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[The five poems on pp. 25-27 are taken from *Poems* by Arjava (J. A. Chadwick)]

The Mother in 1919

The Darshan Hall

Savitri

BOOK V

THE BOOK OF LOVE

CANTO I

THE DESTINED MEETING-PLACE

BUT now the destined spot and hour were close;
Unknowing she had neared her nameless goal.
For though a dress of blind and devious chance
Is laid upon the work of all-wise Fate,
Our acts interpret an omniscient Force
That dwells in the compelling stuff of things,
And nothing happens in the cosmic play
But at its time and in its foreseen place.
To a space she came of soft and delicate air
That seemed a sanctuary of youth and joy,
A highland world of free and green delight
Where spring and summer lay together and strove
In indolent and amicable debate,
Inarmed, disputing with laughter who should rule.
There expectation beat wide sudden wings,
As if a soul had looked out from earth's face
And all that was in her felt a coming change
And forgetting obvious joys and common dreams,
Obedient to Time's call and the spirit's fate,
Were lifted to a beauty calm and pure
That lived under the eyes of Eternity.
A crowd of mountainous heads assailed the sky
Pushing towards rival shoulders nearer heaven,
The armoured leaders of an iron line;

Earth prostrate lay beneath their feet of stone.
Below there crouched a dream of emerald woods
And gleaming borders solitary as sleep:
Pale waters ran like glimmering threads of pearl.
A sigh was straying among happy leaves;
Cool-perfumed with slow pleasure-burdened feet
Faint stumbling breezes faltered among flowers.
The white crane stood, a vivid motionless streak,
Peacock and parrot jewelled soil and tree,
The dove's soft moan enriched the enamoured air
And fire-winged wild-drakes swam in silvery pools.
Earth couched alone with her great lover Heaven,
Uncovered to her consort's purple eye.
In her luxurious ecstasy of joy
She squandered the love-music of her notes,
Wasted the passionate pattern of her blooms
And festival riot of her scents and hues.
A cry and leap and hurry were around,
The stealthy footfalls of her chasing things,
The shaggy emerald of her centaur mane,
The gold and sapphire of her warmth and blaze.
Magician of her rapt felicities,
Blithe, sensuous-hearted, careless and divine,
Life ran or hid in her delightful rooms;
Behind all brooded Nature's grandiose calm.
Primeval peace was there and in its bosom
Held undisturbed the strife of bird and beast.
Man, the deep-browed artificer, had not come
To lay his hand on happy inconscient things,
Thought was not there nor the measurer, strong-eyed toil,
Life had not learned its discord with its aim.
The mighty Mother lay outstretched at ease.
All was in line with her first satisfied plan;
Moved by a universal will of joy
The trees bloomed in their green felicity
And the wild children brooded not on pain.
At the end reclined a stern and giant tract

Of tangled depths and solemn questioning hills
And peaks like a bare austerity of the soul,
Armoured, remote and desolately grand
Like the thought-screened infinities that lie
Behind the rapt smile of the Almighty's dance.
A matted forest-head invaded heaven
As if a blue-throated ascetic peered
From the stone fastness of his mountain cell
Regarding the brief gladness of the days;
His vast extended spirit couched behind.
A mighty murmur of immense retreat
Besieged the ear, a sad and limitless call
As of a soul retiring from the world.
This was the scene which the ambiguous Mother
Had chosen for her brief felicitous hour;
Here in this solitude far from the world
Her part she began in the world's joy and strife.
Here were disclosed to her the mystic courts,
The lurking doors of beauty and surprise,
The wings that murmur in the golden house,
The temple of sweetness and the fiery aisle.
A stranger on the sorrowful roads of Time,
Immortal under the yoke of death and fate,
A sacrificant of the bliss and pain of the spheres,
Love in the wilderness met Savitri.

END OF CANTO ONE

CANTO II

SATYAVAN

ALL she remembered on this day of Fate,
The road that hazarded not the solemn depths
But turned away to flee to human homes,
The wilderness with its mighty monotone,
The morning like a lustrous seer above,
The passion of the summits lost in heaven,
The titan murmur of the endless woods.
As if a wicket gate to joy were there
Ringed in with voiceless hint and magic sign,
Upon the margin of an unknown world
Reclined the curve of a sun-held recess;
Groves with strange flowers like eyes of gazing nymphs
Peered from their secrecy into open space,
Boughs whispering to a constancy of light
Sheltered a dim and screened felicity,
And slowly a supine inconstant breeze
Ran like a fleeting sigh of happiness
Over slumberous grasses pranked with green and gold.
Hidden in the forest's bosom of loneliness
Amid the leaves the inmate voices called,
Sweet like desires enamoured and unseen,
Cry answering to low insistent cry.
Behind slept emerald dumb remotenesses,
Haunt of a Nature passionate, veiled, denied
To all but her own vision lost and wild.
Earth in this beautiful refuge free from cares
Murmured to the soul a song of strength and peace.
Only one sign was there of a human tread:
A single path, shot thin and arrowlike
Into this bosom of vast and secret life,

Pierced its enormous dream of solitude.
Here first she met on the uncertain earth
The one for whom her heart had come so far.
As might a soul on Nature's background limned
Stand out for a moment in a house of dream
Created by the ardent breath of life,
So he appeared against the forest verge
Inset twixt green relief and golden ray.
As if a weapon of the living Light,
Erect and lofty like a spear of God
His figure led the splendour of the morn.
Noble and clear as the broad peaceful heavens
A tablet of young wisdom was his brow,
Freedom's imperious beauty curved his limbs,
The joy of life was on his open face.
His look was a wide daybreak of the gods,
His head was a youthful Rishi's touched with light,
His body was a lover's and a king's.
In the magnificent dawning of his force
Built like a moving statue of delight
He illumined the border of the forest page.
Out of the ignorant eager toil of the years
Abandoning man's loud drama he had come
Led by the wisdom of an adverse Fate
To meet the ancient Mother in her groves.
In her divine communion he had grown
A foster-child of beauty and solitude,
Heir to the centuries of the lonely wise,
A brother of the sunshine and the sky,
A wanderer communing with depth and marge.
A Veda-knower of the unwritten book
Perusing the mystic scripture of her forms
He had caught her hierophant significances,
Her sphered immense imaginations learned,
Taught by sublimities of stream and wood
And voices of the sun and star and flame
And chant of the magic singers on the boughs

And the dumb teaching of four-footed things.
Helping with confident steps her slow great hands
He leaned to her influence like a flower to rain
And, like the flower and tree a natural growth,
Widened with the touches of her shaping hours.
The mastery free natures have was his
And their assent to joy and spacious calm;
One with the single Spirit inhabiting all,
He laid experience at the Godhead's feet;
His mind was open to her infinite mind,
His acts were rhythmic with her primal force;
He had subdued his mortal thought to hers.
That day he had turned from his accustomed paths;
For One who, knowing every moment's load,
Can move in all our studied or careless steps,
Had laid the spell of destiny on his feet
And drawn him to the forest's flowering verge.
At first her glance that took life's million shapes
Impartially to people its treasure-house
Along with sky and flower and hill and star,
Dwelt rather on the bright harmonious scene.
It saw the green gold of the slumbrous sward,
The grasses quivering with the slow wind's tread,
The branches haunted by the wild bird's call.
Awake to Nature, vague as yet to life,
The eager prisoner from the Infinite,
The immortal wrestler in its mortal house,
Its pride, power, passion of a striving God,
It saw this image of veiled deity,
This thinking master creature of the earth,
This last result of the beauty of the stars,
But only saw like fair and common forms
The artist spirit needs not for its work
And puts aside in memory's shadowy rooms.
A look, a turn decides our ill-poised fate.
Thus in the hour that most concerned her all,
Wandering unwarned by the slow surface mind,

The heedless scout beneath her tenting lids
Admired indifferent beauty and cared not
To wake her body's spirit to its king.
So might she have passed by on chance ignorant roads
Missing the call of Heaven, losing life's aim,
But the god touched in time her conscious soul.
Her vision settled, caught and all was changed.
Her mind at first dwelt in ideal dreams,
Those intimate transmuters of earth's signs
That make known things a hint of unseen spheres,
And saw in him the genius of the spot,
A symbol figure standing mid earth's scenes,
A king of life outlined in delicate air.
Yet this was but a moment's reverie;
For suddenly her heart looked out at him,
The passionate seeing used thought cannot match,
And knew one nearer than its own close strings.
All in a moment was surprised and seized,
All in inconscient ecstasy lain wrapped
Or under imagination's coloured lids
Held up in a large mirror-air of dream,
Broke forth in flame to recreate the world,
And in that flame to new things she was born.
A mystic tumult from her depths arose;
Hailed, smitten erect like one who dreamed at ease,
Life ran to gaze from every gate of sense:
Thoughts indistinct and glad in moon-mist heavens,
Feelings as when a universe takes birth,
Swept through the turmoil of her bosom's space
Invaded by a swarm of golden gods:
Arising to a hymn of wonder's priests
Her soul flung wide its doors to this new sun.
An alchemy worked, the transmutation came;
The missioned face had wrought the Master's spell.
In the nameless light of two approaching eyes
A swift and fated turning of her days
Appeared and stretched to the gleam of unknown worlds.

Then trembling with the mystic shock her heart
Moved in her breast and cried out like a bird
Who hears his mate upon a neighbouring bough.
Hooves trampling fast, wheels largely stumbling ceased;
The chariot stood like an arrested wind.
And Satyavan looked out from his soul's doors
And felt the enchantment of her liquid voice
Fill his youth's purple ambiance and endured
The haunting miracle of a perfect face.
Mastered by the honey of a strange flower-mouth,
Drawn to soul-spaces opening round a brow,
He turned to the vision like a sea to the moon
And suffered a dream of beauty and of change,
Discovered the aureole round a mortal's head,
Adored a new divinity in things.
His self-bound nature foundered as in fire;
His life was taken into another's life.
The splendid lonely idols of his brain
Fell prostrate from their bright sufficiencies,
As at the touch of a new infinite,
To worship a godhead greater than their own.
An unknown imperious force drew him to her.
Marvelling he came across the golden sward:
Gaze met close gaze and clung in sight's embrace.
A visage was there, noble and great and calm,
As if encircled by a halo of thought,
A span, an arch of meditating light,
As though some secret nimbus half was seen;
Her inner vision still remembering knew
A forehead that wore the crown of all her past,
Two eyes her constant and eternal stars,
Comrade and sovereign eyes that claimed her soul,
Lids known through many lives, large frames of love.
He met in her regard his future's gaze,
A promise and a presence and a fire,
Saw an embodiment of aeonic dreams,
A mystery of the rapture for which all

Yearns in this world of brief mortality
Made in material shape his very own.
This golden figure given to his grasp
Hid in its breast the key of all his aims,
A spell to bring the Immortal's bliss on earth,
To mate with heaven's truth our mortal thought,
To lift earth-hearts nearer the Eternal's sun.
In these great spirits now incarnate here
Love brought down power out of eternity
To make of life his new undying base.
His passion surged a wave from fathomless deeps;
It leapt to earth from far forgotten heights,
But kept its nature of infinity.
On the dumb bosom of this oblivious globe
Although as unknown beings we seem to meet,
Our lives are not aliens nor as strangers join,
Moved to each other by a causeless force.
The soul can recognise its answering soul
Across dividing Time and, on Life's roads
Absorbed wrapped traveller, turning it recovers
Familiar splendours in an unknown face
And touched by the warning finger of swift love
It thrills again to an immortal joy
Wearing a mortal body for delight.
There is a Power within that knows beyond
Our knowings; we are greater than our thoughts,
And sometimes earth unveils that vision here.
To live, to love are signs of infinite things,
Love is a glory from eternity's spheres.
Abased, disfigured, mocked by baser mights
That steal his name and shape and ecstasy,
He is still the Godhead by which all can change.
A mystery wakes in our inconscient stuff,
A bliss is born that can remake our life.
Love dwells in us like an unopened flower
Awaiting a rapid moment of the soul,
Or he roams in his charmed sleep mid thoughts and

The child-god is at play, he seeks himself
In many hearts and minds and living forms:
He lingers for a sign that he can know
And, when it comes, wakes blindly to a voice,
A look, a touch, the meaning of a face.
His instrument the dim corporeal mind,
Of celestial insight now forgetful grown,
He seizes on some sign of outward charm
To guide him mid the throng of Nature's hints,
Reads heavenly truths into earth's semblances,
Desires the image for the Godhead's sake,
Divines the immortalities of form
And takes the body for the sculptured soul.
Love's adoration like a mystic seer
Through vision looks at the invisible,
In earth's alphabet finds a God-like sense;
But the mind only thinks, "Behold the one
For whom my life has waited long unfilled,
Behold the sudden sovereign of my days."
Heart feels for heart, limb cries for answering limb;
All strives to enforce the unity all is.
Too far from the Divine Love seeks his truth
And life is blind and the instruments deceive
And Powers are there that labour to debase.
Still can the vision come, the joy arrive.
Rare is the cup fit for love's nectar wine,
As rare the vessel that can hold God's birth;
A soul made ready through a thousand years
Is the living mould of a supreme Descent.
These knew each other though in forms thus strange.
Although to sight unknown, although life, mind
Had altered to hold a new significance,
These bodies summed the drift of numberless births
And the spirit to the spirit was the same.
Amazed by a joy for which they had waited long,
The lovers met upon their different paths,
Travellers across the limitless plains of Time

Together drawn from fate-led journeyings
In the self-closed solitude of their human past,
To a swift rapturous dream of future joy
And the unexpected present of these eyes.
By the revealing greatness of a look,
Form-smitten the spirit's memory woke in sense.
The mist was torn that lay between two lives;
Her heart unveiled and his to find her turned;
Attracted as in heaven star by star,
They wondered at each other and rejoiced
And wove affinity in a silent gaze.
A moment passed that was eternity's ray,
An hour began, the matrix of new Time.

END OF CANTO TWO

CANTO III

SATYAVAN AND SAVITRI

OUT of the voiceless mystery of the past
In a present ignorant of forgotten bonds
These spirits met upon the roads of Time.
Yet in the heart their secret conscious selves
At once aware grew of each other warned
By the first call of a delightful voice
And a first vision of the destined face.
As when being cries to being from its depths
Behind the screen of the external sense
And strives to find the heart-disclosing word,
The passionate speech revealing the soul's need,
But the mind's ignorance veils the inner sight,
Only a little breaks through our earth-made bounds,
So now they met in that momentous hour.
So utter the recognition in the deeps,
The remembrance lost, the oneness felt and missed.
Thus Satyavan spoke first to Savitri:
"O thou who com'st to me out of Time's silences,
Yet thy voice has wakened my heart to an unknown bliss,
Immortal or mortal only in thy frame,
For more than earth speaks to me from thy soul
And more than earth surrounds me in thy gaze,
How art thou named among the sons of men?
Whence hast thou dawned filling my spirit's days,
Brighter than summer, brighter than my flowers,
Into the lonely borders of my life,
O Sunlight moulded like a golden maid?
I know that mighty gods are friends of earth.
Amid the pageantries of day and dusk,
Long have I travelled with my pilgrim soul

Moved by the marvel of familiar things.
Earth could not hide from me the powers she veils:
Even though moving mid an earthly scene
And the common surfaces of terrestrial things,
My vision saw unblinded by her forms;
The Godhead looked at me from familiar scenes.
I witnessed the virgin bridals of the dawn
Behind the glowing curtains of the sky
Or vying in joy with the bright morning's steps
I paced along the slumberous coasts of morn,
Or the gold desert of the sunlight crossed
Traversing great wastes of splendour and of fire,
Or met the moon gliding amazed through heaven
In the uncertain wideness of the night,
Or the stars marched on their long sentinel routes
Pointing their spears through the infinitudes,
The day and dusk revealed to me hidden shapes;
Figures have come to me from secret shores
And happy faces looked from ray and flame.
I have heard strange voices cross the ether's waves,
The centaur's wizard song has thrilled my ear;
I glimpsed the Apsaras bathing in the pools
And saw the wood-nymphs peering through the leaves;
The winds have shown to me their trampling lords,
I have beheld the princes of the Sun
Burning in thousand-pillared homes of light.
So now my mind could dream and my heart fear
That from some wonder-couch beyond our air
Risen in a wide morning of the gods
Thou drov'st thy horses from the Thunderer's worlds.
Although to heaven thy beauty seems allied,
Much rather would my thoughts rejoice to know
That mortal sweetness smiles between thy lips
And thy heart can beat beneath a human gaze
And thy aureate bosom quiver with a look
And its tumult answer to an earth-born voice.
If our time-vexed affections thou canst feel,

Earth's ease of simple things can satisfy,
If thy glance can dwell content on earthly soil,
And this celestial summary of delight,
Thy golden body, dally with fatigue
Oppressing with its grace our terrain, while
The frail sweet passing taste of earthly food
Delays thee and the torrent's leaping wine,
Descend. Let thy journey cease, come down to us.
Close is my father's creepered hermitage
Screened by the tall ranks of these silent kings,
Sung to by voices of the hue-robed choirs
Whose chants repeat transcribed in music's notes
The passionate coloured lettering of the boughs
And fill the hours with their melodious cry.
Amid the welcome-hum of many bees
Invade our honied kingdom of the woods;
There let me lead thee into an opulent life.
Bare, simple is the sylvan hermit-life;
Yet is it clad with the jewelry of earth.
Wild winds run—visitors midst the swaying tops,
Through the calm days heaven's sentinels of peace
Couched on a purple robe of sky above
Look down on a rich secrecy and hush
And the chambered nuptial waters chant within.
Enormous, whispering, many-formed around
High forest gods have taken in their arms
The human hour, a guest of their centuried pomps.
Apparelled are the morns in gold and green,
Sunlight and shadow tapestry the walls
To make a resting chamber fit for thee."
Awhile she paused as if hearing still his voice,
Unwilling to break the charm, then slowly spoke.
Musing she answered: "I am Savitri,
Princess of Madra. Who art thou? What name
Musical on earth expresses thee to men?
What trunk of kings watered by fortunate streams
Has flowered at last upon one happy branch?

Why is thy dwelling in the pathless wood
Far from the deeds thy glorious youth demands,
Haunt of the anchorites and earth's wilder broods,
Where only with thy witness self thou roam'st
In Nature's green unhuman loneliness
Surrounded by enormous silences
And the blind murmur of primeval calms?"
And Satyavan replied to Savitri:
"In days when yet his sight looked clear on life,
King Dyumatsena once, the Shalwa, reigned
Through all the tract which from behind these tops
Passing its days of emerald delight
In trusting converse with the traveller winds
Turns, looking back towards the southern heavens
And leans its flank upon the musing hills.
But equal fate removed her covering hand,
A living night enclosed the strong man's paths,
Heaven's brilliant gods recalled their careless gifts,
Took from blank eyes their glad and helping ray
And led the uncertain goddess from his side.
Outcast from empire of the outer light,
Lost to the comradeship of seeing men,
He sojourns in two solitudes, within
And in the solemn rustle of the woods.
Son of that king, I, Satyavan, have lived
Contented, for not yet of thee aware,
In my high peopled loneliness of spirit
And this huge vital murmur kin to me,
Nursed by the vastness, pupil of solitude.
Great Nature came to her recovered child;
I reigned in a kingdom of a nobler kind
Than men can build upon dull Matter's soil;
I met the frankness of the primal earth,
I enjoyed the intimacy of infant God.
In the great tapestried chambers of her state
Free in her boundless palace I have dwelt
Indulged by the warm mother of us all,

Reared with my natural brothers in her house
I lay in the wide bare embrace of heaven,
The sunlight's radiant blessing clasped my brow,
The moonbeam's silver ecstasy at night
Kissed my dim lids to sleep. Earth's morns were mine;
Lured by faint murmurings with the green-robed hours
I wandered lost in woods, prone to the voice
Of winds and waters, partner of the sun's joy,
A listener to the universal speech:
My spirit satisfied within me knew
Godlike our birthright, luxuried our life
Whose close belongings are the earth and skies.
Before fate led me into this emerald world,
Aroused by some foreshadowing touch within,
An early prescience in my mind approached
The great dumb animal consciousness of earth
Now grown so close to me who have left old pomps
To live in this grandiose murmur dim and vast.
As if to a deeper country of the soul
Transposing the vivid imagery of earth,
Through an inner seeing and sense a wakening came.
A visioned spell pursued my boyhood's hours,
All things the eye had caught in coloured lines
Were seen anew through the interpreting mind
And in the shape it sought to seize the soul.
An early child-god took my hand that held,
Moved, guided by the seeking of his touch,
Bright forms and hues which fled across his sight;
Limned upon page and stone they spoke to men.
High beauty's visitants my inmates were.
The neighing pride of rapid life that roams
Wind-maned through our pastures, on my seeing mood
Cast shapes of swiftness; trooping spotted deer
Against the vesper sky became a song
Of evening to the silence of the soul.
I caught for some eternal eye the sudden
Kingfisher flashing to a darkling pool;

A slow swan silvering the azure lake,
A shape of magic whiteness, sailed through dream;
Leaves trembling with the passion of the wind
And wandering wings nearing from infinity
Lived on the tablets of my inner sight;
Mountains and trees stood there like thoughts from God.
Pranked butterflies, the conscious flowers of air,
The brilliant long bills in their vivid dress,
The peacock scattering on the breeze his moons
Painted by memory like a frescoed wall.
I carved my vision out of wood and stone;
I caught the echoes of a word supreme
And metred the rhythm beats of infinity
And listened through music for the eternal Voice.
I felt a covert touch, I heard a call,
But could not clasp the body of my God
Or hold between my hands the World-Mother's feet.
In men I met strange portions of a Self
That sought for fragments and in fragments lived:
Each lived in himself and for himself alone
And with the rest joined only fleeting ties;
Each passioned over his surface joy and grief,
Nor saw the Eternal in his secret house.
I conversed with Nature, mused with the changeless stars,
God's watch-fires burning in the ignorant Night,
And saw upon her mighty visage fall
A ray prophetic of the Eternal's sun.
I sat with the forest sages in their trance:
There poured awaking streams of diamond light;
I glimpsed the presence of the One in all.
But still there lacked the last transcendent power
And Matter still slept empty of its Lord.
The spirit was saved, the body lost and mute
Lived still with Death and ancient Ignorance;
The Inconscient was its base, the Void its fate.
But thou hast come and all will surely change:
I shall feel the World-Mother in thy golden limbs

And hear her wisdom in thy sacred voice.
The child of the Void shall be reborn in God.
My Matter shall evade the Inconscient's trance,
My body like my spirit shall be free:
It shall escape from Death and Ignorance."
And Savitri musing still replied to him:
"Speak more to me, speak more, O Satyavan,
Speak of thyself and all thou art within;
I would know thee as if we had ever lived
Together in the chamber of our souls.
Speak till a light shall come into my heart
And my moved mortal mind shall understand
What all the deathless being in me feels.
It knows that thou art he my spirit has sought
Amidst earth's thronging visages and forms
Across the golden spaces of my life."
And Satyavan like a replying harp
To the insistent calling of a flute
Answered her questioning and let stream to her
His heart in many-coloured waves of speech:
"O golden princess, perfect Savitri,
More I would tell than failing words can speak
Of all that thou hast meant to me, unknown,
All that the lightning flash of love reveals.
In one great hour of the unveiling gods
Even a brief nearness has reshaped my life.
For now I know that all I lived and was
Moved towards this moment of my heart's rebirth;
I look back on the meaning of myself,
A soul made ready on earth's soil for thee.
Once were my days like days of other men:
To think and act was all, to enjoy and breathe;
This was the width and height of mortal hope:
Yet there came glimpses of a deeper self
That lives behind life and makes her act its scene.
A truth was felt that screened its shape from mind,
A Greatness working towards a hidden end,

And vaguely through the forms of earth there looked
Something that life is not and yet must be.
I groped for the Mystery with the lantern, Thought.
Its glimmerings lighted with the abstract word
A half-visible ground and travelling yard by yard
It mapped a system of the Self and God.
I could not live the truth it spoke and thought.
I turned to seize its form in visible things,
Hoping to fix its rule by mortal mind,
Imposed a narrow structure of world-law
Upon the freedom of the Infinite,
A hard firm skeleton of outward Truth,
A mental scheme of a mechanic Power.
This light showed more the darknesses unsearched;
It made the original secrecy more occult.
It could not analyse its cosmic veil
Or glimpse the Wonder-worker's hidden hand
And trace the pattern of his magic plans.
I plunged into an inner seeing Mind
And knew the secret laws and sorceries
That make of Matter mind's bewildered slave.
The mystery was not solved but deepened more.
I strove to find its hints through Beauty and Art,
But Form cannot unveil the indwelling Power;
Only it throws its symbols at our hearts.
It evoked a mood of self, invoked a sign
Of all the brooding glory hidden in sense:
I lived in the ray but faced not to the Sun.
I looked upon the world and missed the Self,
And when I found the Self, I lost the world,
My other selves I lost and the body of God,
The link of the finite with the Infinite,
The bridge between the appearance and the Truth,
The mystic aim for which the world was made,
The human sense of Immortality.
But now the gold link comes to me with thy feet
And His gold sun has shone on me from thy face.

For now another realm draws near with thee
And now diviner voices fill my ear,
A strange new world swims to me in thy gaze
Approaching like a star from unknown heavens;
A cry of spheres comes with thee and a song
Of flaming gods. I draw a wealthier breath
And in a fierier march of moments move.
My mind transfigures to a rapturous seer.
A foam-leap travelling from the waves of bliss
Has changed my heart and changed the earth around:
All with thy coming fills. Air, soil and stream
Wear bridal raiment to be fit for thee
And sunlight grows a shadow of thy hue
Because of change within me by thy look.
Come nearer to me from thy car of light
On this green sward disdaining not our soil.
For here are secret spaces made for thee
Whose caves of emerald long to screen thy form.
Wilt thou not make this mortal bliss thy sphere?
Descend, O Happiness, with thy moon-gold feet,
Enrich earth's floors upon whose sleep we lie.
O my bright beauty's princess, Savitri,
By my delight and thy own joy compelled
Enter my life, thy chamber and thy shrine.
In the great quietness where spirits meet,
Led by my hushed desire into my woods
Let the dim rustling arches over thee lean;
One with the breath of things eternal live,
Thy heartbeats near to mine, till there shall leap
Enchanted from the fragrance of the flowers
A moment which all murmurs shall recall
And every bird remember in its cry."

Allured to her lashes by his passionate words
Her fathomless soul looked at him from her eyes;
Passing her lips in liquid sounds it spoke.
This word alone she uttered and said all:

"O Satyavan, I have heard thee and I know;
I know that thou and only thou art he."
Then down she came from her high carven car
Descending with a soft and faltering haste;
Her many-hued raiment glistening in the light
Hovered a moment over the wind-stirred grass,
Mixed with a glimmer of her body's ray
Like lovely plumage of a settling bird.
Her gleaming feet upon the green gold sward
Scattered a memory of wandering beams
And lightly pressed the unspoken desire of earth
Cherished in her too brief passing by the soil.
Then flitting like pale brilliant moths her hands
Took from the sylvan verge's sunlit arms
A load of their jewel faces' clustering swarms,
Companions of the spring-time and the breeze.
A candid garland set with simple forms
Her rapid fingers taught a flower song,
The stanzaed movement of a marriage hymn.
Profound in perfume and immersed in hue
They mixed their yearning's coloured signs and made
The bloom of their purity and passion one.
A sacrament of joy in treasuring palms
She brought, flower-symbol of her offered life,
Then with raised hands that trembled a little now
At the very closeness that her soul desired,
This bond of sweetness, their bright union's sign,
She laid on the bosom coveted by her love.
As if inclined before some gracious god
Who has out of his mist of greatness shone
To fill with beauty his adorer's hours,
She bowed and touched his feet with worshipping hands;
She made her life his world for him to tread
And made her body the room of his delight,
Her beating heart a remembrancer of bliss.
He bent to her and took into his own
Their married yearning joined like folded hopes;

As if a whole rich world suddenly possessed,
Wedded to all he had been became himself,
An inexhaustible joy made his alone,
He gathered all Savitri into his clasp.
Around her his embrace became the sign
Of a locked closeness through slow intimate years,
A first sweet summary of delight to come,
One brevity intense of all long life.
In a wide moment of two souls that meet
She felt her being flow into him as in waves
A river pours into a mighty sea.
As when a soul is merging into God
To live in Him for ever and know His joy,
Her consciousness was a wave of him alone
And all her separate self was lost in his.
As a starry heaven encircles happy earth,
He shut her into himself in a circle of bliss
And shut the world into himself and her.
A boundless isolation made them one;
He was aware of her enveloping him
And let her penetrate his very soul,
As is a world by the world's spirit filled,
As the mortal wakes into Eternity,
As the finite opens to the Infinite.
Thus were they in each other lost awhile,
Then drawing back from their long ecstasy's trance
Came into a new self and a new world.
Each now was a part of the other's unity,
The world was but their twin self-finding's scene
Or their own wedded being's vaster frame.
On the high glowing cupola of the day
Fate tied a knot with morning's halo threads
While by the ministry of an auspice-hour
Heart-bound before the sun, their marriage fire,
The wedding of the eternal Lord and Spouse
Took place again on earth in human forms:
In a new act of the drama of the world

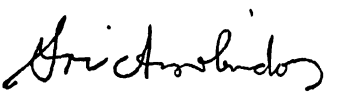
The united Two began a greater age.
In the silence and murmur of that emerald world
And the mutter of the priest-wind's sacred verse,
Amid the choral whisperings of the leaves
Love's twain had joined together and grew one.
The natural miracle was wrought once more:
In the immutable ideal world
One human moment was eternal made.

Then down the narrow path where their lives had met
He led and showed to her her future world,
Love's refuge and corner of happy solitude.
As the paths end through a green cleft in the trees
She saw a clustering line of hermit-routes
And looked now first on her heart's future home,
The thatch that covered the life of Satyavan.
Adorned with creepers and red-climbing flowers
It seemed a sylvan beauty in her dreams
Slumbering with brown body and tumbled hair
In her chamber inviolate of emerald peace.
Around it stretched the forest's anchorite mood
Lost in the depths of its own solitude.
Then moved by the deep joy she could not speak,
A little depth of it quivering in her words,
Her happy voice cried out to Satyavan:
"My heart will stay here on this forest verge
And close to this thatched roof while I am far:
Now of more wandering it has no need.
But I must haste back to my father's house
Which soon will lose one loved accustomed tread
And listen in vain for a once cherished voice.
For soon I shall return nor ever again
Oneness must sever its recovered bliss
Or fate sunder our lives while life is ours."
Once more she mounted on the carven car
And under the ardour of a fiery noon
Less bright than the splendour of her thoughts and dreams

She sped swift reined, swift hearted but still saw
In still lucidities of sight's inner world
Through the cool scented wood's luxurious gloom
On shadowy paths between great rugged trunks
Pace towards a tranquil clearing Satyavan.
A nave of trees enshrined the hermit thatch,
The new deep covert of her felicity,
Preferred to heaven her soul's temple and home.
This now remained with her, her heart's constant scene.

END OF CANTO THREE

END OF BOOK FIVE



Arjava (J. A. Chadwick)

SEARCH

SEVEN lights set in the sky;
Search, search them out;
Drink from a Golden Chalice
That puts an end to drought.

The infinite stairway spirals
From midnight's heavy dun
Shadows, beyond the dawn's rim
To noon-enthronèd sun.

Speeding through clear bright aether
Go feet that cast no shade;
Though the footsoles throng on the gleampath
No phantom of sound is made.

I would tread on the aether's truthway
With a footsole empty of weight,
And soundlessly fare through that starworld
To the living Solar Gate.

TOTALITARIAN

Night was closing on the traveller
When he came
To the empty eerie courtyard
With no name.
Loud he called; no echo answered;
Nothing stirred:
But a crescent moon swung wanly,
White as curd.
When he flashed his single sword-blade
Through the gloom,
None resisted—till he frantic,
Filled with doom,
Hurled his weapon through the gloaming,
Took no aim;
Saw his likenesses around him
Do the same:
Viewed a thousand swordless figures
Like his own—
Then first knew in that cold starlight
Hell, alone.

AN IMAGE OF THE PSYCHE

Water softly swirling
In sea cave,
Shadowlessly furling
Tainture of the grave,
Utterly revealing
The strewn pearl.
And the blue fish wheeling
Waver and curl;
In their swift bright motion
They glint and feel
The wield and surge of ocean
Moment-meal.

HIERATIC

(*Symbols of the Inner Vital World*)

Under the amethyst tree
In a cavern of ocean
Pale limbs of the daughters of the sea
Weave their mystical motion.

There was no rumour from the land
Of reef's wave-grapple:
Their leader shed from her right hand
The gleam of a ruby apple.

Each other moon-pale maid
Bore, heaped and mellow,
Pomegranates carved from lunar jade
On topaz salvers yellow.

No date for steps they dance,
For song no dimming;
Time will reive not their beauty but enhance
Joy's glyph those feet are limning.

FLOWING

Green holm; the rushy margin of a brook—
A brimming trance-forgetfulness of Time,
A burnished flow. Strewn petals of brooklime
Lay on the stream. A wandering Zephyr shook
To dimples all that ecstasy of glass
Communing with the sky. The meadow-sweet
Waved like a fragrant foam amid the grass
And vague dim whirr of wing of insect's feet.

D. Sethna

DRAGON

A CRY of gold piercing the spine's dark sleep,
A dragon fire consuming mortal thought,
An aureoled hunger that makes time fall dead,
My passion curves from bliss to heavenward bliss.

Kindling the rhythm of a myriad smile,
This white wave lifted by some virgin deep
Breaks through the embodied moments of the mind
To a starry universe of infinite trance.

24 June 1937

NIGHT OF TRANCE

Closing your eyes, outstretch vague hands of prayer
Beyond the prison-house of mortal air...
Then, soul-awakened, watch the universe thrill
With secrets drawn from the Invisible—
A force of gloom that makes each flicker-stress
Bare the full body of its goldenness
And yield in that embrace of mystery
A flaming focus of infinity,
A fire-tongue nourished by God's whole expanse
Through darknesses of superhuman trance.

