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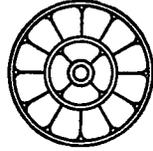
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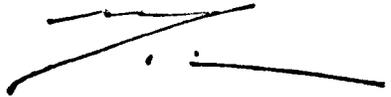


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXVII

No. 5

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

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## **HOW ARE WE TO ESTABLISH A STABLE PEACE AND SILENCE IN THE MIND?**

FIRST you have to will, and then you have to try, and go on trying. There are many methods. Here is one. Sit down and, instead of thinking of fifty things, say to yourself, "Peace, peace, peace." Imagine the calmness and silence. Don't look at the thoughts, don't listen to their noise. How do you act when somebody annoys you very much and you want to get rid of him? You simply refuse to listen, you turn your head away and think of other things. Treat your thoughts in the same manner.

Snatch opportunities again and again to sit down and create the spell of 'Peace'. Do it as soon as you wake in the morning and when you go to bed in the evening. It will have a good effect on your health also. Do it a few minutes before eating. You will be surprised how much it helps you to digest your food.

If you continue long enough, peace will not have to enter into your head; whatever you do, whatever the circumstances, it will always be there. But this takes years. In the beginning keep up the peace-formula for two or three minutes—in a very simple way. When a practice is complicated one has to make efforts, and to make efforts is to stop being tranquil. How do you call an intimate friend to yourself? A mere effortless word and there he is beside you. Just so, you have to make peace your friend and call it.

THE MOTHER

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*(Continued from the issue of April 1975)*

*(This new series of answers by the Mother to questions put by the children of the Ashram appeared for the first time in the Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education but in a somewhat fragmentary, incomplete form. We are giving the translation of the full text as it was taped, with here and there a few special additions or modifications made by the Mother at the time of its first publication as a book in French. This translation came out in book-form in 1973.)*

January 9, 1957

*God cannot cease from leaning down towards Nature, nor man from aspiring towards the Godhead. It is the eternal relation of the finite to the infinite. When they seem to turn from each other, it is to recoil for a more intimate meeting.*

*In man nature of the world becomes again self-conscious so that it may take the greater leap towards its Enjoyer. This is the Enjoyer whom unknowingly it possesses, whom life and sensation possessing deny and denying seek. Nature of the world knows not God only because it knows not itself; when it knows itself, it shall know unalloyed delight of being.*

*Possession in oneness and not loss in oneness is the secret. God and Man, World and Beyond-world become one when they know each other. Their division is the cause of ignorance as ignorance is the cause of suffering.*

*(Thoughts and Glimpses, Vol. 16, p. 382)*

As Sri Aurobindo says here, the reality of the universe is what men call God or Godhead, but essentially it is Delight. The universe is created in Delight and for Delight. But this Delight can exist only in the perfect oneness of the creation with its creator, and Sri Aurobindo describes this oneness as the Possessor — that is, the Creator — the Possessor being possessed by his creation, a sort of reciprocal possession which is the very essence of the Oneness and the source of all delight.

And it is because of the division — because the Possessor no longer possesses nor does the possessed any longer possess the Possessor — that the division is created and the essential Delight is changed into ignorance, and this ignorance is the cause of all suffering. “Ignorance”, not in the sense in which it is usually understood, for that, that is what Sri Aurobindo calls Nescience: that ignorance is a consequence of the other. The real ignorance is ignorance of the oneness, the union, the identity. And it is that which is the cause of all suffering.

Ever since the division began and creation lost its direct contact with the Creator, ignorance has reigned, and all suffering is its result.

All those who have made an inner experiment have that experience, that the moment one re-establishes the union with the divine source all suffering disappears. But there has been a very long movement, about which I spoke to you last week, which

put at the source of creation not this essential divine Delight but desire. This delight of creating, self-manifestation, self-expression — there is an entire line of seekers and sages who have considered it not as a delight but as desire; the whole trend of Buddhism is of this kind. And instead of seeing the solution in a Oneness which brings back to us the essential Delight of the manifestation and the becoming, they consider the goal and the means also are the total rejection of all desire to be and the return to the void.

This conception is like an essential misunderstanding. The methods recommended for self-liberation are methods of development which can be very useful, but this conception of an essentially bad world — for it is the result of desire — from which one must escape at all costs and as quickly as possible, has been the greatest and most serious deformation of the whole spiritual life in the history of mankind.

It could have been useful, perhaps, at a given moment, for everything is useful in the world's history, but this utility has passed, it is outworn, and it is time this conception is superseded and we return to a more essential and higher Truth, go back to the Delight of existence, the Joy of union and manifestation of the Divine.

It is this new orientation — I mean new in its terrestrial realisation — which must replace all the former spiritual orientations and open the way to the new realisation which will be a supramental realisation. That is why I told you last week that only Delight, the true divine Delight can bring about the Victory.

Naturally, one must not fall into a confusion about what this Delight is, and that is why from the beginning Sri Aurobindo puts us on our guard, telling us that it is only when one has passed beyond enjoyings that one can enter into Bliss. Bliss is precisely that state which comes from the manifestation of this Delight. But it is altogether different from all that is usually called joy and pleasure, and these must be completely given up in order to have that.

*(To a child)* Have you a question?

*I have a question, but we haven't yet read that.*

What is it?

*It is about God and Nature.*

And so?

*Why do God and Nature "run from each other when glimpsed" ?<sup>1</sup>*

For play. He says so: "They are at play." It is for play.

*(A young disciple) Mother, does Nature know it is a game ?*

*God knows it is a game, but does Nature know it ?*

I believe Nature also knows it, it is only man who does not know!

<sup>1</sup> "God and Nature are like a boy and a girl at play and in love. They hide and run from each other when glimpsed so that they may be sought after and chased and captured." (*Thoughts and Glances*, p. 382)

(Another child) *Sweet Mother, where can Nature hide itself?*

Where can she hide? She hides in the inconscience, my child. That is the greatest hiding-place, the inconscience. Besides, God also hides in the inconscience.

Perhaps, when one knows it is a game and plays it lightly, it is amusing. But when one doesn't know it is a game, it is not amusing. You understand, don't you, it is only when one is on the other side, on the divine side, that one can see it thus; that is, as long as one is in the ignorance, well, inevitably one suffers from what should amuse and please us. Fundamentally, it comes to this: when one does something deliberately, knowing what one is doing, it is very interesting and may even be very amusing. But when it is something not done deliberately and not understood by you, when it is something imposed upon you and endured, it is not pleasant. So the solution, the one which is always given: you must learn, know, do it deliberately. But to tell you my true feeling, I believe it would be much better to change the game .... One may, when in that state, smile, understand and even be amused, but when one sees, when one is conscious of all those who, far from knowing that they are playing, take the game very seriously and find it rather bad, well ... I don't know, one would prefer that it changes. That is a purely personal opinion.

I know very well: the moment one goes over to the other side ... instead of being downcast and suffering, when one is at the top and not only observes but acts oneself, it is so total a reversal that it is difficult to recall the state one was in when carrying all the weight of this inconscience, this ignorance on one's back, when suffering things without knowing the why or how or where one was going or why it was thus. One forgets all that. And then one can say: it is an "eternal game in an eternal garden." But for it to be an amusing game, everybody should be able to play the game knowing the rules of the game; as long as one does not know the rules of the game, it is not pleasant. So the solution you are given is: "But learn the rules of the game!" ... That is not within everybody's capacity.

I, indeed, have the impression, a very powerful impression, that there is a practical joker who came and spoilt the game and made of it something dramatic, and this practical joker is obviously the cause of the division and the ignorance which is the result of this division, and the suffering which is the result of ignorance. Essentially, despite all spiritual traditions, it is difficult to conceive that this state of division, ignorance and suffering was foreseen at the beginning of creation. In spite of everything, it is difficult to think that it could have been foreseen. Indeed, I refuse to believe it. I call this an accident — a fairly terrible accident, but still, you see, it is terrible at least in proportion to human consciousness; in proportion to the universal consciousness, it may only be quite a reparable accident. And after all, when it will be redressed, one will even be able to recall it, saying: "Ah! that has given us something we wouldn't have had otherwise." But we must wait for it to be redressed first.

In any case, I don't know if there are people who say that it was foreseen and willed, but I tell you it was not foreseen nor willed, and it is just because of this that when

it happened, quite unexpectedly, immediately something else too sprang forth from the Source, which probably would not have manifested if this accident had not taken place. If the Delight had remained Delight and conceived as Delight, and everything had come about in the Delight and in Union instead of in division, there would never have been any need for the divine Consciousness to plunge into the inconscience as Love. So, when one sees this from very far and from high above, one says, "After all, something has perhaps come out of it." But one must see it from a great distance and great height to be able to say that. Or rather, when it is left far behind, when one has gone beyond this state, has entered into Union and Delight, when the division and inconscience and suffering have disappeared, then one may very wisely say: "Ah, yes, one has gained an experience one would never have had otherwise." But the experience must be behind, one must not be right in its midst. For, even for one who — this is something I know — even for one who has come out of this state, who lives in the consciousness of Oneness, for whom ignorance is an external thing, no longer something close and painful, even for that person it is impossible to see with a smile of indifference the suffering of all those who have not come out of it. That seems to me impossible. Hence, it is really necessary for things in the world to change and the acute state of illness to disappear, so that it may be said: "Ah! yes, we have benefited by it." It is true that something has been gained, but it is a very costly gain.

That is why, I believe, because of that, so many initiates and sages have been drawn by the solution of the void, of Nirvana, for, evidently, that is a very radical way of escaping from the consequences of an ignorant manifestation.

Only, the solution of changing this manifestation into a true reality, truly divine, is a far greater solution. And it is that we want to attempt now, with a certitude of succeeding one day or another, for, in spite of everything, despite everything, what is true is eternally true, and what is true in its essence must necessarily become true in the realisation, one day or another. Sri Aurobindo has told us that we have taken the first step on the path and that the moment of realisation is near, hence one has but to set out. That's all.

So, your question? (*To the child who asked about the hide-and-seek game*) Was it this you wanted to know?

Actually what you were asking was: Why this image?

Yes.

One could reverse the thing. Instead of saying that the universe is like that, that is, the Divine and man are like that, look like that, one should say that this is perhaps an outer, superficial expression of what the essential relation between the Divine and man is at the present moment.

In fact, that would amount to saying that when one plays one is much more divine than when one is serious! (*Laughing*) But that's not always good to say. Perhaps there is more divinity in the spontaneous play of children than in the erudition of the

scientist or the asceticism of the saint. That's what I have always thought. Only (*smiling*) it is a divinity quite unconscious of itself.

As for me, I ought to confess to you that I feel much more essentially myself when I am joyful and play — in my own way — than when I am very grave and very serious — much more. Grave and serious, that always gives me the impression that I am dragging the weight of all this creation, so heavy and so obscure, whilst when I play — when I play, when I can laugh, can enjoy myself — that gives me the feeling of a fine powder of delight falling from above and tinting with a very special colour this creation, this world and bringing it much closer to what it essentially ought to be.

*Mother, when and why are you grave ?*

Oh! well, you have seen me sometimes, haven't you? Perhaps when I come down a rung, I don't know — when someone is drowning or in difficulty, then one must come down from the bank into the water to pull him out. That is perhaps the reason. When the creation is in a special difficulty, one comes down a little, pulls, so one becomes serious. But when all is going well, one can laugh and enjoy oneself.

Essentially, it could be said that all predications, all exhortations, even all prayers and invocations come from what Sri Aurobindo calls the lower hemisphere, that is, one is still down below. That may be the summit, may be the frontier, it may be just the edge of this lower hemisphere, but one is still in the lower hemisphere. And as soon as one passes to the other side, all this seems at the least useless and almost childish in the bad sense of the word — ignorant, still ignorant. And it is very interesting to be still in this state when one is at times on one side, at times just on the border of the other. Well, this border of the other, which for the human consciousness is an almost inaccessible summit, for the one who can live consciously and freely in the higher hemisphere, this is despite everything a descent.

I would like later to read here with you the last chapters of *The Life Divine*. I believe you are growing sufficiently old, sufficiently mature to be able to follow it. And then there are all kinds of things you will be able to understand and subjects we shall be able to take up, based on this text, which will help us to go a step further, a serious step towards realisation. He describes so precisely and so marvellously the difference between these two states of consciousness, how all that seems to man almost a maximum of perfection, in any case of realisation, how all that still belongs to the lower hemisphere, including all the relations with the Gods as men have known them and know them still — how all these things are still far below — and what is the true state, that which he describes as the supramental state, when one goes up above.

And in fact, as long as one has not consciously gone up, there is a whole world of things one cannot understand.

So I would like, now, that we open the road and pass beyond, all together, a little.

*Voilà.*

**MRS. INDIRA GANDHI, PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA,  
TO THE CHILDREN OF THE SRI AUROBINDO  
ASHRAM AT THE SPORTSGROUND  
ON APRIL 19, 1975**

I AM happy to have this opportunity of seeing the young and the old or perhaps all the young in heart who are here, who have marched<sup>1</sup> and sung<sup>2</sup> so beautifully in front of us. It was inspiring for me to hear the Mother's words<sup>3</sup> and I can well imagine what it must mean to you to be living here and to feel her presence.

I know what great importance she gave to physical education. In fact the very first time I visited Pondicherry I think we saw a physical demonstration and she herself was with us then.

We in India, as perhaps people all over the world, have a very great responsibility in trying to make this a better world, in trying to create a new type of human being. There are many paths and many truths, and perhaps each one of us has to find the path and the truth for ourselves and to seek for strength not from outside but from within ourselves.

Many times when we see what is happening in the world we are discouraged, but there is no cause for discouragement and specially here in India the people have always risen to the occasion, they have always been able to face hardship and danger with courage, with faith and determination. So I give you all my good wishes for the future. I know that you have a role to play and that you will rise to the occasion magnificently.

Thank you.

**MRS. INDIRA GANDHI TO THE PRESSMEN ON  
THE ASHRAM'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

THE system is modern and aims at developing the child's personality. This is what we want and it is very much there.

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<sup>1</sup> March Past    <sup>2</sup> Bandemataram    <sup>3</sup> Taped Message

## TWO UNPUBLISHED TALKS OF SRI AUROBINDO

July 1, 1926: Evening

*Q. What is to be done with the existing national institutions which are struggling for existence?*

A. If the workers have their hearts in the work and enthusiasm and if they can manage financially, let them go on, no matter how small may be the number of students. Generally the education in these institutions is only a repetition of what is done in official institutions — as the teachers have had no other education. The present system of education is rotten — it takes no account of the individuality of the students but thrusts upon them the routine work mechanically prepared by the authorities. This system represses and kills the best qualities in the students. Those who have exceptional merits can rise through all the obstacles — but their number is small. Even they become much worse than they would have been under the proper system.

