included in later collections, this series of seventy-five aphorisms has long been out of print. Here ordered by subject in single page settings, her words are given as the source and object of insights of complementary clarity. These are meditations not mentations; they carry not the obtuse glance of thoughts but a light, a force of consciousness. They do so with an unaffected ease. Like the missioned rays caught and sent by the moon, they witness and summon the Sun by their shining.

*Day and night constantly the Presence is there. It is enough
to turn silently inward and we detect it.*

— THE MOTHER

The Divine is not something that is to be pursued and attained in some Beyond. The Divine is present everywhere and always. Only our attention is normally fixed elsewhere and we are occupied with a host of other things. If we can withdraw our gaze from its outward direction for a while and turn it inward, quietly and without excitement, gradually we become aware of a Presence that is not anything physical and yet is palpable, vibrant and distinctive. All that is required is a one-pointed turning inward of our consciousness, without distraction, without noise — outer or inner. The Divine Presence reveals itself.

Does the Sun need a moon? Surely it is not dependent on a satellite for its presence, yet its creative intention is to express and reveal itself multiply, uniquely formed. The source-light illumines instrumentally as well as directly, through specula which return and loose forth faithfully its brilliance. The utility of such a mirror depends not only on its reflective fidelity but on its capacity to prismatically yet whitely

present the spectrum of that light. *Meditations* is both clear and iridescent, it holds and pours a living awareness of the Sun-Presence, of the Mother and her vision.

TATSAT

“Whitehead’s Four Principles” *Author — Anil Kumar Sarkar, M.A. Ph.D. D.Lit. Publishers — Bharati Bhawan, Patna-800004 India*

Alfred North Whitehead can be classified with the greatest scientists and philosophers of all times. Although he is an abstract thinker, yet his philosophical assertions are based upon his own concrete experiences. The author of this book has clarified the four main principles of Whitehead: Spatio-Temporal Process, Eternal Objects, God and Creativity.

Each of these principles is a pervasive experimental centre or contrast in a ground-consequent form.

Spatio-Temporal Process may be looked upon as a continuously perishing character, but it is abiding also.

The Eternal Objects are abiding in contrast to the perishing Spatio-Temporal Process, but they are perishing process in contrast to the process of God.

God may appear as abiding in contrast to both Spatio-Temporal Process and Eternal Objects. God’s consequent and superject characters are perishing processes in contrast to the abiding function of creativity.

The abiding function of Creativity lies in its process from the forms to the formless.

Whitehead’s God may be regarded as one of the possibilities beyond the region of the eternal objects. He is a complex cosmic-psyche Possibility. He belongs to an evolving universe. God is an operative principle, leading to the operation of Creativity. God is not an entity but a process and a possibility. Whitehead’s Creativity has to be taken as a ground cosmic-psyche process. According to Whitehead our universe is both many and one, and Nature is not a static fact; God and world cannot be torn apart; each temporal occasion

embodies God, and is embodied in God; God is one and many, the world is many and one; the love of the world passes into the love of God and floods back again into the world; God is the great companion, the fellow-sufferer who understands. Whitehead's God is a process and a possibility in multi-dimensional spheres.

Whitehead's evolutionist mode in the consequent and superject aspects of God to creativity is close to Sri Aurobindo's process of descent and ascent of the Supermind. The final project of Whitehead is peace.

This book is a symposium of all philosophic thought. Along with Whitehead's views the author has quoted almost all greatest thinkers throughout the ages. But it is a very concise book in which all philosophical terms and phrases used are not explained. Thus, for a common reader this book may appear to be incomprehensible, whereas, for the student of Metaphysics it is invaluable. We hope that in ensuing editions our erudite Author will amplify more lucidly the philosophical abstruse terms understood only by philosophers. Then he will really help the gradual growth of comparative philosophy to a global philosophic perspective.

SAILEN ROY