7 June 1937

TRYST

I have come to the secret hour
Long-desired:
Now in my heart a gloam-hue
Trembles earth-tired.

My parching sight grows dim
With blissful dew
And a breathless night within
Draws me for ever to You.

To reach Your heavenly love
The eyes strain not their gaze:
They shut, and all my sleep
Is the quiet of Your Face.

13 August 1941

INEFFABLE

Fold now to quiet fragrance thy rich rose:
Deep hush is of all love the perfect close.

Unflower to bud, breathe inward to the mute
Unnamable essence sucked by rapture's root.

No longer thrill to sound love's myriad sense—
Gauge through calm clay the immutable, the immense!

1942

MAHESHWARI

WIDE, eternal poised on an opal calm
Is she enthroned on the ivory loneliness
In the spheres beyond soul's widest flight.
Like an august and unreachable peak
Wearing the argent vesture of snow-trance,
She wears the silver mask of oblivion.
Sleepless, immeasurable, bourneless alone
She spans the infinity with her gaze.
The immense vistas of her mind's expanse
Bear the suns and the oceans and the stars
And luminous kingdoms of enchanted dreams
And far realms of unbarred distances
And sapphire-mystic dawns of light;
She, with her grandiose tranquillity
Is the flamed spirit of gold-sun-grace,
Mother of giant solitudes and hush
With the face of diamond summit-sleep.

16 September 1949

MAHAKALI

Stark she stands—an icon of towering power
The vast summit-queen of puissance divine.
Giant and unseizable is her mind's leap
From the pinnacles of star-widenesses
To the last granite womb of nought.
Her descent is an avalanche-sweep,
Her steps the terrible typhoons of might,
Her heart the continent of unbarred love,
Her soul the dauntless warrior of light.
Wide and unslumbering is her spirit,
The priestess of height's flaming force,
With her titan tornadoes of laughter
And impetuous thunder of the blue,
She cleaves the eyeless desert-ignorance...
O majesty of lightning's swift delight
Sound the golden clarion of the Sun;
Unmask thy face of august infinity
To reveal the splendour of thy ruthless grace!

18 September 1949

Dilip Kumar Roy

A REVERIE

A PRAYER stirs in my breast as twilight throws
Its chequered shadows upon earth's dimming life:
"May I seek refuge in the Grace that tows
My wistful heart to thee beyond all strife.

After the sun goldens with his soft kiss
Our land of mist: even so thou kindle my soul
Of twilight (when decline youth's buoyancies)
With a radiant aspiration for thy goal."

The moonbeams deepen along the sky's far shore
And with their mystic light the earth's brow laves:
One lilt yields place to another: thou evermore
Recedest to return—like breaking waves.

The supreme Dancer's footfall knows no flaw;
The Victor Gleam cannot be quenched by Night;
When daytides ebb, the stars the gloom outlaw—
When din departs, begins the Lone's delight.

Thou, Wizard, didst initiate me in this
Vision Supreme of a termless rebirth
Flowering on death's stem—the drama of bliss
Battling with bale, God's plenty at war with dearth.

So behind this world's bewildering hurtle and gyre
I glimpse a Peace leavening life's wilderness
And perceive our human love's dark passion and fire
Thou absolvest with thy all-fulfilling Grace.

(White House, Shipuri)
3 November 1949

Tehmi

SWEET ENTRANCER

PRAISED be Thou who touchest me
With Thy wand of ecstasy:
When the seven meanings pass
Through the lucencies of glass,
Twining to a rod of white
Drawn unto Thy Sun-delight;
When the tranced moon-waters roll
In the caverns of the soul
Deep reverberations stored
Of the laughter of the Lord;
When the stars of destiny
Break their Karmic seals, and free
In the being's living breath
Secrecies of life and death,
Placing in my hand the key
Of Thy folded mystery;
Sweet Entrancer, round me close
Magic circlets of Thy Rose.

A FRAGMENT

Within tonight's moon-vigil,
Open, O lotus heart;
White peace is o'er the waters,
The darkness cleaves apart
To shining caves of being,
Spaces of endless light,
Illumined through the ages
By moons beyond our sight.

Norman Dowsett

KUNDALINI

THERE are stars where the roots are, yet in the sky
An atom flings its light to infinity—
So in the quivering heart-beat of a bird
The throbbing song of the universe is heard.
And through the nether worlds a silver stream
Glides o'er the magic darkness of a dream,
To paint the peopled palisades of Night
Into a veiled significance of Light.
Awake! O hooded serpent, lift thine eyes
Unto the burning fires of Paradise,
And bear my spirit to the worlds above
On wings of fire that seeks to offer love,
To that high altar where the gods await
The radiant Dawn, the summit of my fate.

28 July 1949

Eleanor Montgomery

ALONE WITH THE MOON

HEAR! pale moon in the afternoon sky,
The counterpoint that you and I
Sing lightly, (how aloof!) silently...

I too bide the beloved night,
The encircling close, the flush of light;
Wan crescent prayers wax and wait
For the wide opening of the sun's floodgate
Then wane on a tide of eternity.

Woven through your aeonian sphere
Another rhythm of the inner ear:
In contrapuntal ebb and flow
Wends my night-rising, still, sad, slow
And lonely line of melody.

Joyce Chadwick

INMOST

FIELDS of tranquillity, ages of snow-light,
Absolute calm:
Yes, if the face of the never-unreachable
Centre of all is
Holding the eyes
Looking at endlessness:
Seer and sight.

ALL SHAPE HAS A SUN AND A MOON IN IT

A Moon that sees,
A Sun that is,
Form finds in itself
On its knees.
Kneeling Man
Arising can
Move delighted in any place
That silver face,
That flaming head
On his little, needed, neat
Clay feet.

FULL MOON FOR HARVEST

Now it is August, and the august corn-coloured Moon
Standing above all stooks ends every cone:
I see their cobweb-souls fly to her hand,
Her hand tautly gather them as if reins.
What passes? A white excitement along the veins:
Bread shall make all hands daughter that golden Hand.

Words of the Mother

IT is *only in silence* that a true progress can be made; it is *only in silence* that one can rectify a wrong movement; it is *only in silence* that one can be of help to somebody else.

If you have found out a truth, or rectified in yourself a mistake, or made a progress, to speak or to write about it to anybody else than the Guru is to lose at once the truth or the progress.

* * *

It is in tranquillity that the body can increase its receptivity and gain the power to contain.

* * *

True surrender enlarges you; it increases your capacity; it gives you a greater measure in quality and in quantity, which you could not have had yourself.

* * *

Grace is equally for all. But it is received according to the sincerity of each one. It does not depend on outward circumstances but on a sincere aspiration and openness.

* * *

In order to be always near me really and effectively you must become more and more sincere, open and frank towards me. Cast away all dissimulation and decide to do nothing that you could not tell me immediately.

* * *

Faith is spontaneous knowledge in the psychic.

* * *

Faith is a certitude which is not necessarily based on experience and knowledge.

* * *

Sadhana is always difficult and everybody has conflicting elements in his nature and it is difficult to make the vital give up its ingrained habits. That is no reason for giving up sadhana. One has to keep up the central aspiration which is always sincere and go on steadily in spite of temporary failures and it is then inevitable that the change will come.

* * *

As for the change in the vital, it will come by itself when you will take the habit of remaining in your higher consciousness where all these petty things and movements are tasteless.

* * *

Always when one faces difficulties and overcomes them it brings a new spiritual opening and victory.

* * *

I do not believe that to change work will help you to change your character; it has never proved successful before.

* * *

Senses are liars—they do not convey to us the truth of things but only an incomplete and even falsified appearance of things.

* * *

Women are not more bound to the vital and material consciousness than men are. On the contrary, as they have not, in general, the arrogant mental pretentions of men, it is easier for them to discover their psychic being and to allow it to guide them.

In general, they are not conscious in a mental way which can be expressed in words, but they are conscious in their feelings and, with the best of them, in their actions.

WE AND OTHERS

We find in others what is in us. If we always find mud around us, it proves that there is mud somewhere in us.

* * *

Our best friend is he who loves us in the best of ourselves and yet does not ask us to be otherwise than we are.

* * *

We are worth only in the measure of our effort to exceed ourselves, and to exceed ourselves is to attain the Divine.

* * *

Give up yourself—it is the best way of finding yourself.

* * *

Before deciding that something is wrong in others or in circumstances, you must be quite sure of the correctness of your judgment, —and which judgment is correct so long as one lives in the ordinary consciousness that is based on ignorance and filled with falsehood?

Only the Truth-consciousness can judge. So it is better, in all circumstances, to leave the judgment to the Divine.

* * *

Whatever the sincerity, simplicity and purity of the relation between two human beings, it shuts them up more or less from the direct divine force and helps and limits their strength, light and power to their combined potentialities.

* * *

Titles give no value to a man unless he has acquired them in the service of the Divine.

Letters of Sri Aurobindo

I

COMMENTS ON HENRI MASSIS'S VIEWS ON TRANSFORMATION

I DO not gather from these extracts[1] the true nature of the transformation spoken of here. It seems to be something mental and moral with the love of God and a certain kind of union in separateness brought about by this divine love as the spiritualising element.

Love of God and union in separateness through that love and a transformation of the nature by realising certain mental, ethical, emotional—perhaps even physical possibilities (for the Vaishnavas speak of a new *chinmaya* body) is the principle of Vaishnava Yoga. So there is nothing here that was not already present in that line of Asiatic mysticism which looks to a Personal Deity and insists on the eternal pre-existence and survival of the individual being. A spiritual raising of the nature to its highest possibilities is a part of the Tantric discipline—so that too is not absent from Indian Yoga. The writer seems like most European writers to know only Illusionism and Buddhism and to accept them as the whole wisdom of Asia (*sagesse Asiatique*); but even there he misinterprets their idea and their experience. Adwaita even in its extreme form does not aim at the extinction of existence, the adoption of nothingness, the end of the being and destruction of the essence. Only a certain kind of Nihilistic Buddhism aims at that and even so that Nothingness, Sunya, is described on another side of it as the Permanent. What these disciplines aim at is a passing from Time to Eternity, a putting off of the finite and putting on of the Infinite, a casting off of the bonds of ego and its

[1] From *Défense de l'Occident* by Henri Massis

results, desire, suffering, a falsified existence, in order to live in the true Self. These descriptions of the Christian writer betray an entire ignorance of the realisation which he decries, its infinity, freedom, surpassing peace, the ecstasy of the Brahmananda. It is an extinction of the limited individual personality but a liberation into cosmic and then into transcendent consciousness—an extinction of thought and life but a liberation into an unlimited consciousness and knowledge and being. The personality is extinguished but in something greater than itself, not in something less nor in mere "Néant". If it be said that that negates earthly life, so does the Christian ideal, for the Christian ideal aims at the attainment of a celestial existence beyond the earth existence (beyond this single earth life, for reincarnation is not admitted), which is only a vale of sorrows and a passing ordeal. It insists on the preservation of the spiritual personality, but so do Vaishnavism and Shaivaism and other "Asiatic" ideals. The writer's ignorance of the many-sidedness of Asiatic wisdom deprives his depreciation of it of all value.

The phrases which struck you as resembling superficially at least our ideal of transformation are of a general character and could be adopted without hesitation by almost any spiritual discipline, even Illusionism would be willing to include it as a stage or experience on the way. All depends on the content you put into the words, what actual change in the consciousness and life they are intended to cover. If the transformation be "from sin to sainthood" by the union of the soul with God "in an intellectual light full of love"—which is the most definite description of it in these extracts,—then it is not at all identical, but rather very far from what I mean by transformation. For the transformation I aim at is not from sin to sainthood but from the lower nature of the Ignorance to the Divine Nature of Light, Peace, Truth, Divine Power and Bliss beyond the Ignorance. It journeys towards a supreme self-existent good and leaves behind it the limited struggling human conception of sin and virtue; it is not an intellectual light that is the sun of its aspiration but a spiritual supra-intellectual supramental light; it is not sainthood that is its culmination but divine consciousness—or if you like, soul-hood, spirit-hood, conscious self-hood, divine-hood. There is therefore between these two kinds or two degrees of transformation an immense difference.

(1) "C'est un abandon héroïque où l'âme parvient au sommet de l'activité libre, où la personne se transforme, où ses facultés sont épurées, déifiées par la grâce, sans que son essence soit détruite."

What is meant by free activity? With us the freedom consists in freedom from the darkness, limitation, error, suffering, transience of the ignorant lower Nature, but also in a total surrender to the Divine. Free action is the action of the Divine in us and through us; no other action can be free. That seems to be accepted in 2 and 3; but this perception, this conception is as old as spiritual knowledge itself—it is not peculiar to Catholicism. What again is meant by the purification and deification of the faculties by Grace? If it is an ethical purification, that goes a very small way and does not bring deification. Again, if the deification is limited by the intellectual light, it must be a rather petty affair at the best. There was a similar aim in ancient Indian spirituality, but it had a larger sweep and a higher height than that. No spiritual discipline aims at purification or deification by the destruction of the essence—there can be no such thing, the very phrase is meaningless and self-contradictory. The essence of the being is indestructible. Even the most rigid Adwaita discipline does not aim at any such destruction; its object is the purest purity of the essential self. Transformation aims at this essential purity of the pure Spirit, but it asks also for the purity and divinity of the supreme Nature; it is not the essence of being but the accidents of our undeveloped imperfect nature that are destroyed and replaced by the manifestation of the divine Nature. The monistic Adwaita aims at the disappearance of the ego, not of the essence of the person; it arrives at this disappearance by identity with the One, by dissolution of the Nature-constructed ego into the reality of the eternal Self, for that, it says, not ego, is the essence of the person—*so aham, tat twam asi*. In our idea of transformation also there is the destruction of the ego, its dissolution into the cosmic and the divine consciousness, but by that destruction we recover the true or spiritual person which is an eternal portion of the Divine.

(2) "La contemplation du Chretien est inséparable de l'état de la Grâce[1] et de vie divine. S'il doit s'anéantir, c'est encore sa person-

[1] Grace is not a conception peculiar to the Christian spiritual idea —it is there in Vaishnavism, Shaivaism, the Shakta religion, it is as old as the Upanishads.

nalité qui triomphe en se laissant arracher à tout ce qui n'est pas elle, en brisant tous les liens qui l'unissent à son individu de chair, afin que le Dieu vivant puisse s'en saisir, l'assumer, l'habiter."

(3) "Liberté consiste d'abord à subordonner ce qui est inférieur dans sa nature à ce qui lui est supérieur."

These passages can be taken in the above sense and as approximating to our ideal; but the confusion here is in the use of the word "personality". Personality is a temporary formation and to eternise it would be to eternise ignorance and limitation. The true "I" is not the mental ego or the present personality which is only a mask, but the eternal I which assumes various personalities in various lives. The Christian and European conception of a single life on earth tends to bring about this error by making our present personality appear as if it were our whole self.... Again, it is not merely the bodily individuality to which ignorance ties us, but the mental individuality and vital individuality also. All these ties have to be broken, the imperfect forms of mind and life transcended, mind transformed into something beyond mind, life into divine life, if the transformation is to be real and not merely a new shaping or heightening of the lights of the Ignorance.

(4) "Cette solitude de l'âme (de l'ascète asiatique).....n'est pas le vrai loisir spirituel, la solitude active où s'opère la transformation du péché en sainteté par l'union de l'âme avec Dieu dans une lumière intellectuelle toute pleine d'amour."

I have commented already on this description of the transformation to be effected and have to add only one more reserve. The solitude of the self in the Divine has no doubt to be active as well as passive and static; but none who has not arrived at the silence and motionless solitude of the eternal Self can have the free and integral activity of the higher divine Nature. For the action is based on the silence and by the silence it is free.

(5) ".....la vie chretienne—mystique progressive qui est un enrichissement, un élargissement infini de la personne humaine."

This is not our idea of transformation—for the human person is the mental being limited by life and body. An enrichment and enlargement of it cannot go beyond the extreme limit of that formula, it can only widen and adorn its present poverty and narrowness. It

cannot ascend out of the mental ignorance into a greater Truth and Light or bring that down in any fullness into earthly nature, which is the aim of transformation as we conceive it.

(6) "Pour l'asiatique la personnalité est la chute de l'homme; pour le chretien, c'est le dessein même de Dieu, le principe de l'union, le sommet naturel de la création, qu'il appelle tout entière à la Grâce."

The personality of this single life in man is a formation in the Ignorance, therefore a fall; it cannot be the summit of the being. We do not admit that it is the summit of the natural creation either, but say there are higher summits to which we have to climb and reveal their powers in earthly nature. The natural creation is an evolution of the hidden Divine Consciousness in Nature which is limited and disguised at first by the Ignorance. It has still to climb out of the Ignorance—therefore to get beyond the human person into the Divine person. It is in this spiritual evolution that the Plan Divine (*dessein de Dieu*) manifests its central and significant line and calls all creation to the crowning Grace.

You will see therefore that the resemblance of the transformation here to our ideal is only on the surface, in the words, but not in the content of the words which is much narrower and of another order. So far as there is agreement and coincidence, it is because there is contained in them what is common (a certain conversion of the consciousness) to all spiritual disciplines; for all, in East or in West, have a common core of experience—it is in their developments, range, turn to this or that aspect or else their will towards the totality of the Truth that they differ.

9 January 1936

II

SUPRAPHYSICAL PLANES

After a certain stage of development, the capacity of living in the ordinary physical consciousness and yet having super-added to it another and more subtle sense, vision, experience becomes quite normal.

A little concentration is enough to bring it; or even, it happens automatically without any concentration.

There are all kinds in the experiences of each plane—symbolic forms, figures of suggestion, thought-figures, desire formations, constructions of all kinds, things real and lasting in the plane to which they belong and things fictitious and misleading. The haphazardness belongs to the consciousness that sees with its limited and imperfect way of cognising the other worlds, not to the phenomena themselves. Each plane is a world or a conglomeration or series of worlds, each organised in its own way, but organised, not haphazard; only, of course, the subtler planes are more plastic and less rigid in their organisation than the material plane.

24 August 1930

III

DANGERS ON THE ASTRAL PLANE—FASTING IN YOGA

An activity on the astral plane in contact with the astral Forces attended by a leaving of the body is not a spiritual aim but belongs to the province of occultism. It is not a part of the aim of Yoga. Also fasting is not permissible in the Ashram, as its practice is more often harmful than helpful to the spiritual endeavour.

This aim suggested to you seems to be part of a seeking for occult powers; such a seeking is looked on with disfavour for the most part by spiritual teachers in India because it belongs to the inferior planes and usually pushes the seeker on a path which may lead him very far from the Divine. Especially, a contact with the forces and beings of the astral (or, as we term it, the vital) plane is attended with great dangers. The beings of this plane are often hostile to the true aim of spiritual life and establish contact with the seeker and offer him powers and occult experiences only in order that they may lead him away from the spiritual path or else that they may establish their own control over him or take possession of him for their own purpose. Often, representing themselves as divine powers, they mislead, give erring suggestions and impulsions and pervert the inner life. Many are those

who, attracted by these powers and beings of the vital plane, have ended in a definitive spiritual fall or in mental and physical perversion and disorder. One comes inevitably into contact with the vital plane and enters into it in the expansion of consciousness which results from an inner opening, but one ought never to put oneself into the hands of these beings and forces or allow oneself to be led by their suggestions and impulsions. This is one of the chief dangers of the spiritual life and to be on one's guard against it is a necessity for the seeker if he wishes to arrive at his goal. It is true that many supraphysical or supernormal powers come with the expansion of the consciousness in Yoga; to rise out of the body consciousness, to act by subtle means on the supraphysical planes, etc. are natural activities for the Yogi. But these powers are not sought after, they come naturally, and they have not the astral character. Also, they have to be used on purely spiritual lines, that is by the Divine Will and the Divine Force, as an instrument, but never as an instrumentation of the forces and beings of the vital plane. To seek their aid for such powers is a great error.

Prolonged fasting may lead to an excitation of the nervous being which often brings vivid imaginations and hallucinations that are taken for true experiences; such fasting is frequently suggested by the vital Entities because it puts the consciousness into an unbalanced state which favours their designs. It is therefore discouraged here. The rule to be followed is that laid down by the Gita which says that "Yoga is not for one who eats too much or who does not eat"—a moderate use of food sufficient for the maintenance and health and strength of the body.

There is no brotherhood of the kind you describe in India. There are Yogis who seek to acquire and practise occult powers but it is as individuals learning from an individual Master. Occult associations, lodges, brotherhoods for such a purpose as described by European occultists are not known in Asia.

As regards secrecy, a certain discretion or silence about the instructions of the Guru and one's own experiences is always advisable, but an absolute secrecy or making a mystery of these things is not. Once a Guru is chosen, nothing must be concealed from him. The suggestion of absolute secrecy is often a trick of the astral Powers to prevent the seeking for enlightenment and succour.

IV

POWERS IN YOGA

All these "experiments" of yours are founded upon the vital nature and the mind in connection with it; working on this foundation, there is no security against falsehood and fundamental error. No amount of powers (small or great) developing can be a surety against wandering from the Truth; and, if you allow pride and arrogance and ostentation of power to creep in and hold you, you will surely fall into error and into the power of rajasic Maya and Avidya. Our object is not to get powers, but to ascend towards the divine Truth-consciousness and bring its Truth down into the lower members. With the Truth all the necessary powers will come, not as one's own, but as the Divine's. The contact with the Truth cannot grow through rajasic mental and vital self-assertion, but only through psychic purity and surrender.

11 December 1931

V

THE VITAL PLANE

When the vital being goes out, it moves on the vital plane and in the vital consciousness, and, even if it is aware of physical scenes and things, it is not with a physical vision. It is possible for one who has trained his faculties to enter into touch with physical things although he is moving about in the vital body, to see and sense them accurately, even to act on them and physically move them. But the ordinary sadhaka who has no knowledge or organised experience or training in these things cannot do it. He must understand that the vital plane is different from the physical and that things that happen there are not physical happenings, though, if they are of the right kind and properly understood and used, they may have a meaning and value for the earth life. But also the vital consciousness is full of false formations and many

confusions and it is not safe to move among them without knowledge and without a direct protection and guidance.

9 October 1927

VI

ADESH—TRUE AND MISLEADING

This kind of manifestation (*adesh*) comes very often at a certain stage of the practice of Yoga. My experience is that it does not come from the highest source and cannot be relied upon and it is better to wait until one is able to enter a higher consciousness and a greater truth than any that these communications represent. Sometimes they come from beings of an intermediate plane who want to use the sadhaka for some work or purpose. Many sadhakas accept and some, though by no means all, succeed in doing something, but it is often at the cost of the greater aims of Yoga. In other cases they come from beings who are hostile to the sadhana and wish to bring it to nothing by exciting ambition, the illusion of a great work or some other form of ego. Each sadhaka must decide for himself (unless he has a Guru to guide him) whether to treat it as a temptation or a mission.

June 1929

VII

RIGHT WAY OF FACING DIFFICULTIES IN YOGA

All these difficulties should be faced in a more quiet and less egoistic spirit.

This Yoga is a spiritual battle; its very attempt raises all sorts of adverse forces and one must be ready to face difficulties, sufferings, reverses of all sorts in a calm unflinching spirit.

The difficulties that come are ordeals and tests and if one meets them in the right spirit one comes out stronger and spiritually purer and greater.

No misfortune can come, the adverse forces cannot touch or be victorious unless there is some defect in oneself, some impurity, weakness or at the very least ignorance. One should then seek out this weakness in oneself and correct it.

When there is an attack from the human instruments of adverse forces, one should try to overcome it not in a spirit of personal hatred or anger or wounded egoism, but with a calm spirit of strength and equanimity and a call to the Divine Force to act. Success or failure lies with the Divine.

In dealing with others there is a way of speaking and doing which gives most offence and opens one most to misunderstanding and there is also a way which is quiet and firm but conciliatory to those who can be conciliated—all who are not absolutely of bad will. It is better to use the latter than the former. No weakness, no arrogance or violence, this should be the spirit.

14 May 1930

VIII

RIGHT ATTITUDE DURING PERIODS OF ARREST IN SADHANA

A difficulty comes, an arrest in some movement which you have begun or have been carrying on for some time. How is it to be dealt with—for such arrests are inevitably frequent enough, not only for you, but for everyone who is a seeker; one might almost say that every step forward is followed by an arrest—at least, that is a very common, if not a universal experience. It is to be dealt with by becoming always more quiet, more firm in the will to go through, by opening oneself more and more so that any obstructing non-receptivity in the nature may diminish or disappear, by an affirmation of faith even in the midst of the obscurity, faith in the presence of a Power that is working behind the cloud and the veil, in the guidance of the Guru, by an observation of oneself to find any cause of the arrest, not in a spirit of depression or discouragement but with the will to find out

and remove it. This is the only right attitude and, if one is persistent in taking it, the periods of arrest are not abolished—for that cannot be at this stage—but greatly shortened and lightened in their incidence. Sometimes these arrests are periods long or short of assimilation or unseen preparation, their appearance of sterile immobility is deceptive: in that case, with the right attitude, one can after a time, by opening, by observation, by accumulated experience, begin to feel, to get some inkling of what is being prepared or done. Sometimes, it is a period of true obstruction, in which the Power at work has to deal with the obstacles in the way, obstacles in oneself, obstacles of the opposing cosmic forces or any other or of all together, and this kind of arrest may be long or short according to the magnitude or obstinacy or complexity of the impediments that are met. But here too the right attitude can alleviate or shorten and, if persistently taken, help to a more radical removal of the difficulties and greatly diminish the necessity of complete arrests hereafter.

On the contrary, an attitude of depression or unfaith in the help or the guidance or in the certitude of the victory of the guiding Power, a shutting up of yourself in the sense of the difficulties, impedes the recovery, prolongs the difficulties, helps the obstructions to recur with force instead of progressively diminishing in their incidence. It is an attitude whose persistence or recurrence you must resolutely throw aside if you want to get over the obstruction which you feel so much and which the depressed attitude only makes, while it lasts, more acute.

12 April 1932

IX

OUTER CIRCUMSTANCES AND INNER STRENGTH

You should not be so dependent on outward things; it is this attitude that makes you give so excessive an importance to circumstances. I do not say that circumstances cannot help or hinder—but they are circumstances, not the fundamental thing which is in ourselves, and their help or their hindrance ought not to be of primary importance.

In Yoga, as in every great or serious human effort, there is always bound to be an abundance of adverse interventions and unfavourable circumstances which have to be overcome. To give them too great an importance increases their importance and their power to multiply themselves, gives them, as it were, confidence in themselves and the habit of coming. To face them with equanimity—if one cannot manage a cheerful persistence against them of confident and resolute will—diminishes on the contrary their importance and effect and in the end, though not at once, gets rid of their persistence and recurrence. It is therefore a principle in Yoga to recognise the determining power of what is within us—for that is the deeper truth—to set that right and establish the inward strength as against the power of outward circumstances. The strength is there—even in the weakest; one has to find it, to unveil it and to keep it in front throughout the journey and the battle.

12 March 1932

X

THE VIRTUOUS AND THE SINNERS

It is not true that virtuous people suffer more than sinners. Many sinners are people who are preparing to turn to the Divine and many virtuous people have a long run of lives yet to go through before they will think of it.

3 May 1935

XI

YOGA AND ILLNESS

I do not think X's trance has anything to do with her ill-health; I have never known the habit of trances of that kind to have any such result, only the violent breaking of a trance might have a bad result though it would not necessarily produce a disaster. But there is the possibility that if the conscious being goes out of the body in an absolutely complete trance, the thread which connects it with the body

might be broken or else cut by some adverse force and it would not be able to return into the physical frame. Apart from any such fatal possibility there might be a shock which might produce a temporary disorder or even some kind of lesion; as a rule, however, a shock would be the only consequence. The general question is a different matter. There is a sort of traditional belief in many minds that the practice of Yoga is inimical to the health of the body and tends to have a bad effect of one kind or another and even finally leads to a premature or an early dropping of the body. Ramakrishna seems to have held the view if we can judge from his remarks about the connection between Keshav Sen's progress in spirituality and the illness which undermined him, that one was the result and the desirable result of the other, a liberation and release from life in this world, mukti. That may or may not be; but I find it difficult to believe that illness and deterioration of the body is the natural and general result of the practice of Yoga or that that practice is the cause of an inevitable breakdown of health or of the final illnesses which bring about departure from the body. On what ground are we to suppose or how can it be proved that while non-Yogis suffer from ill-health and die because of the disorders of Nature, Yogis die of their Yoga? Unless a direct connection between their death and their practice of Yoga can be proved—and this could be proved with certainty only in particular cases and even then not with an absolute certainty—there is no sufficient reason to believe in such a difference. It is more rational to conclude that both Yogis and non-Yogis fall ill and die from natural causes and by the same dispensation of Nature; one might even advance the view, since they have the Yoga-Shakti at their disposal if they choose to use it, that the Yogi falls ill and dies not because of but in spite of his Yoga. At any rate I don't believe that Ramakrishna (or any other Yogi) fell ill because of his trances; there is nothing to show that he ever suffered in that way after a trance. I think it is said somewhere or he himself said that the cancer in his throat of which he died came by his swallowing the sins of his disciples and those who approached him: that again may or may not be, but it will be his own peculiar case. It is no doubt possible to draw the illnesses of others upon oneself and even to do it deliberately, the instance of the Greek king Antigonus and his son Dimitrius is a famous historical case in point; Yogis also do this sometimes; or else adverse forces

may throw illnesses upon the Yogi using those round him as a door or a passage or the ill wishes of people as an instrumental force. But all these are special circumstances connected, no doubt, with his practice of Yoga; but they do not establish the general proposition as an absolute rule. A tendency such as X's to desire or welcome or accept death as a release could have a force because of her advanced spiritual consciousness which it would not have in ordinary people. On the other side there can be an opposite use and result of the Yogic consciousness: illness can be repelled from one's own body or cured, even chronic or deep-seated illnesses and longe-stablished constitutional defects remedied or expelled and even a predestined death delayed for a long period. Narayan Jyotishi, a Calcutta astrologer, who predicted, not knowing then who I was, in the days before my name was politically known, my struggle with Mlecchа enemies and afterwards the three cases against me and my three acquittals, predicted also that though death was prefixed for me in my horoscope at the age of 63, I would prolong my life by Yogic power for a very long period and arrive at a full old age. In fact I have got rid by Yogic pressure of a number of chronic maladies that had got settled in my body. But none of these instances either on the favourable or unfavourable side can be made into a rule; there is no validity in the tendency of human reason to transform the relativity of these things into an absolute. Finally I may say of X's trances that they are the usual *savikalpa* kind opening to all kinds of experiences, but the large abiding realisations in Yoga do not usually come in trance but by a persistent waking sadhana. The same may be said of the removal of attachments; some may be got rid of sometimes by an experience in trance, but more usually it must be done by persistent endeavour in waking sadhana.

8 December 1949

XII

YOGIC ATTITUDES TO BODY

I might say a word about Ramakrishna's attitude with regard to the body. He seems always to have regarded it as a misuse of spiritual

force to utilise it for preserving the body or curing its ailments or taking care for it. Other Yogis—I do not speak of those who think it justifiable to develop Yogic *siddhis*—have not had this complete disregard of the body: they have taken care to maintain it in good health and condition as an instrument or a physical basis for their development in Yoga. I have always been in agreement with this view: moreover, I have never had any hesitation in the use of a spiritual force for all legitimate purposes including the maintenance of health and physical life in myself and in others—that is indeed why the Mother gives flowers not only as a blessing but as a help in illness. I put a value on the body first as an instrument, *dharmasadhana*, or, more fully, as a centre of manifested personality in action, a basis of spiritual life and activity as of all life and activity upon the earth, but also because for me the body as well as the mind and life is a part of the Divine Whole, a form of the Spirit and therefore not to be disregarded or despised as something incurably gross and incapable of spiritual realisation or of spiritual use. Matter itself is secretly a form of the spirit and has to reveal itself as that, can be made to wake to consciousness and evolve and realise the Spirit, the Divine within it. In my view the body as well as the mind and life has to be spiritualised or, one may say, divinised so as to be a fit instrument and receptacle for the realisation of the Divine. It has its part in the Divine Lila, even, according to the Vaishnava sadhana, in the joy and beauty of Divine Love. That does not mean that the body has to be valued for its own separate sake or that the creation of a divine body in a future evolution of the whole being has to be contemplated as an end and not a means—that would be a serious error which would not be admissible. In any case, my speculations about an extreme form of divinisation are something in a far distance and are no part of the preoccupations of the spiritual life in the near future.

7 December 1949

The Divine Personality

ONE question rises immediately in a synthetic Yoga which must not only comprise but unify knowledge and devotion, the difficult and troubling question of the divine Personality. All the trend of modern thought has been towards the belittling of personality; it has seen behind the complex facts of existence only a great impersonal force, an obscure becoming, and that too works itself out through impersonal forces and impersonal laws, while personality presents itself only as a subsequent, subordinate, partial, transient phenomenon upon the fact of this impersonal movement. Granting even to this Force a consciousness, that seems to be impersonal, indeterminate, void in essence of all but abstract qualities or energies; for everything else is only a result, a minor phenomenon. Ancient Indian thought starting from quite the other end of the scale arrived on most of its lines at the same generalisation. It conceived of an impersonal existence as the original and eternal truth; personality is only an illusion or at best a phenomenon of the mind.

On the other hand, the way of devotion is impossible if the personality of the Divine cannot be taken as a reality, a real reality and not a hypostasis of the illusion. There can be no love without a lover and beloved. If our personality is an illusion and the Personality to whom our adoration rises only a primary aspect of the illusion, and if we believe that, then love and adoration must at once be killed, or can only survive in the illogical passion of the heart denying by its strong beats of life the clear and dry truths of the reason. To love and adore a shadow of our minds or a bright cosmic phenomenon which vanishes from the eye of Truth, may be possible, but the way of salvation cannot be built upon a foundation of wilful self-deception. The bhakta indeed does not allow these doubts of the intellect to come in his way; he has the divinations of his heart, and these are to him

sufficient. But the sadhaka of the integral Yoga has to know the eternal and ultimate Truth and not to persist to the end in the delight of a Shadow. If the impersonal is the sole enduring truth, then a firm synthesis is impossible. He can at most take the divine personality as a symbol, a powerful and effective fiction, but he will have in the end to overpass it and to abandon devotion for the sole pursuit of the ultimate knowledge. He will have to empty being of all its symbols, values, contents in order to arrive at the featureless Reality.