People nowadays require education only for a living and nothing else — hence they patronise institutions which are gateways to the services and professions. Again, to start a national institution for proper education you require sufficient financial resources. Under these circumstances it is not advisable to start national institutions at present.

But those who have begun such an institution and have enthusiasm and resources — let them continue. They should keep three things before their minds: (a) they should see that the students understand and not merely memorise, (b) they should see that the students teach themselves rather than the teachers teaching them, (c) they should be able to create interest in the students.

If these fundamental principles are followed a good beginning will be made.

In the Western countries they are carrying on all sorts of experiments to achieve these things. There is life there; in our country there is no life, hence no creation is possible.

*Q. How can life be imparted to our people?*

A. Just by yourself having life. Life gives life.

*Q. Didn't the non-co-operation movement give life to the country?*

A. Do you call that life? It was based on a falsehood. How could you expect it to create anything? Swaraj was sought to be established by spinning — could anything come from such a false ideal? Some life was given to the country during the Swadeshi days in Bengal. You ought to have seen what Bengal was before the Swadeshi movement to understand what it accomplished. At that time we gave forms and ideals which have since degenerated. Those forms have now been taken up and distorted. Mahatma Gandhi has a sort of force — by exerting it he advances to a certain extent but in reaction he goes back much farther. We ought to give some mantras

to the people and let them work them out in their own way without putting all kinds of restraints on their activity. In the Swadeshi days, "Vande Mataram" acted as a real mantra.

The Satyagraha movement is only meant for Mahatma Gandhi and a few men like him — it ought not to be thrust upon a whole people.

People talk of village organisation — let them first bring life to the villages and they will organise themselves.

*Q. The only life the villagers now have has manifested in quarrelling with one another.*

A. That is not life but absence of life.

*Q. They show great energy and activity in petty quarrels.*

A. That is energy disintegrated.

*Q. Is it any good to have universal general education?*

A. That depends on your standpoint. If you want a nation in the modern sense then there should be general education so that all people may act together for a common purpose. But for the development of the individual the present type of general education does more harm than good.

In India the students generally have great capacities but the system of education represses and destroys these capacities. Look at the method of the class-room — the students must sit there for so many hours and pore over their books: all this is very injurious. What is needed is an atmosphere — a pervasive atmosphere of learning. The students should imbibe that, find out their own aptitudes and develop along those lines. They should be taught reading and writing and then left to teach themselves. Under the proper system of education both the needs — the need of the individual and the need of the nation — can be reconciled. I do not say that such a synthesis is now practicable, but that is the future education of the race if it is to make any real progress. The teacher must see not only that the student is learning things but also that his intelligence is developing — that all his powers are developing. If you can make the students truly develop their capacities, their life, they will be able to make a place for themselves in the world.

### July 1926: Evening

*Q. A lot of defects have been pointed out in Indian students.*

A. Indian students are very quick by nature — whatever defects they show are due to defective education. Thus their want of knowledge about common objects is due to their constant poring over books on America and England. Then there is the medium of English; nothing can be more injurious than to make children, who have no sense of a foreign language, receive their education through it. But there can be no

objection to their learning any foreign language at a tender age. This subject of education of Indian boys is as much ludicrous as lamentable. Let us turn to some other subject.

*Q. Is want of health and sickness any help to psychic experiences?*

A. No. What in such cases are known as psychic experiences are merely influences of the vital world. Only when the body is very crude it may be necessary to have some derangement of the body to have higher experiences. But such cases are exceptions.

*Q. Is luxurious and sumptuous food detrimental to the spiritual life?*

A. I do not want to lay down any general rule for this; it must be determined in individual cases. As far as my experience goes, I found no difference by varying my diet.

*From ANIL BARAN'S DIARY*

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*Coming shortly*

## SELECTIONS

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# FROM SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER TO ESHA

## LETTERS TO A CHILD

*(Continued from the issue of March 1975)*

*(These letters by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were written to Dilip Kumar Roy's niece, Esha. Those by Sri Aurobindo were in Bengali. Esha was about six or seven years old when she came to the Ashram with her parents — most probably in 1930. She was the first child who received such letters from Sri Aurobindo. The Mother wrote to her in English. As will be seen from the letters, the Mother and Sri Aurobindo took special interest in her and considered her an extraordinary girl. We are also reproducing in English translation two Bengali letters from Esha herself.)*

### From Sri Aurobindo

7-5-1935

The Mother said she would try to make you see her because it is not always easy for people to see her even when she is near them. It is also easier to see with eyes shut than with eyes open — though this too is possible — because it is a sight within you that has to open in order to see her. It is not necessary to call her for any fixed number of hours. It is enough if you love always, remember her often, sit every day a little time before her photograph and call her.

You must never doubt that the Mother loves you and you need never weep for that, for her feelings towards you cannot and will not change.

Of course you can take the photographs given to you by the Mother and keep them with you there.

\*  
\*\*

8-5-1935

It is not that because the Mother loves you she can show herself to your physical eyes at a distance. The physical eyes of men are not made so as to see in that way. It becomes possible only after long sadhana. First one sees with the eyes closed, then afterwards it becomes more possible to see with the eyes open. So you should not be too eager to see at once in the more difficult way. It will come in the end, if you want it, but it does not come at once. Don't mind if it takes time. You must grow first more

and more able to feel the Mother near you; that you can do by thinking of her and calling her often. Then seeing will be more easy.

\*  
\*\*

9-5-1935

Do not mind about the time that it will take — one can't fix the time of these things beforehand. When you feel the Mother's presence more and more, when you begin to see her with the inner sight, then it can come.

It is better not to speak of the Mother to your friends — they do not know her, therefore they can take no interest in her. The more you live close to the Mother yourself, the less you will need to speak of her to others.

P.S. You can of course take your temples with you.  
We shall certainly write to you when you are over there.

**From the Mother**

Pondicherry 29-5-1932

My dear little Esha,

I am not at all angry.

If I was not writing to you, it is because I was expecting you to come soon.

With our blessings and love.

\*  
\*\*

9-7-1932

Esha,

I have taken a nice house for you; there is electricity and a fan. Come quick, even if you are not quite well.

You know that here your health becomes very good.

With love and blessings.

\*  
\*\*

12-8-1932

To Esha with our blessings.

I am so sorry to hear that you have been ill. I hope you are quite well now.

This is to send you strength and our love.

We never forget you and your dear mother.

\*  
\*\*

6-9-1932

To Esha with our blessings.

About your coming here, *my* will is that you should come with your dear mother at once.

But ...

Our love and protection are with you always.

\*  
\*\*

11-11-1933

To Esha, our blessings.

So many times I have answered your letters with my heart, but could find no time to write the answer on a sheet of paper.

Hoping that your dear mother and yourself are quite well.

Our love and protection are with you always.

\*  
\*\*

7-5-1935

To Esha with our blessings.

I am not sending you away from here. I know that here only you can be really happy. I would have liked very much to keep you with me. But you are too young to be able to do as you yourself would like. You depend on your parents. Your mother is returning to Barrakpore and has to take you with her. So I have let you go. When you are older, you will be able to choose for yourself; then you can come here. Meanwhile remember me always as I will remember you always. I will always be with you there and I will try to make you see me. Be happy and become strong and wait till things are changed and you can come back to me.

With love.

\*  
\*\*

17-5-1935

Esha

Always remember me as I will always remember you.

My love and blessings will always be with you.

\*  
\*\*

Pondicherry

Dear little Esha

I have received all the nice things you sent me; the saree and the cloth for the blouse, the slippers and the frame — they are all so very pretty.

Hoping you are quite in good health and happy.

Our love and blessings are always with you.

Mira

**From Esha**

My own Mother,

I was very happy to receive your letter. Mother, can I take the two castors from

M? For, plenty of ants come to the place where I offer flowers before your photo and Sri Aurobindo's. If I can have those two castors then I can fill them with water and place the table on them. The flowers will thus be safe from the ants.

Mother, yesterday I received a book from Nolini. Its name is *The Ashram and the Teachings of Sri Aurobindo*. In that book there are pictures of you and Sri Aurobindo as well as of the Ashram. I shall get the pictures of both of you framed. To whom shall I give them? I will do as you advise. Please reply to my letter.

Yours,  
ESHA

SRI AUROBINDO: You can get them framed by Biren.

\*  
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Mamma,

I was very happy to receive Sri Aurobindo's letter. Can I come to see you upstairs? I hope you have received my mother's letter. Can Manu come to the music? I like music very much. My pranams to both of you.

ESHA

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, you can come. Manu will come with Nolina.

(Translation by Arindam Basu)

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## RAIN-DANCE

TODAY i feel like dancing  
On the road to Auroville  
There is nothing else to do  
But dance the way you feel

And i feel no more  
I dance  
I reel  
A U R O V I L L E

AJIT S. RAO

## AMERICA AND AUROVILLE

*(Concluded from the issue of April 24, 1975)*

WHEN you talk about Sri Aurobindo, the Mother and the Ashram, the American audience listens with respect, but with some perplexity at a vision and a movement which is a bit beyond and a bit too mysterious for their traditional pragmatic approaches to life. What does seem to fire the imagination of the advanced elements of the people in the United States is the new city of Auroville. The memories of their own great pioneering venture is not entirely forgotten and they can visualize Auroville as a place of pioneering and experiment, where a small group of people have gathered from all over the world to look for new directions, to work towards a synthesis of what is best in the East and in the West, to hope for a true blending of matter and spirit, and perhaps, ultimately, to come up with a plan for human unity, so desperately needed now on our shrinking earth. They liked to hear about the four zones of Auroville surrounded by a green belt of farm land which would make the community relatively independent. They liked to hear that Auroville is an experiment for all of mankind not just for some small esoteric group way off and "way out" — that if the new ideas developed in Auroville are not workable eventually for all men, then the large pioneering sacrifices of the moment do not make any sense at all. They seemed amused and somewhat relieved to hear that the group which has gathered here was not a bunch of back-to-nature nuts enduring the hardships of a rugged venture in a hot and arid land out of some masochistic desire to suffer or as some sort of irrational revolt ... that the people here were by no means opposed to the great advances of Western technology — as a matter of fact, it is a kind of manly test of endurance to go without them for the moment — but that all who have lasted here for any length of time believe that technology should be respectfully re-examined and perhaps re-directed towards a fuller life which also moves in the spirit. It was made very clear that this was a difficult transition time for us and by no means some dreamy, mystical utopia already achieved. They understood and sympathized with this and they seemed to respect deeply our courage to try something new and to have such hope for the future. They were warned that no one comes here for the climate, which is bloody hot, or the food, which is also bloody hot, and that no one lasts looking for the ordinary "kicks", or for ordinary security, or for rest, or an easy life ... that the one satisfaction seems to be, and it can be overwhelming at times, the joy of being a member of this group pioneering together in the spirit. With all our personal and ethnic differences and our petty egomanias — sometimes heightened in a project like this — there is always a return to the big ultimates on which we all agree and in which we all share — this vision, this experiment trying to start here, this pioneering venture for a more full and integrated life on earth. They admire our apparent security in a spiritual quest which moves with its feet still on the ground.

They listened with the closest attention about the progress of the experiment so

far. Although we are all aware of the many experimental projects which have been going on around the actual Auroville site for the last seven years since the inauguration — for example, at Aspiration and Auromodel, and in many other places in the green belt and at the beach — when I opened my mouth to speak, I found myself talking about the four zones of the actual twenty square miles of the inner circle, like four spiral slices of a pie, which will finally have a population of about 50,000 people.

I. I told them about the International Zone where we hope that all the major nations of the world will be represented — a fulfilment of the promise of inauguration day on February 28, 1968, when two young people from most of the countries in the free world came to Auroville with some earth from their native lands, which was placed in the urn which serves as the corner stone of the city. I heard myself saying that the purpose of this zone is not to be like a group of pavilions at a world's fair, but rather that each nation would set up an atmosphere which would really represent their own particular nation-soul, a place where students, for example, could come and live for awhile and learn faster and deeper on the level of direct experience — sit in the furniture of a different land, eat their food, listen to their music and look at their art, ancient, contemporary, and folk, maybe learn the language, or whatever else is needed, but all in an actual living experience. We feel that this will be an efficacious way to really compare identities and differences, to realize on felt and deeper levels how we are one at our foundations and in our destinies, and that our differences only contribute to the charms and the joy of existence, how our individual souls and our nation-souls are all manifestations of the one Divine Self. I could tell them that major construction has begun on Bharat-Nivas, the Indian Centre, where a large contemporary auditorium and a large dining complex are almost finished and work has begun on separate cubicle buildings representing each of the different states within the nation — where, hopefully our experiment in international living and fraternal enlightenment can begin. I suggested briefly that perhaps this would be the site of the World Assembly on Human Unity scheduled to be held in India in 1976.

II. I told them about the Residential Zone where a small cosmopolitan group is already living at the experimental place called Auroson's Home. This will be the area where the permanent citizens of Auroville will mostly live. While the basic problem of the moment is a friendly fight with the elements, the basic premise for creating new home environments is that mankind now seems to be moving into a more subjective age which is automatically giving rise to a whole new set of requirements for living conditions — like informality and adaptability ... a kind of non-house approach which will move not "back to nature" but forward to a nature no longer feared as was necessary in the past. We trust that Nature Herself will offer new materials and ways, and show us how, even in our living environments, to make the outside and the inside, one. As for the pioneer fight now with the rugged reluctance of surface

nature at this particular spot, along with the small group of experimental houses, we have a small meteorological station, and a Center for Environmental Studies which carefully records the mostly bad news and is starting to make suggestions about what we can do about it. This Center has just been funded by the Indian Government to begin experiments on solar pumps to help solve India's abiding water problem, and it has also just been funded for a totally Ecological House which will be a research project on solar heating, solar cooling, water storage, the harnessing of wind energy, and the recycling of human excreta for night-time cooking. Necessity rules our lives at the moment here but we all trust completely that there is a Mother watching and waiting to come up with the inventions for a better future for all of us and for the rest of the energy-concerned earth. So let the cobras, the scorpions, and the man-eating ants understand that we are here to stay. We could even let them stay around too if they would only transform a bit, as we are trying to transform ourselves to be ready for the great hovering consciousness which must one day fill the environments we are trying to prepare.