We have said, however, that personality and impersonality, as our minds understand them, are only aspects of the Divine and both are contained in his being; they are one thing which we see from two opposite sides and into which we enter by two gates. We have to see this more clearly in order to rid ourselves of any doubts with which the intellect may seek to afflict us as we follow the impulse of devotion and the intuition of love or to pursue us into the joy of the divine union. They fall away indeed from that joy, but if we are too heavily weighted with the philosophical mind, they may follow us almost up to its threshold. It is well therefore to discharge ourselves of them as early as may be by perceiving the limits of the intellect, the rational philosophic mind, in its peculiar way of approaching the truth and the limits even of the spiritual experience which sets out from the approach through the intellect, to see that it need not be the whole integrality of the highest and widest spiritual experience. Spiritual intuition is always a more luminous guide than the discriminating reason, and spiritual intuition addresses itself to us not only through the reason, but through the rest of our being as well, through the heart and the life also. The integral knowledge will then be that which takes account of all and unifies their diverse truths. The intellect itself will be more deeply satisfied if it does not confine itself to its own data, but accepts truth of the heart and the life also and gives to them their absolute spiritual value.

The nature of the philosophical intellect is to move among ideas and to give them a sort of abstract reality of their own apart from all their concrete representations which affect our life and personal consciousness. Its bent is to reduce these representations to their barest and most general terms and to subtilise even these if possible into some final abstraction. The pure intellectual direction travels away

from life. In judging things it tries to get back from their effects on our personality and to arrive at whatever general and impersonal truth may be behind them; it is inclined to treat that kind of truth as the only real truth of being or at least as the one superior and permanent power of reality. Therefore it is bound by its own nature to end in its extremes at an absolute impersonality and an absolute abstraction. This is where the ancient philosophies ended. They reduced everything to three abstractions, existence, consciousness and bliss of being, and they tended to get rid of the two of these three which seemed dependent on the first and most abstract, and to throw all back into a pure featureless existence from which everything else had been discharged, all representations, all values, except the one infinite and timeless fact of being. But the intellect had still one farther possible step to take and it took it in Buddhistic philosophy. It found that even this final fact of existence was only a representation; it abstracted that also and got to an infinite zero which might be either a void or an eternal inexpressible.

The heart and life, as we know, have an exactly opposite law. They cannot live with abstractions; they can find their satisfaction only in things that are concrete or can be made seizable; whether physically, mentally or spiritually, their object is not something which they seek to discriminate and arrive at by intellectual abstraction; a living becoming of it or a conscious possession and joy of their object is what they seek. Nor is it the satisfaction of an abstract mind or impersonal existence to which they respond, but the joy and the activity of a being, a conscious Person in us, whether finite or infinite, to whom the delights and powers of his existence are a reality. Therefore when the heart and life turn towards the Highest and the Infinite, they arrive not at an abstract existence or non-existence, a Sat or else a Nirvana, but at an existent, a Sat Purusha, not merely at a consciousness, but at a conscious Being, a Chaitanya Purusha, not merely at a purely impersonal delight of the Is, but at an infinite I Am of bliss, an Anandamaya Purusha; nor can they immerge and lose his consciousness and bliss in featureless existence, but must insist on all three in one, for delight of existence is their highest power and without consciousness delight cannot be possessed. That is the sense of the supreme figure of the intensest Indian religion of love, Sri Krishna, the All-blissful and All-beautiful.

The intelligence can also follow this trend, but it ceases then to be the pure intellect; it calls in its power of imagination to its aid, it becomes the image-maker, the creator of symbols and values, a spiritual artist and poet. Therefore the severest intellectual philosophy admits the Saguna, the divine Person, only as the supreme cosmic symbol; go beyond it to reality and you will arrive, it says, at last to the Nirguna, the pure Impersonal. The rival philosophy asserts the superiority of the Saguna; that which is impersonal is, it will perhaps say, only the material, the stuff of his spiritual nature out of which he manifests the powers of his being, consciousness and bliss, all that expresses him; the impersonal is the apparent negative out of which he looses the temporal variations of his eternal positive of personality. There are evidently here two instincts, or, if we hesitate to apply that word to the intellect, two innate powers of our being which are dealing each in its own manner with the same Reality.

Both the ideas of the intellect, its discriminations, and the aspirations of the heart and life, their approximations, have behind them realities at which they are the means of arriving. Both are justified by spiritual experience; both arrive at the divine absolute of that which they are seeking. But still each tends, if too exclusively indulged, to be hampered by the limitations of its innate quality and its characteristic means. We see that in our earthly living where the heart and life followed exclusively fail to lead to any luminous issue, while an exclusive intellectuality becomes either remote, abstract and impotent or a sterile critic or dry mechanist. Their sufficient harmony and just reconciliation is one of the great problems of our psychology and our action.

The reconciling power lies beyond in the intuition. But there is an intuition which serves the intellect and an intuition which serves the heart and the life, and if we follow either of these exclusively, we shall not get much farther than before; we shall only make more intimately real to us, but still separately, the things at which the other and less seeing powers are aiming. But the fact that it can lend itself impartially to all parts of our being,—for even the body has its intuitions,—shows that the intuition is not exclusive, but an integral truth-finder. We have to question the intuition of our whole being, not only separately in each part of it, nor in a sum of their findings, but beyond all these lower instruments, beyond even their first spiritual corres-

pondents, by rising into the native home of the intuition which is the native home of the infinite and illimitable Truth, *ṛtasya sve dame*, where all existence discovers its unity. That is what the ancient Veda meant when it cried, "There is a firm truth hidden by truth (the eterna truth concealed by this other of which we have here these lower intuitions); there the ten hundred rays of light stand together; that is One." "*ṛtena ṛtam apihitam dhruvam...daśa śata saha tasthatus, tad ekam.*"

The spiritual intuition lays hold always upon the reality; it is the luminous harbinger of spiritual realisation or else its illuminative light; it sees that which the other powers of our being are labouring to explore; it gets at the firm truth of the abstract representations of the intellect and the phenomenal representations of the heart and life, a truth which is itself neither remotely abstract nor outwardly concrete, but something else for which these are only two sides of its psychological manifestation to us. What the intuition of our integral being perceives, when its members no longer dispute among themselves but are illumined from above, is that the whole of our being aims at the one reality. The impersonal is a truth, the personal too is a truth; they are the same truth seen from two sides of our psychological activity; neither by itself gives the total account of the Reality, and yet by either we can approach it.

Looked at from one side, it would seem as if an impersonal Thought were at work and created the fiction of the thinker for the convenience of its action, an impersonal Power at work creating the fiction of the doer, an impersonal existence in operation which uses the fiction of a personal being who has a conscious personality and a personal delight. Looked at from the other side, it is the thinker who expresses himself in thought which without him could not exist and our general notion of thought symbolises simply the power of the nature of the thinker; the Ishwara expresses himself by will and power and force; the Existent extends himself in all the forms integral and partial, direct, inverse and perverse of his existence, consciousness and bliss, and our abstract general notion of these things is only an intellectual representation of the triple power of his nature of being. All impersonality seems in its turn to become a fiction and existence in its every moment and its every particle nothing but the life, the consciousness, the power, the delight of the one and yet innumerable Personality, the infinite Godhead, the self-aware and self-unfolding Purusha.

Both views are true, except that the idea of fiction, which is borrowed from our own intellectual processes, has to be exiled and each must be given its proper validity. The integral seeker has to see in this light that he can reach one and the same Reality on both lines, either successively or simultaneously, as if on two connected wheels travelling on parallel lines, but parallel lines which in defiance of intellectual logic but in obedience to their own inner truth of unity do meet in infinity.

We have to look at the divine Personality from this standpoint. When we speak of personality, we mean by it at first something limited, external and separative, and our idea of a personal God assumes the same imperfect character. Our personality is to us at first a separate creature, a limited mind, body, character which we conceive of as the person we are, a fixed quantity; for although in reality it is always changing, yet there is a sufficient element of stability to give a kind of practical justification to this notion of fixedness. We conceive of God as such a person, only without body, a separate person different from all others with a mind and character limited by certain qualities. At first in our primitive conceptions this deity is a thing of much inconstancy, freak and caprice, an enlarged edition of our human character; but afterwards we conceive of the divine nature of personality as a quite fixed quantity and we attribute to it those qualities alone which we regard as divine and ideal, while all the others are eliminated. This limitation compels us to account for all the rest by attributing them to a Devil, or by lending to man an original creative capacity for all that we consider evil, or else, when we perceive that this will not quite do, by erecting a power which we call Nature and attributing to that all the lower quality and mass of action for which we do not wish to make the Divine responsible. At a higher pitch the attribution of mind and character to God becomes less anthropomorphic and we regard him as an infinite Spirit, but still a separate person, a spirit with certain fixed divine qualities as his attributes. So are conceived the ideas of the divine Personality, the personal God which vary so much in various religions.

All this may seem at first sight to be an original anthropomorphism terminating in an intellectual notion of the Deity which is very much at variance with the actualities of the world as we see it. It is not surprising that the philosophical and sceptical mind should have found

little difficulty in destroying it all intellectually, whether in the direction of the denial of a personal God and the assertion of an impersonal Force or Becoming or in that of an impersonal Being or an ineffable denial of existence with all the rest as only symbols of Maya or phenomenal truths of the Time-consciousness. But these are only the personifications of monotheism. Polytheistic religions, less exalted perhaps, but wider and more sensitive in their response to cosmic life, have felt that all in the cosmos has a divine origin; therefore they conceived of the existence of many divine personalities with a vague sense of an indefinable Divine behind, whose relations with the personal gods were not very clearly conceived. And in their more exoteric forms these gods were crudely anthropomorphic; but where the inner sense of spiritual things became clearer, the various godheads assumed the appearance of personalities of the one Divine,—that is the declared point of view of the ancient Veda. This Divine might be a supreme Being who manifests himself in various divine personalities or an impersonal existence which meets the human mind in these forms; or both views might be held simultaneously without any intellectual attempt to reconcile them, since both were felt to be true to spiritual experience.

If we subject these notions of the divine Personality to the discrimination of the intellect, we shall be inclined to reduce them, according to our bent, to fictions of the imagination or to psychological symbols, in any case, the response of our sensitive personality to something which is not this at all, but is purely impersonal. We may say that That is in reality the very opposite of our humanity and our personality and therefore in order to enter into relations with it we are impelled to set up these human fictions and these personal symbols so as to make it nearer to us. But we have to judge by spiritual experience, and in a total spiritual experience we shall find that these things are not fictions and symbols, but truths of divine being in their essence, however imperfect may have been our representations of them. Even our first idea of our own personality is not an absolute error, but only an incomplete and superficial view beset by many mental errors. Greater self-knowledge shows us that we are not fundamentally the particular formulation of form, powers, properties, qualities with a conscious I identifying itself with them, which we at first appear to be. That is only a temporary fact, though still a fact, of our partial being

on the surface of our active consciousness. We find within an infinite being with the potentiality of all qualities, of infinite quality, *ananta-guṇa*, which can be combined in any number of possible ways, and each combination is a revelation of our being. For all this personality is the self-manifestation of a Person, that is to say, of a being who is conscious of his manifestation.

But we see too that this being does not seem to be composed even of infinite quality, but has a status of his complex reality in which he seems to stand back from it and to become an indefinable conscious existence, *anirdeśyam*. Even consciousness seems to be drawn back and leave merely a timeless pure existence. And again even this pure self of our being seems at a certain pitch to deny its own reality, or to be a projection from a self-less[1] baseless unknowable, which we may conceive of either as a nameless somewhat or as a Nihil. It is when we would fix upon this exclusively and forget all that it has withdrawn into itself that we speak of pure impersonality or the void Nihil as the highest truth. But a more integral vision shows us that it is the Person and the personality and all that it had manifested which has thus cast itself upward into its own unexpressed absolute. And if we carry up our heart as well as our reasoning mind to the Highest, we shall find that we can reach it through the absolute Person as well as through an absolute impersonality. But all this self-knowledge is only the type within ourselves of the corresponding truth of the Divine in his universality. There too we meet him in various forms of divine personality; in formulations of quality which variously express him to us in his nature; in infinite quality, the Anantaguna; in the divine Person who expresses himself through infinite quality; in absolute impersonality, an absolute existence or an absolute non-existence, which is yet all the time the unexpressed Absolute of this divine Person, this conscious Being who manifests himself through us and through the universe.

Even on the cosmic plane we are constantly approaching the Divine on either of these sides. We may think, feel and say that God is Truth, Justice, Righteousness, Power, Love, Delight, Beauty; we may see him as a universal force or as a universal consciousness. But

[1] *Anātmyam anilayanam.* Taittiriya Upanishad.

this is only the abstract way of experience. As we ourselves are not merely a number of qualities or powers or a psychological quantity, but a being, a person who so expresses his nature, so is the Divine a Person, a conscious Being who thus expresses his nature to us. And we can adore him through different forms of this nature, a God of righteousness, a God of love and mercy, a God of peace and purity; but it is evident that there are other things in the divine nature which we have put outside the form of personality in which we are thus worshipping him. The courage of an unflinching spiritual vision and experience can meet him also in more severe or in terrible forms. None of these are all the Divinity; yet these forms of his personality are real truths of himself in which he meets us and seems to deal with us, as if the rest had been put away behind him. He is each separately and all altogether. He is Vishnu, Krishna, Kali; he reveals himself to us in humanity as the Christ personality or the Buddha personality. When we look beyond our first exclusively concentrated vision, we see behind Vishnu all the personality of Shiva and behind Shiva all the personality of Vishnu. He is the Ananta-guna, infinite quality and the infinite divine Personality which manifests itself through it. Again, he seems to withdraw into a pure spiritual impersonality or beyond all idea even of impersonal Self and to justify a spiritualised atheism or agnosticism; he becomes to the mind of man an indefinable, *anirdeśyam*. But out of this unknowable the conscious Being, the divine Person, who has manifested himself here, still speaks, "This too is I; even here beyond the view of mind, I am He, the Purushottama."

For, beyond the divisions and contradictions of the intellect there is another light and there the vision of a truth reveals itself which we may thus try to express to ourselves intellectually. There all is one truth of all these truths; for there each is present and justified in all the rest. In that light our spiritual experience becomes united and integralised; no least hair's breadth of real division is left, no shade of superiority and inferiority remains between the seeking of the Impersonal and the adoration of the divine Personality, between the way of knowledge and the way of devotion.[1]

SRI AUROBINDO

[1] Reprinted from *Arya*, Vol. V.

Vedic Study: Need for a New Approach

I

MAX MULLER records an interesting incident. Freidrich Rosen was a noted German scholar, one of the pioneers of western students who turned to Vedic studies in the early years of the last century. It appears one day when he was busy in the British Museum copying out the hymns of the Rig Veda, Raja Rammohan Roy—the leading light of the Indian Renaissance—came in and was surprised, disagreeably, at the work Rosen was engaged in. He admonished the scholar not to waste any time on the Vedas and advised him to take to the Upanishads instead. We do not know if Rosen swallowed the advice at all. Obviously not. For he was still engaged in the Veda at the time of his death and his edition of the First Book of the Rig Veda with Latin translation did appear later. The incident is noteworthy for the light it sheds on the mental attitude of the cultured and educated Indians of the time towards the Veda. The outlook of the educated section of our countrymen as regards the Vedic hymns has undergone little change even after more than a century today. And no wonder. For they have but dutifully followed all along in the footsteps of the European professors who have, as a class, studied and regarded the Vedas more as specimens of antiquarian and philological interest than as records of any sustaining values. To them the Vedas are study-worthy not for anything intrinsically significant but for the side-lights they throw on the social and other conditions of their times. By themselves the Vedic hymns are 'singularly deficient in simplicity, natural pathos or sublimity', they have 'no sublime poetry as in Isiah or Job or the Psalms of David'. They are primitive chants where 'cows and bullocks are praised in most extravagant expressions' as among the 'Dinkas and Kaffirs in Africa whose present form of economics must

be fairly in agreement with that of the Vedic Aryan'. Even such a famous scholar like Oldenburg must needs note that here is 'the grossly flattering garrulousness of an imagination which loves the bright and the garish', while Winternciz records, with approval evidently, that Leopald Von Schroder finds similarity between some of these hymnal chants and 'notes written down by insane persons which have been preserved by psychiatrists'.

Not all from the West, however, have reacted in the manner noted above. Some have brought to bear a more sympathetic and closer understanding on their studies of the Veda and have confessed to a remarkable widening of the vistas of their higher mental horizons after their study of these Books. There is Brunnhofer, for instance, who is constrained to exclaim: 'The Veda is like the lark's morning thrill of humanity awakening to the consciousness of its greatness.'

Indian tradition, however, has held the Vedas all along in the highest reverence, it has invested them with the authority of a revealed scripture, Books of Wisdom. Notwithstanding all the centuries-old efforts at such debunkings, the Vedas stand firm as a rock towering like the snow-capped peaks of Kailas overtopping and overlooking the vast panoramic expanse below drawing its nourishment every moment from the ceaseless streams that flow from above—the huge and hoary expanse of Indian life and culture. What is the secret that has enabled the Vedas to hold the pre-eminent position they have occupied from the beginnings of time in this country? Is there anything in them which is valuable for man as to exact respect and reverence to the extent they have done? And if the Vedas are really so valuable and so sacred, why is it that they have become the targets of so much criticism? Why is it that the Vedas are today so much enveloped with misunderstanding and condemnation that they are in danger of being completely lost to sight?

And what, in the first place, is the Veda?

The Vedas are the only extant records of the lives and expressions of our forefathers in an age upon the time-limits of which scholars and historians have been unable to agree with any degree of finality. Indian scholars like Tilak and Europeans like Jacobi are inclined to date the period from Four to Six Millenniums before the Christian era while other western scholars have a strong tendency to advance the date to

as near the Christian era as possible. Be that as it may, it is the songs and chants of these fathers of the race—*purve pitaraḥ*—, it is their hymns that form the starting point and the kernel for the vast literature that has flowed from and developed round them and goes by the name VEDA. At some period of their history, very likely at the close of the epoch during which the hymns were first sung and celebrated, it was found necessary to collect and compile all the available hymns current at that time. The necessity for the compilation may have arisen in order to prevent their loss inevitable with the passage of time and also to preserve them in the form in which they were chanted. Tradition has it that they were compiled under the direction of that Master compiler of the Great Age—Vyasa. Certainly what have been compiled do not exhaust all the hymns that must have been current; the compilations represent the remnants that had survived the ravages of time and were still extant at the time of the compilation. These hymnal texts were handed down from mouth to mouth and it was inevitable that they must have suffered diminution in quantity with each generation.

The hymns were collected and arranged in four different compilations, *Samhitas*, each collection being governed by different considerations about the nature of the hymns, the purpose for which they were compiled, etc. Thus hymns which were largely in the nature of prayers and dedications to Gods were collected—says the tradition—by Paila under the guidance of Vyasa, and went to form the Rik Samhita. Hymns which were particularly chanted during religious and social functions of the community were compiled by Vaishampayana under the title Yajus Samhita. Jaimini is said to have collected hymns that were set to music and melody—Saman. There is also the fourth collection of hymns and chants ascribed to Sumantu, known as Atharva Samhita. We need not dwell upon the subject of the Atharva Samhita and the controversy around it but recognise the Vedic tradition as has come down to us which includes all the four Samhitas in its field. Each of these Samhitas was followed gradually by explanations and dissertations in prose and in verse for elucidating the meanings, allusions, legends, etc. of the hymns and their application. These portions are known as Brahmanas. The concluding portions of these or the portions attached to them are discussions and speculations of a

philosophical and spiritual import based certainly on the ideas and texts found in the Hymns. They are called the Aranyakas and Upanishads. Each Veda thus comprises the Mantra Samhita, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas and the Upanishads.'[1]

[1] The Rig Veda is said to have had 21 recensions. The recension that has come down to us and in use now is ascribed to Vedamitra or Shakalya. The Rig Veda Samhita as it stands consists of 1,017 Suktas (Hymns) or 1,028 if the 11 Valakhilya Suktas supplementing the VIII Book are added to them. Each hymn is of varying number of Riks and the total number of Riks varies from 10,402 to 10,622. The Samhita is sub-divided in two ways. One, for purposes of memorising and study, *adhyayana*, into eight equal portions, *ashtakas*, each one of which contains eight chapters, *adhyāyas*. The adhyayas are further divided into groups, *vargas*, which consist of an average of five *riks*. The other division, suited for application *anushthāna*, is into *Mandalas*, Books, ten in number, each Mandala into so many *anuvākas* and each anuvaka into hymns, *suktas*, the suktas containing varying number of *riks*. The Hymns have been arranged into each Mandala either according to the Rishi or Rishis to whom they are ascribed or according to the deity or deities to whom the hymns are dedicated. Thus the Second Mandala contains the hymns of Gritsamada and his descendants, the III of Vishwamitra and his family, IV mostly of Vamadeva (40 out of 58 hymns), the V of the house of Atri, VI mostly of Bharadwaja, VII of Vasishtha and family, VIII of Kanva and Angiras. The IX Mandala consists of hymns dedicated wholly to Soma (excepting the *Apri* hymn and one in which Soma is invoked jointly with Agni, and another with Agni and other gods.) The first Mandala contains Riks by a number of Rishis—*shatarchins*—authors each of a hundred or an indefinite number of Riks, invoking many different deities; so also the last, the tenth Mandala.

Forming part of the Rig Veda is the Aitareya Brahmana and the Aitareya Aranyaka and the Aitareya Upanishad. The Kaushitaki or Sankhayana Brahmana and the Aranyaka and Upanishad after the same name also belong to the Rig Veda.

The Yajurveda Samhita consists of prayers mostly taken from the Rik Samhita and formulae which the Adhwaryu priests have to utter while performing their duties at the sacrificial ceremonies. There are two Yajurveda Samhitas—(1) the Taittiriya Samhita or the Krishna Yajurveda Samhita and (2) the Vajasaneyi or the Shukla Yajurveda Samhita. The former contains a Brahmana as part of the Samhita while the latter contains an Upanishad instead. For an illuminating account of the origin of the Vajasaneyi Samhita and the implications thereof *vide Lights on the Veda* (pp. 40-41) by Sri T.V.Kapali Sastry. These Samhitas are partly in verse and partly in prose. The verse portions are mostly selections of Riks, chosen for particular applications in the sacrifices.

The Krishna Yajurveda contains the Taittiriya Brahmana which is really a continuation of the Taittiriya Samhita. The Taittiriya Aranyaka and Taittiriya Upanishad and also Mahanarayana Upanishad belong to this Veda. The Kathaka, Svetasvetara

Now the hymns collected in the Samhitas are largely prayers, invocations to the deities. Each hymn consists of a number of Mantras which according to tradition are not compositions but the *seeings*, the revelations made to the particular Rishis who were the *seers*, *mantra-drashtārah*, in whose names they have come down to us. These prayers and invocations were used during religious and other ceremonies like the Yajna, Sacrifice. The authors of the Brahmanas while explaining and elucidating the meaning and significances of these hymns tended to emphasise the application side of it and dealt at length with

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and Maitrayaniya Upanishads are also of this collection. The Shukla Yajurveda contains the famous and most important Shatapatha Brahmana, its Aranyaka and the Brihadaranyaka and Isha Upanishads.

The Samaveda is almost wholly a collection of Riks from the Rig Veda Samhita set to melody—generally to Gayatri metre—to be sung by the Udgatr priests. Of the 1500 and odd verses all except some 70 are from the Rig Veda. The collection is divided into two parts, *archika* and the *uttararchika*. The Samaveda contains the Tandya Mahabrahmana, also called Pancha Vimsa—one of the oldest Brahmanas containing rites and references of special interest, notably the *Vrātyastoma*, a ceremony to admit non-aryans in the Aryan fold. The Shadvimsa Brahmana, the last portion of which is called the Adbhuta Brahmana, is really a continuation after the Pancha-Vimsa; Jaiminiya Brahmana is also said to be part of the collection in Sama Veda but is not fully available. The Chhandogya Upanishad of which the first section is an Aranyaka belongs to a Samaveda Brahmana probably the Tandya Brahmana. The Kena also belongs to this collection.

The Atharva Samhita containing 731 (760 according to some) hymns—about six thousand verses—is available in the Saunaka recension which is the best preserved. Nearly a seventh of the verses are from the Rig Veda. A variety of subjects including medicine, charms, love, death, etc. are treated therein. The Gopatha Brahmana is attached to it. The Mundaka, Prasna, and Mandukya Upanishads are parts of this Veda.

Besides, there is also a class of literature known as Vedangas. But they do not form part of the Veda, though they bear upon the study of it. They are really enlargements and developments of the dissertations and hints found in the Brahmanas regarding the mantras, Yajna, and allied topics. A study of them was held to be indispensable for a proper understanding of the Vedas and hence they were attached to the Veda, *vedanga*, limbs of the Veda. They are treatises on phonetics *shiksha*, and metrics *chhandas*, both of which were necessary for reading of the Vedas, on grammar *vyakarna* and etymology *nirukta*, necessary for understanding them and on sacrifices (rituals) *kalpa* and astronomy *jyotisha*, both of these being necessary for the ceremonial use of the Vedas. These contain doctrines adumbrated in the Brahmanas and have been put in concise formulas called *sutras*, aphorisms for convenience of memory.

the details, the minutiae of the ceremonies in which the hymns were supposed to be made use of. The human mind has an obstinate preference to form, to the concrete as opposed to the abstract and no wonder the tendency grew of attaching premier importance to the ritual of the ceremonies and only a subsidiary role to the mantras. This tendency found expression and a lead in the school of *Mimamsakas* or Vedists whose position was given a respectable footing and influential standing by successive champions the first of whom was Jaimini who gave an ethical and religious framework for this method of approach to the Vedas. Not all subscribed to this way of looking at the Veda Samhita. There were those who leaned more towards the thought-substance rather than to the ceremonial utility of these hymnal texts and developed and cultivated a thought-life and a soul-life on the lines discernible in the hymns. The beginnings of these knowledge-seekers are to be found in the Aranyakas and the Upanishads. They always looked to these texts and not to the Brahmanas for enlightenment. This dual tendency among the adherents of the Veda found a sharp expression, in course of time, in the bifurcation of the Veda into Karma Kanda and Jnana Kanda. The Brahmana texts formed the authorities of the former and the Upanishads of the latter. The hymns themselves were relegated to the background to be summoned only for support and sanction to the findings of the respective schools. This was the position as far as we can gather, at the end of the Vedic period. After that we meet with a big blank in this aspect of the nation's history. Doubtless the Vedas continued to exercise thoughtful minds, the Vedic hymns must have become objects of attention of serious students, particularly in that age of intellectual efflorescence which followed close on the heals of the Upanishadic period, and many schools of Vedic studies must have sprung up. Yaska the great etymologist indeed refers to some of them. But to that we will come later. Suffice it to say that there were a number of ways of approach to the Veda current during those times, each differing with the motive of approach. Etymologists, historians, ritualists, priests, seekers of Truth, all these had their own ways of understanding the hymns. But there was no one tradition as such that stood out over the rest as the one true and authoritative interpretation of the Veda. Attempts were made now and then by able exponents of the different schools of thought

to establish their own line of interpretation but none seems to have acquired any commanding position as the most widely accepted and thereby the authoritative. It was so, at least till the fourteenth century A.D., when Sayana appeared on the scene.

II

It has always been a debatable question among philosophers of history whether it is the men that mould and shape events and epochs or whether men are not just material-ends through which historical forces precipitate themselves into action. While it is difficult to find a verdict exclusively either way, because truth seems to lie in both the view-points, instances are not rare when powerful individuals by sheer force of their personality and mastery of will and mind have succeeded in directing the course of history in the direction of their choice. Such a remarkable personage was Sayanacharya. Living in the 14th century A.D. he came to be known as Madhava Vidyaranya, founder of the Vijayanagar Empire—that glorious isle of culture and progress in the surrounding mass of the then ruling cult of Islamic sword and fire. Whether he was the same or his brother as sustained by some, he was in any case a man of uncommon solidity of learning and capacity for industry. He addressed himself to a task which none had so successfully attempted before. He set out to comment upon, explain and fix the meaning of the entire collection of the four Samhitas along with their Brahmanas. He lived at a time when the outer form and ritual of religion had attained an increasing supremacy over the spirit within and naturally he shared the beliefs of his age. He accepted the ritualist doctrines that the Brahmanas constituted the real Veda which was traditionally looked upon as having proceeded from beyond the beginnings of time and beyond the origins of human mind. The Mantras were important in so far as they subserved and allowed themselves to be made use of for support of this position. Sayana set upon his task with this avowed intention, namely, to fix firmly the claim of the ritualist to be the sole-sufficing guardian and exponent of the Veda. He utilised all the resources available to him, applied all the thoroughness he was capable of, commented upon every word of the text with meticulous care though with a pronounced ritualist slant and succeeded

in producing a work which once for all oriented the message of the scriptures in the line of the phase of Vedic worship he represented. He heavily robed the Vedas in the folds of the ritualist raiments. Regarding the achievements and the far-reaching consequences of this remarkable work of Sayana, we need make no apology to quote from the following striking appraisal of the same:

"He (Sayana) left to posterity a finished and complete commentary on all the Brahmanas and the Mantra Samhitas of which the Rik-Samhita presents insuperable difficulties for interpretation. But he overcomes them, gives generally a lucid exposition of the hymns assigning their place in the ceremonial worship and presents a harmonious whole of the plan of his work. The merits of this stupendous work of Sayana are many and so precious that his work is an indispensable help to Vedic students...In a sense Sayana went far beyond the Brahmanas themselves; for it is doubtful if the latter were sure that they have correctly interpreted the Riks even for purposes of rituals, and what is more, they have not taken up the whole body of the hymnal text for explanation and use in the sacrificial rites...Sayana's commentary on the Riks succeeds in establishing Ritualism as the sole and central creed of the Veda, founded on the eternal self-existent words and passages of the Brahmanas to which the mantras are the uncreated self-existent accessories...The work is indispensable for the student of the Veda for the invaluable help it gives, the numerous references, mention of ancient authorities, traditions, lexicons, legends, alternative meanings suggesting possible senses of words, verses and hymns, elucidation of accents and points of grammar and construction of sentences in these ancient litanies of a remote antiquity. There are other commentaries on the Riks, but in fragments and are of little avail and importance before the weight and prestige of Sayana and the volume of his work.

Nevertheless the central defect of Sayana's work remains. It is the defect of a representative obscurantism of the time, unprogressive and narrow, vast erudition developing an extraordinary poverty of sense attached to the hymns of the Vedic seers, enthroning in the heart of the Vedic religion the external cult and worship of Nature Powers and performance of ceremonial rites for material benefits and other-worldly pleasures, a sublimated hedonistic doctrine before which

the ideals of an inner and higher life and spiritual knowledge have their facets disfigured or eclipsed and hidden in disgrace."[1]

This, then, was the decisive turn given to the course of the Vedic stream, setting it run through successive ages along the waste-lands of the increasingly mysterious rituals and mystifying priestcraft until the waters thinned out into sparse rivulets and almost disappeared amidst the arid sands of the Hindus in their decline and all-round bankruptcy by the end of the eighteenth century.

It was about this time that scholars from Europe turned their attention towards the Vedas. They desired to make acquaintance with works which the Indians held, though only in memory, as revealed scriptures of a dateless antiquity, partly in order to probe into the conditions of life and mental development of a people whose descendents had been lately delivered into their (Europeans') care by a wise Providence and partly to see what support they could get from these ancient records for the new theories and sciences that were being just developed on the Continent of Europe. It was not easy for foreigners to get at these manuscripts which had for long become the exclusive monopoly of Brahmins. However with the patronage and material help of the East India Company they managed to get and study the texts with the aid of indigenous scholarship. They equipped themselves with sufficient knowledge of classical Sanskrit. But the Vedic language presented considerable difficulties and Sayana with his word-to-word renderings and explanations of legends and ceremonies which were utterly alien to their culture and upbringing proved to be a great boon to them. They made Sayana the base of their labours and applied to their studies their knowledge of the new sciences, Comparative Mythology, Comparative Religion, Philology. That the sciences were largely conjectural is another matter. They sought to trace parallels between the early Chaldean, Roman, Greek and other Mediterranean peoples and the Vedic society; Sayana's investiture of the Vedic hymns with a wholly ritualistic meaning, his explanations of the prayers and entreaties of the early Aryans to their Gods for wealth, cattle, women, protection from and destruction of the malevolent, supplications for waters—all these fitted in perfectly with their ideas of what these primitives should

[1] *Lights on the Upanishads* (pp. 117-120) by Sri Kapali Sastry.

have been in that early, pastoral stage of development. But they did not stop with Sayana and his ritualism nor did they accept *in toto* what he said. For in many places when Sayana comes across passages which are openly spiritual in import he does not hesitate to say so. Again in some portions he speaks of God and gods as if they were really supernatural living personalities. In such places the scholars dismissed him as unduly superstitious, for such primitive people as the emigrant Aryans could not be expected to be conversant with ideas and conceptions which come in only at a later stage of human development. It would be unnatural—an impossible exception to the general trend of human progress throughout. The Gods that were worshipped by the Vedic people were simply personified Nature-powers. Agni was the physical fire element, Indra the rain-god and Maruts the storms. Thus they were a myriad number of gods and there was polytheism. The whole of Nature was at times sung as if she was one deity—there was surely pantheism among them. To propitiate particular gods, each god, when he was being addressed, was invoked as if he was the only and sole God combining all the rest within himself. To classify this novel mode of worship a fresh term was put into currency—Henotheism, and so on. Parallels were traced between Vedic Indra and the Teutonic Thuman with his Mjolin, the Vedic 'goblin worship' and the counterpart in Turanian Chaldea. These hymns were not unlike the songs and chants of early people anywhere else in the world, when feeling helpless before mighty and powerful forces of Nature men seek to propitiate their anger and solicit their favour. Thus the modern scholars went one better than Sayana in exploding the myth of the spiritual character of the Vedic Hymns. We cannot however fail to mention that among these scholars there have been some who were deeply struck with something remarkably non-mundane in these litanies and have wondered whether after all there may not be something true in the claim made for the Veda by the country's tradition. But they have been rather exceptions than the general rule and have not influenced the general trend of western opinion and verdict. We must not also fail to record that the western scholars have brought to bear on their studies a most painstaking industry, and the splendid editions of the Vedas and Brahmanas brought out by pioneers like Max Muller are a standing monument to the almost German thoroughness with which they applied themselves to the task.

Of course industry and judgement are not synonymous nor are they always coextensive.

Max Muller observes somewhere that the authors of the Brahmanas were blinded by theology, authors of later Niruktas (etymological texts) were deceived by etymological fictions, and both conspired to mislead later authors like Sayana. Here we may add that it was Sayana who misled the later western scholars more effectively and more truly than he himself was. For truth to speak, Sayana was not a dupe. He was aware of other lines of interpretation, he refers to them and makes use of them wherever they support his avowed stand and where they conflict with him, he indifferently passes them over. He set out, as we noted, with the proclaimed intention of setting the wheels of Vedas on the rails of ritualism. He made no ceremony of delving into the Vedas for treasures of Knowledge and emerging with hands full of Ritualistic shells and Naturalistic lobsters.

III

What looked a certain death, however, proved to be just a slumber. Indian culture, Indian civilisation knows no death because it is based on the eternal verity of the Spirit—the *sanātana dharma.* Soon a many-sided powerful revivalist movement was afoot. By the middle of the last century the call to re-establish the Vedas in their sovereign pedestal for presiding over an assured and inevitable resurgence of the national life, found a vigorous expression in that stalwart champion of ancient culture, Swami Dayananda Saraswati. He called for a bold dispersal of the fog of half-baked theories and alien prejudice that had settled round the luminous Vedas and enjoined upon every son of the soil to look straight into the face of the Sun and recognise there what was indeed a Revealed Scripture. He pointed out with unanswerable proof how the concept of One Deity stood out toweringly in the Hymns with all other gods as names for its many qualities and powers. He summoned the services of the old Nairuktas and commented upon the Riks basing his interpretation on the etymological significance of the words therein and asked the world to see if there was or there was not in these Hymns a code of conduct of man, a divine law and a law of the universe. The ice was broken and the way

was once more cleared for a truer appreciation of the significance of the Vedas.

Serious students have since sought to interpret the Vedas with zeal and labour but we are afraid they have failed to keep up the initial promise. Lokamanya Tilak carried on extensive researches and announced his Arctic Theory of the Veda. With the help of clues, astronomical and others, found in the many hymns, he has traced the original home of the Vedic Aryans to the Northern Polar regions. He has also calculated on the same basis the approximate date of the hymns to be six thousand years before the Christian era. As feats of subtle reasonings and mathematical calculations these discoveries are certainly admirable but they leave the main question unanswered.

Mr. Paramasiva Iyer propounded, in the early years of the century, his Geological Theory. He has sought to prove that Vritra-Ahi of the Rig Veda is really the Glacier which is the deadliest enemy of human life and property in that glacial age in which the Aryans lived and Indra is a mighty volcano with Agni for the fire. It is the fight between Lava and Glacier that is recorded in the Riks. This, he says, is the central fact of the Riks: "The surface of the earth, the seat of life, was concealed from her vivifying lord, the Sun, and weighed down by serpents[1] and in response to her pressure her father Vishwakarman raised up mighty volcanoes which fought the glaciers, lifted up the earth, loosened the rivers, cut out new beds for them high above the old rivers overwhelmed by the glaciers, fertilised her and restored her to the embraces of her distant husband."

He has traced an 'amazing identity of Vedic and Puranic stories in the geological and chemical phenomenon' and proved that Gayatri=Ch_2, the Rik=bubble of hydro-carbon gas, and the like.

[1] Mr. Iyer has drawn parallels between the Vritra-Ahi and the Azi of Zenda Avesta, the Python of the Greeks, the Serpent invading the Paradise of the Hebrews, and the Dragon of the climbers of Alps and identified Vritra-Ahi, the serpent, with the Glacier as they correspond with each other in changing form, creeping movement, etc. *Vide* his book, *The Riks*.

Then there is the Biological Theory of Mr. V. G. Rele. Mr. Rele maintains that the biological interpretation provides the true key for understanding the Veda. These texts really give the physiology of the nervous system written by the Vedic seers in symbolic language. The Vedic deities represent different centres of activity in brain, spinal cord and other parts of the nervous system of the human body. The Riks exhibit an extraordinary knowledge of the inner organism of the body on the part of the Rishis. Naturally they must have got the knowledge by dissecting the dead bodies. "This had to be done mostly secretly in those days owing to the fear of being killed as cannibals or man-hunters; and, for the same reason, the source of this knowledge could not also be revealed. It was therefore given out that this knowledge was acquired by divine inspiration; the Vedic seers heard it from Brahman. Hence it was called Sruti."[1]

We will not say these theories are all woolly conjectures. Perhaps they could be sustained, at any rate in parts. We had an old school-teacher who used to say that the Rig Veda is nothing but Ayurveda. Possibly, he would have proved his case, had we had the temerity to ask for it, with the help of a few Riks here and few more there. But these theories do not touch the main question at all. Is there any basis for the millenniums-old tradition that the Veda is a 'Scripture of divine knowledge, divine worship, divine action'? Do the hymns contain anything in themselves to substantiate this faith voiced by countless saints and sacred books of the past? We have to make our choice one way or the other. Or, in the words of Sri Aurobindo: "We can no longer enshrine the Veda wrapped in the folds of an ignorant reverence or guarded by a pious self-deceit. Either the Veda is what Sayana says it is, then we have to leave it behind for ever as the document of a mythology and ritual which have no longer any living truth or force for thinking minds, or it is what the European scholars say it is, and then we have to put it away among the relics of the past as an antique record of semi-barbarous worship or else it is indeed Veda, a book of divine knowledge, and it becomes of supreme importance to know and to hear its message."

[1] Vide *The Vedic Gods as Figures of Biology.*

IV [1]

And Sri Aurobindo says the Vedas are truly epitomes of Knowledge, gained and bequeathed by the Rishis of old who were not bards or poets of common clay but inspired singers who poured out in living vocables the highest experiences and realisations of the soul. They were *seers*, leaders of men who had attained a high watermark of a particular culture and civilisation and these hymnal records are just the finger-prints and signposts of their spiritual and religious endeavour. The Mantras of the Veda are not of the usual human origin, their contents bespeak the presence of the Word beyond words. Their language is antique, but behind that antiquity lies the story of human language. The axis round which the entire litany revolves is the Institution of Sacrifice, Yajna, which is the highest secret of all creation, the World-Existence that had its origin in the holocaust by which the supreme Purusha offered his own Substance for its birth even as it is destined to find its deliverance and fulfilment in its own self-giving to the Creator. The Gods to whom the hymns are addressed are the powers and personalities of the Highest Godhead, enlivening with their presence and aid the Sacrifice at which they are the honoured guests, maintaining the activities of the world or worlds over which they preside. The Vedas record the workings and manifestations of this Higher Knowledge; there may be much else besides; but that is secondary. They are pre-eminently scriptures of the Knowledge and Practice of the Art of God and Science of the soul.

Such in outline are the findings of Sri Aurobindo. This is no hypothesis or theory put forward by him on deliberate study to base any chosen line of philosophy of life. His whole manner and occasion of entry into the Vedas was unpremeditated and accidental. As he himself explains, he looked into the Vedas to see if there was any evidence therein to justify the popular theories of racial animosity and conflict between the two peoples—Aryans and Dravidians of that early age—and of the utter incompatibility due to differences of

[1] This section is based on the Rig Veda Bhashya in Sanskrit by Sri T. V. Kapali Sastry whose commentary on the Riks runs along the lines of Sri Aurobindo's esoteric interpretation.

origin between the northern Sanskritic and the southern Dravidian group of languages. And he was struck to find in the hymns much that threw light on and in some ways anticipated the ways of spiritual realisations he had been charting out independently of his own accord. Some of the Mantras lucidly explained experiences that had come about, but whose significances were not clear to him before. Besides, he recognised here very clearly certain deities which had manifested themselves to him in the course of his Tapasya. He pursued his enquiry, went straight to the Riks without aid of commentaries, understanding the meanings of words in their original sense with derivative significance—a course which made a consistent and connected reading possible—and was left in no doubt that there was a Secret in the Veda which explained the reverential homage paid to it from the Upanishads downwards. He expounded his method of approach and the lines of enquiry on which he proceeded with a summary of his conclusions in a series of articles in the *Arya*[1] under the title of *Secret of the Veda.*

It may be asked, and quite relevantly, whether there is any corroboration to this finding besides the authority of Sri Aurobindo. We answer there is. The hymns in the Rig Veda[2] proclaim in unmistakable terms that the Mantras embody a secret, the Mantras are secret words which are known only to the Gods. *Asmākam rahasyāni stotrāni yuvayor-viditāni,* says seer Vasishtha addressing Mitra and Varuna, *nā vāam ninyāni achite abhūvan* (VII.61.5), 'To you are known our secret prayers, they are not concealed from you'. *Ninyāni rahasyāni api stotrāni,* prayers even though they are secret, observes Sayana in his comment. Or look to the hymn of Vamadeva:

> *Eta vishwa vidushe vedho nithani agne ninya vachamsi*
> *nivachana kavaye kavyani ashamsisham matibhir vipra ukthaih*
> (IV. 3.16)

"O Agni, Disposer, to thee who knowest these secret words, fructuous I have uttered, I have sung, enlightened with thought and prayers." The Riks revealed their meaning to man, but only to men who had

[1] A philosophical Monthly conducted by Sri Aurobindo from 1914-1921.

[2] The Hymns of the Rig Veda can be taken to represent the Vedic hymnal literature in as much as the Mantras in the other Samhitas of the Trayi are mostly taken from the Rik Samhita, as pointed out in Section I.

equipped themselves with the necessary purificatory discipline—*tapas*. Emphasising on this aspect of the Mantras, Yaska, the earliest extant Vedic Lexicographer who is also the last representative of the Nairuktas, quotes two Riks, one of which we shall reproduce here for the bold imagery adopted for explaining this truth. Drawing attention to this, Sri Aurobindo observes: "But all cannot enter into its secret meaning. Those who do not know the inner sense are as men who seeing see not, hearing hear not, only to one here and there the Word desiring him like a beautifully robed wife to a husband lays open her body."

Uta tvah pashyanna dadarsha vacham uta tvah shrinvanna shrinotyenām
Uto tvasmai tanvam visasre jayeva patya ushati suvāsāh.
(Rig Veda X. 71. 4).

'Otherwise seeing he sees not, hearing he follows not. But to him (to the qualified) she (Vak in the form of speech) reveals her form even as a loving well-drest wife disrobes herself to her husband.'

But why should secrecy have been necessary at all? Why should not the Rishis have given the knowledge they had attained to in a form which all could understand and benefit by? And are we sure we are not reading our own philosophical ideas into what after all may be just the propitiatory and invocatory songs that we are familiar with in all early societies among which the Vedic people certainly could be counted?

The early Aryans must have had their primitive and pastoral stages of development like any other people without doubt. But judging from the vigour of expression, the fullness and the force of it, the grace of symmetry and directness in the language, the aptness with which figures of poetry are handled and the side-lights which casual references throw on environmental life, it does look that these people were far removed from an age when men could only gape and babble. It rather looks more probable that they were a people who had touched a considerable mark of refinement and culture, possibly the summit of that particular cycle of civilisation. Like all early societies of that age they were governed by a strong symbolic mentality

and an intuitive vision of things. The Intellect as such had not set in its reign and when Intellect is not, Nature gets its work fulfilled by means other than Intellect. They, at any rate, the most developed among them, had a natural and more unobstructed insight into the workings of the Universe around and a more intimate awareness of the inner world than is possible for us in this intellectual age. They did not stop with appearances. With a directness that is so natural to the leap of intuitive perception they recognised that all life was instinct with and was overshadowed by, something behind it. The outer hid the inner, the lower concealed the higher. They saw that the springs of life are operated effectively from behind and above it. Behind the distinctive operations of Nature, they saw the Powers that directed the elemental forces and sought to get at them by whatever means possible. They also perceived a definite rhythm of order in all the movements of Nature and looked for the Law that underlay it. It was the Law the Powers obeyed, the Law of the highest Power. These Powers, these Gods, were in the beginning naturally a predominantly physical aspect. But gradually they came to be invested with a psychological character and Gods were looked upon not merely as deities presiding over and directing the powers of Nature but as entities that influenced and moulded the inner life of the individuals in the universe. They developed their own inner lines of discipline to reach out to these secret controllers of the destiny of men and Nature. But they kept their knowledge of the technique and results carefully guarded. Only the initiates were allowed to share it. This is the story of the Mystics all over—whether in Persia, Chaldea, Egypt or Greece. And India was no exception. The Rishis were precisely such leaders of society that attempted, persevered and succeeded in not only visioning and communing with these higher Powers or Gods but devoted their whole lives to develop the inner life for embodying the very gods within one's own purified being and with their help to soar to the Highest. In this daring adventure of theirs, they relied almost exclusively on the aid, grace and support of the higher Powers, the Gods whose presence was invoked and sustained by the choicest offerings they were capable of, by the offering of the whole of themselves as a mite of love and adoration to the Gods. This is the Yajna which figures so prominently in the Hymns.

Such a higher knowledge as this could not be shared with all, with all men high and low, men with different levels of attainment, without vulgarising the sacred knowledge and exposing the society to possible misuse of the knowledge by the ignorant. But at the same time the knowledge had to be preserved. And this task was rendered easy by the state of the language and the manner of the use of words in that age. For at that stage of human development language as an expression of human thought and emotions had not acquired the fixity and finish which comes only after a definite maturity is reached. In our age, for instance, each word has a particular significance which is fastened on it by convention. We use a particular word to denote a particular object simply because all have come to accept by convention that this word means this. Any other word will serve the purpose for us as long as others accept the same meaning for it. Language has become mechanical. But in the early stages of development and formation of human speech, words were far from the conventional apex. They retained the multi-significance of the roots from which they were derived. The roots themselves were the spontaneous expressions of responses evoked in the psychological and nervous being of man by phenomena of the objective and the subjective universes and hence each root throbbed with a self-evident meaning or meanings and needed no further explanation. Words were consciously derived from these roots and their derivative significances went side by side, so that one word could denote many objects even as the same object could be denoted by a number of words depending on how it was looked at.[1] Thus the word *Ghṛta* signified clarified butter, but it also meant brightness, as the root *ghṛ* means to shine or glisten. So also the word *go* meant among other things not only the quadruped but also "ray"—the root, from which it is derived, signifying movement. Now the Rishis with the help of such words and terminology arranged their thoughts in a system of parallelism. They borrowed self-evident figures from the environment, like the hills, rivers, forests etc. and placed behind them the psychological and spiritual truths of existence which they had perceived. Here also their choice was not arbitrary. The tree, *bhuruha*, for instance, signified human existence—since man also derived

[1] Vide *Sphota and the Spoken Word* By Sri T. V. Kapali Sastry.

his existence from the earth; the rivers, the waters, signified currents of life-energy and consciousness by virtue of their common characteristics of ceaseless movement and the nourishment they impart and so on. Thus it came to be that the hymns in which they clothed their thought were understood in the inner sense only by those who knew how to look for it, and in the outer sense by the laity. The Rishis, however, took care to see that even in the outer meaning the Riks made sense and were applicable to the external worship and ritual which go with every society of the early ages. The terminology devised and the series of figures used were such that the the hymns could be taken to apply to the outer ceremonials and sacrificial ritual while, for those who knew how to get at the esoteric sense, there was the knowledge relating to the inner worship, the inner *yajna*. The externals of worship and sacrifice were given considerable importance by these seers as training-ground for the less prepared, as vestibules through which they could enter the sanctum of the Inner Sacrifice when they were ready. Thus both the outer and the inner meaning are worked out side by side. But the psychological sense always predominates and at places it throws the external physical sense into the background. That is why certain portions do not make sense at all when interpreted in the ritualistic manner, while there is obtained generally a consistent meaning when the esoteric interpretation is applied.

That there was thus more than one sense in which the Riks were to be understood was known not only to contemporary opinion but to much later generations also. Thus Yaska[1] refers to the threefold interpretation, the threefold sense in which the Mantra was to be understood, viz. *ādhi-yajnika, ādhi-daivika* and *ādhyātmika*, the meaning as related to the sacrifice, *yajna*, as related to the gods, the cosmic Powers and as related to the life of the spirit. These three modes of interpretation seem to have been well recognised and each took to the particular interpretation to which he felt qualified. But there was the recognition of the prime importance of the spiritual interpretation. Yaska pointedly observes:

Yajna-daivate pushpa-phale devate-adhyātme va. (Nirukta 1. 6. 4.)

[1] And Yaska came at least three or four thousand years after the Vedic Age, accepting the general computation of 700 to 400 B. C. as the period in which he must have lived.

"The Yajnic is the flower and the daivic the fruit or the daivic the flower and the adhyatmic the fruit." What the commentators say on this passage is worth-noting:
"They are the knowledge of the sacrifice, knowledge of the gods and the knowledge of the Self. This is what is established by the whole Veda. If the Dharma promoting material prosperity (i. e. the Yajna which achieves it) is resorted to, then the knowledge of the gods is the fruit of it, the former becomes the flower, the latter the fruit. If on the other hand the Dharma leading to higher welfare is desired, then both the yajnic and the daivic become the flower; the daivic containing in itself the yajnic becomes the flower and the adhyatmic the fruit."

This tradition of the spiritual import of the Vedas must have been current for a long time till it was eclipsed by the ritualist tradition receiving tremendous impetus and prestige at the hands of Sayana in the 14th century A.D. Even as late as the 13th century—a century before Sayana—Anandatirtha known as Maddhwacharya revived the tradition by writing commentary on the first 40 Suktas of the Rik Samhita. Even after Sayana, Sri Raghavendra Swami wrote the Mantrartha-manjari explaining and amplifying the Bhashya of Madhwacharya and he has quoted therein an ancient Puranic text which says that the Vedas have three meanings—*trayorthah sarva vedeshu.*[1]

The Mantras, the Riks themselves, we must note, were not poetical compositions, written to record experiences objective or subjective, in the manner of our poets and authors. They were not minted in the mart of mind. They had a deeper and other origin. The Rishis themselves disclaimed authorship of the Riks. They were not creators but *seers* who perceived the truth of the *mantra.* That is why Sayana observes,

na hi vedasya kartaro drashtarah sarva eva hi,

"they are no creators of the Veda but seers". In the course of their *tapasya,* the Rishis came across truths in an un-ideaed form which

[1] Vide *Lights on the Veda,* pp. 84-85.

pressed upon them and through them for expression. From the depths and heights of the soul where they perceived the spiritual truths of Divine import the Rishis dug them out, *nirākhanan*, (Shatapatha Br. VII. 5.2.52), they carved them out, *takshan* (RV. 1.62.13), to the best of their capacity and clothed them with human speech. The Rishis variously refer to the Inner Ocean, *antaḥ samudra* or the supreme ether *paramam vyoma*, from where they received the *riks*. That is the explanation of the traditional ascription of non-human, *apaurusheya* character to the Mantras.

If we approach the Riks with an understanding of this their background, with a readiness to get into the spirit of the age and proceed on the lines chalked out by Sri Aurobindo, the hymns do not appear any longer to be the simple folk-songs or abject supplications of a primitive, barbarian people they are fancied and made out to be. Instead, they reveal their true character of being the indices, the charts of the spiritual adventure of highly developed men who had pioneered into the realm of the Unknown. Seekers of Light they realised and enlisted the help and support of the Gods and Goddesses in their fight with the sons of Darkness who are ever after man to thwart his progress. They perceived the Gods face to face and established a living intercourse with them. Like children to the father, they gathered and delivered themselves now to Agni, now to Indra. They narrate with nostalgic fondness the thunder of the carriage, the hue of the chargers and the dazzle of the sun-bright apparel as they recall the visit of the Lord to partake of their choicest offering of Soma, the delightful draught of all life's experience. They call upon Agni to take birth in them as their Son and lead them as their Captain. They address the celestial Twins, Varuna and Mitra to cure with their vast purity and harmony the crookednesses and imperfections that disfigure the human life. They call upon the mighty Indra to smash the Enemy—the nescient Darkness—which baffles them so that the Waters (life-giving and life-building energies) —waters that flow *straight* and not zigzag, some of them stream *upwards*—may debouch, inundate and fertilise the onward course of their journey. They describe the route of their ascent, 'from summit to summit', and speak picturesquely of the several breaks of the Dawn of illumination before they arrive at the threshold of the Sun Effulgent.

The Veda is a fitting commemoration of the supreme spiritual effort that was the high note of Vedic Civilisation. It forms the Prologue to the eternal Drama of endless Acts that is being enacted on the hallowed soil, *punya bhumi*, of India ever since.

M. P. PANDIT

"It is when knowledge reaches its highest aspects that it is possible to arrive at its greatest unity. The highest and widest seeing is the wisest; for then all knowledge is unified in its one comprehensive meaning."

SRI AUROBINDO

"Knowledge and will have naturally to be one before either can act perfectly."

SRI AUROBINDO

Sidelights on Tantra

I

IN this brief study we shall make an attempt to appreciate the basic principles that underlie the Agamas, generally called Tantra Shastra. We shall make a general reference to their relation to the Vedic and Vedantic schools of philosophic thought and spiritual discipline. We shall take note of the salient features and evaluate, in the light of Sri Aurobindo's teachings, the part they have played in the past which has trickled down to the current times. When we look upon the past of India, upon the lines of her cultural history in its meandering course, with all the vicissitudes of such a long life that has few parallels elsewhere, we are struck by a consistent note. It is a note that permeates every successive attempt to revive the ancient spirit and restate in the language and form suited to the conditions of the age the high ideals, the subtle ideas and sublime truths perceived and worked out by the early builders of Indian society in its infancy as well as in adolescence. What is this perpetual note that arrests our attention? Certainly, it is the presence of a large synthesis conceived and worked out first by the ancient architects of society, the seers and sages of the Vedic Age and later in its decline taken up by the revivalist attempts of the Brahmanas and the Upanishads. Nowhere this spirit and vision of synthesis is so open and exacting as in the teachings of the Gita which heals up the hiatus or the apparent gulf of the intermediate ages and builds a comprehensive system having for its basis the spirit of the Veda and the substance of the Vedanta, takes up all the accumulated knowledge of the past, assimilates the essentials into the body and spirit of its instructions, and presents a really grand synthesis not as a metaphysical system but as a comprehensive teaching for application under all conditions of life.

But there has been all along another distinctive Synthesis embodied in the teachings of Agamas which, while professing general allegiance

to the Vedic systems of philosophy and thought and spiritual discipline, is apparently different in its method of approach and is comprehensive, all-inclusive in its spirit, devoid of the exclusiveness associated with all the religious schools and rituals based upon the Smritis and Shrutis of Vedic ceremonialism. It is difficult to plumb exactly into their origins, much less to find the precise period of the beginnings of their teachings though the extant works of the Agamas can be traced to approximate periods of India's history. For we must note that the substance of the teachings may have and certainly has come from early ages, though the written texts may have appeared later on at different times which may be ascertained with less difficulty. Let us first be sure of the sense in which the term Agama is used and came to be called Tantra and then proceed with the main principles of the framework of the Agamas in general and the Shakta Tantras in particular.

In dealing with the purposes of the study of Vyakarana, Sanskrit Grammar, Patanjali uses the word Agama in the sense of Veda or Vedic knowledge; and in the Yoga Sutras he speaks of three criteria of knowledge—Perception (pratyaksha), Inference (anumana), and Revelation or authentic utterance (agama). Thus we find that because all sacred scriptures were considered to be revealed the Veda was termed Agama; and when another class of literature, viz. Tantra, scriptural in import, appeared and began to hold sway over a vast mass of people, the term Nigama was applied to Veda while Agama though not exclusively but generally came to denote Tantra and to preserve the distinction between the Veda and the Tantra on the one hand and ensure its sanctity like the Veda on the other. Now it is well known that the Rishis of the Veda are not authors of the Veda but seers of the Mantra while the Veda is understood to be eternal even as the Divine Wisdom that is embodied in it. The Agamas, whoever may be their writers and whatever their dates be, are held to be essentially Scriptures revealed by the Supreme Shiva or Hari according to the nature and class of the Agamas concerned.[1] Let us leave aside for consideration

[1] The dates of the extant Agamas even when they are settled with certainty do not at all mean that the teachings they embody came to birth along with the books. It is necessary to strike a note of caution on this point in view of the current beliefs among a section of the educated classes, Indian and Western, that the Agamas were later inven-

the Bauddha and Jaina Agamas which openly disclaim any Vedic authority and purport in fact to oppose and supplant the ancient tradition, and we have the Vaishnava, the Shaiva and the Shakta Agamas. The Vaishnava Agamas look upon Vishnu as the Supreme and other gods and goddesses his aides; so do the Shaiva Agamas assign the highest position to Shiva. The Shakta Agamas too claim the most superior position for the Goddess in practice.[1] But in theory She is not put above Vishnu or Shiva. She is indeed the Creatrix of the Trinity, Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra—the Mother of the Universe. But She is also acclaimed as the Yoga-Maya of Vishnu as in Chandi Saptashati or as in other texts the Para Shakti, the Supreme Consort of Shiva. There is another notable difference between the Shakta and the other two classes of Agamas. For while the Shaiva and Vaishnava Agamas continue and preserve the Vedic tradition of confining their knowledge and application only to the four Varnas with some restraint, the Shakta declares in a more liberal spirit that it is for all people irrespective of

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tions or scriptural adjustments wrought by the endeavours of later writers. Shiva-worship side by side with the Vishnu-worship was current in the Southern (Tamil) India as early as the first and second century of the Christian Era as is evidenced in the sacred poems of Nayanmars, Shaiva Saints, and the Prabandhams of Alwars, Vaishnava Saints, whose times extend from the 2nd to the 8th century. Not only worship, but references to Agamas are frequent therein. In the North, the Besnagar Pillar Inscription of the 2nd century B. C. bears clear testimony to Vishnu worship in temples. The Inscription records the erection of Garuda Pillar in the temple of Vasudeva and indicates thereby that that worship had been accepted by a foreign Greek ambassador from Taxila.

That the major Puranas and the main Agamas of Shaiva and Vaishnava persuasion were written and completed by the end of the Gupta period is admitted on all hands by students of history. But Vasudeva worship is referred to by Panini whose time is at least some four centuries before Christ. Thus it is wrong to deduce from the available texts that the teachings themselves started with these books. It is quite possible that Shiva worship was a feature of the Indus Valley Civilisation and the recent researches based upon the excavations throw some light on prehistoric India and have given shock to the accepted notions of historians in regard to stories of Ancient India.

[1] We must note that this was a radical departure from the Vedantic tradition. For while the tradition looked upon the Purusha as the Lord of all and the One Substratum of All, the Shakta Agama i.e. Tantra increasingly looked to the Energy aspect of the Supreme, to the Prakriti in effect and this departure was responsible, as pointed out by Sri Aurobindo, for the later loss of its purity of intention in the mechanism of its means.

their Varna. It is the scripture of the common man. All the Agamas are also known as the Tantra Shastra. Tantra in Sanskrit has many meanings; but the one significance of relevance to us here is *act*. Act—and ritual is an act—is the one characteristic common to all the Agamas and hence they have come to be known as the Tantra Shastra.

A striking feature common to these Agamas is the high reverence in which they hold the Vedas. They do not, as is imagined by many, run counter to the spirit of the Veda. On the contrary, they declare that the knowledge in the Veda is high, beyond the reach of common men and claim to hold in themselves the substance and essence of the supreme knowledge embedded in that Scripture. And indeed it is so. For while the Upanishads represent the revivalist attempts of the jnana portions of the Vedas, the practical side of the Vedic teaching, not as related to the Ritual—for that was the care of the Brahmanas—but as concerning the inner life of the seeker, the esoteric teaching as we would put it, was sought to be revived, continued and preserved by these later Yogas and Tantras. As Sri Aurobindo observes; "...The mental images of the Vedic gods figured in the mantras (were replaced) by mental forms of the two great deities, Vishnu and Shiva, and their Shaktis and by corresponding physical images which are made the basis both for external worship and for the Mantras of inward adoration and meditation, while the psychic and spiritual experience which the inner sense of the Vedic hymns expresses finally disappeared into the psycho-spiritual experience of Puranic and Tantric religion and Yoga." Such knowledge as this—of the building of the inner life—was traditionally handed down from father to son, from Guru to Shishya and the Agamas represent a worthy compilation and preservation of this inheritance from the forefathers. There are many traces of the Vedic influence and outlook in these Agamas. There is, for instance, a monothesim in them. It is now Shiva, now Vishnu or Hari who is the Supreme. There is also, as in the Rig Veda, an apparent polytheism. For many are the deities worshipped and invoked by the aspirant—though their position is one of subordination to, and ultimately identity with the Supreme. There is even a tendency to Monism perceptible in the Shakta scriptures. The devotee worships the Deity and finds his glorious culmination in the final act of complete identification

and merging in the Higher—eliminating all difference between the worshipper and the worshipped.

But these Agamas are not a mere conglomeration of various systems of teachings and past traditions. They work up a large synthesis instead. And synthesis is no collection or heaping up of diverse elements; it is not eclecticism either. The synthesis we meet with in the Agamas is a living whole in which every element of value is preserved and falls into its just position and proportion—all together making quite a new and developing system which embraces the entire life in its sweep, the man in the individual and man in the aggregate, man the thinker and the doer, man the soul. This synthesis of the Tantra is in fact more comprehensive than the synthesis of the Gita and in a sense more in consonance with the Intention in life. For the ultimate teaching of the Gita comes to this: action is unavoidable, none can subsist without it. So make the best of it, use it—such of it as allows itself to be so used—first of all for your own moral and spiritual elevation leading to a progressive surrender to the Lord of all so that once you are completely given to Him you may have nothing more to do with this transitory and unhappy world, even though you may continue to do work for the sake of others. Life is a lever for rising upwards and shooting beyond it, not a field to be worked upon and cherished as an enjoyable creation of the Divine Being. The Tantric synthesis however looks upon life with a different and other vision. There is nothing to be rejected from what the Supreme Shakti has created. Even that which the Gita enjoins upon all seekers to reject, the *bhoga*, need not be given up. After all the world is for the *bhoga* of the Ishwara or the Ishwari and man at his highest, representing as he does an effective portion of Him or Her, must enjoy the *bhoga*, conscious of his part as the vehicle or centre of the Enjoyer. That this *bhoga-marga*, Vama-marga as it is called, later fell into disrepute and degeneracy is quite another matter which could be easily explained and does not detract from the sublime conception at the base, the high standard of purity and sincerity that was expected of one if he was to discharge conscientiously his responsibility as an unsullied channel of the Joy of *Bhoga*. It means a tremendous labour of discipline and self-exceeding, in one's own personal and inner, and the outer and collective life—a continuous action, *tantra*, on so many planes.

Let us now turn to a closer view of the Tantric system and scrutinise the four famous parts, *pada*—which go to make up the whole. Every way of religious and spiritual life has a basis to stand upon, a metaphysical base providing the philosophical Truths underlying the system, its genesis, rationale, the aim. In fact it is the strength and validity of this source of inspiration that determine the course and power of the outflowing manifestation. A systematised presentation (in intellectual terms) of the underlying Idea, a rational working out of its ways and means of expression, an examination of its fundamentals—in the premisses and in the conclusions—*vis a vis* other prevailing Idea-truths, is what we would call the metaphysical basis of a system and the Tantra Shastra has doubtless a philosophy, a metaphysics of its own. If the esoteric message of the Vedas is the substance of its practical teaching, the Vedanta with the Sankhya in a modified form provides the background, we may say, even the backbone of the philosophy of the Tantra. The Supreme is One and All is He. Only there it is Brahman, here it is Vishnu, Shiva or Shakti. The psychology of the Tantra is the psychology of the Sankhyas which itself is a side-product of the Upanishadic thought. These teachings are developed and extended so as to apply to a larger and larger part of man; the emphasis is sought to be shifted from the soul and mind to the other parts of the being, the heart and emotions and the will as well. In fact it is a restatement of the Wisdom of the Upanishads in terms suited to the changing conditions in which society was passing with varying stresses on the different elements that go to make up the complex personality of man. But this Knowledge-part, *Jnana-pada*, could not be all. At best it can provide a satisfying and even a compelling understanding of the aim and purpose of life. Beyond that it has to go, it has to be accompanied by steps taken to put it into practice, to translate it into action. And the Tantra has the second pada, the *Yoga-pada* for the purpose.