III. I told them about the Industrial Zone where the first factory was inaugurated on February 28, 1974, a furniture workshop called TAKSHANALAYA, the Sanscrit word for "Carpenters' Home". The purpose of this factory and the other factories to follow will be the same as factories everywhere — to make a legitimate profit — in this case to be used ultimately for the financing of the city. At Auroville, however, again we hope to move into new dimensions with a more fully conscious approach to industry, and the handling of money, and the labor which goes into producing it. To begin with, we have been given clear instructions by the Mother that the villagers who have been living on the land where Auroville is to be built are to be given a fair price for their land and then be given the opportunity of becoming the first citizens of Auroville. We have, therefore, been automatically forced into a fast re-thinking of the industrial process. We must plan for low energy and high labor, to keep the villager near his village and away from the over-crowded cities — and our villagers we must keep as fellow citizens, and eventually as full brothers. Their living and hygienic standards are so low at the moment that they threaten any new community trying to start with their unconscious and blameless contamination. We are hoping that a new village will be created by the young people working in our factories so that the living standards can be more controlled and act as an example for others in the area. The efficiently run factory, the new working conditions, the new village and, hopefully, a slowly increasing prosperity will act as a long term prototype weapon to wage an all-out war against India's biggest enemy, a desperate, degrading, and seemingly hopeless poverty. This project, at the root of the country's problems, would seem to be the mysterious key we have found at last to getting Auroville really started. It is the tangible sign needed by the rest of the world of the legitimate practicality of our vision. Our factory at the moment is nothing but a big go-down with four machines and a lot of goodwill but we have been able to produce well-designed, well-made furniture at

such a fair price that one of the largest banks in the country seems ready to place a large order and a large responsibility with us. May God bless this bank, and bless us with the continued trust of these enlightened people, so that the practical process of Auroville can really begin, and we can, first, show them and our potential clients in the rest of the world that our consciousness approach to business produces the best work. Later, we will be able to advance further towards new simple design techniques, and to experiments in our factory, and in our new village, towards the true preservation of the creative freedom of our working men, and their full integration into the new city. Perhaps in the process too, we will be able to show ourselves and the world that there is a group on the earth who is using money as it was always meant to be used, as a means to an end, and that the end beyond all other ends is to free the spirit within man.

IV. I told them about the Cultural Zone where practically nothing yet has happened on the actual site but where we will try to profit from the extraordinary experience and experiments which have been going on in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram for the past fifty years, under the direct supervision and inspiration of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother ... in the Ashram School for example, just now being recognized as the best there is in India, where the approach to education begins with the premise that "nothing can be taught". This means that everything to be learned is already there within the child and all that an educator can do is set up a proper atmosphere and be a guiding presence to help the child awaken. A free progress system has been set up so that the students move in their own natural directions and at their own pace. There are examinations only when the student feels he may need one, and there are no degrees. If there is any pressure at all, it is only for an inner growth, which somehow flows naturally to an outer accomplishment where knowledge never loses contact with wisdom. This development of the mind and the inner consciousness is joined with a well-planned and well-equipped athletic program where the competition is mainly with one's self and the purpose is to develop the discipline, the grace and the beauty which go with good health. These amazingly successful experiments will be carried on in Auroville, and the approach to culture and art will begin where it has ended for some of the great artists of the world — with the admission that great art starts and ends with a direct and transcendent contact with the Divine. The mystical and creative proclivities of this place and of the people here are such that perhaps the joys waiting in the Cultural Zone are too heady for the hard pioneer work before us. We move on in the trust that the flood gates of this bliss will be opened when we are ready.

After all this was told to my warm friends in America, the questions became more penetrating about Sri Aurobindo, the Mother, and the great spherical structure, the Matrimandir, being built at the very center of our new city. I could only direct them then to the writings left with us by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother ... and hope for

the inner touch with which we have all been blessed ... hope for the light to help them make the project of Auroville their own wherever they are ... and for the love to remember us here on the other side of the earth.

*(Concluded)*

WILLIAM T. NETTER

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## THE NOONS OF THE FUTURE

O SEEKERS, who look forward to the future's dawns  
 Who yearn to be no more bound by the pulling past;  
 Setting your luminous back to the glorious fading suns,  
 On gold-nude flaming noons your burning vision cast.

Men, prophets, gods have come and gone but flow of life  
 Hurls on: they trod, tremored the earth with new-shot forces  
 Shaking, themselves unshaken, they hewed new ways through strife,  
 Through moveless unyielding rocks they carved the milky courses.

Yet never yields God's onward movement; unappeased  
 Time stares in our face; yet greater marvels of golden skies  
 Beyond the view of withering light wait to be seized  
 By man's invincible conscience that never dies.

To stick to the past, to glorify the shades gone dim:  
 This is old Adam in man. The fiery spirit flies  
 Through past, to the naked Noon. This superman in him  
 Strives to create on earth the God-promised paradise.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

## I MUST LEARN

I MUST learn to see Thy face in all  
And feel Thy breath of Grace  
And quiet down each common call  
And yearn for Thy heart's embrace.

I must learn to calm so many things  
And sail on Thy wide wide seas  
And scatter the seeds of Thy joyous Light  
And throb to Thy melodies.

I must learn to look with the inner eye  
Into Thy future's well  
And mould of my ignorant heavy clay  
A room for Thy bliss to dwell.

I must learn to cry like a little child  
That craves for its Mother's love  
And in this Matter dark and wild  
Create the Splendour above.

Fire and Light and Joy and Peace  
Of these I should be made,  
I must harbour within me an immense regard  
In Love's eternal shade.

I must learn to be Thy true little soul  
And face all things with faith  
And receive Thy sacred Light from all  
And knock at Thy golden gate.

For now my heart with gratitude  
Brimms to the full for Thee,  
My gaze meets Thine and tears appear  
— I am Thine for eternity.

My being soars towards Thy diamond Light  
And I see Thy radiant Word  
Written in gold on the sun-white wings  
Of earth — Thy resplendent Bird.

ARVIND HABBU

# THE CONFERENCE

## AN IMPRESSION OF THE SEMINAR ON NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION

February 18-20, 1975

SPEAKING of his impression of the Conference, a devotee from outside struck by its uttermost simplicity remarked, "There was no high, no low — as if the very dimension of the graded importance stood eliminated and all felt as equal participants in a programme which, to say the least, nursed a greater revolution than any human history knows of and science and technology can boast of bringing about."

Indeed simplicity was the hall-mark of the conference. Though a row of chairs was kept arranged facing the audience, it was more for the sake of convenience than as a mark of distinction. The two brief general sessions without much pomp or show, without fanfare, were like the silent turning of a compass-needle. From the Divine we move towards the Divine. Inspired by a Presence we move towards establishing that Presence in life and manifesting it in the new modes to be developed and created henceforward.

The nature of Sri Aurobindo's work is not social, not political, not even moral. It is a programme of total change — the transformation of life as an inevitable and intended further step in evolution. Life today is in a state of transition; it has to reveal a new splendour. This new manifestation is not a miracle to be achieved in isolation by the unaided effort of man. Man is included in its sweep as a conscious material. He can understand the situation and help and collaborate with the Evolutionary Force at work. The work has started with the unique Tapasya of Sri Aurobindo and tends towards the Future for which all the past has been a long preparation. The past too has to be understood and adapted to the new way of life. It cannot simply be brushed aside and a new creation started as though after a dissolution. Sri Aurobindo says:

The leaders of the spiritual march will start from and use the knowledge and the means that past effort has developed in this direction but they will not take them as they are without any deep necessary change or limit themselves by what is now known or cleave only to fixed and stereotyped systems or given groupings of results, but will follow the method of the Spirit in Nature.

This gives us a nice hint of the attitude or the method to be adopted. As regards the general outline of the programme the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother reveal it in due measure as they are liberally strewn with the luminous hints of its detailed working out. Yes, the details are there but to know them in their true form or measure we have to move along the path. We have to launch our boat in the holy stream, for then alone are revealed the holy places and the temples on its two banks. As our approach goes on deepening and widening, new situations reveal themselves, new methods and modes of operation go on becoming more and more visible.

In this regard the Ashram here may itself be accepted as a model. Nobody knew in advance, nobody drew up an outline in advance, but the Ashram emerged as the banyan tree emerges from a tiny seed. The All-caring, All-knowing Mother has tended it just as she is tending the new movement. She is tenderly rearing the New creation that the Ashram as a collectivity represents.

Orissa is another example. For nowhere else the new movement has entered into the mass life in such a measure. And yet if one were to plan it in the human way, one wonders how it should have started: one might have felt utterly stuck right in the beginning. The writings of Sri Aurobindo are in English. How could Orissa be expected to open itself to the luminous heart of the messages lodged in writings so remote from its speech and expressions? But Orissa has opened and magnificently moves on the path. Schools have been started, farms are being organised, cooperatives and stores for the supply of provisions are being planned and the masses are slowly directed to the one inevitable way of the future. How? References were made to the movement as also to similar developments outside Orissa and conclusions were drawn. The first thing that suggests itself is essentially the spiritual nature of the movement. The spiritual movement is like the sowing of great seeds. It is also most silent and far-reaching. The seeds sown and tended, the garden comes up, fruits and flowers appear where all was sterility and waste before.

The foundation is the opening to the New Light, the New Force, to get enkindled by the touch of the Mother's Grace. "She is the Sun from which we kindle all our suns." This is the first step, the beginning. Madhav Pandit observed in his summing-up address that those centres have tended to grow and develop which were organised around sincere aspirants; centres around social celebrities have faded and lost themselves.

This in effect means a reversal in our attitude. The disillusionment of man, his abject failure and crumbling institutions tell but one story. His attempt has been to plan life from the outer side. He plans and changes his external existence to bring about happiness and a sense of well-being. But his method has proved dangerous and he has to save himself. Sri Aurobindo says:

The one safety for man lies in learning to live from within outward, not depending on institutions and machinery to perfect him, but out of his growing inner perfection availing to shape a more perfect form and frame of life; for by this inwardness we shall best be able both to see the truth of the high thing which we now only speak with our lips and form into outward intellectual constructions, and to apply their truth sincerely to our outward living.

By learning to live from within outward we cut across the charmed circle of futile acquisitions. The tragedy of competitive glamour has its birth in externalised living. Inwardness brings a sense of 'enoughness', a sense of well-being that does not very much depend upon material acquisitions. We could save much waste of energy and

effort, save ourselves from much fumbling and anxiety if we cultivated this sense of 'enoughness', instead of making frantic attempts to shape our society in the fashion of other countries, imitating provisions for enjoyments that are more intoxicants and leave us in the end utterly beaten and discontented.

Our outer life is the result of the consciousness that inhabits it. An attempt, therefore, to change life must begin with the change of the underlying consciousness. This effects a great change, almost a reversal in our approach to life and its various problems. It is not possible to think of and find finished solutions of problems whose roots lie deep in human nature. History provides ample proof of the fact that all such solutions have soon turned into dogmas and have proved a troublesome burden to future generations. Thus 'inwardness' or proper understanding of life's problems, based upon a true vision of the root-realities and the world conditions, is the necessary thing to be cultivated. As we progress in cultivating such a mentality, we progress both inwardly and outwardly. As our inwardness increases, so also increases our awareness of the underlying 'Reality'. A movement starts. It is a movement spiritward, Godward. And the Divine Mother observes, "Without the Divine, life is a painful illusion. With the Divine all is bliss." It is no reconstruction programme in the ordinary sense; it is a reconstruction of values, a reversal of values, a reversal of consciousness, we may say.

To achieve this, therefore, should be our primary motive. Now it may be argued that a mere statement of such abstract principles is likely to achieve nothing. For the people, torn as they are with strife and suffering and all kinds of privations, are not likely to listen to and understand such things. But our experience belies this impression. The masses too have a sense, a basic sense which most automatically lends itself to an understanding of spiritual values. The examples of Gadipalli in Andhra and various centres of Orissa are eye-openers. But one thing has to be remembered. We cannot profess without ourselves becoming examples. For this knowledge has to be inspired, this sense has to be created and it cannot be thrust upon the people by any external agency. Moreover, Sri Aurobindo's words are mantras charged with a creative potency. It is to this Force that the villagers awaken, the heart of India opens.

Thus viewed, the task loses its formidable aspect. A nucleus of Sri Aurobindo's study, a study centre or a *svadhyaya chakra* automatically develops into a centre of a New Creative Energy. It generates new life and starts creating new institutions, new modes of activities.

This is the fundamental point around which a new society is organised. As centres go on increasing, so also goes on increasing the impact of the transforming Force on the mass life. Each of these centres has to work free, has to work unfettered depending upon its direct link with the Mother, with the inspiration it receives from her. Any attempt to advise, or to direct and control its activities by a superior body, would automatically drive it into an inferior position and turn it into a dependency. This would, in effect, mean institutionalising; would mean turning a divine movement

into a human programme where thoughts or ideas drive out the soul and lamps are substituted for the sunlight. But left to work independently, with their own right inspirations as recurring points of light touched by the flaming truth the Mother and Sri Aurobindo embody, the centres will automatically group themselves and combine, feeling unity as the developing new way of life. This will be the beginning of the new creation where Economics and Education and in fact all social endeavours would be turned to produce better effects, to achieve better ends.

India is a poor country. And, as we hear so often, our impoverished economy has caused many a shipwreck in achieving our programmes. We cannot build up India and flourish as many western countries are flourishing. This is our cry of woe. The aim of economics to achieve affluence is necessarily attended with such a cry. But can we not turn our objective into a new direction? Sri Aurobindo observes:

The aim of economics would be not to create a huge engine of production whether of the competitive or of the cooperative kind, but to give to men, — not to some but to all men, — each in his highest possible measure, — the joy of work, according to their own nature and free leisure to grow inwardly as well as a simply rich and beautiful life for all.

The function of money in the new context would be 'to prepare the world for a new and higher creation'. As new activities are inspired around the study centres or circles the economic life of the community goes on getting organised on the basis of the elevating principle. Gadipalli in Andhra again serves as a nice example. There people, mostly cultivators, being inspired by the new faith, have combined themselves most unobtrusively and formed the new way of life. Their example is bound to inspire such experiments elsewhere and no wonder Orissa has lost no time in coming forward to organise such farms at many places.

In order to prepare the country for such a life, education must be organised under the guidance of the New Light and must embrace areas of activities which were generally considered out of bounds and were not necessarily covered under the old system. Fortunately, Sri Aurobindo has left for us a thoroughly organised programme. All life is education just as all life is Yoga. For life is an evolving reality. And as long as we continue to grow, as long as we continue to learn through life and its experiences, we are on the path of education.