It is certainly not that Yoga was born with the Agamas or the Tantriks or that there were no Yogins before they came. It cannot be said either that even Raja Yoga was first propounded by Patanjali. The truth is that Yoga is as old as the Vedas at least and the Institution of Sacrifice, *Yajna*, in the Vedas is just a symbol of the one Yoga in which the Rishis were ceaselessly engaged, the Yoga by which

they endeavoured, invoked and received in themselves the gods from high on. In the very nature of things there was no set uniformity in every detail of the individual pursuits of the Yoga though in large outlines they always corresponded. Handed down by tradition for centuries, it was perhaps Patanjali who first picked up one line of Yoga, and methodised the system of Raja Yoga in his famous Sutras. But Tantric Yoga goes beyond that, it infuses an inner discipline on the lines marked out by the Guru to the disciple. Life is sought to be purified, uplifted and equipped for effective embodiment and living the truths in accordance with the principles laid out in the *Jnana-pada.*

The Tantra Shastra does not stop with the individual. It recognises that for all purposes man is but a member of the larger society around. He influences those around and is influenced by their movements, by their thoughts, aspirations and actions to a greater extent than he normally affects the aggregate. It is not enough to educate and develop one unit. It is indispensable to mould the general environment also on the same lines so that there could be an identity of aspiration, a mutually helpful and congenial intercourse between the individual and the collective. It recognises also that human mind in the mass is less attracted to the abstract and the subtle and goes on to provide significant rituals and ceremonies by which it could be gradually drawn to the inner truth of things. This is the *Kriya-pada.* External ceremonies, ritual, worship have played a notable part in the awakening of the normally extrovert consciousness of man to the reality of an Inner Presence; they impinge upon the senses and sense-faculties of man with considerable force and leave impressions which in the cumulative result effect an opening through some part into the larger being of himself. Effort at such social and collective religious practices is encouraged. Congregational worship has a stimulating effect and power of invocation not generally realised by most. The atmosphere created by the pressure of a single Idea, a single mounting aspiration in a multitude of hearts simultaneously striving for the same end gets charged with a force and intensity which the individuals share, consciously or unconsciously, each benefitting by the all, each individual aspiration and realisation contributing to the general but also absorbing and growing on the strength and nourishment received from the total and the general. It is in this light that

the elaborate ritual-cum-worship aspect of the Tantra is to be examined. This aspect of the Tantra bears a close resemblance to and recalls the Ritual of the Brahmanas, the Yajna of the Veda. There is no more the full figure of the Yajna; yet an important ritual in the construction of Temple and the installation of the Idol is the *Kumbhaabhisheka*, considered to be a *Yaga*. Thus even the tradition of the old ritual ceremony is absorbed and carried forward in a newer form.

And this is not all. The seeker is given a philosophy with which he equips himself intellectually; he is initiated into a Yoga that could yield the truth of the philosophy for his living; he is provided with an environment and an outer scaffolding suited to the growth and outflowering of his faith and realisation. But the spiritual effort, fostered and built up with such an all-round care and eye for detail, is not meant to be bottled up in its results within the limits of the individual frame. Liberation of the soul from the bonds of the lower Prakriti and a release into the heights of the Spirit does not form the end of such a comprehensive endeavour. The ideal individual of the Tantric Yoga has a responsibility to others less fortunate than himself, he is looked upon as a *Siddha*, a perfect individual for the outpouring of the Shakti he is in communion with. He has to have dealings with men and society, he has to discharge all the responsibilities that devolve on him by virtue of the pre-eminent position he has attained, not without some help from the society. He has to guide and lead others. The Shastra lays down the code of conduct, the ways of functioning—the *Charya*—for these mentors of men. Relations and activities of men in the spiritual path are governed by rules and modes of conduct other than those that are prescribed by the Dharma of the age for the laity. That is because their thoughts and their actions proceed on a different basis; they have another motive-force and other ends in view. Their attitude to life, their outlook on the world, is different from that of common humanity and things do not appear to them in the same hue and light in which they do to others. As a rule man looks only at the surface of things, thinks—when he does at all—with an insufficient faculty called mind and proceeds as best as he could. But one who has effected a change in his make-up by dint of *tapasya*, and stationed himself on a deeper basis necessarily governs his life-movement with different considera-

tions which may at times strike the convention-ridden mind as opposed to reason or morality even as the actions of an adult human being may well appear to be harsh, cruel and stupid—when they are really otherwise—to an infant. The Tantra Shastra recognises and provides for the need of such a higher type of being to proceed on different basis of action in the fourth pada, the *Charya-pada* and enjoins upon him to work out the progressive weal of the rest. Mark the three ways of worship of the Tantriks: the godly way, *divya bhava*, the way of the hero, *vira bhava*, and that of the animal, *pashu bhava* which alone is governed by the ordinary stereotyped rules of conduct.

This in brief is the rationale of the four padas of the Tantra, the Jnana pada, Yoga pada, Kriya pada and Charya pada. A Tantra is whole and complete only when it has these four parts. We can now better appreciate the large spirit that has actuated the Tantric sages. But no human institution fashioned by human hands in Time is known to have escaped the decay and disease inevitable with the wear of age and the Tantric system has been no exception. And we need not be surprised when we find votaries of the Tantra attaching exclusive importance to the externals of the cult, to the minutiae and formulae totally forgetful of the original intention of the system-builders. Thus when it is asserted that what is of utmost importance in the Kriya pada is strict observance, to the very letter, of the requirements in measurement and design in the construction of the temple and performance of the ritual or when it sought to enforce uniform rules for all relating to details of daily life as all-sufficing commandments of the Charya pada, one can only smile if he has enough detachment or sigh at human stupidity which competes with the march of ages in pulling down lofty structures of the ancients.

Before concluding this section on the Tantric synthesis we cannot resist the temptation of drawing attention to the parallel between this and the New Synthesis, the synthesis worked out in the Teachings of Sri Aurobindo. Not that this our system has been modelled after the Tantric, though it is true that the Tantric truths have gone into the making of it even as the Vedantic conceptions have. But they do not, by any means, form the prototypes; they are important elements; we will not go into the question further for the moment but only point out an interesting correspondence between the Tantric Quartette

and the Quartette of writings Sri Aurobindo found necessary to broad-base his vast system, for Metaphysics and Philosophy, for the realisation of the fundamental truths in one's being, for the development of social psychology in consonance with the principles enunciated and finally for the actual working out of the Unity of man.

II

It is not accurate to describe this ancient religion of India now current as Puranic. Neither the Gods of the current religion nor the metaphysics and philosophy—Shastra—are really Puranic in origin. The Puranas are compilations of the legendary lore of the country, giving different accounts of the cosmogony of the universe—accounts of the primary creation, the secondary creation, narrations of the geneology of the progenitors of mankind, cycles of time, rolls of the dynasties of kings, etc.—*puranam pancha-lakshanam.* The Puranas are more historical—if history they can be called—interspersed with philosophical or religious stories for the mental and moral elevation of man and society. The Gods of the Hindu religion are in fact Tantric Gods. And the Gods of the Tantra are not sudden arrivals on the scene. They are really a continuation of the line of Gods of the Veda. Not in the same form and name of course, but with necessary modifications inevitable with the incidence of Time on tradition.

The Vedic Gods, as we have noted elsewhere while dealing with the subject in fuller detail, have a twofold aspect to the seers of the Veda. In their exterior aspect they are essentially Nature-powers. Agni is the elemental fire, Indra the rain-god, Surya the solar orb, Maruts the storm-gods and so on. But they have another, psychological character also and this was more important to those initiated into the mystery of the Vedic religion. These Gods are powers indeed, but not merely the powers of Nature. They are rather higher Powers, Personalities of the Godhead having cosmic field for their action. There are also lower gods who preside over the elemental forces of nature, over movements in the physical world and also movements in the inner world of man. Besides presiding over the Fire element in creation, Agni is looked upon as the deity controlling and promoting the upward flame, the agni in man stationed on the various levels of

his being — as the agni in life, *prana-agni*, as the flame of aspiration in the heart, as the consuming quest for knowledge in the mind. He has other functions also. Similarly, Indra is the God governing the higher regions of the luminous mind, the Maruts controlling and contributing to the life-powers and thought-powers of man. Thus the Gods are cosmic Powers with specific functions in the external world of Nature as well as with more important and significant charge in the inner world that supports it from behind and above. The sages of the Tantra carried on the tradition in the essentials that mattered. The Gods are very much the same here also, only the external functions in their physical aspect which predominate in the common mind of the early times have been appropriately relegated to the background when they are not altogether dispensed with. Thus Agni of the Veda continues in the Tantra, with a change of name certainly, yet with the same functions and even the new name, Kumara, Child, is significant for the Agni-origin it preserves. Agni is Kumara, Child of the Supreme Shiva. In the Rig Veda Agni is in the forefront of the Gods, their guide, their messenger. Here he is their chief of Powers who leads them to victory, the commander behind whom they line up. In the Veda Agni is regarded by the seers as the all-effecting and all-knowing pilot of their journey. Kumara is also looked up to for his immense store of knowledge and wisdom by these seers of later times. Again the mighty Indra is there, but in the Tantra and the Puranas his part is taken up by Rudra the powerful who brooks no obstacle. The hosts of Indra—the Maruts —continue as the *pramathas* of Rudra. Indra the *marutwan*, leader of the hosts of Maruts, the storm-gods or life-powers, continues to play his effective part as Rudra the lord of the *pramathas*, Pramathanatha. The Sun, the Highest God of the Veda is also here as Vishnu—a name which is applied to the Supreme Sun in the Rig Veda itself. Aditi the mother of All is not there under the same nomenclature, but there is the Supreme Shakti, called variously Uma, Gouri etc. All the important Gods are there. The other minor gods with mainly physical functions and less of psychological have been consigned to the position of the *Dik-palakas*, guardians of the several quarters or of some other minor importance. Newer Gods have arrived, true, but the older ones have not been altogether supplanted and totally

forgotten, they retain their due supremacy though in different form.

We have referred to that interesting feature of the Tantra, namely the recognition of the Supreme Deity as the Highest with a simultaneous adoration of a number of other deities. The sages of the Tantra do not see any inconsistency in the position, for they recognise that this creation is not a unitary system but a gradation of worlds spread over a rising tier of consciousness and planes and the various Gods and Goddesses are higher beings, powers and entities deriving their authority from the Supreme to participate and act or preside over their spheres of domain. There is a regular hierarchy of Gods some of whom are far above the highest heavens of human reach. But there are also Gods and Goddesses closer to the human level. They are more readily accessible to those that aspire to them and in some cases the seeker on the Tantric path looks to the aid and lead of these deities in his effort. They are endowed with capacities and powers beyond normal human possiblity, but they are not all for that reason divine in nature. There are higher and lower classes of them, *Uchcha* and *Kshudra* devatas. Those that are nearest to the earth-plane, swarming in the vital world overtopping the physical, are usually of the latter type. They respond very readily to the approaches of those that seek their help, but they do so mainly for their own purpose, namely to get hold of the particular human vehicle and convert it into a centre for their activity on the earth. They may and do answer the call of the seeker in the beginning but in the end they let him down, rather roughly, once their purpose is fulfilled. The seeker is misled, his inner progress comes to a standstill if it does not end in disaster. The Kshudra-devatas mislead the seeker with petty glamorous gifts, induce a false sense of progress and *siddhi*, prevent the dawn of real Jnana which would expose their whole game and succeed in enslaving the man for their purpose at the cost of his soul which is betrayed into misadventure. It is to eliminate all such chances and possibilities of mishap that orthodox spiritual tradition frowns upon and strongly discourages occult lines of effort in which intercourse with the beings of other worlds is not rare. But we must remember at the same time that all the Devatas or deities are not of this type. There are benevolent deities who answer equally readily to the prayers of the devotee and their help is inestimable for him if only he keeps his Ideal pure and

aloft. If he aspires only for the Highest the deity helps him, takes him a long way, not merely with spiritual aid but help of other kinds as well. The Tantra Shastra has done signal service in emphasising that though all the devatas are of the same divine origin, yet each has a special stress in its character, each is meant to actualise and help to actualise the particular potentiality of the Supreme in creation. Thus certain deities have it within their power to confer wealth, material and spiritual, some to confer health of mind and body, some have an exclusively spiritual function. It is again a fact to be noted that prayer to an indefinite something, to an Impersonal divinity can only evoke an impersonal or indefinite response. If a response is sought to be evoked for a particular need, the prayer could be fruitful when it is addressed to a canalised centre of the divinity, the Personal form which is active for the purpose in question, and that is precisely what the devata in its higher sense is in the Tantra. Spiritual progress with the help of deities as these is rendered easy and safe. The sincerity with which the seeker puts himself to their care guarantees safety against the rocks and steeps in the path, the progress is smoother and the growing realisation richer by reason of the happy contribution made and especial gifts conferred on him by these chosen deities, *Ishta-devatas*.

The Tantra Shastra develops the means wherewith to commune with the Gods is rendered possible. Man is endowed with faculties all of which are not active or perceptible to the physical eye, but are nonetheless real; and given the necessary touch of awakening and opportunity for development they function with much more effect and with an infinitely larger range than the normally active sense organs. The ancients knew this and developed various lines of discipline for the development of this less-cared-for and hidden side of man in which lies the means for his deliverance from helpless subjection to the bonds of physical nature. There are the many lines of Yoga, including the Hatha Yoga, Mantra Yoga, Raja Yoga, Laya Yoga, not to speak of Devotion and Knowledge, each with its own basis, technique and process of functioning and the seeker has to choose in accordance with the aptitude of his nature and demands of his soul which way he would commence. Now the Tantriks took over these Yogas, as they were, improved upon them with their special

knowledge of the occult worlds and applied these means for opening up the inner centres that window upon the supraphysical and still higher regions. But they did not stop with that. They developed another Sadhana which also had significant origins with the Vedic Rishis—the *mantra*. The Mantra-sadhana has survived to this day as the most significant contribution of the Tantras to the spiritual heritage of mankind. A Mantra, as is well known, is not a mere letter or collection of letters, with some meaning. It is the sound-body of a Power charged with the intense vibrations of the spiritual personality of the creator or the seer of the Mantra. The Mantra is an ever-living embodiment of the Truth and Power which have found expression in it through the medium of the Rishi or Yogin who has given them that body. And when a Mantra is uttered, under proper conditions, it is not the feeble voice of the reciter that goes forth to evoke the response of the Gods to whom it is addressed, but the flame of *tapasya* and realisation, that is lying coiled up in the body of that utterance. The vibrations issuing from the Mantra are its own and they create the necessary conditions in and around the reciter appropriate to the reception of the response from the deity to whom the address is made. The form of the Mantra may be coherent words or may be simple letters arranged in a certain order. The Tantra has thus formulated some seed-letters, *Bija-akshara*, which the seeker uses as the Mantra. These *Bijaksharas* have been endowed with a perennial store of power by the Tantric seers and it needs only the living touch of the Guru to set them awake in the disciple. This is the true sense in which the use of the Mantras is to be understood. They are not, as at times the superficial mind may be tempted to suppose, just convenient aids for concentration, mechanical devices for keeping the mind from wandering.

These are the essentials of the Tantra Sadhana—the Devata, the Mantra and the Guru. The Devatas are certainly not worshipped in the abstract. They are approached in the form in which they revealed themselves to the inner eye of these seers. For these Gods and Goddesses though they may not have the physical form of the gross kind have yet their own characteristic figure and colour. They have their own vehicles, *vāhana*, their auras of specific colour. Some of them reveal their presence in certain definite symbols. All these are

matters of experience with the Tantric seers who proceeded to render these subtle forms and figures in their physical correspondences as close and faithful as possible. Hence the sacredness and importance attached to the images and figures in the Tantric ritual. The image, *murti*, or the diagram, *yantra*, are the meeting places of the Invisible Presence of the Deity and the sense-bound soarings of human aspiration.

The Bijakshara, the Mantra of the seed-letter, is also no construction or invention of the imaginative Tantriks. These letters have an individuality of their own, their own shade and colour and reveal themselves as such. Each seed-letter refers to a certain principle related to the Tattwa of the Deity. And it could by itself be a Mantra or form a Mantra in conjunction with other seed-letters or words.

Then there is the Guru, who carries the Tantric tradition in himself, is instinct in some measure with the living presence of the deity invoked and who implants the Mantra along with the activating personal force of his own in the disciple. The Mantra-dynamis is set in motion within the being of the disciple by the Guru and if only he would co-operate by assiduous attention and compliance with the needs of the growing Sadhana the progress is assured and the goal sure of reach. The Guru, the Deity, the Mantra are all equally important. The Shastra goes so far as to combine them in the identity of a single whole, and with reason. For the Guru is present in the Mantra through the influence he puts into it while initiating the disciple. The Devata is present in the Mantra which is indeed the Sound-body of the deity. Again the Devata is also present in the person of the Guru. And it is the Mantra which works out the Sadhana. That is why it is said, the Guru, the Devata and the Mantra are one, *guru-devata-manūnām aikyam.*

Thus it will be seen that the Tantra Shastra attaches great importance to all the three essentials of the Sadhana. The Guru is much more than the physical appearance he wears; he is looked upon as the embodiment of the Deity sought to be realised or attained; to look upon him as a human being like any other is not merely wrong but also a dangerous delusion. Then there is the image in which the deity is worshipped. The image or the form is the 'material foundation' to form the 'physical nodus' for the act of external worship. To look upon such an image as mere stone is profane. Again the

Mantra has a special character, it is the body of a spiritual truth or deity. To look upon it as mere letters is to blaspheme the sacred character of the Mantra. Thus the Tantriks have a famous dictum which sums up the Tantric position in regard to the Guru, the Image and the Mantra: "To hell he goes who mistakes the Guru for a human, who takes the image for a piece of stone, who looks upon the Mantra as mere letters."[1]

III

This, then, is the Tantric system in its fundamentals. We see that there is nothing in it which runs radically counter to the ancient spirit of the Vedic teachings. On the other hand there is much in conformity with it or in continuation of it. It has assimilated the Vedic spirit and revived it in a modified form. If there is a note critical and antagonistic to the Vedas in some of the extreme texts of the Tantra, it is in the nature of a rejoinder provoked by criticism of the later Vedists, the Smritikaras that the Tantra, unlike the Veda, has no sacred character about it because all castes, varnas, including women, have access to it, and such other insinuations. We have referred to the esteem in which they hold the Vedas. The central feature of the Vedic ritual, viz. the Yajna is taken up in the Ritual of the Tantra with suitable changes and there is no temple without a *Yāga-shālā*, Sacrificial Hall. The gods of the Veda continue to adorn the Tantric pantheon; their functions continue, but vary in form; the names undergo a change. The same gods are worshipped under different names and, what is remarkable, at times the very same Mantras and gods in the Rig Veda figure in the Tantra in all their grandeur. We shall illustrate this point as it is important to show how the Tantra has worked its way up to adumbrate in it the gods of the Vedic pantheon. We shall take an example from the Prapanchasara-tantra which deals with many deities, Vaishnava, Shaiva, Shakta without distinction of superiority of any one over the other.

Agni in the Rig Veda is a deity of paramount importance without whose help it is impossible for the sacrificer to proceed. Agni is the

[1] देशिके मानवभ्रान्ति प्रतिमासु शिलामतिम्।
मन्त्रेष्वक्षरबुद्धिं च कुर्वाणो निरयं व्रजेत्॥

seer who finds the way, the *pāvaka* who burns the dross and cleanses the seeker of all sin and impurity, carries him through all obstacles, like a boat over the seas *naveva sindhum*. In the Shakta Tantra the same Deity is worshipped as Durga, the indomitable, the protectrix who carries the devotee safe across the sea of misery, the ocean of birth and death, *bhavasāgara-nauḥ*. And what is more important, in one place the exact Mantra addressed to Agni in the Veda is applied here to Durga.

It is in the text referred to above that we come across three Mantras which have been combined together to form a hundred letters and give what is known as the *Shatākshari Vidya*. The first Mantra consisting of 44 letters, in *trishtup* metre, is bodily taken from the 99th Sukta of the first Mandala in the Rig Veda.

Agni is the seer, knower of all. It lies in his power to render us all help as a result of his fore-knowledge. Knowledge is a most priceless possession of man and without it he is rudderless in the sea of life. And Agni deprives the enemy of this indispensable possession. To him, says the Rishi, let us offer our choicest gift, the very sap of life, the distilled juice of Ananda, the Soma, so that pleased, he would transport us over all the eddies and whirls, tides and waves of obstruction and misfortune that beset life. 'Like a boat across the waters,' is a favourite image of the ancients. It is repeated in the Upanishads, it also finds mention in the Tantric text referred to. Here is the Rik and the English rendering:

जातवेदसे सुनवाम सोममरातीयतो नि दहाति वेदः।
स नः पर्षदति दुर्गाणि विश्वा नावेव सिन्धु दुरितात्यग्निः॥

'To the Knower of all Birth (Agni) we press Soma, to him who consumes the knowledge (or wealth) of the enemy. Let Agni carry us across all the obstructions like a boat over the river.'

In the Veda the Rik is ascribed to Rishi Kashyapa; in the Tantric text also the Seer of the Mantra is Kashyapa. There the deity is Agni, here it is Durga.

Then follows the second part of the Shatakshari (hundred-lettered Mantra) of 32 letters, in *anushtup* metre, which again is a verbatim reproduction of the 12th Rik in the 59th Sukta of the seventh Mandala

in the Rig Veda. The Rik is addressed to Rudra as Tryambaka, father of the Three (worlds). The Rishi aspires towards immortality for himself and for others who have engaged themselves in the Yajna, the *antar-yajna*. He has a claim for immortality as a child of the Gods, a position he has attained not merely by his endeavours but by the benign grace of the Gods themselves. But this high status of immortality cannot be won and retained by any one without a certain elevation and strength of purity; the utmost that human effort can build up in the direction is inadequate. Only the Divine can promote and shape the requisite all-round strength and fitness. Again desire, want, greed, lust bring in their train disappointment, grief, unhappiness, disease and ultimately death. And for those that aspire for immortality there should be nothing in them which clings to its opposite, viz. death and agents of death. He that would share in the high status above has necessarily to be aloof and separate from, even while living amidst it, the envelope of ignorance and darkness that characterise the human world, like a cucumber separate from its shell, says the Rishi, like the ripe cocoanut loosened from its shell, say the saints and sages of later times.

त्र्यंबकं यजामहे सुगन्धि पुष्टिवर्धनम्।
उर्वारुकमिव बन्धनान्मृत्योर्मुक्षीय मामृतात्॥

'We adore the Father of the three worlds, Tryambaka of auspicious Fame, increaser of fullness and strength. May I be detached from Death like cucumber from the shell (or the stem,) not from the Immortal.'

In the Rig Veda, this Rik ascribed to Vasishtha is addressed to Rudra, as Tryambaka, father of the three worlds. Here in the Tantra also the deity is Rudra, as Mrityunjaya, conqueror of Death and the Mantra is famous as the Mrityunjaya Mantra.

The third part of 24 letters, in *gayatri* metre, is the famous Gayatri from the 62nd Sukta of Rishi Vishwamitra in the third Mandala of the Rig Veda. Savitr is the deity in the Veda; the same supreme deity is invoked here also. Savita, it must be noted is identified with Vishnu here as in the Rig Veda. Vishwamitra is the seer of the Mantra here also. The Sun, Savitr, is not the physical sun we see in the skies, but the supreme Effulgence in the highest firmament above, beyond the lower triple creation. The physical sun is indeed taken as the image

of the Truth-Sun, the Centre of all Knowledge and radiating Power. It is the radiance issuing from the Supreme Source in which is massed all the creative movement of the Uncreate that is the ultimate root of all movements in the creation. Let that Light motivate and energise our thought-movements, says the Rishi.

तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि। धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात्॥

'We meditate upon that excellent splendour of the Lord Savitr. May he activate our thoughts.'

One significant fact shall not escape notice here in as much as it illustrates the remarkable facility with which these seers reconcile the claims of the respective votaries of Vishnu, Shiva and Para Shakti for supremacy. Thus here in this single Vidya, there is Durga who stands for the Para Shakti of the Shakta, there is Rudra in place of Shiva and there is Savitr, Surya for Vishnu. All are placed on the same supreme level of adoration, all are simultaneously invoked in the prayer poured forth by the Sadhaka.

Such is the synthesis of the Tantra, broad-based and deep-rooted, catholic and progressive. It does not ignore or overlook any past heritage of spiritual value. Its Jnana-pada, the metaphysical basis, combines in itself the essence of the Vedantic philosophy with all the spirit of pliability and catholicity of the ancient Rishis. The Yoga-pada, the practical side, revives the remnants of past lines of Yoga as far as possible and carries further the esoteric tradition, absorbs and develops the later physico-vital and psychological methods of self-development and self-exceeding. The Kriya-pada, the social and the ceremonial aspect, takes up the institution of community worship and ritual from immemorial times and extends the claim of the Spirit on the entire society. The Charya-pada, bearing upon personal conduct, re-establishes the claim of society on the individual and reconciles it with the special privileges and responsibilities of the latter issuing from his spiritual transcendence.

T. V. KAPALI SASTRY

Peculiars

THAT may seem a peculiar title for an article on religious matters. It is, however, a specific word for something that bears very closely on the religious. A Peculiar, in the language of medieval ecclesiasticism, meant a place reserved not merely from the interference of the secular power but even from the inspectorship of the local religious organisation. A Peculiar was a 'reserve' not for a backward tribe or an almost extinct culture but for a community that claimed that it was living 'way ahead' of the legal norms of the contemporary civil community. In Medieval Ireland the same thing existed, though under somewhat different detail of form. The principle that these particular social patterns illustrated was that there should be reserved places where people who want to live—and have shown they could —lives of a definitely advanced sort, should be permitted to be independent of all jurisdiction save that of the supreme source of morality and faith, the Papacy. If they were interfered with by a lesser authority they had the right of appeal to the Pope.

Certainly the need that special communities—especially those concerned with the exploration of consciousness and the knowledge of the human spirit and its destiny—should be independent, has not grown less. The modern state is now claiming rights of interference that would have startled a medieval mind not only in matters ecclesiastical but with the rights of the civil population. Certainly the Papacy itself claimed too much when it tried to reserve the whole of central Italy as its 'Peculiar'. But in our own day the Vatican has been able to sustain its reasonable right that its own administrative quarters—the Vatican City—should be treated as a reserve, an independent centre. The same principle was clear to that original thinker Thomas Jefferson when he persuaded his fellow founding fathers that it would be necessary that the Federal

Capital should be in no one state but should be in its own independent centre, the so-called District of Columbia, and that the people living in this district should be under 'peculiar' laws and limitations. Such reflections bring us back to the present state in India. The various 'civil peculiars'—the Raja states—are being done away with. No doubt there will have to be some sort of reservation rules for the more primitive peoples in the great sub-continent. But what about those communities which are so much ahead of the current Indian social pattern as for instance the Gonds are behind it? India has always believed in various levels of social conscience and consciousness and caste if not hereditary does point to the fact of human inequality and the need for its recognition. Should not India which has also believed in religious vocation more strongly than any other nation, make provisions for religious 'peculiars' for small communities which live under the protection of the supreme government but (subject to the rule that they must attend to their own business and not interfere in external matters) are permitted to govern themselves without interference and follow their own advanced pattern of living? Why should not Pondicherry which for so long was a French 'enclave' in the side of giant British India now become a religious 'enclave' in the body of the New India?

GERALD HEARD

The March of Civilisation

WE are familiar with the phrase "Augustan Age": it is in reference to a particular period in a nation's history when its creative power is at its highest both in respect of quantity and quality, especially in the domain of art and literature, for it is here that the soul of a people finds expression most easily and spontaneously. Indeed, if we look at the panorama that the course of human evolution unfolds, we see epochs of high light in various countries spread out as towering beacons or soaring peaks bathed in sunlight dominating the flat plains or darksome valleys of the usual normal periods. Take the Augustan Age itself which has given the name: it is a very crucial and one of the earlier outflowerings of the human genius on a considerable scale. We know of the appearance of individuals on the stage of life each with a special mission and role in various ages and various countries. They are great men of action, great men of thought, creative artists or spiritual and religious teachers. In India we call them Vibhutis (we can include the Avataras—Divine Incarnations—also in the category). Even so, there is a collective manifestation too, an upsurge in which a whole race or nation takes part and is carried and raised to a higher level of living and achievement. There is a tide in the affairs of not only men, but of peoples also: and masses, large collectivities live on the crest of their consciousness, feeling and thinking deeply and nobly, acting and creating powerfully, with breadth of vision and intensity of aspiration, spreading all around something that is new and not too common, a happy guest come from elsewhere.

Ancient Greece, the fountainhead of European civilisation—of the world culture reigning today, one can almost say—found itself epitomised in the Periclean Age. The light—grace, harmony, sweet reasonableness—that was Greece reached its highest and largest, its most characteristic growth in that period. Earlier, at the very beginning

of her life cycle, there came indeed Homer and no later creation reached a higher or even as high a status of creative power: but it was a solitary peak, it was perhaps an announcement, not the realisation of the national glory. Pericles stood as the guardian, the representative, the emblem and nucleus of a nation-wide efflorescence. Not to speak of the great names associated with the age, even the common people—more than what was normally so characteristic of Greece—felt the tide that was moving high and shared in that elevated sweep of life, of thought and creative activity. Greece withdrew. The stage was made clear for Rome. Julius Caesar carried the Roman genius to its sublimest summit: but it remained for his great nephew to consolidate and give expression to that genius in its most characteristic manner and lent his name to a characteristic high-water mark of human civilisation.

Greece and Rome may be taken to represent two types of culture. And accordingly we can distinguish two types of elevation or crest-formation of human consciousness—one of light, the other of power. In certain movements one feels the intrusion, the expression of light, that is to say, the play of intelligence, understanding, knowledge, a fresh outlook and consideration of the world and things, a revaluation in other terms and categories of a new consciousness. The greatest, at least, the most representative movement of this kind is that of the Renaissance. It was really a new Illumination: a flood of light poured upon the mind and intellect and understanding of the period. There was a brightness, a brilliance, a happy agility and keenness in the movements of the brain. A largeness of vision, a curious sensibility, a wide and alert consciousness: these are some of the fundamental characteristics of this remarkable New Birth. It is the birth of what has been known as the scientific outlook, in the broadest sense: it is the threshold of the *modern epoch* of humanity. All the modern European languages leaped into maturity, as it were, each attaining its definitive form and full-blooded individuality. Art and literature flooded in their magnificent creativeness all nations and peoples of the whole continent. The Romantic Revival, starting somewhere about the beginning of the nineteenth century, is another outstanding example of a similar phenomenon, of the descent of light into human consciousness. The light that descended into human consciousness

at the time of the Renaissance captured the higher mind and intelligence—the Ray touched as it were the frontal lobe of the brain; the later descent touched the heart, the feelings and emotive sensibility, it evoked more vibrant, living and powerful perceptions, created varied and dynamic sense-complexes, new idealisms and aspirations. The manifestation of Power, the descent or inrush of force—mighty and terrible—has been well recognised and experienced in the great French Revolution. A violence came out from somewhere and seized man and society: man was thrown out of his gear, society broken to pieces. There came a change in the very character and even nature of man: and society had to be built upon other foundations. The past was gone. *Divasa gataḥ*. Something very similar has happened again more recently, in Russia. The French Revolution brought in the bourgeois culture, the Russian revolution has rung in the Proletariate.

In modern India, the movement that led her up to Independence was at a crucial moment a mighty evocation of both Light and Power. It had not perhaps initially the magnitude, the manifest scope or scale of either the Renaissance or the Great Revolutions we mention. But it carried a deeper import, its echo far reaching into the future of humanity. For it meant nothing less than the spiritual awakening of India and therefore the spiritual regeneration of the whole world: it is the harbinger of the new epoch in human civilisation.

These larger human movements are in a sense anonymous. They are not essentially the creation of a single man as are some of the well-known religious movements. They throw up great aspiring souls, strong men of action, indeed, but as part of themselves, in their various aspects, facets, centres of expression, lines of expansion. An Augustus, a Pericles, a Leo, a Louis XIV, or a Vikramaditya are no more than nuclei, as I have already said, centres of reference round which their respective epoch crystallises as a peak culture unit. They are not creators or originators; they are rather organisers. A Buddha, a Christ or a Mohammed or even a Napoleon or Caesar or Alexander are truly creators: they bring with them something—some truth, some dynamic revelation—that was not there before. They realise and embody each a particular principle of being, a unique mode of consciousness—a new gift to earth and mankind. Movements truly anonymous, however, have no single nucleus or centre of reference: they are multi-nucleur.

The names that adorn the Renaissance are many, it had no single head; the men through whom the great French Revolution unrolled itself were many in number, that is to say, the chiefs, who represented each a face or phase of the surging movement.

The cosmic spirit works itself out in the world and in human affairs in either of these forms: (1) as embodied in a single personality and (2) as an impersonal movement, sometimes through many personalities, sometimes through a few outstanding personalities and sometimes even quite anonymously as a mass movement. Either mode has each its own special purpose, its function in the cosmic labour, its contribution to the growth and unfoldment of the human consciousness upon earth as a whole. Generally, we may say, when it is an intensive work, when it is a new truth that has to be disclosed and set in man's heart and consciousness, then the individual is called up and undertakes the work: when, however, the truth already somehow found or near at hand is to be spread wide and made familiar to men and established upon earth, then the larger anonymous movements are born and have sway.

Indeed, these movements, the appearance of great souls upon earth and the manifestation of larger collective surges in human society, are not isolated happenings, having no reference or point of contact with one another. On the contrary, they are two limbs of a global evolutionary process. In and through them across countries and centuries the spirit of humanity moves towards greater and greater fulfilment. Evolution means the growth of consciousness. In man in his collective existence the growth continues: it lies in two directions. First of all, in extension. A sufficiently large physical body is needed to house the growing life and consciousness: therefore the unicellular organism has developed into the multicellular. In the same way, in the earliest stages of human society, the light and power of consciousness, characteristic of that age, found expression among a few only: it was the age of representative individuals, leaders—Rishi, Magi, Patriarch, Judge, King. Next a stage came when the cultural consciousness widened and, instead of scattered individuals or some families, we have a large group, a whole class or section of society who become the guardian of the light: thus arose the Brahmin, the *élite*, the cultured class, the aristocracy of talents. The light and culture filters down further and embraces larger masses

of people who take living interest and share in the creative activities of man, in the higher preoccupations of mind and thought; this is the age of enlightened bourgeoisie. In comparatively recent times what is familiarly known as the "middle class" was the repository and purveyor of human culture.

The light sinks further down and extends still more its scope seeking to penetrate and encircle the whole of humanity. The general mass of mankind, the lowest strata of society have to be taken in, elevated and illumined. That must be the natural and inevitable consummation of all progress and evolution. And that is the secret sense and justification of the Proletarian Revolution of today. Although, the many names and forms given to it by its violent partisans do not bring out or sufficiently honour the soul and spirit that informs it.