Study centres, around which a new way of life develops, are also the centres of developing new awareness regarding education. The cradle for the new education is the new society. For, the guardians of the children, as also the prevailing atmosphere, have to change before the new programme can be taken up effectively. And yet all is included in one total movement. Nothing inferior can satisfy the guardians inspired by Sri Aurobindo's vision. Thus, wherever Study Centres have been organised and are continued on right lines, a natural concern for organising education on the lines suggested by Sri Aurobindo is being born. Schools are being started and there is a general demand

for providing necessary training to aspiring teachers.

Thus viewed, the Conference was an occasion which provided opportunity for self-retrospect to those who have accepted this ideal and feel called upon to serve the country and humanity at large. We have to grow, we have to be ignited and glow and for this what other method can be more effective than to open ourselves to the luminous message embodied in the writings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo? Inspired individuals, study centres and the progressive organisation of illumined group-life around such centres are the triple terms of the movement that stand revealed to us. New horizons will open up as we move on the path.

CHHOTAY NARAIN

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Excerpts from the review of *Night and Dawn* (Sri Aurobindo Society, 1974), price Rs. 12 written by Jesse Roarke and published in the March 1975 issue of *Sri Aurobindo's Action*:

This collection of seventy poems by one of the younger members of the Ashram is a volume of rare distinction. It is not often that one finds poetry of psychic and spiritual aspiration, brought out with such utter integrity, and such command of the medium...

The poetic level is consistently high. Peter Hechs demonstrates beyond profitable cavil that his grasp of form is sure; in metre and rhyme, diction and felicity of phrase, we have here the work of a genuine poet. Or, to be most critical, we can say that we have genuine poetry here, and may hope that future work will prove the author's, or instrument's, title to that high distinction...

Altogether the least that can be said is that this is a volume to be recommended to everyone who enjoys and responds to poetry. For the seeker, the aspirant to divine fulfilment and beatitude, it is more: a fine and genuine expression of actual experience, and a ray of light upon the path.

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## THE MULTIPLE SINS OF HUMAN NATURE

FOR reasons with which I sympathize, one makes oneself unpopular with progressive people if one blames public evils on human nature. True, the argument that human nature is bad is often used as an excuse by interested parties who oppose social change. All the same we seem to have got to a stage in the world's history where at every point we are brought up against "human nature" as an impassable wall that prevents us taking obvious measures to save ourselves from destruction.

Everywhere there is the paradox that the most practical ways of solving problems are also the least practicable: and for reasons that come down to "human nature". The great example of this is overpopulation, the problem behind all other problems which is likely to lead to unprecedented famines, and to wars and revolutions. The practical way of stopping overpopulation would be to have a world goal of halving the world's population within, say, thirty years: but everyone knows that for reasons of nationalism, religion, etc., birth control on a world scale is impracticable. The reasons all come down to traditions, rivalries, beliefs — in fact, human nature: or, better, in the plural, human natures. For there are as many human natures as there are divisions preventing people from seeing that overpopulation is a single problem affecting the whole world.

What startles us in the face is that unless the practical becomes practicable, the experiment which is human life on this planet will probably fail. Henry Kissinger stated the practical very clearly in Rome at the World Food Conference, when he said: "The current trend is obvious and the remedy is in our power. If we do not act boldly, disaster will result from a failure of will: moral culpability will be inherent in our foreknowledge." Only to read a statement like this is to be sure that a hundred voices are going to shout: "But what you propose is entirely impracticable." And sure enough Mr. Kissinger had at his elbow the Secretary of Agriculture, most appropriately named Mr. Butz, who immediately butted in with many "buts" designed to show that Mr. Kissinger did not mean what he had so forcibly said.

It seems quite probable that by the end of the century an overpopulated, polluted, fragmented world will collapse into wars and revolutions, perhaps the end of most human life. The ultimate reasons for the collapse will lie in the failure of multiple human natures to become one humanity capable of adapting itself to conditions which human beings, with their science and technology, have themselves produced. Having set up machinery of rapid intercommunication, which means that whatever of importance happens in one part of the world for good or for ill, very quickly affects all other parts of it, human beings will have failed to evolve ways of thinking and acting which can treat of problems like those of food and population in every area as affecting every other area, on a global scale.

Throughout history the comparative failure of every human generation has been that of the inability of those living to think of life as a single consciousness of which each separate contemporary person is a minute extension, and not a whole world unto

himself or herself. No one is to be blamed for this failure which is indeed the result of the condition of isolation into which each one of us is born. All the same, the failure which used to be comparative is now absolute. In the past it was possible for the individual to merge himself to some extent within the nation as a whole.

But now that the world is effectively, for purposes of construction or destruction, a whole, individuals have to think of themselves as functions of the world, not of the nation, if they are to solve its problems. And unless there is some kind of *mutation of consciousness* this seems to be to expect too much of human nature.

The failure of the human race to adapt to a world in which everyone has everything to gain or everything to lose, will be the result of the innate egocentricity of each individual born into his separate body, belonging to his separate family, which is part of his separate nation, which belongs to its separate race and separated creed.

I think there are signs that many people are beginning to feel that what is required today is some kind of mutation of human consciousness. This shows in a dozen ways — the turning of the young in the West toward Oriental, more or less cosmic, philosophies, agitation about “pollution” and “environment”, both of which are conceived in terms of the globe. Above all there is the worldwide disillusionment with politics. For adaptation of new consciousness to new circumstances can only be achieved by political means — yet our politicians are among the most backward members of the human race. We need leaders who express our situation, political philosophers who analyze it.

Yet the opinion-poll-minded political leaders in the democratic countries seek not to educate but to mirror public opinion. The image of the President of the most powerful country and the greatest democracy in the world is of a man pulling papers out of his pocket to show that he echoes the opinions of 81 per cent of the public in doing almost nothing to avoid disaster to the world by acting boldly according to “our foreknowledge”.

What people all over the world surely want is that politics should make the measures that are almost glaringly practical, practicable — but perhaps human nature is incapable of doing this and humanity will die like other species of failing to adapt to unprecedented circumstances.

STEPHEN SPENDER

(*With acknowledgements to The New York Times, January 4, 1975*)

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## THE SPIRIT OF EDUCATION

THE spirit of education is inherent in the word 'education' itself. Education is that which brings out the best in the individual. It is assumed that everyone is born with certain inherent potentialities and virtues as Plato would say. It is the task of the teacher to help the taught in self-discovery and thus make him realise his hidden potentialities.

"As one thinks, so he becomes" is the old saying. As a matter of fact the spirit of education lies in developing self-awareness and such a consciousness as removes the barrier between the body and the soul. It is really amazing that with so much of potential knowledge within, the individual remains the victim of triple ignorance. While the individual is essentially a soul in a body, due to ignorance he forgets this fact and begins to identify himself with his body only.

The spirit of education lies in the need for the individual to have a correct consciousness in regard to his body and the soul or spirit which he is. Recent researches in human physiology and psychology have provided sufficient evidence in support of the view that human thoughts play a very significant role in the maintenance of health, both physical and mental.

Maya Pines<sup>1</sup> has summed up the present position on the contemporary state of mind and matter and pointed out that brain scientists are studying the workings of the brain with a new technique known as biofeedback. The biofeedback technique employs electronic gadgets which measure and amplify the minutest physiological changes. According to Maya Pines, "The research confirms what Indian Yogis and Buddhist meditators have known for thousands of years — that it is possible, with training, for the mind to control the body."<sup>2</sup>

In the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo the main emphasis is on changing the consciousness. The individual must develop through meditation and yoga the divine consciousness. Hence it is rather satisfying for us to note that what has been known to the ancient Indian yogic tradition is now being discovered through the technique of biofeedback.

It has been further pointed out by Maya Pines that "in Sanskrit there are 20 different names for varying states of 'consciousness' or 'mind'. Yet we are limited to these two words"<sup>3</sup>. In other words, at present we have confined ourselves in regard to the powers of the brain to two words, *viz.* consciousness and mind. But Sri Aurobindo has gone deep into the nature of consciousness as well as the different levels of mind in the context of the Integral Yoga.

The future evolution of man will be in terms of cosmic consciousness and supermind. To pass from mind to supermind is the real spirit of education. The present

<sup>1</sup> Maya Pines, *The Brain Changers. Scientists and the New Mind Control*, New York Harcourt Press Jovanovich, Inc., 1973, quoted in the *Span*, February, 1975.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

system of education is bookish and lays heavy emphasis on memory work. Children develop rote memory but little understanding and insight. There is little of creativity and more of mechanisation in the present educational theory and practice. The truth of the matter is that, by and large, educators are not aware of the true nature of man and hence all attention is paid to the outer self of the individual. The inner self or the soul is totally neglected. That is why there is a deep crisis in the present system of education all over the world.

Lecomte du Noüy<sup>1</sup>, while discussing the present scientific knowledge and its uses in the context of human destiny, has stated, "What characterises man, as *Man*, is precisely the presence in him of abstract ideas, of moral ideas, or spiritual ideas, and it is only of these that he can be proud. They are as real as his body and confer on his body a value and importance which it would be far from possessing without them." In other words, the importance and significance of the human body is to the extent the individual has in him correct notions of his spirit and soul.

The task today is to provide a correct view of man and the instrument of brain of which he is so proud. Our knowledge of the brain and its functioning which we call mind is very limited. On account of this limited knowledge we suffer from such ignorance as is extremely harmful. It is due to this ignorance that we are unable to discriminate between the real and the unreal.

### Education as Light

The present system of education is so superficial that it fails in its main purpose which is to enable the individual to have a correct view of things. It is no wonder that, in the ancient tradition, education has been described as Light. Education is that Light which removes the darkness of ignorance and separateness. In the Vedic and Upanishadic literatures the utmost importance has been given to attaining the Light. Take for example the following prayers which were popular in ancient India:

- (a) Let our meditation be on the glorious *Light* of Savitri. May this *Light* illumine our minds.

(*Rig Veda*)

- (b) The face of Truth remains hidden behind a circle of gold. Unveil it, O God of *Light*, that I who love the true may see.

(*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*)

The human aspiration for light is spiritual in nature, for it enables the individual to go beyond the limitations of mind and perceive the real Truth, which is the spirit of education.

<sup>1</sup> Lecomte du Nouy, *Human Destiny*, New York: The New American Library of World Literature, 1949, p. 13.

It is interesting to note that in the Upanishadic literature the Spirit and the Light go very much together. A typical example is given below from the *Chhandogya Upanishad*:

There is a *Light* that shines beyond all things  
on earth, beyond us all, beyond the heavens,  
beyond the highest, the very highest heavens.  
This is the *Light* that shines in our heart. (3-13-7)

Here we find a reference being made to Light as Spirit. The real purpose of education is to discover this Light which shines in our heart. But the main difficulty is the barrier between the Light within and the physical mind which is regarded today as the main instrument of knowledge. In order to remove that barrier one must try to be free from the mechanisations of human mind. In this context the following statement of Sri Aurobindo has significant relevance:

“The mere idea or intellectual seeking of something higher beyond, however strongly grasped by the mind’s interest, is ineffective unless it is seized on by the heart as the one thing desirable and by the will as the one thing to be done. For truth of the Spirit has not to be merely thought but to be lived, and to live it demands a unified single-mindedness of the being ....”<sup>1</sup>

Since the spirit of education is solely concerned with the inner awakening and realisation of the Self the human mind with its faulty perceptions, prejudices, defective reasonings cannot be of any help. The human mind must be prepared for transformation through such education as lays emphasis on the Spirit and not on form. From mind to supermind is the evolutionary path which the spirit of education has to cover. Sri Aurobindo writes:

“A progressive evolution of the visible and invisible instruments of the Spirit is the whole law of the earth nature. Spirit has concealed itself in inconscient matter. It evolves into forms of matter by the working of matter forces. It is only when this has been sufficiently done, that it thinks of life. A subconscious life and its imprisoned forces were there all the time in matter and its forces.

“Afterwards came an evolution of mind in many forms by the working of liberated mind-forces. In those life-forces in matter and in the very substance of matter mind was latent. An evolution of mind in the living form by a working of liberated mind-force was the third chapter of the story. The third chapter is not completed, neither will it be the end of the narrative ”<sup>2</sup>

Thus human mind in its present form and functioning cannot really understand the spirit of education. In order to do so it must become an instrument of Truth by fulfilling one of the following three conditions:

(1) “Either it must fall silent in the Self and give room for a wider and

<sup>1</sup> *A Practical Guide to Integral Yoga*, Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1971, p. 321.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193.

- greater consciousness;
- (2) "or it must make itself passive to an inner light and allow that light to use it as a means of expression;
  - (3) "or else it must itself change from the questioning intellectual superficial mind it now is to an intuitive intelligence, a mind of vision for the direct expression of the divine Truth."<sup>1</sup>

The present system of education is devoted to intellectual questionings and does not try to develop a true vision and an intuitive intelligence, for it is oblivious of the Spirit of education.

In order to make education an instrument of attaining a higher consciousness and ultimately the divine consciousness we have to go deep into the inner world of the psyche and the Spirit. No amount of religious or moral education can really awaken the dormant Spirit and the Light surrounded by the darkness of superficial knowledge.

### The Goal

The spirit of education has an inherent goal which requires every individual to make an integral effort for inner growth and development so that his consciousness becomes cosmic. In 1912 the Mother wrote down some of the general aims which should guide humanity on its path to the Divine. These aims are meant for the individual as well as for the collectivity. But the general goal in terms of the spirit of education is to establish a "progressing universal harmony". This can be possible only if through education it is realised that human unity is necessary and it can be achieved not by emphasising the external conditions but through "the awakening in all and the manifestation by all of the inner Divinity which is One".<sup>2</sup>

To perceive One in all and all in One is an essential condition for realising the spirit of education. Each individual must make an effort to be "conscious in himself of the Divine Presence and to identify himself with it".<sup>3</sup> The real spirit of education demands this consciousness to be developed in the individual so that he may become aware of the Divine Presence in himself. Such a goal is not idealistic but concretely related to the requirements of "individual transformation, and inner development leading to the union with the Divine Presence".<sup>4</sup>

But such an individual transformation and inner development leading to the union with the Divine Presence is not possible without the corresponding social transformation which will create such an environment for the individual as will enable the growth and flowering of his total personality. The goal is action-oriented, which according to the Mother is threefold:

- (1) "To realise in oneself the ideal to be attained: to become a perfect earthly

<sup>1</sup> M.P. Pandit, *Dictionary of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga*, Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1966, p.159.      <sup>2</sup> The Mother, *Conversations*, Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1971, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*      <sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 2.

representative of the first manifestation of the Unthinkable in all its modes, attributes and qualities.

(2) "To preach this ideal by word, but, above all, by example, so as to find out all those who are ready to realise it in their turn and to become also announcers of liberation.

(3) "To found a typic society or reorganise those that already exist."<sup>1</sup>

Thus the spirit of education is concerned with the individual as well as with the society in which he lives. The individual and social transformations are complementary. They support each other. One is not possible without the other. But the main burden lies on the individual. He must do his duty, that is, he must develop first a genuine aspiration for his inner development and for a progressive union with the Divine Light. Without this aspiration the spirit of education cannot be realised.

But all individuals have to work and labour in terms of their uniqueness and the special potentialities with which they are born and also must choose, according to the Mother, an external action in terms of their capacities and personal preferences.

The relation between the individual and the society can be harmonious if the spirit governing this relationship is kept active. Each individual "must find his own place, the place which he can alone occupy in the general concert, and he must give himself entirely to it, not forgetting that he is playing only one note in the terrestrial symphony and yet his note is indispensable to the harmony of the whole ...."<sup>2</sup>

The value of this relationship between the individual and the collectivity is the same as that of a note in a symphony, the sole condition being the creation of harmony. Such is the spirit of education which must be realised if we want to go beyond bookish and mental education.

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

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# THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE FUTURE

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

(Continued from the issue of April 24, 1975)

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

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We have found Teilhard employing the term "physical" to denote "reality", but his context makes it clear that he does not have in mind every kind of reality but rather the reality possessed by our evolutionary universe — the universe of nature, commonly described as "material" and pictured by Teilhard as a cosmogenesis that is also Christogenesis.

To culminate and clinch our line of thought we may bring forward four other pronouncements of his. The first two<sup>1</sup> are:

"Projected, then, on the screen of evolution, Christ, in an exact, physical, unvarnished sense, is seen to possess those most awesome properties which St. Paul lavishly attributes to him."

"In Scripture Christ is essentially revealed as invested with the power of giving the world, in his own person, its definitive form. He is consecrated for a cosmic function. And since that function is not only moral but also (in the most real sense of the word) physical, it presupposes a physical basis in its humano-divine subject."

Let us note the two strokes of emphasis. Teilhard speaks of "an exact, physical, unvarnished sense." Also, the term "physical" is said to be meant "in the most real sense of the word" Evidently, the intention is that we should understand "physical" in an absolutely literal connotation. Taken most literally, the word points — as any dictionary will tell us — to material existence, the existence which confronts us in the world of nature, the universe in which we live and of which our bodies, with their souls, are a part.

The unseverable linking of the word's content to material nature is fully supported by Teilhard himself when we read the phrase:<sup>2</sup> "... the resurrection of the flesh —

<sup>1</sup> *Christianity and Evolution*, p. 88; *Prayer of the Universe*, p. 17.      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 34.

taken in its literal, physical sense.” And the sentences coming fairly close on the heels of that phrase completely bear out our notion that the two strokes of emphasis we have marked drive home the appropriateness of taking the literal sense — namely, materiality — to be always contained in “physical”. The sentences<sup>1</sup> read: “... the mystical body of Christ is something more than a totality of souls; because, without there being present in it a specifically material element, souls could not be physically gathered in Christ .... In this regard, there is no difference between the lower natural world and the new world that is being formed around Christ.”

Now the picture is distinct: “physical”, implying “organic”, refers to the material universe of nature. It may not in every context coincide with “material”, but the two adjectives show the same thing under two faces: the substance that acts as “physical” is “material” — the “material” substance in its organicity is “physical”. And both the faces — the substantial and the organic — are subsumed under the cosmically “natural”. On this showing, the Cosmic Christ proves to be intrinsically connected and subtly to overlap with the organic world of matter.

To get this intrinsic connection and subtle overlapping into greater focus we may present a few more extracts. The first we may draw from Mooney’s book.<sup>2</sup> There we have Teilhard saying:

“Minds who are timid in their conceptions ... dangerously weaken scriptural thought and render it incomprehensible or banal to people enthusiastic over connections that are physical and relationships properly cosmic .... No, the Body of Christ must be understood boldly, as it was seen and loved by St. John, St. Paul and the Fathers. It forms in nature a world which is new, an organism moving and alive in which we are all united physically, biologically ....”

The next extract, from Teilhard’s “Introduction to the Christian Life”,<sup>3</sup> speaks of divine “grace” as the “organic” power of “a state of union with God”: “from the Christian Catholic and realist point of view, grace represents a physical super-creation. It raises us a further rung on the ladder of cosmic evolution. In other words, the stuff of which grace is made is strictly biological.”

These two extracts are more or less parallel and both bring in an addition to the terms we already have: “biological.” It has obviously to do with organisms, as the first extract shows, and is akin to “organic”. But the chief interest of the extracts is not here. It lies in what is asserted about the Body of Christ, the state of grace which is union of souls with God. We are told that, despite its being “a world which is new” (a phrase echoing an earlier quotation’s “new world that is being formed around Christ”), this Body is still within “nature” and, for all its being a “super-creation”, is yet a part of “cosmic evolution”. It is a higher “physical” and “organic” or “biological” step in the evolutionary cosmos of material nature. But this is one side of the situation. The other side is that, though the Body of Christ is not

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 70. The reference given is *La Vie cosmique*, 1916, in *Ecrits du temps de la guerre*, pp 39-40.

<sup>3</sup> *Christmamy and Evolution*, pp. 152-3.

out of "nature" and "cosmic evolution", it is nonetheless a "new" world, a "super-creation", "a further rung on the ladder".

We may speak of two conditions of organic nature — an ordinarily material-physical and an extraordinarily material-physical. The two must not be confused but at the same time they must not be split quite apart. They are the same material-physical medium. And there is even a meeting-point of the two. This is Teilhard's famous "Omega", the terminal point of evolution which the universe is bound to reach by a play of increasingly "centred" or "interiorized" synthesis, which we have come to know as Teilhard's law of developing complexity-consciousness. How this Omega serves as a meeting-point between the ordinary and the extraordinary conditions of organic nature we may see from statements like the following:

"... ahead of us a *universal cosmic centre* is taking on definition in which everything is explained, is felt, and is ordered. It is, then, in this physical pole of evolution that we must, in my view, locate and recognize the plenitude of Christ .... I am only too well aware how staggering is this idea of a being capable of gathering all the fibres of the developing cosmos into his own activity and individual experience. But, in conceiving such a marvel, all I am doing (let me repeat) is to transpose into terms of physical reality the juridical expressions in which the Church has clothed her faith."<sup>1</sup>

"Having noted that the Pauline Christ (the great Christ of the mystics) coincides with the universal term, omega, adumbrated by our philosophy — the grandest and most necessary attribute we can ascribe to him is that of exerting a supreme physical influence on every cosmic reality without exception."<sup>2</sup>

"Since Christ is omega, the universe is physically impregnated to the very core of its matter by the influence of his super-human nature."<sup>3</sup>

"The pressure of facts is now such that it is time to return to a form of Christology which is more organic and takes more account of physics. A Christ who dominates the history of heaven and earth not solely because these have been *given* to him, but because his gestation, his birth and gradual consummation constitute physically the only definitive reality in which the evolution of the world is expressed: there we have the only God whom we can henceforth worship. And that is precisely the God suggested to us by the new aspect the universe has assumed."<sup>4</sup>

"It is essential for us to get back to the soundest currents of Catholic tradition and at last offer men a theology in which Christ will be seen to be linked to the development of the whole universe, a universe as physical and as great as he."<sup>5</sup>

"There is only one centre in the universe: it is at once natural and super-natural: it impels the whole of creation along one and the same line, first towards the fullest development of consciousness, and later towards the highest holiness: in other words towards Christ Jesus, personal and cosmic."<sup>6</sup>

Let us start with the astonishing phrase making the universe "as physical and as

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 127-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Science and Christ*, pp. 56-7.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>4</sup> *Christianity and Evolution*, p. 89.

<sup>5</sup> *Prayer of the Universe*, p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23-4.

great as" Christ. It is the converse of the one we find in *Intimate Letters*:<sup>1</sup> "All my effort goes to maintain a Christ as vast and organic as the universe ...." Both imply the same "truth": Christ's is the basic physicality and greatness, the basic vastness and organicity: the universe's physicality and greatness, its organicity and vastness, are an expression of it. And to say this is to proclaim "in terms of physical reality" the primacy with which the Church has endowed Christ in "juridical expressions". These terms have to be taken in a literal sense, pertaining to the realm of nature, because Christ coincides with Omega, "the universal cosmic centre," the supreme focus ahead by which every atom of matter is impregnated and by whose influence it is attracted, Omega that is "the physical pole of evolution". Surely, if Christ is "located and recognized" in that physical pole, those "terms of physical reality" cannot be construed as merely "ontological" ones which reduce "physical" to a generality like "real": the term "reality", already present, supplies all that we need of "real", and therefore "physical" tells us what kind of "real" is here. This "real" 's physicality has to be absolutely literal and involve material nature. What else can it be and do if Teilhard's Christology "takes more account of physics", the science of the domain of material nature, than does the Christology of his fellow-Catholics?

So, finally, it is not surprising when Christ's "gestation, his birth and gradual consummation" are said to be "*physically* the only definitive reality" of cosmic evolution, and when Christ is called both the "natural" and the "supernatural" centre of the universe: that is, one who is physically "cosmic" and supernaturally "personal."

To sum up: in several contexts Christ's being "physical" means his being the universal process of material nature in the basic truth of all its aspects: the evolutive form, the evolver drive, the evolutionary goal — though his being this does not prevent him from being also something "new" in nature and from being hyper-physical and hyper-cosmic.

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What is different from and in excess of material nature with its universal process and constitutes the basis of the hyper-physical, the hyper-cosmic, is best indicated by Teilhard apropos of the passage that evoked from de Solages and de Lubac their own comment and their reference to the comment by Mooney. The passage is: "If things are to find their coherence in Christ, we must ultimately admit that there is in the nature of Christ, besides the specifically individual elements of Man — and in virtue of God's choice — some universal physical reality, a certain cosmic extension of his body and soul."

A little after the passage Teilhard<sup>2</sup> tells us:

"We should note ... that there is nothing strange about this idea of a universal physical element in Christ.

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres Intimes*, p 391. "Tout mon effort va à maintenir le Christ aussi vaste et organique que l'Univers..." (8 août 1950)

<sup>2</sup> "In the Form of Christ", *The Prayer of the Universe*, pp. 20-1.

“Each and every one of us, if we care to observe it, is enveloped — is haloed — by an extension of his being as vast as the universe. We are conscious of only the core of ourselves. Nevertheless, the interplay of the monads would be unintelligible if an *aura* did not extend from one to another: something, that is, which is peculiar to each one of them and at the same time common to all.

“How, then, may we conceive Christ to be constituted as the cosmic centre of creation?

“Simply as a magnification, a transformation, realized in the humanity of Christ, of the aura that surrounds every human monad.

“Just as one sees in a living organism elements, originally indistinguishable from the others, suddenly emerge as *leaders* so that they are seen to be centres of attraction or points at which a formative activity is concentrated:

“So (on an incomparably larger scale) the man, the Son of Mary, was chosen so that his aura, instead of serving simply as the medium in which interaction with other men might be effected in a state of equality, might dominate them and draw them all into the network of its influence.

“Even before the Incarnation became a fact, the whole history of the universe (in virtue of a pre-action of the humanity of Christ, mysterious, but yet known to us through revelation) is the history of the progressive information of the universe by Christ.”

Mooney<sup>1</sup> cites the first half of this long statement (in a translation of his own) and precedes it with an earlier text which “describes the cosmic Body of Christ, ‘whose principal attributes are sketched by St. Paul’ as ‘the Point towards which [beings] converge or just as equally the Milieu in which they are immersed.’”<sup>2</sup> Then Mooney makes his comment: “Whatever meaning ‘physical’ is to have, therefore, it will have to be situated in the realm of the human and the personal. Teilhard is not going to ‘confuse naively the planes of reality and make of Christ a physical agent of *the same order* as organic life or the ether. That is what is blamable and ridiculous.’ This is simply to become a visionary, whose ‘real error ... is to confuse the different planes of the world and consequently to mix up their activities.’”<sup>3</sup>

What Mooney argues is well founded and, as he remarks just a little later, Christ’s “supremely physical influence over the total reality of the cosmos”, as Teilhard<sup>4</sup> puts it, is of a personal presence — and, we may add, it preserves in a sublimated form the “person” of each human monad which it gathers up. But, while Christ’s “personal presence” is not of “*the same order* as organic life or the ether” (or, as instead of “the ether” Teilhard would have said at a later date, “energy”), it is still “a physical agent” and its different order is within the same world, and the order which does not comprise it is still a lower pitch of the different order. This comes home to us from a passage in

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> Mooney’s Note: *L’Union créatrice*, 1917, in *Écrits dans le temps du guerre*.

<sup>3</sup> Mooney’s Note: Letter of May 25, 1923 to Father Auguste Valensin

<sup>4</sup> Mooney’s Note *Mon Univers*, p. 86.

*Intimate Letters*<sup>1</sup> where Teilhard notes his distinction from Maurice Blondel *vis-à-vis* the Universal Christ: "... between him and me there is perhaps only a difference of *tendency*, or at least of *accent* — he insisting especially on the transcendence of the Universal Christ, I on his 'physicity'. These attitudes are complementary." Teilhard's remark shows that the order which is not the same "as organic life or the ether" is at the same time transcendent and physical. The Universal Christ has both Blondellian "transcendence" and Teilhardian "physicity". Christ supernatural has yet a natural and therefore "physical" character: although his "physicity" cannot be equated to that of ordinary phenomena, he has nonetheless to be called "physical". If this were not so, Teilhard<sup>2</sup> could never have written in the same letter: "... Christ is the centre of the universe, *even in its zones called 'natural'.*"

We arrive at the identical conclusion when we see that Mooney's statement about Teilhard not confusing the planes of reality is based on a communication in *Intimate Letters*,<sup>3</sup> where Teilhard criticises to Valensin a thinker named Sédir. The conclusion is forced on us by what Teilhard<sup>4</sup> goes on to say: "But, as regards what is basic (the aspiration towards a total Christ and a religion mixed with the whole of life), he seems to me to carry more of the true religious sap, in his disorderly lucubrations, than Father Janvier, in all his dead prose, where one finds only the truths already a hundred times digested, without any living juice." The suggestion is that we must not separate Christ from the physical reality within which we commonly live. The danger to guard against is simply to think, as Sédir does, all physical reality to be of a single kind — the ordinary external one. This kind too, as Sédir basically believes, is open to Christ but it is not directly one with him. What is directly one with him is a subtler kind. Still, for all its subtlety, it cannot be denied the Sédirian description "physical."