This then is the pattern of cultural development as it proceeds in extension and largeness. It moves in ever widening concentric circles. Individuals, small centres few and far between, then larger groups and sections, finally vast masses are touched and moved (and will be moulded one day) by the infiltrating light. That is how in modern times all movements are practically world-wide, encompassing all nations and peoples: there seems to be nothing left that is merely local or parochial. It is a single wave, as it were, that heaves up the whole of humanity. Political, social, economic and even spiritual movements, although not exactly of the same type or pattern, all are interrelated, interlocked, inspired by a common breath and move from one end of the earth to the other. They seem to be but modulations of the same world-theme. A pulse-beat in Korea or Japan is felt across the Pacific in America and across that continent, traversing again the Atlantic it reaches England, sways the old continent in its turn and once more leaps forward through the Asiatic vastnesses back again to its place of origin. The wheel comes indeed full circle: it is one movement girdling the earth. What one thinks or acts in one corner of the globe is thought and acted simultaneously by others at the farthest corner. Very evidently it is the age of radiography and electronics.

In the early stages of humanity its history consists of the isolated histories of various peoples and lands: intercommunication was difficult, therefore all communion was of the nature of infiltration and indirect influence. The differences between countries far distant from each

other were well marked and very considerable in respect of their cultures and civilisations. To put it in a somewhat scholarly yet graphic manner, we can say, the isometric chart of the tides of civilisation in various countries over the globe in those days presents a very unequal and tortuous figure. On the other hand, a graph depicting the situation in modern times would be formed by lines that are more even, uniform and straight. In other words, the world has become one, homogeneous: a consciousness has grown same or similar on the whole in outlook and life-impulse embracing all peoples and races in a tight embrace. The benefit of the descending or manifesting Light is now open equally and freely to each and every member of the human kind.

Not only in extension but the growth or evolution has progressed in another direction. There has been not only a quantitative but also a qualitative development. Culture movements have grown in intent, in depth or elevation, in the meaning and significance of the consciousness involved. And they have converged towards a single aim and purpose. That purpose is not only the establishment of the global consciousness, but the expression and embodiment of the highest, the supreme consciousness. The process here too, as in the domain of extension, is one of graduation, advance by stages. The light, the light of awakening consciousness first touches the more easily accessible parts of human nature, the higher domains that are not too much involved in the gross material or animal nature. It is the realm of thoughts and ideas, of idealism, imagination and aspiration: it is man's mind, which is the least heavily weighted or ballasted by a downward gravitational pull and the most buoyant and supple—the Ariel in him. It is his head that first receives the glow of the morning sun.

If we look at Europe once again and cast a glance at its origins, we find at the source the Graeco-Roman culture. It was pre-eminently a culture based upon the powers of mind and reason: it included a strong and balanced body (both body natural and body politic) under the aegis of *mens sana* (a sound mind). The light that was Greece was at its zenith a power of the higher mind and intelligence, intuitively dynamic in one—the earlier—phase through Plato, Pythagoras, Heraclitus and the mystic philosophers, and discursively and scientifically rational through the Aristotelian tradition. The practical and robust Roman did not indulge in the loftier and subtler activities of the higher

or intuitive mind; his was applied intelligence and its characteristic turn found expression in law and order and governance. Virgil was a representative poet of the race, finely sensitive and yet very self-conscious—earth-bound and mind-bound—as a creative artist: a clear and careful intelligence with an idealistic imagination that is yet sober and fancy-free is the very hall mark of his poetic genius. In the post-Roman age this bias for mental consciousness or the play of reason and intellectual understanding moved towards the superficial and more formal faculties of the brain ending in what is called scholasticism: it meant stagnation and decadence. It is out of this slough that the Renaissance raised the mind of Europe and bathed it with a new light. That movement gave to the mind a wider scope, an alert curiosity, a keener understanding: it is, as I have said, the beginning of that modern mentality which is known as the scientific outlook, that is to say, study of facts and induction from given data, observation and experience and experiment instead of the other scholastic standpoint which goes by *à priori* theorising and abstraction and deduction and dogmatism.

We may follow a little more closely the march of the centuries in their undulating movement. The creative intelligence of the Renaissance too belonged to a region of the higher mind, a kind of inspirational mind. It had not the altitude or even the depth of the Greek mind nor its subtler resonances: but it regained and re-established and carried to a new degree the spirit of inquiry and curiosity, an appreciation of human motives and preoccupations, a rational understanding of man and the mechanism of the world. The original intuitive fiat, the imaginative brilliance, the spirit of adventure (in the mental as well as the physical world) that inspired the epoch gradually dwindled: it gave place to an age of consolidation, organisation, stabilisation—the classical age. The seventeenth century Europe marked another peak of Europe's civilisation. That is the Augustan Age to which we have referred. The following century marked a further decline of the Intuition and higher imagination and we come to the eighteenth century terre-à-terre rationalism. Great figures still adorned that age—stalwarts that either stuck to the prevailing norm and gave it a kind of stagnant nobility or already leaned towards the new light that was dawning once more. Pope and Johnson, Montesquieu and Voltaire are its high-lights. The nineteenth century brought in another crest

wave with a special gift to mankind; apparently it was a reaction to the rigid classicism and dry rationalism of the preceding age, but it came burdened with a more positive mission. Its magic name was Romanticism. Man opened his heart, his higher feeling and nobler emotional surge, his subtler sensibility and a general sweep of his vital being to the truths and realities of his own nature and of the cosmic nature. Not the clear white and transparent almost glaring light of reason and logic, of the brain mind, but the rosy or rainbow tint of the emotive and aspiring personality that seeks in and through the cosmic panorama and dreams of

A light that was ne'er on sea or land...

A glory that hath passed away from earth.

The Romantic Revival was a veritable source movement: it was, one can say, a kind of watershed from where various streams of new creation and fresh adventure flowed down in all directions. Its echoes and repurcussions are met with even today and continue. The next stage that followed naturally and inevitably was man's preoccupation with his sense being, his external, his physical and material personality. It is the age of Naturalism, Realism, Pragmatism, Scientism: it proclaims the birth of the economic man. From the heart and emotions we drop down into the field of the nervous and sensuous existence, from the vital sphere into the sphere of the body. And that is where we are today. It means that we have been made more than ever self-conscious on this plane and of this personality of ours. We have been given and are being given greater knowledge of its mechanism; we are intensively (and extensively too) getting familiar with all the drawbacks and lacunae that are there so that we can remedy them—and discover new latent forces too,—and re-create and possess a truly "brave new world".

That is how the spirit of progress and evolution has worked and advanced in the European world. And one can take it as the pattern of human growth generally; but in the scheme described above we have left out one particular phase and purposely. I refer to the great event of Christ and Christianity. For without that European civili-

sation loses more than half of its import and value. After the Roman Decline began the ebb tide, the trough, the dark shadow of the deepening abyss of the Middle Ages. But even as the Night fell and darkness closed around, a new light glimmered, a star was born. A hope and a help shone "in a naughty world". It was a ray of consciousness that came from a secret cave, from a domain hidden behind and deep within in the human being. Christ brought a leaven into the normal manifest mode of consciousness, an other-worldly mode into the worldly life. He established a living and dynamic contact with the soul, the inner person in man, the person that is behind but still rules the external personality made of mind and life and body consciousness. The Christ revelation was also characteristic in the sense that it came as a large, almost a mass movement—this approach of the soul personality to earthly life. The movement faded or got adulterated, deformed like all human things; but something remained as a permanent possession of man's heritage.

This episode links up with the inner story of mankind, its spiritual history. The growing or evolving consciousness of man was not only an outgoing and widening movement: it was also a heightening, an ascent into ranges that are not normally perceived, towards summits of our true reality. We have spoken of the Graeco-Roman culture as the source and foundation of European civilisation; but apart from that there was a secret vein of life that truly vivified it, led it by an occult but constant influence along channels and achievements that are meant to serve the final goal and purpose. The Mysteries prevalent and practised in Greece itself and Crete and the occult rites of Egyptian priests, the tradition of a secret knowledge and discipline found in the Kabbalah, the legendary worship of gods and goddesses—sometimes confused, sometimes identified with Nature forces—all point to the existence of a line of culture which is known in India as Yoga. If all other culture means knowledge, Yoga is the knowledge of knowledge. As the Upanishad says, there are two categories of knowledge, the superior and the inferior. The development of the mind and life and body belongs to the domain of Inferior Knowledge: the development of the soul, the discovery of the Spirit means the Superior Knowledge.

This knowledge remained at the outset scattered, hidden, confined

to a few, a company of adepts: it had almost no direct contact with the main current of life. Its religious aspect too was so altered and popularised as to represent and serve the secular life. The systematisation and propagation of that knowledge—at least the aspiration for that knowledge—was attempted on an effective scale in the Hebrew Old Testament. But then a good amount of externalities, of the Inferior Knowledge was mixed up with the inner urge and the soul perception. The Christ with his New Testament came precisely with the mission of cleaning the Augean stables, in place of the dross and coverings, the false and deformed godheads, to instal something of the purest ray of the inner consciousness, the unalloyed urge of the soul, the demand of our spiritual personality. The Church sought to build up society on that basis, attempting a fusion of the spiritual and the temporal power, so that instead of a profane secular world, a mundane or worldly world, there may be established God's own world, the City of God.

The drive towards the building of Heaven upon earth and with earth, the materialisation of the Spirit on a cosmic scale, the remodelling of the whole human society in spiritual terms was the secret inspiring the other Semitic Revelation, that of Mohammed. The Arab Master sought to bring down and establish and express in life force what the Rabi of Bethelhem saw and felt in the inner heart—one was a lover, the other a servant warrior of God.

Turning to India we find a fuller and completer—if not a global—picture of the whole movement. India, we may say, is the spiritual world itself: and she epitomised the curve of human progress in a clearer and more significant manner. Indian history, not its political but its cultural and spiritual history, divides itself naturally into great movements with corresponding epochs each dwelling upon and dealing with one domain in the hierarchy of man's consciousness. The stages and epochs are well known: they are— (1) Vedic, (2) Upanishadic, (3) Darshanas—roughly from Buddha to Shankara, (4) Puranic, (5) *Bhagavata* or the Age of Bhakti, and finally (6) the Tantric. The last does not mean that it is the latest revelation, the nearest to us in time, but that it represents a kind of complementary movement, it was there all along, for long at least, and in which the others find their fruition and consummation. We shall explain presently. The

force of consciousness that came and moved and moulded the first and the earliest epoch was Revelation. It was a power of direct vision and occult will and cosmic perception. Its physical seat is somewhere behind and or just beyond the crown of the head: the peak of man's manifest being that received the first touch of Surya Savitri (the supreme Creative Consciousness) to whom it bowed down uttering the invocation *mantra* of Gayatri. The Ray then entered the head at the crown and illumined it: the force of consciousness that ruled there is Intuition, the immediate perception of truth and reality, the cosmic consciousness gathered and concentrated at that peak. That is Upanishadic knowledge. If the source and foundation of the Vedic initiation was occult vision, the Upanishad meant a pure and direct Ideation. The next stage in the coming down or propagation of the Light was when it reached further down into the brain and the philosophical outlook grew with rational understanding and discursive argumentation as the channel for expression, the power to be cultivated and the limb to be developed. The Age of the Darshanas or Systems of Philosophy started with the Buddha and continued till it reached its peak in Shankaracharya. The age sought to give a bright and strong mental, even an intellectual body to the spiritual light, the consciousness of the highest truth and reality. In the Puranic Age the vital being was touched by the light of the spirit and principally on the highest, the mental level of that domain. It meant the advent of the element of feeling and emotiveness and imagination into the play of the Light, the beginning of their reclamation. This was rendered more concrete and more vibrant and intense in the next stage of the movement. The whole emotional being was taken up into the travailing crucible of consciousness. We may name it also as the age of the Bhagavatas, god-lovers, Bhaktas. It reached its climax in Chaitanya whose physical passion for God denoted that the lower ranges of the vital being (its physical foundations) were now stirred in man to awake and to receive the Light. Finally remains the physical, the most material to be worked upon and made conscious and illumined. That was the task of the Tantras. Viewed in that light one can easily understand why especial stress was laid in that system upon the esoteric discipline of the five *m*'s (*pancha makāra*), all preoccupied with the handling and harnessing of the

grossest physical instincts and the most material instruments. The Tantric discipline bases itself upon Nature Power coiled up in Matter: the release of that all-conquering force through a purification and opening into the consciousness of the Divine Mother, the transcendent creatrix of the universe. The dynamic materialising aspect of consciousness was what inspired the Tantras: the others forming the Vedantic line, on the whole, were based on the primacy of the static being, the Purusha, aloof and withdrawing.

The Indian consciousness, we say, presented the movement as an intensive and inner, a spiritual process: it dealt with the substance itself, man's very nature and sought to know it from within and shape it consciously. In Europe where the frontal consciousness is more stressed and valued, the more characteristic feature of its history is the unfoldment and metamorphosis of the forms and expressions, the residuary powers, as it were, of man's evolving personality, individual and social.

To sum up then. Man progresses through cycles of crest movements. They mark an ever-widening circle of the descent of Light, the growth of consciousness. Thus there is at first a small circle of élite, a few chosen people at the top, then gradually the limited aristocracy is widened out into a larger and larger democracy. One may describe the phenomenon in the Indian terms of the Four Orders. In the beginning there is the Brahminic culture, culture confined only to the highest and the fewest possible select representatives. Then came the wave of Kshatriya culture which found a broader scope among a larger community. In India, after the age of the Veda and the Upanishad, came the age of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata which was pre-eminently an age of Kshatriyahood. In Europe too it was the bards and minstrels, sages and soothsayers who originally created, preserved and propagated the cultural movement: next came the epoch of the Arthurian legends, the age of chivalry, of knights and templars with their heroic code of conduct and high living. In the epoch that followed, culture was still further broad-based and spread to the Vaishya order. It is the culture of the bourgeoisie: it was brought about, developed and maintained by that class in society preoccupied with the production or earning of wealth. The economic bias of the literature of the period has often been pointed

out. Lastly the fourth dimension of culture has made its appearance today when it seeks to be coterminous with the proletariate. With the arrival of the Sudra, culture has extended to the very base of the social pyramid in its widest commonalty.

This movement of extension, looked at from the standpoint of intensiveness, is also a movement of devolution, of reclamation. The Brahminic stage represents culture that is knowledge; it touches the mind, it is the brain that is the recipient and instrument of the Light. The Kshatriya comes into the field when the light, the vibration of awakening, from the mind comes down into the vital energies, from the brain to the heart region. The Vaishya spirit has taken up man still at a lower region, the lower vital: the economic man that has his gaze fixed upon his stomach and entrails. Lastly, the final stage is reached when physical work, bodily labour, material service have attained supreme importance and are considered almost as the only values worth the name for a human being. To walk and work firmly upon Earth the Light needs a strong pair of feet. Therefore, the Veda says, *Padbhyām sudro ajayata*, out of the feet of the Cosmic Godhead the Sudra was born.

That is how man has become and is becoming integrally conscious—conscious in and of all parts of his being. He is awakening and opening to the light that descends from above: indeed the true light, the light of truth is something transcendent and it is that that comes down and slowly inhabits the world and possesses humanity. Its progress marks the steps of evolution. It means the gradual enlightening and illumining of the various layers of our being, the different strands of consciousness from the higher to the lower, from the less dense to the more dense, from mind to the body. It means also in the same process a canalisation, materialisation and fixing upon earth and in the physical being of the increasing powers of the Light.

The Light as it descends from its own home above to the lower levels of our being expresses itself no doubt in one way, but also gets diminished, modified, even deformed in another respect. The work of purification certainly goes on and until that is complete and there comes the fullest expression, it will continue. The action of light on the physical plane, for example, on the body of the Cosmic Being is so blurred and confusing apparently that it looks almost like the action

of Darkness. And yet the Dark Night of the soul is not simply the obscurity of Ignorance. It is only the mud that lay diffused or settled in the being which has come up in its gathered mass in the process of churning and cleaning and appears like an obscure screen.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

"We must be governed by the guide within rather than by the opinions of men. The influence of the environment works often with great subtlety; we prefer and put on almost unconsciously the garb which will look best in the eye that regards from outside and we allow a veil to drop over the eye within.....The eye of man outside matters nothing; the eye within is all."

—SRI AUROBINDO

Some Reflections on the Analytical Psychology of C. G. Jung in the Light of Integral Yoga

I

"Where are the great and wise men who do not merely talk about the meaning of life, but really possess it?"

"Whence does consciousness come? What is the psyche?..... At this point all science ends."

Modern Man in Search of a Soul.

NO modern psychologist of comparable stature has studied and valued the spiritual teaching of the East so fully as Jung. It is inevitable therefore that a study of his work should challenge comparison with the system of psychology embodied in Integral Yoga. In attempting to measure some of his basic postulates against those of Sri Aurobindo it is very important to make two distinctions. First, the psychologies of the East and West are based on two different kinds of *knowledge*, that of China and India being metaphysical in approach, and that of the West empirical. As Professor Sinha has observed in his admirable work *Indian Psychology*, every school of philosophy in India has made valuable contributions to Psychology, Logic, Ethics and other mental sciences, but because of the respect of the Hindu mind for the organic unity of a subject, it never makes a "compartmental study of its different aspects. In the philosophical literature of India we find a synthetic treatment of a problem in all its multifarious aspects, psychological, logical, ethical, and metaphysical.....There is not a single work which is exclusively devoted to the psychological analysis of mental processes." To try and divorce

the psychology of Sri Aurobindo from its metaphysical basis would be impossible; in the clinical sense in which it is used in Western psychology, it is not based on experiment, but on introspection. Western psychology, on the other hand, believes that it can explore the psyche in the atmosphere of the laboratory and by experiment and analysis arrive at conclusive explanations of its origin, activities and meaning. The difficulties of this approach—to which Jung does not, of course, cling—are many, and in fact quite intractable of solution. As to the organic unity of the subject and the impossibility of maintaining a compartmental study, Jung himself has this to say: "In treating of the problems of psychic life we perpetually stumble over questions of principle belonging to the private domains of the most different branches of knowledge. We disturb and anger the theologian no less than the philosopher, the physician no less than the educator; we even grope about in the field of the biologist and the historian."

The second distinction we must keep in mind is not so fundamental; it is a distinction of degree rather than of kind. Jung's psychology is therapeutic. It has been built up mainly from his experiences as a doctor in treating neurotic people. Its aim is to explore the laws of the psyche in order to cure psychic suffering. Sri Aurobindo's psychology—his analysis of personality and the laws which govern the individual being—is instrumental to a far more extended objective. In so far as both psychologies aim at bringing about a right relation in the being, which calls for the shift to a new centre of orientation, both may be said to be therapeutic. There is, however, a profound difference of degree between the needs and aims of the consulting room and those of a spiritual community, and to fail to grasp this fact creates needless confusion.

EAST AND WEST

Jung's respect for the psychological discernment of the East is very great, and he compares, as an event of the deepest importance, the work of Richard Wilhelm in the field of Chinese studies, with that of Anquetil du Perron in the eighteenth century, who brought the first translation of the Upanishads to Europe, and gave the West

"its first deep insight into the baffling mind of the East." "Anyone like myself," writes Jung in his memorial address on Wilhelm, "who has had the rare good fortune to experience in a spiritual exchange with Wilhelm, the divinatory power of the I Ching, cannot for long remain ignorant of the fact that we have touched here an Archimedean point from which our Western attitude of mind can be shaken to its foundations." But it is not only in the scholarly exchange of thinkers, or in the first-hand study of the esoteric teaching of the East amongst philosophers and orientalists, who might be relied upon to approach it without danger, that the wisdom of the East has entered Europe. Jung sees that it has entered also in a perilous fashion through the back door of our civilization, and assumed many perverted and injurious forms. To this emotional and uncritical adoption of Eastern wisdom by unsuitable people he is fervently opposed. "We do not yet realise," he writes, "that while we are turning upside down the material world of the East with our technical proficiency, the East with its psychic proficiency is throwing our spiritual world into confusion..... While we are overpowering the Orient from without, it may be fastening its hold upon us from within." For Jung believes that in the order of things there is always a readjustment to a disequilibrium of psychic forces; "for every piece of conscious life that loses its importance and value.....there arises a compensation in the unconscious." Was it, he asks, a coincidence that the enthronement of the Goddess of Reason in Notre Dame occurred at a time when Anquetil du Perron was returning with his fifty Upanishads? And we may well wonder whether it is coincidence that in the era of the hydrogen bomb, the most deadly weapon of destruction ever conceived by man, Sri Aurobindo should be distilling the creative wisdom of India in a language which is now the most widely used throughout the civilized world, and which has therefore greater chances of penetrating to its remotest corners than any other.

The East, says Jung, is at the bottom of the spiritual change through which the West is passing today, and its influence, adapted into forms suitable to our assimilation, may help "to subdue the boundless lust for prey of Aryan man." Again, "European cannons have burst open the gates of Asia," he writes, "European science and technique, European worldly-mindedness and cupidity, flood

China. We have conquered the East politically. Do you know what happened when Rome overthrew the Near East politically? The spirit of the East entered Rome. Mithra became the Roman military god, and out of the most unlikely corners of Asia Minor, came a new spiritual Rome. Would it be unthinkable that the same thing might happen today and find us just as blind as were the cultured Romans who marvelled at the superstitions of the *Christoi*?"

But if Jung is stern in his condemnation of much that is unsalutary in the West, he is not without criticism of the East, however great his admiration for its spiritual achievements. "When the primitive world disintegrated into spirit and nature," he says in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, "the West rescued nature for itself...and only became the more entangled in it with every painful effort to make itself spiritual. The East, on the contrary, took mind for its own, and by explaining away matter as mere illusion...continued to dream in Asiatic filth and misery. But since there is only *one* earth and *one* mankind, East and West cannot rend humanity into two different halves. Psychic reality exists in its original oneness, and awaits man's advance to a level of consciousness where he no longer believes in the one part and denies the other, but recognises both as constituent elements of one psyche." He observes that the East came to its inner knowledge "with a childish Ignorance of the world," and claims that the West "will investigate the psyche and its depths supported by a tremendously extensive historical and scientific knowledge." "It is far from my wish to undervalue the tremendous differentiation of Western intellect," he adds elsewhere, "because, measured by it, Eastern intellect can be described as childish. (Obviously this has nothing to do with intelligence.) If we should succeed in bringing another, or still a third function to the dignity accorded intellect, then the West could expect to surpass the East by a very great deal." Whatever we may think of this rather ambitious and inflated statement —when it was written it was not likely that Western genius might bring about the apotheosis of its precious intellect by an atomic war —it is important to understand that Jung condemns any facile imitation of the spiritual proficiency of the East by the West, or any depreciation of the frontiers of scientific knowledge hewed out by the Western mind. "Whoever seeks to minimise the merits of Western

science is undermining the main support of the European mind. Science is not, indeed, a perfect instrument, but...(it) is the best tool of the Western mind and with it more doors can be opened than with bare hands." Those who take over Yoga practices "quite literally" only become, according to Jung, "pitiable imitators," and he cites Theosophy ("pure Gnosticism in a Hindu dress") as the most flagrant example of what happens when the Westerner abandons the safe foundations of his mind and "loses himself in a mist of words and ideas which never would have originated in European brains, and which can never be profitably grafted upon them." He maintains that the historical premises of East and West are so different that we desert our own cultural nexus at peril. It is, he writes, impossible to give too many warnings against the attitude that "accepts the alms of the East in specie....What it has taken China thousands of years to build cannot be stolen by us. We must learn to acquire it in order to possess it." Indeed, the appropriation of Christianity, a highly developed Oriental religion, by the Western world when it was still immersed in the early stages of polytheism, was only achieved at the expense of psychic strains and stresses which produced in the Western temperament severe and unpleasant repercussions.

This conviction of Jung's is based on several observations. First, that Western man has suffered "an almost fatal shock...and fallen into profound uncertainty." Whether viewed from the moral, intellectual or aesthetic standpoint, the undercurrents of the psychic life of the West present an uninviting picture. European man himself shows an alarming lack of balance, and to add to his difficulties, he faces a profound convulsion in his spiritual life. Brought to a kind of spiritual nemesis by the conflicting tides of nineteenth-century teaching—on one side the Church preaching blind faith, on the other the Universities proclaiming an equally dogmatic and indefectible belief in the supremacy of the rational intellect—he has at last, through disbelief and scepticism, begun to seek a religion based on experience and not on articles of faith. Hence his interest in the workings of the psyche and psychology, in astrology, theosophy, spiritualism, occultism and so on. But only through the peculiar conditions of his own historical situation, only by clinging to what roots he possesses, can European man find his way out of his own entanglements. He

must take what light and help he can from other sources, remembering always to adapt it to his own necessity, and drawing into the work "the real European as he is in his western commonplaceness, with his marriage problems, his neuroses, his social and political illusions, and his whole philosophical disorientation."

Secondly, because of his innate vanity and almost psychotic sense of superiority, Western man must be thoroughly disillusioned with himself, if necessary by a ruthlessly revealing psychology, before he can begin to build anew. "The Occidental burns incense to himself and his own countenance is veiled from him in the smoke." Therefore to the Westerner, acquaintance with the realities of psychic life must begin in the depths, "with all that repels us and that we do not wish to see."

For Jung then, Western man is sick; the East holds out healing, but in order to be truly effective, the Westerner must transpose the technique of that healing into terms consonant with the demands of his nature, and within the frame-work of his own history. He sees the malaise of the West as a combination of exaggerated intellection, self-deception and disillusionment, and a disregard for the things of the spirit as the indispensable condition of health. "There are too many persons to whom Freudian psychology is dearer than the Gospels, and to whom the Russian terror means more than civic virtue." And all these things have been exacerbated by war, the collapse of institutional religion, and the ideals which Western man held as absolute, bringing about a deep spiritual crisis which searches to the roots of his being.

For Jung's purpose it is perhaps necessary to emphasise the differences of the East and West in order to hold the European situation clearly in the light of analysis and to note its distinctive features. But sometimes he seems to over-simplify the issues. The risk of such an emphasis is that it tends to caricature the characteristic tendencies it strives to define. As Jung himself maintains—and no one could more scrupulously respect the sanctity of personality—each individual is unique, and the situation in which he finds himself may require from the psychotherapist a continuously creative approach in which he is prepared to burn the boats of all his previous convictions in the exploration of the patient's inner reality. Each individual is a micro-

cosm; each discovers the means of his own healing through methods personal to him, and these methods are infinitely plastic, even in the use of such things as dream symbols which would appear to be relatively fixed in their meaning. One must never, he says, violate personality by forcing interpretations of experience on the patient to which he does not inwardly consent. But just as to some patients health may consist in the achievement of normality, so to others who have a special ability, normality may be "unbearable boredom, infernal sterility and hopelessness." On the lines of this argument we might justifiably say that though it may be necessary in defining general tendencies to flatten all Westerners into an average mould and label it commonplace European, in fact, when we look round us, we see many individuals who by taste, temperament and inclination defy all but a superficial resemblance to the standard article. What of the deeper individual past that lies behind each being? What clouds of experience does he come trailing into the world, and from what sources? Can we say quite so sweepingly that he abandons his historical ground by immersing himself in another culture when, indeed, we cannot tell in terms of more than his present life-experience—and that perhaps not the most potent in its formative influence—what that historical ground has been?

CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS

Although Jung is a physician, trained in the exact sciences, he uses psychological terms with far less precision than Sri Aurobindo, so that it is not always easy to make accurate definitions of what he means by them. But since the concepts of consciousness and unconsciousness occur repeatedly in his work, we must try and arrive at what he means by them.

Jung attributes much of the evil in the world to the fact that "man in general is hopelessly unconscious," a view to which any Aurobindonian would happily concede. But the unconscious to Jung is always *below* mind; it is the "collective unconscious," the depths of the psyche with its archetypal contents, a "hinterland" of the mind, super-personal and continuous. It contains "the powers of darkness," so that to open up these unconscious depths always provokes intense suffering. It is like Boehme's *ungrund*, the ground of being, "the abyssal world

where there is neither end nor limit," as Boehme put it, "the abyss of God's liberty," the "mysterium magnum...the chaos wherefrom originate good and evil, light and darkness, life and death." In Indian terminology this *ungrund* might be called Prakriti, the forces of lower Nature. From its depths powers of destruction and healing alike are thrown up. "The psychic depths are nature," says Jung, "and nature is creative life." But these foundations of psychic life are also "eternally unknown and alien," and compared to the powers of the unconscious, consciousness itself is very weak. The unconscious may easily seize power and in times of a lost psychic equilibrium, can overwhelm not only individuals but whole civilizations. "If we might personify the unconscious," says Jung, "we might call it a collective human being combining the characteristics of both sexes, transcending youth and age, birth and death, and, from having at his command a human experience of one or two million years, almost immortal." "The unconscious, which expresses itself in symbols, contains subliminal perceptions whose scope is nothing less than astounding...it is highly extensive and can juxtapose the most heterogeneous elements in the most paradoxical way." It seems to be "like an unceasing stream or perhaps an ocean of images and figures which drift into consciousness in our dreams or in abnormal states of mind." Jung then assures us that it is with this hinterland that Yoga puts us in touch. "The unconscious," he says again, "perceives, has purposes and intuitions, feels, thinks as does the conscious mind." If we could but make them conscious, these contents of the psychic underworld "would mean an immeasurable increase in knowledge." Its purpose is that of a compensatory force which assists the equilibrium of the psyche; only when it is excluded, misunderstood, depreciated or repressed by overconscious tendencies, which separate the two realms of the psyche—conscious and unconscious—may it become explosive, but by nature it is morally and aesthetically neutral.

To anyone acquainted with the psychology of Sri Aurobindo, these dictums of Jung's on the unconscious will seem to contain many right things in the wrong place. Moreover for so purposive a *mysterium magnum*, the term "unconscious" does not seem apposite. But we will return to this later.

Jung sees the evolution of man as "the tremendous experiment

of becoming conscious, which nature has imposed on mankind, uniting the most diverse cultures in a common task." This necessitates a widening of consciousness; but what does Jung mean by consciousness and how does he define it? We should make a grave mistake if we were to interpret these statements in an Aurobindonian sense. Jung takes consciousness as "the *sine qua non* of psychic life—that is to say, as the psyche itself." The identification of the psyche with consciousness at this point is very confusing, for in another place (in *The Secret of the Golden Flower, a Chinese Book of Life*) he deprecates the fact that we "are always attempting to identify the psyche with consciousness, or at least attempting to represent the unconscious as a derivative (of consciousness)." It does not become less confusing when he tells us that the ego is the centre of consciousness, but we will try and sum up what he means by ego, psyche and self when we have attempted to define more clearly what he means by consciousness. "Consciousness," he says, "did not exist from the beginning: in every child it has to be built up anew." Again, "Experience shows us that the sense of the "I"—the ego-consciousness—grows out of unconscious life. The small child has psychic life without any demonstrable ego-consciousness, for which reason the earliest years leave hardly any traces in memory."

In the instinctive functioning of the unconscious all the patterns of life and behaviour inherited from his ancestors are present in the human child, and this activity prepares for all the workings of the psyche. The essential difference between the unconscious and the conscious is simply that consciousness is limited, intensive, concentrated, transient, concerned with the present and the immediate field of action, while unconsciousness is highly extensive but "shades off into obscurity," and contains "besides an interminable number of subliminal perceptions, an immense fund of accumulated inheritance-factors left by one generation of men after another." But in point of fact, the distinction between the two is sometimes held very loosely by Jung, as will be evident for instance in his remark: "If we study the psychic processes of neurotic persons, it seems perfectly ludicrous that any psychologist could take the psyche as the equivalent of consciousness."

It is evident that Jung supposes consciousness to rise from the

unconscious without any pressure from a higher order, for he says in the *Golden Flower*, "without a doubt consciousness is derived from the unconscious" and again "consciousness is a late-born descendant of the unconscious psyche." This is a postulate completely at variance with Sri Aurobindo's teaching that higher forms cannot evolve from lower ones simply by an intrinsic process inherent in the lower, and without the operation of a superior power.

To Jung therefore, consciousness would appear—I put these definitions forward rather warily—to occupy that area which mind occupies in the psychology of Sri Aurobindo; it is that which the psyche has organised from a kind of total environing psychic reality which he designates the unconscious. He does not attempt to explain how it arises, but observes that its advent in the child is marked by its capacity to "know" things or persons, and that this knowing is based "upon a conscious connection between psychic contents."

PSYCHE, EGO, SELF

We have already seen that Jung regards consciousness as the *sine qua non* of the psyche, or soul. The depths of the psyche reach down into the collective unconscious, characterised as nature, or creative life. As to cause, purpose and meaning, the psyche is first and foremost a close reflection of everything we call corporeal, empirical and mundane—the contents of consciousness itself are also defined as being largely determined by our sense perceptions. In its working the psyche is a self-regulating system like the body, and by means of the unconscious can maintain its metabolism under normal conditions. Jung suggests that the soul arises from "A spiritual principle which is as inaccessible to our understanding as matter," and in the *Golden Flower* he describes it again as "a world in which the ego is contained." *In Modern Man in Search of a Soul* he makes it clear where his own position lies in regard to a belief in the objective reality of the soul, saying that his own system of psychology does not seek to explain everything upon physical grounds "but appeals to a world of the spirit whose active principle is neither matter and its qualities nor any state of energy but God." To those who look upon the soul as an epiphenomena of the body, he has some pertinent

things to say, as for instance in his statement that it is "presumptuous and fantastic for us to presume that matter produces spirit; that apes give rise to human beings...that the brain-cells manufacture thoughts, and that all this could not possibly be other than it is." Matter, he remarks, is just as inscrutable as mind. "I must admit that I can see as little nonsense in this so-called superstition (of the self-existence of the soul) as in the findings of research regarding heredity or the basic instincts," he writes, "no chain of reasoning can prove or disprove the existence of either mind or matter. Both these concepts... are mere symbols that stand for something unknown and unexplored, and this something is postulated or denied according to man's mood and disposition or as the spirit of the age dictates." And he demands: "What, or who, indeed, is this all-powerful matter? It is once more man's picture of a creative god."