And this point hits us in the eye most forcibly if we probe a certain phase in the long quotation we have made about "a universal physical element in Christ". The phrase comes almost at the end: "in virtue of a pre-action of the humanity of Christ." It gives the ground of Teilhard's assertion: "Even before the Incarnation became a fact, the whole history of the universe is the history of the progressive information of the universe by Christ." The ground is indeed, as Teilhard says, "mysterious", and can be accepted only on the authority of "revelation". Its mysteriousness has been stressed and its scriptural source recognised by Mooney too. The doctrine of the "pre-action of the humanity of Christ" is Teilhard's legacy from St. Paul, who does not confine the Incarnate Christ, the Divine in his form of "humanity", to one period of time but sets him in eternity: it is, surprisingly, the *Incarnate* Christ about whom

<sup>1</sup> p. 35: "... entre lui et moi il y a peut-être seulement une différence de *tendance*, ou au moins d'*accent*, — lui insistant surtout sur la Transcendance du Christ-Universel, moi sur sa 'physicité.' Ces attitudes doivent se compléter."

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, " le Christ est Centre de l'Univers, *même dans ses zones dites 'naturelles'.*"

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, "Mais, pour le fond (aspiration vers un Christ total et une religion mêlée à toute vie) il me paraît apporter plus de vraie sève religieuse, dans ses élucubrations désordonnées, que le P. Janvier, dans toute sa prose morte, où on ne trouve que des vérités déjà cent fois digérées, sans aucun suc vivant."

Paul says (Colossians I, 19-20): "all things were created by him, and for him;/And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Mooney<sup>1</sup> observes that here is "an aspect of St. Paul's thought which ... is receiving considerable attention today", an aspect where "apparently it is always the concrete, historical God-Man of whom he is thinking, never the Word independent of his humanity". Mooney adds: "How this is to be explained theologically is a question for which there is as yet no satisfactory answer." Nor does he tell us that whatever explanation Teilhard essays is satisfying. But the fact of Teilhard's Pauline attitude stands. And, corresponding to the pre-action of Christ's humanity, we have the world's pre-formation in that humanity, when Teilhard<sup>2</sup> writes: "St. Paul quite obviously has in mind the theandric [God-Man] Christ: it was in the Incarnate Christ that the universe was pre-formed." This signifies that, for Teilhard as for Paul, the universe of our experience exists in its fundamental form from all eternity in the very God-Man who took birth at one period of time in the universe of our experience. Now, if such is the case, there is implied for Christ as well as for the universe an eternal physicality over and above a physicality that is phenomenal and experiential. In ultimate terms, we should have to say, on the one hand, that the universe we know as physical has a transcendence of its own and, on the other, that the transcendent Christ is also physical in the same essential sense as the universe we know. No wonder that in the context of Teilhard's self-comparison with Blondel we are told of "transcendence" and "physicity" being complementary aspects of the Universal Christ. The Universal Christ's "physicity" is thus no more than a higher order of the same reality whose lower order is "organic life or the ether".

Hence the lower order cannot but be considered Christ himself in disguise. Here he is completely concealed so far as his proper person is concerned. Nevertheless he is fundamentally identical with it. So "the total Christ" of Teilhard has three pitches, so to speak: he is the cosmos constituting ordinary "nature", he is the immanent Omega who is extraordinary "nature" on a cosmic scale, he is Omega transcendent who is supernature in the sense of being already and ever existent rather than emerging through the aeons as the last step in the series of evolutionary syntheses. And the second pitch — natural physicality in an extraordinary mode — makes the basis for the hyper-physical, the hyper-cosmic, which is the third pitch.

Surely, these three pitches make a blend of Christianity and pantheism? Teilhard was always in two minds about the latter: a love-hate relationship with it is found throughout his writings. His Christ, unlike as in the pantheism he was afraid of, is more than the combination of *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*, in which God is wholly nature (*Deus sive natura*) and lacks transcendence. But, inasmuch as he is cosmic, he seems indissolubly related to the order of nature, the world of matter, and is in such relation to it as the World-Soul in pantheism, having the cosmos as its body. And this is precisely the true significance of certain assertions of Teilhard's.

Thus he<sup>3</sup> says: "If we are to effect the synthesis between faith in God and faith

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 170

<sup>2</sup> *Science and Christ*, pp 54-55.

<sup>3</sup> *Christianity and Evolution*, p. 180.

in the world, for which our generation is waiting, there is nothing better we can do than dogmatically bring out in the person of Christ the cosmic aspect and function which make him organically the prime mover and controller, the 'soul' of evolution."

Again, there is his pronouncement:<sup>1</sup> "We cannot pin down the point at which the hand of God is apparent. It acts upon the whole body of causes without making itself evident at any point: thus, externally, there is nothing so like the action of the Prime Mover as the action of a soul of the world...."

Once again, we have the words:<sup>2</sup> "When life in its lower stages is moving towards consciousness, when men are passionately striving for the complete freedom and unanimity of their spirit. when thinkers and poets thrill with excitement at the emergence of a 'world-soul', it is in fact Christ whom they are all seeking — Christ who still keeps hidden his personal and divine being, but nevertheless Christ himself, who must be the *first object* of desire as the keystone that holds together the effort of the universe — Christ who must effectively fulfil this natural function before he can reveal himself to us through the more intimate parts of his being, and, in those depths, undertake the supernatural work of our sanctification."

Then there is the brief but suggestive phrase<sup>3</sup> about the revealed God the Christian worships and the material universe whose dimensions are increasing immeasurably to the eyes of science: "How could either of these two majestic grandeurs dim the radiance of the other? The one is but the peak — the soul, we might say — of the other."

Or take the following two confessions of faith: "To this faith, Jesus, I hold ... : you are the cosmic being who envelops us and fulfils us in the perfection of his own unity. It is, in all truth, in this way, and for this that I love you above all things."<sup>4</sup> "Lord Jesus, ... I love you as a world, as *this* world which has captivated my heart; and it is you, I now realize, that my brother-men, even those who do not believe, sense and seek throughout the magic immensities of the cosmos."<sup>5</sup>

Lastly, we may consider:<sup>6</sup> "Judging from first appearances, Catholicism disappointed me by its narrow representations of the world and its failure to understand the part played by matter. Now I realize that, on the model of the incarnate God whom Christianity reveals to me, I can be saved only by becoming one with the universe. Thereby my deepest 'pantheist' aspirations are satisfied, guided, and reassured. The world around me becomes divine. And yet the flames do not consume me, nor do the floods dissolve me. For, unlike the false monisms which urge one through passivity into unconsciousness, the 'pan-Christism' which I am discovering places union at the term of an arduous process of differentiation. I shall become the Other only by being utterly myself. I shall attain spirit only by bringing out the complete range of the forces of matter. The total Christ is consummated and may be attained, only at the term of universal evolution. In him I have found what my being dreamed of: a personalized universe, whose domination personalizes me. And I hold this 'world-soul'

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, p. 26.      <sup>2</sup> *Prayer of the Universe*, p. 22

<sup>4</sup> *Prayer of the Universe*, p. 83.      <sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 104

<sup>3</sup> *Christianity and Evolution*, p. 75.

<sup>6</sup> *Christianity and Evolution*, pp. 128-9.

no longer simply as a fragile creation of my individual thoughts, but as the product of a long historical revelation, in which even those whose faith is weakest inevitably recognize one of the principal lines of human progress.”

We may ignore, in this last passage, all the prejudiced misunderstanding of pantheism that sees the pantheist as wanting to merge into unconsciousness instead of wanting, as he actually does, to realise the beatitude of a total union with his own supreme Truth, the Universal Self, the World-Soul whose individual phase or aspect he is. What is of moment to us is the affirmation of a certain pantheistic presence, a “pan-Christism” in which the Godhead is both cosmic and personal and which enables each human person to discover his own highest truth of personality, his own widest solidarity with the cosmos and a vision wherein the “world around... becomes divine”. A fusion of genuine pantheism with genuine personalism *sub specie Christi* is what we reach as the fundamental of fundamentals in the faith of Teilhard de Chardin through the analysis of the use to which he frequently puts the term “physical”.

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA

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# THE GOLDEN HEART OF THE KING

## A STORY FOR CHILDREN

### I

#### The Good King and Death

ONCE upon a time there was a small country of enchanting meadows, through which a glittering river flowed in many delightful curves. In the middle of that country stood a gentle hill covered with flowers, and on its top was a spacious palace. Naturally, in this palace there lived a good King, who offered all his love for the welfare of his little country and its industrious inhabitants. The gates of the palace were always kept open for those who were looking for advice and help, and the King himself listened attentively to each problem. He was not only an exceptionally good ruler, but also the true friend of every man in this beautiful land. His love and justice were so perfect that no written laws, no judges and no prisons were necessary — for there was not a single one among the populace who could imagine anything better than to follow simply the example of their King, and be good-hearted and honest.

One evening, after the last petitioner had left the palace with peace in his heart, the King remained for some time in the now silent hall, musing quietly. Suddenly he heard a noise which made him open his eyes. Standing before him was a tall, gaunt man with sad eyes.

“Oh! Who are you?” the King asked in astonishment, for he did not remember seeing anyone in the room before. “How could I overlook you — I thought everyone had left!”

The gaunt man did not reply, only his large eyes grew even sadder.

“You must surely be a stranger,” the king continued, “for none of my people have such sad eyes.”

“I also am a King,” the other now answered. “I am Death, and I rule the Country of the Dead.” Then he drew out from under his cloak a large hour-glass.

“Look, your time has run out. I have come to take you.”

“But that is no reason for you to look so sad,” the good King said compassionately. “After all, each of us has to leave this world.”

“That is true,” Death replied “but only a few are as good and selfless as you, and whenever I come to such rare beings I am very sad. And in your case it especially pains me, for you have forgotten to look for a successor.”

“You are right,” the King said thoughtfully. “Who will help the people of this country when I am no more here?”

For a time both of them were silent and perplexed. Then Death said, “To exceptionally good beings I can allow some extra time — but not more than three days. Take this time, and see what you can do. On the evening of the third day I will have

to take you into my domain." Then Death vanished and the King was again alone with his thoughts.

"It will be best if I myself travel through my country and search for a suitable successor," he thought and straight away made all the necessary preparations. So that no one might recognise him he disguised himself as a travelling merchant. He took a horse from the royal stables and left the palace that very night.

## II

### The Dream Fairy

Until dawn he looked tirelessly, but very cautiously, lest anyone should notice him, into the rooms of his people. Some sat laughing together, others sat seriously; some were alone, reading a book; others worked, even through the night; but most of them were peacefully and contentedly sleeping, dreaming towards a new happy day. The King carefully scrutinised all the many faces, but in none could he perceive that perfect selflessness and love which he expected from his successor. Surely they were all brave and honest people, but still somewhere in each one lurked a little devil who was mischievous, or envious, or moody, or given to gossip. So the night passed, and the whole of the following day. And as his kingdom was very small, by the evening he had visited all his subjects — but there was no future King among them.

For a moment he felt a little discouraged. Then he pulled himself together and again was confident.

"That was only the first day, and in the two that are left many things can still happen. Of course all will turn out well in the end." Thus he spoke to himself — and realised that he was terribly tired.

In the pale light of the moon he could see a small dilapidated hut standing on the edge of a dark wood. In front of it was a well with a bucket hanging down. There the King prepared himself a bed of grass and soon fell into a sweet slumber. During the night he dreamed of many good fairies who slipped out of the sleeping flowers and merrily danced around him. Their cheerfulness rejoiced him. He took them by their fragile silver hands and joined their dance. But suddenly he remembered his search, and all the cheerfulness dropped away. He sat on a stone and explained his sadness to the fairies who gathered around him. When he had finished, one fairy, with large luminous eyes, approached him, kissed him gently on the cheek and whispered in his ear, "Look into the well." And the King awoke.

"'Look into the well' — what does it mean?" he asked himself. But all his tiredness flew away as he remembered the well in front of the house. He hurried outside, for he had always believed in the advice of good fairies.

He leaned far out over the edge of the well and peered down into the shaft, but he could see nothing out of the ordinary. At that moment a cloud passed over the moon and suddenly there was pitch darkness ... and in this complete blackness the

King could see a soft golden shimmer at the bottom of the well. He quickly fastened one end of the well-rope to the post and slipped nimbly down it, deeper and deeper until he touched the well-floor. There he found a small niche in the wall, and in it a gleaming golden object. Carefully he took it out — it was one half of a golden heart.

“Where might the other half be?” wondered the astonished King. He examined the walls and the floor of the well, but he could not find the missing half. So, in the end, he wrapped the one half carefully in his cloak and climbed up the rope again to the surface. There he was examining the heart again, when he heard a sound behind him and turning around saw the good fairy of his dream standing before him.

“Go and see Murtti the Wizard,” she said smilingly, and vanished before he could ask her anything.

“Murtti the Wizard? — it becomes more and more mysterious! Where should I find him? I have ridden throughout my entire kingdom and visited all my subjects but there was no wizard among them. Where could he be?” Finding no answer, the good King lay down again on his bed of grass and slept peacefully until sunrise. Then he got up, still puzzled what to do until he saw an old woman gathering sticks on the edge of the forest.

“Maybe she can help me,” thought the King, and he walked over to her.

“A good morning, dear lady,” the King said. “Do you know where I could find Murtti the Wizard?”

“Hmnn,” the old woman mumbled, and snapped a twig in two. “It is a long time since he went away from here and nobody has seen him since.”

“But perhaps you might know which way he went?”

“Hmnn,” again she snapped a stick, “Yes ... yes, I remember .... Do you see that small path over there which leads into the wood? That’s where he disappeared.”

“Many thanks, dear lady! Then I will search in the wood.”

“But be on your guard, good man,” she warned. “It is very dark and ghostly, and no one has ever had the courage to cross that wood.”

But the old woman’s warning could not deter the King. He mounted his horse and followed the path into the wood. The birds were singing their morning songs and the beams of the rising sun played on the leaves of the trees.