Nevertheless, Jung's definitions of the psyche are far from clear, a criticism which he himself anticipates, for he says that for the purposes of psychology he thinks that at the present time it is impossible to make statements about the psyche that are "true" or "correct"; the best we can achieve is "a detailed presentation of everything that is subjectively noted." Part of the confusion would seem to lie in Jung's refusal to call in metaphysics, for in a science of the soul metaphysics are indispensable. Moreover, Jung often refers to what he calls the unconscious psyche, so that we have no idea of the distinct functions of the soul, merely that it is a kind of Siamese twin to certain psychic states called consciousness and unconsciousness—sometimes even the equivalent of these states.

Jung's analysis of the total psychic entity of man includes also the distinctions "ego" and "self" (sometimes referred to as the true psyche.) He uses the term ego in the same sense as Sri Aurobindo, and contrasts it with the self, or true inner being. These two points are alternative centres of gravity for the total personality. If this centre is moved from the ego, and is shifted to "what might be called a virtual point between the conscious and the unconscious," we shall find at this new centre that which "might be called the self." So in the final transformation of psychotherapy when the psyche has awakened to spontaneous life, the inadequate ego with its "futile willing and striving" is supplanted. From the depths the individual is con-

fronted with "something strange that is not the 'I', and is therefore beyond the reach of personal caprice." We put the ego in the centre of our lives from an excess or over-valuation of consciousness, and thus mistake the ego for the self. Jung's definition of the true self as a point between the conscious and the unconscious is somewhat vague and questionable, specially in view of the imprecision which we cannot help feeling attaches to his conception of these states. The mystic may well feel that his confidence in the ability of psychotherapy to achieve our self-perfection is a trifle naive, and that the discovery of the true Self demands a more searching experience than the confession, explanation, education and transformation of the consulting-room.

METAPHYSICS

Jung's analytical psychology, though it is by far the most compelling of the psychologies of the West, lacks what they all lack (and some of course decisively repudiate) a psychology of the soul. This is all the more disappointing because he always seems about to invoke one. But in his desire to avoid as much theoretical reasoning as he can, and to base his discoveries on what can be observed and experienced, rather than speculated, he has an almost ludicrous suspicion of metaphysics. Since he insists on a religious basis to life as the only guarantee of spiritual health, and eschews the claims of scientific or naturalistic criterions to apply their standards of proof to the psyche, he is continually being dragged from his empirical stronghold to the touchline where he begins to slip into the rejected sphere of metaphysics, and this tension produces many of the paradoxes in his thought. He frequently points out the limitations of the empirical approach, yet fundamentally he has the deepest distrust for any other kind of knowledge. It is not the psychologist, he says, who must be questioned as to what happens finally to the detached consciousness after death, for "whatever theoretical position he assumed, he would hopelessly overstep the boundaries of his scientific competence." He does not see that the psychic proficiency of the East is infinitely superior to the West because its psychology is based on an adequate philosophy of being and knowing. "To be specific in the matter," he says

in his commentary on the *Golden Flower*, "I can say that my admiration for the great Eastern philosophers is as great and as indubitable as my attitude towards their metaphysics is irreverent. I suspect them of being symbolical psychologists, to whom no greater wrong could be done than to be taken literally. If it were really metaphysics that they mean, it would be useless to try and understand them. But if it is psychology, we can not only understand them, but we can profit greatly by them, for then the so-called 'metaphysical' comes within the range of experience."

This is to place metaphysics in the sphere of pure speculation, in the mistaken way that people designate faith as blind, or unfounded, belief: it is to use the word in the debased sense of a chain of over-subtle, abstract reasoning weaving itself out in a vacuum. But a true metaphysic is founded, like faith, on experience. In the East it might be described as a spiritual geography of Reality, and to call it symbolical psychology is merely a verbal nicety which changes the name but not the precise nature of the activity. The fact remains that however firmly we may imagine we have taken Eastern wisdom "out of the metaphysical and placed (it) in psychological experience", it does not alter the truth that this wisdom is founded on a discernment of the nature of God, man and the universe, usually called metaphysical which bears the same relationship to its psychology as the branch to the blossom, and is indeed its indispensable condition.

For some reason philosophy is spared the fate of metaphysics, the resemblance of its discipline to psychology being "that both are systems of opinion about subject-matter which cannot be fully experienced and therefore cannot be comprehended by a purely empirical approach." Again, "general conceptions of a spiritual nature are indispensable constituents of psychic life.....The future task of psychology will be the investigation of their (the psychic processes) spiritual determinants...We have only begun to take scientific note of our spiritual experiences...The spiritual aspect of the psyche is at present known to us only in a fragmentary way. We have learned that there are spiritually conditioned processes of transformation in the psyche which underlie...the states induced by the practice of Hindu *yoga*. But we have not yet succeeded in determining their

particular uniformities or laws." Certainly, clinical analysis has not, but these laws have been understood by Occultism, Yoga and the esoteric mystery religions from time immemorial because they recognised that there were differing degrees of reality which required two different modes of knowing, and they did not make the mistake of applying these methods to realms that were inappropriate to them. Although he senses the distinction intuitively, it is the failure to hold it clearly that accounts for so much of what seems inconsistent in Jung's thought, for he is continually appealing to the standards of first one and then the other. For instance, he does not burke the problems that lie in store for a psychology that appeals to a world of the spirit whose active principle is God, yet, because to the European in him, knowledge always means rational knowledge, (though he constantly shows his mistrust for its claims to absoluteness) he can write elsewhere: "whether energy is God, or God is energy, concerns me very little, for how, in any case, can I know such things? But to give appropriate psychological explanations—this I must be able to do." Until we have decided whether God is energy, or energy is God, we may be permitted to wonder how far it is possible to give appropriate psychological explanations at all.

Whether psychotherapy likes it or not, if it is going to stumble into the domain of metaphysics (or symbolical psychology!) it must learn something of its methods. Though we must admire and respect Jung's courage in supporting the claims of the spirit in the desert of the pre-war slavery to materialism, and his discernment that there is abroad among men "a deep spiritual distress to bring meaning once more into life on the basis of fresh and unprejudiced experience," we cannot but look with doubt on some of his "general conceptions" of the life of the spirit. Belief in God too often becomes a hygienic necessity—something to be encouraged because it ensures the patient's health. And what—even shedding any metaphysical pretensions—shall we make of a sentence such as this: "There is psychological justification for this supposition (that God is the quintessence of reality) for it is only appropriate to call divine an almost immortal being whose experience, compared to that of man, is nearly eternal."!

THE "MODERN MAN"

Before trying to comment from the standpoint of Integral Yoga on the various headings under which I have attempted to outline some of Jung's ideas, I want to add something on his conception of the highly evolved man, to whom he gives the name "modern". This individual, while profoundly receptive to the "void out of which all things grow," will possess an extension of consciousness far beyond the average. Having freed himself from submersion in the collective unconscious, the *participation mystique* of the herd, he will be solitary. He advances at the cost of "tearing himself loose from that all-embracing, pristine unconscious which claims the bulk of mankind almost entirely." Because he is thus "unhistorical", having estranged himself from the bounds of tradition, he has to bear the higher level of consciousness "like a burden of guilt," because to be unhistorical, in the judgment of the world, is the Promethean sin.

Here Jung makes an important qualification: the truly modern man "must be sound and proficient in the best sense—a man who has achieved as much as other people, and even a little more." He must not be a pseudo-modern who by-passes the various stages of development and the tasks they represent, one of those "great hordes of worthless people...uprooted human beings, bloodsucking ghosts, whose emptiness is taken for the unenviable loneliness of the modern man." He must have paid all his debts to life; he must have made no short cuts; he must have lived, suffered and experienced to the full. The truly religious man, says Jung, with a flash of exceptionally deep insight, has an unprejudiced objectivity and "senses in everything the unseen presence of the divine will"—and by everything he means that which also appears to be evil. But only the man who has fully accepted himself, as did Christ, can do this, which leads him to ask: "Are we to understand the 'imitation of Christ' in the sense that we should copy his life and, if I may use the expression, ape his stigmata; or in the deeper sense that we are to live our own proper lives as truly as he lived his? It is no easy matter to live a life that is modelled on Christ's, but it is unspeakably harder to live one's own life as truly as Christ lived his."

Jung does not describe how an extension of consciousness is to be brought about, and it would seem to be a mental enlargement of consciousness, rather than a different order from that which we ordinarily possess. But, as in psychotherapy the stages of healing are classified as confession, explanation, education and transformation, so Jung defines the four great gifts of human experience as faith, hope, love and insight, and the way to experience, he tells us, is "a venture which requires us to commit ourselves with our whole being."

As can be seen, throughout the teaching of Jung there are fundamental concepts which link up with some of the basic principles of Integral Yoga. Jung tells us in the *Golden Flower* commentary that in his practice of psychiatry, though originally quite ignorant of Chinese philosophy, he discovered he had been led unconsciously along "that secret way which for centuries has been the preoccupation of the best minds of the East." Nevertheless, even judged simply by the criterion of giving appropriate psychological explanations, when we compare the postulates of Analytical Psychology with those of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga we feel as if we were placing the attempt of a sixteenth-century cartographer beside a modern ordnance survey map of the same locality. The Jungian would doubtless protest that the methods of Integral Yoga would be useless for the treatment of the great majority of people who seek the aid of a psychotherapist, and they would probably be right. But I am not concerned here with the therapeutic value of either system, since both are designed for human needs that differ so profoundly in degree that they hardly bear any resemblance, but simply with the anatomy of the psyche they put forward. If I appear to have an unfair bias towards that of Integral Yoga it is, in all due humility, because the "psychological explanations" it advances seem to me more consistent, adequate and complete than those of Analytical Psychology, and not because of any illusion that they can be proved, in the empirical sense, "true" or "correct", since that would be to subject them to tests appropriate to a different order of knowledge.

II

Jung is at pains to emphasise that the Westerner should not become a blind imitator of the spiritual practices of the East, since an absence of understanding of the phenomena on which these are based leads to their "complete twisting and is a real menace to our world."[1]

Anthroposophy and Theosophy aside—to which these remarks refer—I do not suppose that any sensible European would dream of seriously practising Yoga without the aid of a Guru, any more than he would practise Christian mysticism without putting himself under the guidance of a spiritual director, since these are necessary conditions laid down through the ages by both the masters of the East and the West. As for the suitability of Yoga for the Occidental, given this condition, Sri Aurobindo has expounded his views on the subject at some length to a correspondent who designated Yoga impossible for a non-Oriental. Such an idea, Sri Aurobindo says, "is contrary to all experience. Europeans throughout the centuries have practised with success spiritual disciplines that were akin to Oriental Yoga and have followed too ways of the inner life which came to them from the East. Their non-Oriental nature did not stand in their way," and he adds that the disciplines of Christian mysticism "were one in essence with those of Asia." In fact, as Jung points out, Christianity was a highly-developed Asiatic religion. "I do not see either," continues Sri Aurobindo, "*why* there should be any such unbridgeable gulf; for there is no essential difference between the spiritual life in the East and the spiritual life in the West; what difference there is has always been of names, forms or symbols or else of emphasis laid on one special aim or another or on one side or another of psychological experience." The objection of the "incapacity or unsuitableness" of Occidentals for Yoga has never been made, he maintains, "either from the side of the disciple or from the side of the Masters....It is not the Hindu outlook or the Western that fundamentally matters in Yoga, but the psychic turn and the spiritual urge, and these are the same everywhere." Orientals and Occidentals may have the specific difficulties and advantages of their training and temperament to hinder

[1] Translator's Preface to *The Secret of the Golden Flower*.

or assist them, but these things are only "superstructural formations, not the very grain of the being."

As to the relationship of East and West, Sri Aurobindo analyses it very much on the same lines as Jung. The East, he writes, has always put the emphasis on Spirit; the West has concentrated on the world. These two aspects, Jung says, are both constituent elements of one psyche. Their perfection, adds Sri Aurobindo, "can be regarded as part of the intention of the spirit in world nature; they are not incompatible with each other; rather their divergence has to be healed and both have to be included and reconciled in the pursuit of the highest and largest ideal, Spirit embrace Matter and Matter find its own true reality and the hidden Reality in all things in the Spirit."

CONSCIOUSNESS

To Jung consciousness appears to be that area of a total surrounding psychic reality called the collective unconscious, which mind has appropriated and brought into focus, and of which the ego is the centre. It is the indispensable condition of psychic life. Divorced from the depths of the conditioning unconscious, this ego-consciousness may upset the whole equilibrium of the being; it is only by balancing the heights and depths that man can safely advance in consciousness.

It would be impossible to deal fully with Sri Aurobindo's definition of consciousness within a short space, for it is the *leit motif* of his thought and he returns repeatedly to its exposition throughout his books, so it must suffice to indicate those concepts which seem to bear a relationship to Jung's.

Sri Aurobindo has called consciousness "the fundamental thing in existence", and defined it as "a self-aware force of existence." Its principle therefore is found throughout the universe, in the stone and the star, the atom and the elephant, in the physical processes of the body as well as in the activities of mind and spirit. We might say that consciousness was the *sine qua non* of all being, for it is one of the attributes of God. The world is "essentially an act of consciousness," says Sri Aurobindo, but whereas consciousness in the material world is veiled and deeply involved in the forms it secretly supports, at its highest spiritual level it fully possesses itself. At

every level therefore, its character is different, depending on the limitation or extent of its status and scope, but at every level it is a power of the consciousness of the Divine Being. "Consciousness is a reality inherent in existence," writes Sri Aurobindo, "it is there even when it is not active on the surface, but silent and immobile...it is there even when it seems to us to be quite absent and the being to our view unconscious and inanimate.

"Consciousness is not only power of awareness of self and things, it is or has also a dynamic and creative energy. It can determine its own reactions or abstain from reactions: it can not only answer to forces, but create or put out from itself forces.

"Consciousness is usually identified with mind, but mental consciousness is only the human range which no more exhausts all the possible ranges of consciousness than human sight exhausts all the gradations of colour or human hearing all the gradations of sound —for there is much above or below that is to man invisible and inaudible. So there are ranges of consciousness above and below the human range, with which the normal human has no contact and they seem to it unconscious,—supramental or overmental and submental ranges." Again he says: "The gradations of consciousness are universal states not dependent on the outlook of the subjective personality; rather the outlook of the subjective personality is determined by the grade of consciousness in which it is organised according to its typical nature or its evolutionary stage." This accords with Jung's definition of the contents of consciousness, and we see also something of his concept of a total environing psychic reality in which man is immersed, with the important—indeed vital—proviso that it has ranges superior to our mental consciousness, as well as inferior. Jung has observed that the subliminal perceptions of the unconscious, as they appear in dreams, cover an enormous field and give expression "to ineluctable truths, to philosophical pronouncements, illusions, wild fantasies, memories, plans, anticipations, irrational experiences, even telepathic visions, and heaven knows what besides." But to Jung all these phenomena of sleep, some of them representing highly ordered and conscious experiences, rise from the depths, from that dark, obscure, chaotic void of the unconscious. It is surely not necessary to be very perceptive or conscious to realise the illogicality of

such a supposition! Indeed only a concept of the gradations of consciousness such as Sri Aurobindo's can supply anything like a rational explanation of what is otherwise inexplicable in the experiences of sleep. Moreover, it does not seem to have occurred to Jung that when heterogeneous things are juxtaposed in the "unconscious" this may be due to a perfectly orderly para-normal experience being hopelessly distorted by the receiving mind.

The autonomous nature of psychic happenings has been noted by Jung, and our inability to change them, for they are largely outside our conscious control; at times the depths of psychic life "which are nature" rise up and overwhelm us and sweep us away. This is the matrix in which all men under the domination of nature are submerged, but its operation and character are very obscurely envisaged, since the highest illuminations of the spirit are also represented as issuing from this sphere so ambiguously designated the unconscious. "Psychic science calls this hidden consciousness the subliminal self," says Sri Aurobindo, "and here too it is seen that this subliminal self has more powers, more knowledge, a freer field of movement than the smaller self that is on the surface. But the truth is that all this that is behind, this sea of which our waking consciousness is only a wave or series of waves, cannot be described by any one term, for it is very complex. Part of it is subconscient, lower than our waking consciousness; part of it is on a level with it but behind and much larger than it; part is above and superconscient to us. What we call our mind is only an outer mind, a surface mental action, instrumental for the partial expression of a larger mind behind of which we are not ordinarily aware and can only know by going inside ourselves. So too what we know of the vital in us is only the outer vital, a surface activity partially expressing a larger secret vital which we can only know by going within. Equally, what we call our physical being is only a visible projection of a greater and subtler invisible physical consciousness which is much more complex, much more aware, much wider in its receptiveness, much more open and plastic and free." And elsewhere he adds that the body consciousness itself "is only part of the individualised physical consciousness in us which we gather and build out of the secretly conscious forces of universal Nature."

In the light of these statements it becomes clear that what is unsatisfactory about Jung's estimation of consciousness and unconsciousness is his failure to recognise that there exists a hierarchy of the states of the universal consciousness, in which our consciousness is far from being the *ne plus ultra* which merely requires extension of its habitual contents. This extension of consciousness would seem to mean the hewing of fresh frontiers by the mind in the virgin forest of that which lies outside the range of its present apprehension. But Jung does not suggest that to do this fully requires a different order of knowing, and the advance to a superior power of consciousness and this is a conception absolutely fundamental to Integral Yoga.

PSYCHE, EGO AND SELF

The terms used by Sri Aurobindo to define the various inner aspects of the being are very much more complex than those used by Jung. But here a difficulty arises for the European, for though the doctrine of the subtle bodies, on which he relies, is now accepted by a number of more enlightened doctors in the West, it is not one to which the concrete European mind takes very easily. Without it, however, it is much more difficult to accept Sri Aurobindo's analysis as definitive. This doctrine maintains that besides a physical body, each individual has an etheric counterpart consisting of a mental and emotional sheath. These sheaths act as a closed magnetic field and subtle matrix for the body, and control its physiological changes; they also act as a connecting mechanism which links it with the forces of mind, feeling and will. Sri Aurobindo refers to them as the physical, vital and mental planes of the being, and affirms that each has its own consciousness, separate though inter-connected and inter-acting, though "to our outer mind and sense, in our waking experience, they are all confused together." To each of these planes there is an inner, as well as an outer counterpart, a higher as well as a lower organisation, and each responds to particular stimuli and controls the mental and emotional reactions of the individual. Quite apart from its importance to medicine, the recognition of the existence of these vital-mental bodies would enormously extend the scope of Western psychotherapy. To the practice of Yoga an understanding of their organisation would seem indispensable.

Sri Aurobindo describes the ego as the frontal personality, or desire soul, which serves the being's purposes of rough traffic with the world, and is built up in the process of its organic struggle to survive and reproduce itself. The individual identifies himself with this ego-self and in his early evolution recognises no other "I". In Jung's sense the ego is the centre of consciousness at this stage, and would far better fulfil his description of being a close reflection of the corporeal, mundane and empirical than the soul. Here, however, the roads of Integral Yoga and Analytical Psychology diverge. Sri Aurobindo would hardly endorse Jung's opinions on the nature of the soul, which leave us in fact, in the utmost doubt as to its precise character. Instead, he describes the soul as an aspect of the Spirit, or Jivatma, which is "above" the manifested being; "a spark of the Divine...which comes down into the manifestation to support its evolution in the material world. It is at first an undifferentiated power of the divine consciousness containing all the possibilities which have not yet taken form, but to which it is the function of evolution to give form. This spark is there in all living beings from the lowest to the highest."

In its evolution, the soul forms a "psychic being" to support the mind, vital and body, but it is at first veiled by these things, and only as it grows "becomes capable of coming forward and dominating the mind, life and body." When therefore Jung speaks of his patients becoming conscious of something strange within them that is not the "I", and that this revelation marks the beginning of their cure, it would be optimistic to suppose that this was realisation of the Self or Spirit as the contemplative uses the term; rather it may be an initial conscious experience of what Sri Aurobindo calls the psychic being. To perfect that experience, to bring the psychic being forward so that it dominates all the levels of the individual, is a first step in Integral Yoga and on purely psychological grounds one without which it may be said no true rehabilitation of personality can take place.

It may be labouring the obvious to say that Integral Yoga is founded on the belief that there is one Being, which manifests itself as the Many; but on the intuitive realisation of this truth hang all the law and the prophets of Yoga. Its psychology therefore may be said to depend absolutely on a metaphysical postulate. Whether the analysis of man it advances is veridical can only be tested by subjective exploration and

experience—a standard of psychological judgment which Jung himself would seem, fundamentally, to endorse; on that proving or disproving, metaphysic and psychology stand or fall. But though Analytical Psychology confesses "the individual to be dependent on a world-system of the spirit" we must not look upon this as metaphysics, or venture to indicate what conclusions might logically be drawn from it in the field of psychological practice!

METAPHYSICS

In view of the foregoing it is unnecessary to go very fully into Sri Aurobindo's evaluation of metaphysics, since Integral Yoga without metaphysics might be likened to Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. Whether we call him a metaphysician or a symbolical psychologist can safely be left to the academic finesse of future disputants. The different connotations of words are an endless source of misunderstanding, and when Jung envisages metaphysics he is not, I am sure, thinking of it in the sense in which Sri Aurobindo uses it in the following: "Indian philosophers have always...tried to establish generalisations drawn from spiritual experience by the light of metaphysical reasoning, but on the basis of that experience and with the evidence of the spiritual seekers as a supreme proof ranking higher than intellectual speculation or experience. In that way the freedom of spiritual and mystical experience is preserved, the reasoning intellect comes in only on the second line as a judge of the generalised statements drawn from the experience."

THE "MODERN MAN"

Jung's conception of the highly evolved man is of one who has attained an extension of consciousness far beyond the average. He has also disengaged himself from submersion in the unconscious. If the unconscious meant here the Ignorance—domination by the lower forces of Nature—we should acquiesce; but at the same time this man must be receptive to the "void out of which all things grow," and this represents for Jung the unconscious. And what does he mean by extension? He admits that *samadhi* is a remarkable extension of consciousness, yet says he cannot distinguish the condition from an unconscious

state. Dr. Indra Sen has levelled a number of justifiable criticisms at this arbitrary identification[1] which would seem to be the result of the failure to distinguish the real nature of the gradations of consciousness.

We might qualify Jung's statement that much of the evil in the world comes from man being so hopelessly unconscious, by saying that it is also the outcome of the limitations of mental consciousness. We have only to add another range of perception—extra-sensory perception —to the ordinary range of the physical senses which largely supply the contents of our mental consciousness to find that our idea of the world has been completely revolutionised. How can we rely on a mode of consciousness so palpably fallible? If the extension of consciousness envisaged by Jung is not radically different in quality from our ordinary mental consciousness we can have little hope that it will prove a radical solution of our difficulties. Moreover, the weakness of his analysis of *samadhi* would seem to be this: on his own admission Jung tells us that too deep an attraction for the unconscious has a disintegrating effect on personality and may totally destroy its equilibrium, yet in *samadhi*, in all the higher mystical states, the orientation and integration of the personality that takes place as a result is of a very exceptional order. How then can it be the outcome of submersion in the unconscious?

Extension, in Jung's terminology, we may infer, is not that highest power of consciousness called by Sri Aurobindo the Supramental. It is not an intuitive realisation in which a man acts from a centre where he is in union with his own highest Self and the Divine Consciousness. Nevertheless the loneliness of Jung's modern man has some distant resemblance to the inwardness of Sri Aurobindo's gnostic man. "The spiritual man lives always within," writes Sri Aurobindo, "and in a world of the Ignorance that refuses to change he has to be in a certain sense separate from it and to guard his inner life against the intrusion and influence of the darker forces of the Ignorance; he is out of the world even when he is within it; if he acts upon it, it is from the fortress of his own spiritual being where in the inmost sanctuary he is one with the Supreme Existence or the soul and God are alone together." This transcendence, he adds, is

[1] *Vide*, "A Psychological Appreciation of Sri Aurobindo's System of Integral Yoga" in Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual, No. 3, 1944.

necessary "for the freedom of the spirit; for otherwise the identity in Nature with the world would be a binding limitation and not a free identity."

There all resemblance with the spiritual man of Sri Aurobindo's ideal ends; for he is the result of a life-long process of steadfast aspiration, vigilant discipline and devotion, and the transformation he seeks is that of being transfigured into the Divine Nature. But Jung has posited a new man, and that is a matter of profound significance, for it is only when men of good will all over the world begin to grope towards a fresh ideal, however imperfectly, that the creative conditions for its emergence are released.

MORWENNA DONNELLY

"Humanity is not the highest godhead; God is more than humanity; but in humanity too we have to find and to serve him."

SRI AUROBINDO

The Practical Man and the Eternal

THIS epoch may well be thought of as delivered over to the Practical Man. The upsurge of Science, and the increasing importance of trained labour within the complexity of the modern industrial State, has largely operated to establish what is generally called the Practical Man in the forefront of the community. He is the one who knows about things; he has an alertness of hand and brain that enables him to "get things done", and a natural aptitude for leadership at a time when "things" and "the hard facts of life" seem to have the ascendancy over ideas and the philosophical ways of living. The Practical Man has been in undisputed charge of the world's affairs for the past few generations; and the blunt truth is that he has made a frightful mess of them.

Unless the Practical Man can soon be converted into the Spiritual Man, to some effective extent at least, it looks as if organised civilisation on this planet may shortly come to a full stop. So far as he has got at present this modern man feels that he must behave as if he were the isolated individual unit he thinks he is, and must strive and fight in competition with the other individuals about him. He recognises little more common life-interest with others than a mutuality of armed suspicion, or at best a precarious bargain of mutual non-aggression. He finds it necessary to carve out legal systems, and to maintain police and armed forces to guarantee his vital and economic existence, whether as an individual, a group, or a nation. The purpose to be served by these mechanisms of his is to keep individuals apart, to keep them from getting at each other, and so to prevent victimisation and the devouring of one human unit, or class, or nation by another.

The individual in whose breast some glimmering of spiritual perception is beginning to shine deplores this general spectacle of a humanity composed of mutually exclusive units and groups, but is

seemingly unable to do anything about it. Such individuals are by no means uncommon in all nations which pretend to civilisation. They may not be sufficient to provide electoral majorities but still there are a lot of them. In general they wish well by their fellow-men and they are distressed and bewildered by the pass to which humanity has now brought itself, and more especially they are bewildered by their own ignorance and apparent futility in helping to make things better.

Many of them join forces with each other and work hard to impose some apparently more logical system of regulation—whether religious, political, or social—on their fellows. But one after another their systems are found merely to involve a change of bonds, never a release from the bondage of individual separativeness with its consequent fear and misfortune. The changes of systems appear to act only to shift the impact of distress from one individual or class to another within the whole, but never to lift all individuals bodily out of their common sorrow.

Although possibly accentuated over the past fifty years or so this is the age-old puzzle to which man must have been applying himself ever since he could reflect on his own inward state. One after another the great religions of history have tried to solve it, and all have made some contribution, if only in a negative sense. But still the puzzle stands unsolved as a whole, and each religious power which at its birth, and for a short time after, looked as if it would provide an answer, has gradually withered into a dry social form and has become ineffective to help humanity in any real or wide way.

The latest attack on the puzzle of human misery is by the new religion of Political Science, which has grown out of recent industrial history and the old pessimistic Political Economy of the 19th Century. Various "churches" or schisms of this new "Religion of the Common Man", as it might be called, have appeared all over the world, ranging from confessions of faith in cynical power-materialism to a pampered idealisation of the Common Man which goes beyond the limits of rationality. Still it is obvious that not yet has the particular political system appeared which will deliver individuals, groups, or nations from their heritage of suffering and fear. In most areas in the world there is little more relative harmony among the men and women who inhabit them than there is among the animals in any representative

tract of jungle, and within only a few small countries which are especially rich, possibly through some circumstance of isolation or another, is there any settled prosperity or harmony of social conditions.

Yet, as has been said, the civilised world is full of people—practical people—who wish well by their fellow men and who would make personal sacrifices if they knew how they could benefit mankind. What is the key to this puzzle of how our human family is to provide happiness for itself, instead of unhappiness?

In his wonderful chapter in "The Life Divine" called "The Eternal and the Individual", Sri Aurobindo demonstrates how each individual is, as a matter of reality, an embodiment of three things at the same time. He is first a terrestial being, individualised and separate from other terrestial beings; secondly, he is possessed of the potentiality of cosmic consciousness within his own individual vehicle, and thirdly he is supported by the Absolute Reality behind all manifestation of which our cosmos is a part.

In explaining the mechanism of consciousness Sri Aurobindo describes the interrelationship of these three states, i.e., the Individual mind, the Cosmic consciousness, and the Absolute supporting principle of consciousness-life. Each of these aspects has access to the other, actual or potential, and it is in the matter of bringing his individuality into actual contact with the greater consciousness that the secret of man's fulfilment, the sublimation of his humanity into divinity, exists.

The individual consciousness informs the separated units of humanity, and is the outermost expression of that universal sea of consciousness that envelops all manifestation. Each human individual appears to be shut off in his life and consciousness from all other individuals, and finds he must depend on such aids as language, spoken or written, to get some rough approximation to the contents of their consciousness. In fact, however, all human units of consciousness are merely parts of the Cosmic Being who chooses to manifest in this way; when an individual gains access to the Cosmic mind he finds himself, we are told, in simultaneous contact with the consciousness and minds of all other human beings. He perceives his unity with all humanity and the separate, or specialised, interests of his own personality are of no more than mild academic interest to him. He is aware of the life of the whole within himself.

The Cosmic mind, or World-Being is, in its turn, supported by the Absolute (Purusha):

"But we see farther that in the end this Purusha, this cause and self of our individuality, comes to embrace the whole world and all other beings in a sort of conscious extension of itself and to perceive itself as one with the world-being. In its conscious extension of itself it exceeds the primary experience and abolishes the barriers of its active self-limitation and individualisation; by its perception of its own infinite universality it goes beyond all consciousness of separative individuality or limited soul-being. By that very fact the individual ceases to be the self-limiting ego; in other words, our false consciousness of existing only by self-limitation, by rigid distinction of ourselves from the rest of being and becoming is transcended; our identification of ourselves with our personal and temporal individualisation in a particular mind and body is abolished."[1]

It appears, then, that it is the individual's attempt to live his life as if he were an isolated and irresponsible unit of life-consciousness, of merely a part of a whole, that is the cause of all his unhappiness. There is, therefore, every practical reason for the individual to remember always that he is, in fact, three things in one—he is an individual, he is part of a cosmic being, finally he exists only through the support of a divine and transcendental principle.

Nevertheless, because of the limitations of his present perceptions it is very natural for the individual to say—

"I am not compelled to reconcile contradictions, not called on to be conscious of and conscious in something beyond myself and world and yet deal from that basis, as God does, with a world of contradictions. The attempt to be as God while I am still an individual or to be three things at a time seems to me to involve a logical confusion and a practical impossibility."[2]

[1] *The Life Divine*, Vol. II, p. 123.

[2] ibid.

The hard and inescapable fact is, however, that we are each one of us "three things at a time" and the endeavour to live our lives as if we were only one—the individual—is the very root and cause of all humanity's distress. Until the individual can, to some extent, solve in his own understanding this most difficult of all problems, his life will lack essential direction and he will encounter frustration and sorrow.

In dealing with the rational or individual approach to this problem Sri Aurobindo says there is involved "a triple error, the error of making an unbridgeable gulf between the Absolute and the relative, the error of making too simple and rigid and extending too far the law of contardictions and the error of conceiving in terms of Time the genesis of things which have their origin and first habitat in the Eternal."[1]

This illumined conception has great originality among religious and philosophical theories of the past or the present. That there is not an unbridgeable gulf between the Absolute and the relative is a discovery in the sphere of spiritual physics as tremendous as—and more significant for mankind than—Einstein's discovery of relativity. Indeed, there seems to be some sort of analogy between these two pronouncements.

It must be said at once that because Sri Aurobindo says there is not an unbridgeable gulf between the Absoute and the relative, this does not put his conception among the easy materialistic philosophies of the day which are centered round the vulgar idea of "making one's heaven on earth". These are generally little more than attempts to improve material circumstances to suit personal tastes, or at best to apply a sort of self-hypnosis so that the stark facts of existence are not seen in their true implications but only through a spurious rosy mist of sentimentality. The heaven-on-earth school reaches its most extreme peak of credulity with the notion that if material conditions are made physically comfortable enough, the ordinary rank-and-file individual will grow into spirituality willy-nilly. This astonishing belief is a precept of modern Socialism and is in interesting contradiction to the exhortation of the great spiritual Light who said "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God..." It may be that this faith in the absolute rule of matter is strengthened by the theories of the so-called psychological

[1] *The Life Divine*, Vol. II, p. 123.

sciences of the day, which have not yet got beyond locating the human will and character in the cells and glands of the body. The belief in the dominant effect of physical environment on the human spirit is so astonishing because it is contrary to all observation and human experience; it is an example of misplaced faith—the faith that depends entirely on will and is not founded on impartial and rational perception. Later, we shall develop Sri Aurobindo's conception of a true heaven-on-earth of a totally different calibre. This one comes about through first seeking the Kingdom of God and, then, having found it, bringing it down into manifestation on earth. It does not at all depend on rearranging the circumstances of material existence as a first requisite.

Nor does Sri Aurobindo's teaching have anything to do with the schools who deny themselves full expression of their inclinations on earth in the hope of being correspondingly rewarded later in heaven. Both these apparently opposed points of view are actually rooted in the same materialism. The people who bargain away the things they long for here and now, in order to enjoy some sublimated form of them in a Hereafter, are as hide-bound materialists as are those who collect all they can now and refuse to defer cashing their cheques till hereafter. Both doctrines want the same things, but one is prepared to wait so as to enjoy a more exquisite type of them; or more often because their immediate enjoyment of them is not actually possible and they must make the best of a bad job.