### III

#### Murtti the Wizard

“But there’s nothing ghostly around here,” thought the King. After some time, however, the wood became thicker; the trees grew closer together and their branches intertwined so that hardly any light could penetrate. As he went on he realised suddenly that for some time he had heard no sound of any bird. It was silent and gloomy. The only sound he could hear was the breathing of his horse. Finally the wood became so thick and dark that the King had to dismount in order to follow the path

through the thickets. He paid no attention to the strange shadows which seemed to lurk behind each tree. Determined, he began to cut his way through the undergrowth. And then — it grew brighter again and at last he came out of the wood into a beautiful meadow full of small yellow flowers. In the distance he could see a white house with a red-tiled roof and a herb-garden before the door. The King mounted his horse and trotted expectantly towards the house.

When he arrived there he knocked on the door, but no answer came. Only the busy humming of bees was in the air. The King knocked once more, and when again there was no reply he pushed open the door and walked in. He found himself in a large room. In it there was a round white table with two chairs and, at the far end, an old stove. Before the stove stood a man with fiery red hair who wore a blue cloak on which were painted many coloured stars. He was solemnly stirring in a cooking-pot.

The King cleared his throat and the man turned around. His face was a perfect circle and friendly laughing eyes shone behind his outsize spectacles.

For a moment he scrutinised the King and then grinned from ear to ear.

“Hello, Mr. King — there you are! Did you bring the golden heart with you?”

Our good King was amazed.

“From where do you know me? and how do you know.... Unless you are perhaps Murtti the Wizard?”

“Right, right! I am he!” the answer came.

“Good,” said the King happily. “As you obviously know this story much better than I do, maybe you can help.”

“Of course, of course!” Murtti replied enthusiastically. “That is why the fairy has sent you here. But first we’ll take a good helping of soup, for I see that you are hungry.”

That was fine for the King and when they sat down at the table Murtti the Wizard began his tale.

“Many years ago, when you had just come to the throne, and when I was still living on the other side of the forest, I once looked into my crystal ball to see the future. There I could see everything — your kindness and love for this beautiful country and its people, and your ability to rule. But I saw too that in your complete self-abnegation you would forget to prepare a successor.”

There the King interrupted him.

“Why then didn’t you come to my palace to remind me in time?”

“It is a law for good wizards not to tell the future of others until it has become the past,” Murtti explained. “But naturally I was thinking how, in spite of this, I could help you — and finally I found a solution. The time-span of your passage on earth was limited; but what always helped the land and the people were your love and strength, and they are immortal. Therefore, with my magic, I made the golden heart, which I wanted to give to you on your last day. For in it your love should live until a suitable successor would come to house its power in his own heart. Unfortu-

nately not everything went so smoothly. My brother is an exceptionally wicked magician of the underworld and when he heard of the golden heart he wanted to steal it. For this reason I had to hide in this wood, and to be entirely sure I divided the heart in two parts and put one half in the well, together with a spell so that you alone could take it out. The other half is with me.”

After Murtti had ended his tale both of them silently supped their soup until it was all gone. Then the Wizard stood up.

“Come, dear King, now we will melt the two halves together again.”

Murtti the Wizard took his half of the heart from a casket and placed it on the table. The King unwrapped his half and put it next to the Wizard’s. Murtti murmured a spell and soon there was a bright singing in the air and little stars began jumping over the split. Suddenly it became very bright, there was a gentle ‘ping’ and the heart was once more whole.

“Well, that’s it, dear King,” the Wizard said. “Take the golden heart and start immediately on your way back to the palace. For the most difficult part you still have before you. My brother will surely come to know soon that the heart is again one and he will lie in ambush to steal it from you. But he can do nothing as long as you have no fear. If you meet him, just laugh at him. That he cannot stand and he will vanish. But be on your guard! He can take many shapes. Only in your palace is the heart safe from him.” And with these words, Murtti gave the King the heart and pushed him out of the door.

“Thanks, thanks, dear Wizard — and farewell !”

The King quickly mounted his horse and galloped away. The sun was already setting. The second day came to its end.

The King again entered the wood, which this time was very easy to cross. All the undergrowth and roots, all the entwined branches seemed to give way before him. The King silently thanked again the good Wizard who helped him in this way to reach his palace quickly.

#### IV

### The Wicked Magician

He had nearly crossed the wood, when suddenly a heavy fog appeared between the trees and surrounded him so that he could no longer see his way. The King stopped, but he could not make out anything and the fog became always thicker and heavier. His breathing too became heavier and slower — he could hardly keep his eyes open. The fog became ever more depressing. Then his horse collapsed. The King was near to losing consciousness when he remembered Murtti’s warning. With his last strength the good King tried to laugh — but it didn’t work. His throat was constricted, but again he tried, again and again. The fog was almost about to crush

him, when finally he succeeded. A bright laugh leaped out of his breast and at the same instant the fog was blown away.

"That was close," the King thought as he recovered. Gradually his strength returned; his horse too stood up and soon they were on their way again. The first stars were just appearing in the night sky as the King came out of the wood.

He reined in his horse while he thought which way would be the shortest road to his palace. At that moment he heard a dumb growling in the earth which became gradually louder.

"That sounds like the Wicked Magician," the King thought and he remained still, quietly alert. The rumbling became louder and louder until it seemed as if Hell itself would break out of the ground. The earth was shaking and quaking — it suddenly tore apart and a huge, terrifying wall of flame shot skyward from the abyss. The horse reared in terror, but this time our King was prepared. Immediately he laughed forcefully, and immediately the wicked spell crumbled down.

The whole night now he rode on his brave steed and allowed himself almost no rest. He was constantly on the watch against new trickery, but nothing happened. He could follow his way unhindered.

"My laugh seems to have scared the Wicked Magician quite a bit," the good King said to himself.

Thus came the morning of the third day. In the light of the rising sun he could already see his palace, friendly and sparkling on the top of the flowery hill. After some hours he arrived at the foot of the hill. He was just about to hurry up the path when he heard a loud sigh. The good King hesitated and looked around, but at first he could see nobody. Again he heard the sigh, and now he discovered, lying in the ditch, an old, dusty beggar with a mournful expression on his face.

"Oh, good man," the beggar moaned, "help me. I am so poor and sick."

Compassionately, the King dismounted.

"For so many years now I have starved," the beggar whimpered. "I am so sick and poor and hungry."

The King was wondering what he could give this poor fellow, when suddenly he remembered something.

"For many years, you say, you have been hungry?"

"Yes, oh, yes, uncounted years — and all my sisters and brothers are also very miserable. Help, Oh, help, kind sir."

"And all your sisters and brothers are miserable too?" questioned the king, and now clearly understood who this beggar was — no other than the Wicked Magician, who now in a human form was trying to dupe him.

"For a long time now, in my entire country there have been no beggars and no starving paupers. You are a liar. I know who you really are — the evil brother of the good Wizard Murtti. You only want to steal the golden heart!"

Then the old man sprang up with dangerously burning eyes and growled between clenched teeth.

“This time you won’t escape!”

At the same moment he became a huge tiger. Snarling fiercely he stood an instant before the King. Then he sprang with a blood-curdling scream. But the King only laughed, and in mid-air the beast vanished.

“Now, quickly back home,” the King said, jumping on the back of his horse. He galloped up the hill and before the Wicked Magician could attack again he was in his palace, in safety.

## V

### The Golden Heart of the King

He made his brave comrade comfortable in the stable and then for the last time passed through his palace. But he was not at all sad, for he had the golden heart for his people. He came at last into the throne-room where King Death was already eagerly awaiting him.

“Have you been successful?” Death questioned him.

The good King told him the whole story and when he had ended he placed the golden heart on the throne.

“Yes, we can go now,” he said. “Love and Goodness have been the rulers of this country, and they will remain so, for they are immortal. Even though I am gone, my golden heart is here and whoever needs help can take from its treasure, as always.”

Heaven opened above them and Death led the good King into his domain of undying souls.

Yes, it was as the King had said. Whosoever needed help approached the golden heart of the King and when he saw or touched it he felt how the good protecting love flowed into his heart and gave him comfort and strength until he was again full of hope. And with this might in the heart, what need can there be, what question then remains without an answer?

THE END

MICHEL KLOSTERMANN

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# THE SECRET SOURCE OF THE GANGES

## A QUEST IN A STRANGE LAND

*(Continued from the issue of March 1975)*

*(Transcreated by Gurudas Banerjee from the last chapter of Promode Kumar Chatterjee's book, Gangotri, Jamunotri O Gomukh, first published in April 1950)*

### 4

WE foot-paced to the portal, then turning to the right we took the road to the temple. To describe the grandeur and wealth of this avenue is impossible for me. I would only say that in places I observed something like a long rectangular altar and around it ten or twelve seats. The avenue measured about a mile terminating on the temple fringe. The temple looked like the 'Stupa' at Sanchi, only a little taller and surmounted with seven gold jars arranged big to small; from the smallest shot up a trident. So I took it for a Shiva-temple.

From the road a stairway of about thirty steps — each a foot high — led to the temple. The lady first showed me everything that was there to see on the ground floor: huge caves, all flooded with light. In one there were vessels of innumerable types, another was filled with various commodities, still another was full of weapons, and one was a cuisine. Ten or twelve cooks, like Bhima in stature, seemed lost in their work. The aroma of incense, sandalwood and saffron mingled to create a delightful atmosphere there. It took about one and a half hours to see around. Such a vast extension I had never come across before in any religious edifice. We climbed upstairs. There were not many people there.

We first came upon a perfectly square verandah, each side of which was nearly 60 yards. From the verandah the temple door was roughly 80 yards, in between there was a theatre; the architecture was simple, what was remarkable were the paintings on the walls. This theatre was something grand. The temple itself was of great dimensions. Cylindrical in form with a dome pointing upwards; its interior diameter was not less than 40 yards. The entrance had, oddly half a door only. The interior of the temple was pleasantly illuminated by a green light which did not streak in from outside through some window or ventilator, because from the floor right up to the apex of the cupola there was not the smallest hole. There had to be something inside, by the light of which everything appeared wonderfully bright. Before me I saw a cubic altar around ten feet high, access to it being given by a flight of six steps. On the top of this altar, exactly in the middle, there was an enchanting throne of lustrous gold bedecked with rare gems. Above this was a baldachin on four golden columns. Over all these was a large bejewelled umbrella held by a silver chain hooked to the pericarp of a

hundred-petalled lotus painted round the apex of the cupola.

We climbed up the six steps and stood before the throne. I had been, to say the least, thrilled. But the greatest wonder was yet to come. On the top of the throne, in the centre, I observed a square *ādhār* or receptacle, each side being two feet long, overlaid with a lustrous yellow cloth; in its centre was something so dazzling that at first I could not make out anything of it at all. When my vision cleared, I distinguished a diamond statue of Buddha, no larger than a thumb, and behind it a tree — about eight inches high — made of emerald. The hall looked flooded by the refulgence of these.

I nearly fell unconscious with extraordinary amazement and joy; for some time I could not make out where I was and what I was seeing. By the combined sparks of that diamond statue of Buddha in meditation, and the emerald tree, the sanctum sanctorum was transmuted into paradise. Words cannot convey any idea of their power and influence. As I was wonder-struck I was not ready to believe that these rarities were man-made. My adorable hostess had been watching me amusedly from the start. Now when I glanced at her she nodded encouragingly. I queried in Hindi, “What are these? How did they come here?”

This is what I gathered from her explanation: “That emerald tree, nobody knows its age, but it is certain that no human hand has shaped it; in the mine where in the Himalayas it was found, it was exactly in this form. It was first in the possession of the king of Ratal. The great grandfather of Vajrasena overthrew him in a battle and winning his kingdom he brought this along with other precious stones. The power of this emerald tree is unlimited. We consider it Heaven-sent. With its blessings he conquered this land and founded this temple. He expanded the boundaries of his capital keeping this temple in the centre. Then he proclaimed that thenceforth this kingdom would be called Marakata Rajya (The Emerald Kingdom), and since then this land is called that way, though this was originally Karad Rajya. Someone afterwards brought here that diamond statue from Kimpurush Varsha (Tibet); from him the then Gandharva Yuvaraj Kanakavajra received it for two hundred horses and a certain measure of gold dust and stowed it in his jewel-house. Seeing it, the priest Balakashyap suggested that that was not the right place for keeping a jewel of so rare a class: this temple would be the appropriate place. So the raja then brought it here and placed it under the emerald tree. As long as these two jewels were apart neither had such lustre; but as soon as they were joined together, an astounding thing happened; immediately this dazzling light that you see came out to make the temple bright, and since then no lamps are kept here.” At the end of this intriguing piece of history, my hostess pulled me still closer to the throne and whispered, “See, take a good look!”

The emerald tree was about eight inches high and in breadth a little more than that. From the roots five branches went upwards and faded away among thick foliage. The upper part of the tree spread like an umbrella. What I found most fascinating were the tiny leaflets appearing so natural; the whole tree looked quite natural with clear characteristics of a real, huge tree. Most engaging were the tiny little

rubies sticking naturally to the branches. Fashioned by Nature, this tree was simply unique.

## 5

I was neither hungry nor thirsty, nor even tired; yet Devi — as I would call my hostess — said it was late afternoon. The feeling of a certain strength and vitality filled me, as if I were an inhabitant of a deathless world. I think Devi said — “In the evening we shall come here again, now we have to go.” Outside I now counted many people going into or coming out of the temple-theatre. In the middle of the stage, on a big satranji, six nymphean figures were sitting; various musical instruments were arranged there; a few young men, of exquisite grace, were looking at them turning them round in their hands. One of the stringed instruments had the shape of a boat. Its sound was clear and loud.

I was gazing at the murals on the outer walls of the theatre — suddenly my eyes fell on a person whose complexion was whitish blue, and he had a very shining body. I witnessed this in broad daylight. I have been seeing here folk with very shining bodies and of various hues; whatever be the hue of a person, there seemed to be a transparency about it — whatever the colour on the surface, the light was from within. This man was dressed out gaudily with gold ornaments and gems. A decorated leather fillet concealed his wide chest; from his left shoulder hung a *chaddar* down to the waist. He gripped a stick in his right hand. His flashing eyes gleamed almost seven feet above the ground. Had I run into such a prodigy elsewhere, it would have made me reel back! This was the giant who was entering the theatre from the verandah side. Seeing him my hostess pronounced with undisguised enthusiasm, “Devaraj”!

“The god Indra?” I gasped open-mouthed.

“No, no!” she laughed boyishly. “The secretary of the temple.”

By then Devaraj, sighting my hostess, came hurrying to her. She greeted him with a smile. In response he lifted her with his huge arms to cuddle her; then giving her two kisses on her two cheeks he put her down. At last noting me he eyed her questioningly.

With a flow of tenderness she told him from where I had hailed, and from what I could grasp I got an idea of what these people thought of me: “Himachal ... dakshina... Bharatavarshya ... Aryan”, that is, an Indian, an Aryan from the south of the Himalayas.

I returned from the temple pulsating with a wonderful knowledge. It was borne in upon my mind that, situated in a snowland in the northernmost front of India, this was a veritable playground of the gods! Being of the artistic temperament and a lover of beautiful Nature, I was immensely pleased with this land. The Devas who had fashioned it must surely have been drunk with beauty. Majestic, free of tension, Marakata Rajya becomes my Canaan, my land of promise. In many ways the people

of this kingdom match the land: friendly, open, graceful, unplagued by any of the problems that harass the rest of the world. If material progress or modernism brings smog, slums, water-fouling or air-pollution, rubbish-strewn streets, overcrowded-roads, and sky-hiding wind-blocking buildings, the subjects of this kingdom might just as soon do without it. The variety that this valley presents to the visitor is bewildering. It impressed me right from the beginning.

*(To be continued)*

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## LAURA DE SADE\*

THE archetypal Rose your singer sought  
 Through all the blossoming of his thought  
 He found upon your visionary mouth —  
 A moulded fire capturing the spirit's cry,  
 A beacon to Petrarchan poesy,  
 A living sonnet of the sunward South,  
 Whose octave of one large lip's dreamy glow  
 Trembled, with grave and delicate lines, apart  
 From the intense sestet of joy below  
 To breathe the secret of Love's heaven-rooted heart.

AMAL KIRAN

\* The beloved of the Italian poet Petrarch (1304-74), whom he first saw on Good Friday 1327 but is said to have briefly met in the month of May the same year. Through most of his life he kept writing and rearranging his verses for her, which are in varied forms, the majority being the Sonnets whose mood, imagery, rhyme-scheme and clear-cut yet harmonious division into opening eight lines (octave or octet) and closing six (sestet) "dominated literary circles for centuries and the names of Petrarch and Laura became symbols of passionate love constrained by spirituality". His poetry is marked by an emotion at once sensuous and idealistic, elaborated with technical perfection and a subtlety of phrase which sometimes presses even puns and "conceits" into striking service

In the light of this information it may be of interest to note Sri Aurobindo's comment on the above poem which was written in May 1937: "It is a very fine caprice beautifully worked out. The image of the octet and sestet is evidently a conceit but where everything else is so successful this seems to justify itself also."

*A prodigal of her rich divinity,  
Her self and all she was she had lent to men,  
Hoping her greater being to implant  
That heaven might native grow on mortal soil.*

SRI AUROBINDO

## **SRI AUROBINDO STUDY SEMINAR**

**June 2 to 6, 1975 (Five Days)**

**Tapogiri, Ramgarh Talla, Dt. Naini Tal, U.P**  
**Subject: The Mother and Her Varied Manifestations**

THE Mother is no more and yet ever so much with us and we find it so rewarding, so satisfying, so thrilling to contemplate Her, to think of Her, to talk about Her, in fact to seek a contact with Her in whatever way we might do it.

Now we look forward to Her Birth Centenary too which comes on 21st February 1978. That will indeed be a splendid occasion and we must prepare ourselves heartily to have the full joy of it.

The Mother's personality was a great personality indeed: profound, varied and inconceivably high. She was a mighty inspirer of high and noble things, a wonderful guide and Guru, a comforter and a helper, an educationist and administrator and the creator of a township for the future, a new society and a new man.

At our next Seminar, we shall seek to know the Mother deeply and widely, Her diverse aspects and manifold achievements and Her continuing activity and concern for man and his destiny.

We shall avail ourselves of the following papers in this connection:

1. The Mother and Her Varied Manifestation (A Compilation from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother).
2. "A Flaming Warrior from the Eternal Peaks"  
(A Compilation from *Savitri*, Sri Aurobindo's epic poem).
3. What is the Specific Issue of our Spiritual Endeavour at Present? —  
by Indra Sen.
4. A lot of other material to read and to see concerning the Mother (in particular, Her correspondence in the original, Her sketches, etc., etc.)

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The bus for Ramgarh Talla starts from Haldwani at about 9 00 a.m. and from Kathgodam at 9.15 a.m., (reaching there at 12.30 p.m.). Another is available from Bhowali, leaving at 5.00 p.m. and from Ramgarh Malla at 5.30 p.m. (reaching there at 6.30 p.m.). For Bhowali and Ramgarh Malla, there are many buses during the day

from Haldwani and Kathgodam. Direct buses are now running between Delhi and Nainital, Delhi and Ranikhet, Hardwar and Nainital and possibly between some other places and Nainital too. One can come by any of these and take the Ramgarh Talla bus from Haldwani or Bhowali or Ramgarh Malla according to circumstances. The Ashram is about two furlongs from Ramgarh Talla bus terminus.

A second through bus for Ramgarh Talla is also likely to be available, which would leave Haldwani at about 3.00 p.m.

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| 1. Indra Sen<br>Sri Aurobindo Ashram<br>Pondicherry 605002                       | 2. Arjun Dev<br>Mountain Paradise<br>Ramgarh (Naini Tal) 263158    |
| 3. Sunil Kumar Saxena<br>Sri Aurobindo Yoga Mandir<br>Jwalapur (Hardwar), 263158 | 4. Qurban Hussain<br>Madhuban, Ramgarh Talla<br>(Naini Tal) 263158 |
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## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**Modern and Otherwise** by *Sisir Kumar Ghose*. D. K. Publishing House, Delhi, 1974, 321 pages with Index of some 1000 references.

To criticize the critic or to review the reviewer—and Dr. Ghose is both critic and reviewer in this book — can be a tricky business, for several reasons. First, it usually presupposes a familiarity with the subject matter equal to or greater than that of the author in question, and with other points of view as well, so that a fair evaluation can be made and verified with substantial proofs. Then there is the necessity of a common critical language through which to communicate the appreciation or depreciation thus arrived at for the benefit of the reading public. I doubt that many of us possess either of these pre-requisites. If we were in England where the reviewer's trade has become not only a craft but an industry, as any reader of *TLS* will know, perhaps the task would be easier. Here we are in an extremely different situation and we have not only the difficult responsibility of thinking objectively about the writing of an objective thinker, but we have at the same time to do our best to encourage objective thinking as such — double the load. We have to promote (or demote) both the book and the faculty that must be employed to appreciate it. In this case both the book and the faculty are important and useful for a better understanding of ourselves and others, though both will probably be underrated and underdeveloped by many of us, even in those institutions which have been created to further such achievements.

Dr. Ghose has called our attention to this problem in one particularly lucid and penetrating article that appears in this collection — and this is a collection of assorted pieces that have appeared in print elsewhere, rather than a systematic work, although most of the pieces sit as nicely together as if they had been planned that way and are as refreshing as they were when we saw them in the appropriate journals. As Dr. Ghose states the problem in the article titled "Problems of English in India":

A word or two about critical journals in English. There aren't many. Some, perhaps most, Indian universities publish Bulletins or Annuals with a varying fare. But usually these have but a local habitation and name and not even the affiliated colleges take any notice. The subscribers' list of the university journals should be revealing. And yet some of those contain interesting, even outstanding contributions which perish not because these have been published but because these have failed to fertilize dialogue. The fault may not be the writer's.

The sad fact is, we ourselves do not care what our colleagues are doing by way of thinking and writing. We seem to have insufficient intellectual regard for the community (perhaps not without reason). In such an eroded atmosphere, where we are only too ready to pick on others, dialogue has no chance. In spite of the history of more than a hundred years we are still not a community.

This is a telling pronouncement which could, I think, be applied not only to the literary community but to every field of thought and activity current today and it reveals the general tone of selfishness, or apathy, or conservatism, or egoistic attachment that seems to run through the whole mental fibre of the nation. And still, this is only the symptom of a more serious fixation and a deeper need, as Dr. Ghose is quick to point out in his next paragraph:

There are deeper issues, another dimension to the problem of English in India, it could as well be an experiment in self-discovery.

The elaboration of this point is remarkable for its sincerity, its boldness, its clarity and its polish, a fit offering to the one to whom the book is dedicated and whose luminous influence can be felt throughout its pages. I am tempted to quote the passage at some length so that the *rasa* of this very Indian appeal with all its characteristic depth and candor will not be missed.

First, at the risk of being branded a heretic, what know they of literature — especially 'phoren' — who only literature know? Art and literature, like myth and ritual from which they derive, are always part of a wider context, of man's growing awareness, the ontological refinements of being. Secondly, what you are determines what you can and shall be. As Krishna said, it is better to die following one's own nature than to follow an alien rule. This should teach our neo-literates, in love with the latest lost cause, the lesson they are loath to learn: the need for a radical self-examination....What we say is that, placed as he is, the Indian teacher of English needs, along with his own discipline, a sense of life, a sense of values and the past which may not be wholly past. It cannot be helped if this calls for an understanding in depth of the foundations of our culture. It is not asking for too much and would, in any case, be obligatory anywhere else. Literary studies are not for the uncultured, ignorant armies brandishing withered branches.... However cosmopolite, you cannot disown your environment. Or, maybe, you can, at your peril. By trying to do so, by isolating himself from the larger life of the people, the regional literatures as well as the classics, by his extra-territorial loyalties, the Indian teacher of English has hurt himself. His total irrelevance in the cultural context is its most telling comment. The least he can do is to look sharp, admit a wide and natural relationship, realize the aesthetic possibilities of the life and thought around him, including that of the tribals. If this involves a little labour, he should not mind the price for learning. Responsible living is a harvest of tragedy, demands its pound of flesh. After all, his *Angst* cannot be greater than the Buddha's.

Dr. Ghose knows his subject matter and his authors and he has the language with which to judge them. He is full of entertaining quips, cutting criticisms, stimulating opinioans, astute observations, illuminating phrases and an inexhaustible store of substantial references, all of which I am afraid may at times seem rather obscure to the

uninitiated. In his remarks on "The Relevance of Wordsworth" for example:

The case of Wordsworth seems to me like a rescue operation... ..just as *The Prelude* is the first modern poem, so Wordsworth, even more than Blake, or Rilke, is the first modern poet, whose subject matter is poetry, that is, imagination itself... out of the ruins of an associationist psychology, the disasters of war and disillusionment, through landscapes of memory ('Every man is a memory to himself') he was able to ransom something rich and strange, the language of maturity, the 'egoless I'... When the poets of today show as much ingenuity and insight that would be a good day... He did not live on a diet of distress, he had sought and found other nourishment within.

...as Leavis has rightly pointed out, he had, if not a philosophy, a wisdom to communicate. Few stand out, said Landor, on like elevation. And Landor was not easy to please.

We may not be convinced by his argument and we may not agree with his hypothesis but then it is not by argument that Dr. Ghose hopes to convince and it is not so much as a critic of Wordsworth that he speaks as it is as commentator and prophet of the modern scene. And he makes his position clear. By a series of brilliant impressions that throw into relief what he believes to be of crucial significance, we may be helped to see deeper and wider the reality of our world and, if so, I think that he would be satisfied.

Without our identity we are lost. As refugees from reality, we have become total aliens to this higher self which has been the language of every culture except our own. When Wordsworth speaks of

Oft in these moments such a holy calm  
Would overspread my soul, that bodily eyes  
Were utterly forgotten, and what I saw  
Appeared like something in myself, a dream,  
A prospect of the mind.

he is not talking of the 'small I' but the 'big I', the Self one in all.

It is obvious that Dr. Ghose prefers the *Otherwise* to the *Modern*, as he shows us repeatedly in these essays. In the first one, "The Malady of the Modern", he writes:

Modern is not They but We. At the moment the family fortune is a little low. The lights are dim and may go out any moment.

But how or why did we get into such a pass? Why and how has power outstripped control, outstripped charity? Knowledge wisdom? Technique transcendence? Why do we live like this, 'living towards death'?

If we are to recover from bestiality, boredom and anomie, at least two of our modern myths have to be slain or rendered powerless: the idea of automatic

progress and the idea of reason as the sole arbiter of human destiny.

Looking back it is easy to see that ever since its beginning modern society has been the victim of a simple but colossal intellectual error. And what is that? The human subdued by the non-human, an erroneous metaphysical notion or an arbitrary definition of the real has dominated man for centuries. To reverse the process we have to go within and seek deeper sources of strength and integration, if there are any left.

To reject the past and behave like demolition experts is not enough.

The quest of the authentic may be an atonement for the errors and excesses of the modern malaise. In a world where men have forgotten themselves, else have identified themselves with the lowest, the recovery of self and a revision of goals is the road to recovery. To progress again man must remake himself and his environment. And he cannot do so without much suffering, borne willingly.

That we have indeed come to such a pass is borne out in the next essay, "The Image of Man Today: The Literary Evidence", in which Dr. Ghose culls from a wintry harvest of the century's best *avant-garde* writing the modern image of man, which comes to Nothing, an analogy of despair.

But who is a nihilist? He is, according to Nietzsche, a person 'who says of the world as it is, that it *ought* not to exist, and of the world as it ought to be that it does not exist'. 'We are all worms'.

That is the picture that we get scanning such authors as Beckett, Sartre, Gide, Jaspers, Hesse, Tillich, Lawrence and Colin Wilson. In the essays that follow, on Eliot, Pound, Yeats, Whitman and of course the author's favourites, Rabindranath, Huxley and Sri Aurobindo, the latter three of which we hear too little in this collection, it becomes increasingly clear that Dr. Ghose has not read aimlessly, nor just in order to keep the booksellers in business and to keep up his image in the classroom. He has kept an eye on what was happening around him, as well as on what appeared to be at the tip of the nose. And in doing so he seems to have liberated both his creative intelligence and his expressive faculty to the extent that both his reading and his writing have acquired a purpose and a force of consciousness that are admirable. We might say that he has lived up to the image and fulfilled the dream of many a professor and student who take the intellectual path to salvation but who perhaps are less fortunate in their choice of a guide than he has been. But can we say that this is the goal towards which we aspire, or could he? Hasn't he been snared in his own trap, a lover of the latest lost cause standing humbly or proudly beside the God of Humanity at the ruined gates of the temple of the tribe? Is this the new word, the new voice, the new vision that we seek? Or is it not only a timely warning and a pointer along the way, perhaps a promise of things to come?

ROD