By contrast with these easy, but finally ineffective and false, ways of achieving serenity, Sri Aurobindo points out a new road by which suffering humanity may escape from its fears and sorrows. This road may appear either simple or difficult, according to the psychological temperament of the sympathetically inclined seeker. Like all roads of escape it will only appeal to those who are in distress, save for a fortunate few who are equipped already, by their spiritual past, with the ability to see the Light and for whom there is no practical problem. It will have no meaning at all for people who are satisfied with their own lives and prospects, or with the conditions they see around them, or with the religions or philosophies which they already possess, and to which they look for explanations of the life that they know. It will, however, appeal with exhilarating power to those who have picked up and put down as useless, one after another, the nostrums for human happiness

which are scattered around civilisation East and West in such a welter of confused ineffectiveness. To those whose souls are sick for the Light of Final Reason, and whose spirits long for complete and unqualified serenity, the message of Sri Aurobindo is the supreme hope of the age. In passing, it must be admitted that the Path proposed is one of escapism—that word of suspicion to Western minds. But it represents escape from the Ignorance into Reality and not merely a temporary escape from one bad dream into another temporarily less unpleasant. The yoga that Sri Aurobindo describes is the path of escape from the Dungeons of Despair into the Light of bliss.

With some possible exceptions all effective spiritual philosophies have come out of the East. These have generally insisted on the gulf which exists between the Absolute and the relative and have been addressed to helping their followers to cross it. Christianity and some other systems have promised a magical post-mortem crossing, or salvation, in return for faith in and devotion to a personal Saviour. To the extent that other systems identify "salvation" with "illumination" and enable this to be brought about during the ordinary life-time by a practical technique (or yoga) of mysticism, they are of the same essential nature as the Eastern systems.

But Sri Aurobindo's yoga is not so much devised to assist the postulant to cross a gulf existing between the Absolute and the relative consciousness, as to help him to do away with it. He must find a means of bringing the two consciousnesses together. He is not intended to leap over the abyss into the Absolute, once and forever, abandoning humanity behind him in the relative life from which he has himself escaped.

In this chapter—The Eternal and the Individual—Sri Aurobindo develops and explains, with compelling reason and logical force, the interrelationship of the three levels of consciousness, the Absolute principle, the cosmic Divine, and that of the individual. He gives also the secret for the practical achievement of awareness by the natural man of the perpetual presence in his life of the Divine consciousness. This fact is the hope and glory of human life, that the Divine consciousness is always available to the individual, but it is for him to open himself up to it and share it. This is the solution of human difficulties, and the means for the harmonisation of the relative or personal life.

The way in which this awareness is to come about is by spiritual experience. Sri Aurobindo says, "We see by reason that such an Absolute must exist; we become by spiritual experience aware of its existence;..."

The whole secret and purpose of human life and endeavour, in terms of Sri Aurobindo's teaching, is to become aware of the existence of the Absolute consciousness, and this we can do by a type of experience which transcends the reason and which, for want of more precisely developed scientific terms, is called spiritual. Indeed, the term is a good one with which to describe supra-rational experience, so long as we shake it clear from any connotation with religiosity, as well as from formal ethical and moral concepts. This is not to say that ethics and morals make no contribution to the experiences of the spirit, but merely that these terms imply conditions that are rooted in the relative consciousness and changeable, so that the practice of any particular form of them is not in itself a decisive step towards spiritual experience. The latter, even when achieved in very small measure, will be found to impose its own rules of ethics and morals, some of which may be in startling contrast to commonly accepted conventions.

Spiritual experience is both the individual's means of connection with the Eternal and his hope—his only hope—for the solution of his troubles in the human world of relativities. There is no other path for him out of his sorrows and pains than to gain by spiritual experience a realisation of the Absolute of which he is a cosmic aspect. All the political systems, the economic theories, the religious professions, the social endeavours in the world will not take mankind out of his natural troubles—but only spiritual experience will do this for him. It is obviously not the case that politics, economics, religions, social service, and so on are useless to mankind. These movements are exercises in action and self-discipline; they involve the interchange and friction of thought and aspiration and confront the individual with the problems of his own being. They are, in one form or another, the essential kindergarten in the curriculum which lies before the individual as soon as he becomes capable of reflective thought. This occurs when he begins to emerge from the semi-involuntary consciousness of the human-animal stage of evolution, during which his thinking will have been merely the semi-automatic reflexes arising out of his vital experiences. Following the principle of evolutionary recapitulation, the highly civilised man or

woman should normally grow through some enthusiasms for formal religion, politics, social service, and so on during the early years of a lifetime. There seems, however, to be not much reason—or excuse—for such enthusiasms to persist into the years of mature spiritual endeavour, though there is no reason why some form of these activities should not be a means of secular occupation, just as any other profession. So far as taking mankind bodily out of its troubles all these movements are essentially beside the point. They are in Caesar's domain, and in themselves are not currency in God's kingdom. The most ingenious rearrangement of economic powers will not change "self" into "not-self" in the human breast, and nothing short of this is going to help to solve the human problem.

To change self into not-self, somehow to bring into the waking consciousness the realisation of our unity with the World-Being, is the aim. Somehow we must become conscious of a Self which at one and the same time informs the cosmos and informs our own and each other's individuality in the cosmos. This Self, we shall find in time, has Its reality and support from, and is an expression of, the Absolute, the final conditionless state.

Although this conditionless condition of all life—the Absolute—is beyond our rational conception it seems well and helpful to think of It as bliss and utter fulfilment. It does not take much faith to hold that the final state of consciousness-life is fulfilment, and not annihilation in the ordinary meaning of the word. Preliminary spiritual knowledge points to this conclusion, and the whole weight of mystical experience is towards a more and more blissful fulfilment, and a continuous shedding of a less for a more satisfactory state of being.

What concerns the practical mind is how to bring into the individual consciousness the spiritual experience that will reveal the continuous presence of the cosmic Being or consciousness. It is important to see that the sincere formulation of this question—how is it to be done?—is an indication that the answer is already half guessed at. The individual who asks the question will not be concerned at all with the problem unless he has had some preliminary spiritual conversion, that is, presuming the question is not asked out of rhetorical cynicism. His experiences arising out of the external or internal circumstances in his own life or in those about him, may have sent him seeking for

more satisfactory explanations of his universe than he has yet been offered. He may not recognise his pains and perturbations as spiritual experience, although if they have been strong enough to upset the equilibrium of his normal, commonplace outlook he will probably be aware of the signs and portents of an enlarged cosnciousness. For people capable of accepting ideas that go beyond the common-or-garden varieties in general currency, spiritual experience may already be a reality justifying faith. Not only may this type of postulant have some notion of what spiritual experience is, but he may also be able to appreciate some of its potentialities for opening up his consciousness to the power, light, and bliss, of higher realms of being. He may even know—more or less—what he must do to deliver himself from his own chains, and will see that he lacks only will and faith enough to carry his endeavours into realms which he cannot yet see but only surmise.

To the practical man with spiritual leanings who surveys the world Vanity Fair, it does not seem possible that there are enough seekers after the Light to make any appreciable difference to the over-all spiritual content of the race consciousness. Even if all seekers became illuminated at once there would still seem to be far too few points of light to have any practical effect on the prevailing darkness. It is, indeed, difficult for the isolated striver to see how any large-scale conversion of humanity is going to be possible as a result of such efforts as his own, and at this stage of his evolution humanity's problem will worry him and he will want to do something about them.

It is the case, of course, that during such glimpses of the Light of reality as he has had all problems will have disappeared—both his own and humanity's—but when the Light has faded his own fears and doubts will have flowed back over him and, in fact, will have reduced him to being a "practical man" again, from which viewpoint this article is being written.

The waking consciousness of the ordinary man floats on the thin outer surface of existence. He has no normal contact with the inner depths from which spring the outer conditions of which he is aware. Indeed, he is generally unaware that his outer conditions spring from anything else than other outer conditions. He may vaguely assent to interior or superior influences of one sort or another, but he gives

no practical weight to them in his day-by-day calculations. Unless a man makes the great effort, backed by initial faith, which is necessary to get behind the screen of "things", his waking consciousness is restricted to outer sense controls and the semi-automatic reaction to images formed in his lower intellect. He must make his judgments and strive for his effects on the bare surface of conditions and dealing only with the concrete things of his life. This is why the common efforts of well-meaning but unenlightened people are so unavailing to help humanity to any real betterment of its environment; as rapidly as the surface components are rearranged into what seems a better pattern, so do new evils and troubles come to the surface to keep the fundamentals as they were. In fact, the ordinary life of humanity is like dry sand, inelastic and with no mutuality of cohesion in itself.

What, then, are we to tell our practical man who has the welfare of the world at heart? If he will listen, which means if he is both sincere and intelligent, we will try and give him Sri Aurobindo's message of inspiration:

"The power of the individual to possess in his consciousness by self-knowledge his unity with the Transcendent and the universal, with the One Being and all beings and to live in that knowledge and transform his life by it, is that which makes the working out of the divine self-manifestation through the individual possible; and the arrival of the individual—not in one but in all—at the divine life is the sole conceivable object of the movement."[1]

He will see that his sole duty, and possibility of help to humanity, is himself to find the Divine Life. He will not go far in his search before realising that he had previously formed some very erroneous notions about what was best and most desirable for his fellow-men. From a new elevation of the spirit he will perceive that what he previously took to be enormous differences between human beings and their personal characters are, in fact, so trifling as to be of little practical account. The saint and the sinner may now appear to him to be relatively close together—perhaps both lacking in the touch

[1] *The Life Divine*, Vol. II, p. 140.

of real Light, or perhaps both sharing it. Even pain and sorrow will seem to be a phase of the play of Ananda within the crude and rebellious material which is being worked into a progressive homogeneity and harmony. Individual tragedies, and the horror of separation of life from life, will seem less stark and cruel when it begins to be perceived that there is no separation either of life from life or of individuality from the Whole. The sentimental outlook upon events and history will give way to a finer and wider perception of realities, and this increase of impersonality will result in a greater power for healing and building. How great the power will be, or what it will accomplish or when, will be realised to be beside the point. Such as it is, it will be placed more and more at the disposal of the Mother, whose guiding hands will gradually take over the whole direction of the individual life, to the joy and fulfilment in power of the individual. This is no isolated triumph for the disciple but he will become another beacon for his fellows still in Ignorance, another beach-head for the assault upon the forces marshalled under the banner of the blind King of personal power.

The practical man will see, if his sincerity gives him eyes, that his formula for the future is the power of self-transcendence and of transforming, by self-knowledge, the conditions of the play nearer and nearer to the truth of the Divine Delight. "In that power lies the justification of individual existence; the individual and the universal unfolding in themselves the divine light, power, joy of transcendent Sachchidananda always manifest above them, always secret behind their surface appearances, this is the secret intention, the ultimate significance of the divine plan, the Lila. But it is in themselves, in their transformation but also in their persistence and perfect relations, not in their self-annihilation that that must be unfolded. Otherwise there would be no reason for their ever having existed; the possibility of the Divine's unfolding in the individual is the secret of the enigma, his presence there and this intention of self-unfolding the key to the world of Knowledge-Ignorance."[2]

A. L. CRAMPTON CHALK

[1] *The Life Divine*, Vol. II, p. 141.

Freeing a Star

"If a star were confin'd into a tomb,
Her captives must needs burn there;
But when the hand that lock'd her up, gives room,
She'll shine through all the sphere."

Henry Vaughan.

WHEN Christianity went west, what happened to the Resurrection? The light-loving, sattwic Greeks remained faithful to the idea: the Greek church still puts its chief emphasis on the ending of a dark phase and the beginning of a bright permanency. Wherever the Celts were predominant, a glorious rebirth of light out of darkness was what the new faith meant to them: echoing, perhaps amplifying, the substance of their own. The cosmogeny of this, quoted from the ancient Welsh *Barddas* by Sir Humphrey Rolleston in his *Myths and Legends of the Celtic Races*, is as follows:— "Organised life began by the Word—God pronounced his ineffable Name and the 'Manred' was formed. The Manred was the primal substance of the universe. It was conceived as a multitude of minute indivisible particles—atoms in fact—each being a microcosm, for God is complete in each of them, while at the same time each is a part of God, the Whole. The totality of life as it now exists is represented by three concentric circles. The innermost of them, where Life sprang from Annwn, is called 'Abred' and is the stage of struggle and evolution —the contest of life with Cythrawl. The next is the circle of 'Gwynfid' or Purity, in which life is manifested as a pure, rejoicing force, having attained its triumph over evil. The last and outermost circle is called 'Ceugeant' or Infinity. Here all predicates fail us, and this circle, represented graphically not by a boundary line, but by divergent rays, is inhabited by God alone. Every being, we are told, shall attain

to the circle of Gwynfid at last." Such a ground enabled the Scottish Celts to do lovely things with what they supposed to be the message of the new Avatar. Here, for instance, is the translation (from the *Carmina Gaedelica*) of a very ancient Gaelic hymn of the nativity, *Duan Nollaig:*

> "This is the night of the great Nativity
> Born is the Son of Mary the Virgin
> The soles of his feet have touched the earth..."

(Let us for a moment remember K.D. Sethna's:

> "What shall we mortals do? O ours to meet
> With worshipping brow the flowers of his feet!"

and let the poems rejoice in each other.) The Gaelic poem goes on:

> "The mountains glowed to him, the plains glowed to him,
> The voice of the waves with the song of the strand
> Announcing to us that Christ is born."

No one has put the star into any kind of a tomb yet. Listen!

> "Shone to him the earth and sphere together.
> God the Lord has opened a Door
> Son of Mary Virgin, hasten thou to help me
> Thou Christ of hope, thou Door of joy
> Golden Sun of hill and mountain
> All hail! Let there be joy."

But the Celtic Christians were pushed back too soon, and so was their bright faith, by people of cruder and heavier desires: emphasis shifted from Christ the Door to a tamasic-rajasic, wallowing acceptance of Christ as vicarious sacrifice for sin. At once the starry idea of evolution—"from Abred to Gwynfid"—is entombed, and Cythrawl, a darkness glaring with all the Vital's hottest and smokiest enjoyments, clamps down the lid. Man "sins" and grovels. Even Thomas

Traherne, a light-loving creature who looked "For Man to act as if his soul did see, The very brightness of eternity; For Man to act as if his love did burn Above the spheres, even while it's in its urn", could also, after a glance about him, write:

"Mankind is sick, the world distemper'd lies
Oppressed with sins and miseries.
Their sins are woes; a long corrupted train
Of poison, drawn from Adam's vein,
Stains all his seed and all his kin
Are one disease of life within.
They all torment themselves!"

They do, indeed: ego swells under a thousand disguises.

"Lord, what is man? why should he cost Thee
So dear? what had his ruin lost thee?
Lord, what is man? that thou hast overbought
So much a thing of nought?"

True modesty, one would suppose, might conclude that an omniscient and omnipotent Creator must have a very good idea of his creatures' value; proceeding thence to the notion that a worthy Creature's part in the endeavour is, with quiet happiness, to go on learning how properly to fulfil the creative idea. Indeed the young, musical Milton does see what the sentimental Crashaw misses.

"Blest pair of Sirens, pledges of Heaven's joy,
Sphere-born harmonious Sisters, voice and verse!
Wed your divine sounds, and mixt power employ
Dead things with inbreathed sense able to pierce;
And to our high-raised phantasy present
That undisturbed Song of pure concent
Ay sung before the sapphire-coloured throne
To Him that sits thereon,
With saintly shout and solemn jubilee;
Where the bright Seraphim in burning row

Their loud uplifted angel-trumpets blow;
And the Cherubic host in thousand quires
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires,
With those just spirits that wear victorious palms,
    Hymns devout and holy psalms
    Singing everlastingly:
Thus we on earth, with undiscording voice
May rightly answer that melodious noise;
As once we did, till disproportioned sin
Jarred against nature's chime, and with harsh din
Broke the fair music that all creatures made
To their great Lord, whose love their motion swayed
In perfect diapason, whilst they stood
In first obedience, and their state of good.
    O may we soon again renew that Song
    And keep in tune with Heaven, till God ere long
    To His celestial concert us unite
To live with Him, and sing in endless morn of light!"

Man is here in his place: his voice and his verse penetrate even to the core of "dead things", breathing into them—breathing *back* into each its own lovely importance, as divined by Man, in whom the inarticulate are intended to find voices and by whom alone, in this evolution, they are to be shown their "sense." Man is aware, he is familiarly and deliciously part of the "fair music which all creatures make." The star is out and singing as it sang to Shakespeare, when he realised that

"There's not the smallest orb which thou beholdst,
But in his motion like an angel sings...."

Gwynfid is shining everywhere through Abred. But not for long.

"Methought Death, with his dart,
Had mortally transfix't my heart;
  And devils round about,
To seize my spirit flying out,

Cried—'*Now*', of which you took no care,
Is turn'd to *Never* and despair!"

In all ages there appear to be artists who reflect their time—not necessarily with approval—and those whose vocation is rather to resist, illuminate, and lead it on to its future. While Bishop Thomas Ken was writing the verse just quoted, Thomas Shepherd's eye was fixed firmly on a distant Gwynfid:—

"Alas, my God, that we should be
Such strangers to each other!
O that as friends we might agree
And walk and talk together."

Not long afterwards, up jumps Blake with his exasperated—and perhaps, because exasperated, insufficient—revolt against the contemporary isolation of Man from his divine setting and cosmic function.

"And did the Countenance Divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among these dark Satanic Mills?

"Bring me my bow of burning gold..."

In vain, one is tempted to think. The fog thickens.

"The church bells toll a melancholy round...
Surely the mind of man is closely bound
In some black spell..."

The half Cornish, half Cockney poet who thought so, did, we may gratefully suppose, as thoroughly as anyone could, what his Muse required of him toward counteracting the spell, and he tried to discover the cause of the melancholy: in the letter to George Keats, his brother, dated 30th April 1819, he puts in a strong plea thus for Gwynfid-and-evolution against Cythrawl-and-substituted-retaliation. "The common

cognomen of this world among the misguided and superstitious is 'a vale of tears' from which we are to be redeemed by a certain arbitrary interposition of God and taken to Heaven—what a little circumscribed straightened notion! Call the world if you please 'The vale of Soul-making'. Then you will find out the use of the world....I say 'Soul-making', soul as distinguished from an Intelligence—there may be intelligences or sparks of the divinity in millions—but they are not Souls till they acquire identities, till each one is personally itself. Intelligences are atoms of perception—they know and they see and they are pure, in short they are God. How then are Souls to be made? How then are these sparks which are God to have identity given them—so as ever to possess a bliss peculiar to each one's individual existence? How, but by the medium of a world like this....As various as the Lives of Men are—so various become their Souls, and thus does God make individual beings, Souls, Identical Souls of the sparks of his own essence. This appears to me a faint sketch of a system of salvation which does not affront our reason and humanity..."

But the commercial attitude already hinted at in Crashaw's lines is rapidly spreading to life: the industrial revolution is upon us, Man is no longer a "voice" for dead things but their exploiter: the more sensitive, aware of this growing narrowness, go so far as to indulge in a kind of grovelling before Nature as well as before God. Listen to Elizabeth Barrett Browning:

> " 'O dreary life', we cry, 'O dreary life!'
> And still the generations of the birds
> Sing through our sighing, and the flocks and herds
> Serenely live while we are keeping strife
> With Heaven's true purpose in us..."

Man lives in himself, and the isolation is terrible: he is afraid of his source and his home.

> "The 'Infinite.' Word horrible! at feud
> With life, and the braced mood
> Of power, and love, and joy..."

That is Coventry Patmore. Here is Christina Rossetti:

"God strengthen me to bear myself;
That heaviest weight of all to bear,
Inalienable weight of care...

"If I could set aside myself,
And start with lightened heart upon
The road by all men overgone!"

She does, almost, glimpse what may lie at the end of such a journey —or at any rate, be refreshment on completing a stage.

"As I lie dreaming
    It rises, that land:
There rises before me
    Its green golden strand,
With its bowing cedars
    And its shining sand;
It sparkles and flashes
    Like a shaken brand."

But she locates it, not on earth at the end of a brave and extremely interesting struggle "out of Abred into Gwynfid", but in a static heaven passively reached by the grave. She is typical of her time in so doing. Man, his eyes on personal salvation and his thoughts on bargain instead of identity and divine calling, grows more and more disgusting to himself—and even, as Charles Wesley presently discovers, to his Maker:

"Still, O Lord, for Thee I tarry
    Full of sorrows, sins and wants;
Thee and all thy Saints I weary
    With my sad and vain complaints;
Sawn asunder by temptation,
    Tortured by distracting care,
Killed by doubts' severe vexation,
    Sorer even than despair.

Will the fight be never over?
Will the balance never turn?"

Yes, it will—but not just yet. Even to Hopkins, who can begin a sonnet, "The world is charged with the grandeur of God", it seems, as the poem continues, that:

"Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell..."

No doubt Hopkins' Muse, too did what could be done with the age, and Hopkins. But there is too much commerce, there is too little identity, there is too much ego and too little cosmos.

"Ah well! it is all a purchase, all is a prize.
Buy then! bid then!—What?—Prayer, patience,
alms, vows..."

But already two young poets in Ireland are preparing to restore Man, partially at any rate, to his place in the manifestation—a thing they have only to look at, anywhere, in order to see in it a whole and beautiful, god-occupied, infinitely various marvel.

"I passed along the water's edge below the humid trees,
My spirit rocked in evening light, the rushes round my knees,
My spirit rocked in sleep and sighs; and saw the moorfowl chase
Each other round in circles, and heard the eldest speak:
Who holds the world between His bill and made us strong or weak
Is an undying moorfowl, and He lives beyond the sky.
The rains are from His dripping wing, the moonbeams from
His eye."

Yeats also walks among the seven woods of Coole: "shady Kyle-dortha sunnier Kyle-na-gno" and "dim Pairc-na-tarav, where enchanted eyes, Have seen immortal mild proud shadows pass." He had not, he tells us:

"I had not eyes like those enchanted eyes
Yet dreamed that beings happier than men
Moved round me in the shadows, and at night
My dreams were cloven by voices and by fires..."

Man is not now absorbed in himself: light rocks his spirit; the God who is archetype for the moorfowl is archetype for himself—and the Eternal Beauty; he neighbours beings "happier than men", of a different order and yet able to communicate to his poetically alert penetration the experience of their pure delight. No longer self-isolated, man no longer disgusts himself: he occupies a necessary and intended place and is pleased with it. AE contemplates this function and place, as contrasted with those of beings not of the Evolution, with passionate awareness and deep content. Man says to the Angel:

"I have wept a million tears:
Pure and proud one, where are thine,
What the gain though all thy years
In unbroken beauty shine?...

All your beauty cannot win
Truth we learn with pain and sighs:
You can never enter in
To the circle of the wise..."

Both of these poets have enriched and steadied the course of man's pilgrimage. Their visions were exact and pure: AE's too pure perhaps to support many through the waste lands of 1918 to 1943, but do not let us on that account underrate their value. Do not let us underrate the value of any of these cries, these incantations, these creative words: for will it not be found when our eyes can see everything that each of them has been an entirely necessary—more, an indispensable—thread in the fabric of the Manifestation? It would at any rate have been quite different without them: each as it was spoken has had some effect, and each as it is quoted here will change for ever, in some degree, the consciousness of the reader: he will wish the star to come out of the tomb, he will want resurrection, he will see himself as a voice for dead things,

he will with Blake ask for—and perhaps receive and bend—his Gandiva; he will, with Charles Wesley, make the lovably comic discovery that man too much occupied with the idea of his sins, may be an almost insufferable bore to his God.

And he will pass again through the waste land. Perhaps its greatest desolation was not voiced by T. S. Eliot for in his work Man is often aware of his plight: in the nineteen-thirties, I think, Man was not. W. J. Turner, in *The Dancer*—surely one of the most poignant small poems ever written—describes the seeming gaiety and the real void:

> "The young girl dancing lifts her face
> Passive among the drooping flowers;
> The jazz band rattles sticks and bones
> In a bright rhythm through the hours..."

Wordsworth listened to silence and found himself hearing the "still, sad music of humanity." It was worse than that, from 1918 to 1943—much more desolate than "sad". It is worse than merely "sad" now.

HEAR THE SOUND OF MEN LIVING

> It is the perpetual sound of the sea, but shriller.
> Wind in a shell makes this moan—but this is sadder,
> A sound that scarcely can bear its own sadness any longer
> (Not knowing it is sad, or that a sound made by it
> could be other).
> O breaking heart of the world—grey abscess!—
> There is a living-sound of perdurable rapture.

K.D. Sethna describes the sound flawlessly when in his preface to *The Adventure of the Apocalypse* he speaks of "a low universal croon, a far away rhythm with a deep monotone overlaid with small variations: even the variations repeat one and the same softly trembling theme: some ultimate Mother Spirit seems to be gently singing to her child the cosmos..." Other poets are listening for the sound; some, to it. The wisest of them, having watched time ripening, know

that they are demanding an intended thing in asking for a new *Duan Nollaig*: a "night of the Great Nativity", which, because Man is now maturer, shall be strongly, faithfully and intelligently welcomed. They believe that now they could be shown a Door of joy that they could manage not to bang shut at once; they think of a golden Sun by which they intend not to be dazzled; of divine feet touching their mountains and not moving thence to crucifixion. Here is Vernon Watkins looking from Abred to Gwynfid, and sending his perceptions into the storming ocean of Possibility that was 1943:

"Plunging below the paths and deaths of ships
To the first film of pearl,
Shell of the world unborn and of the waking girl,
Treading time down through rhyme and slime
To the first norm
Of self-engendering flame,
Slow miracle-bed of lightning and coiled limbs,
Where no prolonged martyrs' crucifix beats
Cobbles of a pilgrim's streets,
But the crust breaks in Christ's original radium."

It is a strong cry. Five years later Edwin Muir, in his own fashion, repeats it, in a poem of heart-breaking beauty calling for the return of a Christ who shall no longer be a Man of Sorrows, but:

".....Christ the uncrucified,
Christ the discrucified, his death undone,
His agony unmade, his cross dismantled—
Glad to be so—and the tormented wood
Will cure its hurt and grow into a tree.....
And Judas damned take his long journey backward
From darkness into light....."

It cannot really, of course, be a journey backward. "The road leads on." We are told that by the same poet with the utmost firmness in another, intensely moving, poem called *The Way* in the same volume in which *The Transfiguration* appears (*The Labyrinth*. Faber,

1949). He even says that the road "leaps on". Where? He does not tell us. So let us listen again to the Indian voice which has twice already duetted in so brotherly a way with our Celtic-Germanic-Romance muse:

> "The golden sphere of the sun in earthly skies
> Echoes a globe of God whose self is light
> Hung over mortal mind in a blue of bliss.....
> A sun beyond this sun above the mind
> Waits in a mystery beyond the blue;
> A night more vast than the blue distances
> Between our reveries and the flame they reach
> Is spread between that flame and fathomless truth's
> Gigantic star seen like one diamond speck
> Lost in a time-transcending loneliness.
> Remote from the globed sun is that strange blaze—
> It rounds not human knowledge but reveals
> A gold in which mind's glimmering bents are drawn
> Straight by a pattern holding God's full Self
> Of being and consciousness, delight and power
> In a gathering of the immense to the intense
> A foursquare sun focussing eternity,
> Formless perfection caught in a perfect form!"

More, then, than the old wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove (more, anyway, than what Man has usually understood by the phrase) is required now for Man to be his age: he must have the wisdom of his extended self. To deserve, or recognise a divine Presence which shall no longer be a Man of Sorrows he must give up grieving. "Pain," says Sri Aurobindo in a letter to a disciple, "is caused because the physical consciousness in the Ignorance is too limited to bear the touches that come upon it. Otherwise, to cosmic consciousness in its state of complete knowledge and complete experience, all touches come as Ananda." It is possible at a very low level of awareness to observe something of such a transmutation: to watch, and find the feel of pain altered by an open-minded staring to, perhaps, the sight of colour: noble red and royal yellow,

symbol or actuality of a force—courtship or lash—that some, possibly quite distant, faltering yet delightful and necessary constituent of life has to make contact with in order to exert itself and increase. The feeler of the pain becomes enchanted co-operator then instead of victim; he grows, he has comrades—he has everything that exists for his comrade. Where is there any room for distress? None, of course, at the moment of insight; but in habit, in memory, in tamasic enjoyment of weakness, in the general pulling back of the Ignorance, plenty of room will be discovered for it later. What does it matter? We do not expect to reach Gwynfid from Abred in the time that one candle takes in burning.

> "Like falling plum-blossom, lily-coloured rain,
> Like moonlight pelting through the black boughs of a pine,
> More delicate, more kind, more subtle, strange
> Than any of these—out of range
> Because of its function, which is to enchant us on
> To the round-as-a-pearl perfect, unguessed as well as unknown
> End it has pictured and we, wise with its wisdom, will be:
> That is how, last night, the Nature of God shone to me."

"Wise with its wisdom." A sobering thought. But really we have known for a long time now that we cannot, as they did in Wordsworth's time, go on "moving about in worlds not realised". They impinge too dangerously upon our function as conscious traveller "out of Abred into Gwynfid", as voice "for dead things", as a shower of Ceugeant to. and in Cythrawl.

Ceugeant?—the state in which to the old Barddic seers "all predicates fail us"? Yes, Ceugeant. Man is to go beyond Gwynfid. And Ceugeant is not to be, when he reaches it, at all strange to him. Listen!

"A Transcendent who is beyond all world and all Nature and yet possesses the world and its nature, who has descended with something of himself into it and is shaping it into that which as yet it is not, is the Source of our being, the Source of our works and their Master. But the seat of the Transcendent Consciousness is above in an absoluteness of divine Existence—and there too is the absolute Light, Power, Bliss

and Truth—a divine Truth-Consciousness as the ancient mystics called it, a Supermind, a Gnosis, with which this world of a lesser consciousness proceeding by Ignorance is in secret relation and which alone maintains it and prevents it from falling into a disintegrated chaos. The powers we are now satisfied to call gnosis, intuition or illumination are only fainter lights of which there is the full and flaming source, and between the highest human intelligence and it there lie many levels of ascending consciousness, highest mental or overmental, which we would have to conquer before we arrived there or could bring down its greatness and glory here. Yet, however difficult that ascent, that victory is the destiny of the human spirit and that luminous descent or bringing down of the divine Truth is the inevitable term of the troubled evolution of the earth-nature; that intended consummation is its *raison d'être*, our culminating state and the explanation of our terrestrial existence."[1]

Most loving reverence, I think, should flow out to the old Bards who knew there was a Ceugeant and, while feeling that there all predicates failed them, yet put its rays protectingly around Gwynfid—and round Abred: the stage of struggle—where we are now.

> "O diamond Master, inmost undefeatable Fighter,
> Be me now to the feet—and a blue sword besides at the centre:
> I am in great danger.
> The Asura-mouth, even of my sister,
> Gapes...Take, like lightning, the kiss."

Mistily, Man is beginning to recognise that in the most ordinary intercourse with his fellows he is actually played upon and playing with powers of which he knows nothing. Notice any conversation running round a group of acquaintances. Words are spoken, but it is not words which are most significantly answered: it is unconscious, half conscious, sub- and super-conscient likes, dislikes, memories, illuminations, threats, hopes, encouragements, lusts to dominate,

[1] Sri Aurobindo. *Synthesis of Yoga.*

dreads of diminution. In less casual companionships the thing naturally goes deeper. "There is always some vital interchange, unless one rejects what comes from the other instinctively or deliberately. If one is impressionable, there may be a strong impression or influence from the other. Then when one goes to another person it is possible to pass it on to the other. That is a thing which is constantly happening. But this thing happens without the knowledge of the transmitter. When one is conscious one can prevent it happening."[1] It is said so quietly that we cannot help hearing it in, even to the centre: the effect of that being that the centre, so charged, takes charge of us, holding and furthering us into recognition that it, our Centre, is also everyone's and everything's: absolute knower, faultless protector, enjoyer and lover. What then it sends out again through us to the confronted Self can only be what the reality of that Self ardently wants to receive from it—whether lightning to strike, shrivel, and eject a fault of a possession, or smile to welcome, warm and increase one of its own hidden, tentatively emerging splendours. But really to reach Gwynfid from Abred we must go higher—and deeper—than our fellows' needs. "It is very true that physical things have a consciousness within them which feels and responds to care and is sensitive to careless and rough handling. To know or feel that and learn to be careful of them is a great progress in consciousness."[2] Let us listen to the fuller statement: "A certain reverence, even, for Matter and a sacramental attitude in all dealings with it is possible. As in the Gita the act of taking food is spoken of as a material sacrament, a sacrifice, an offering of Brahman to Brahman by Brahman, so also the gnostic consciousness and sense can view all the operations of Spirit and Matter. The spirit made itself Matter in order to place itself there as an instrument for the well-being and joy, *yoga-kshema*, of created things, for a self-offering of universal physical utility and service. The gnostic being, using Matter but using it without material or vital attachment or desire, will feel that he is using the Spirit in this form with its consent and sanction for its own purpose. There will be in him a certain respect for physical things, an awareness of the occult consciousness in them, of its dumb

[1] Sri Aurobindo. *Letters. Second Series.*

[2] ibid.

will of utility and service, a worship of the Divine, the Brahman in what he uses, a care for a perfect and faultless use of his divine material, for a true rhythm, ordered harmony, beauty in the life of Matter, in the utilisation of Matter."[1] We have travelled a long way here from Milton's bright Seraphim in their burning row. The "sapphire throne" is not now being sung to by the creatures of an infinitely remote earth; rather, That which occupies it is Itself singing—and in every clod It is itself the song, and Man is its ears hearing, its mind thinking, its feet moving upon the mountains toward itself, its innumerable eyes looking in an intoxication of delight at the enchanting novelty, the dear known-ness, of its own innumerable faces. Ceugeant is visibly and everywhere pouring an unveiled divinity into Gwynfid, into Abred, into Cythrawl. Childishness is over, the entombed star is out and shining: any discerning poet should be able to say now with Christina Rossetti:

"As I lie dreaming
It rises, that land:
There rises before me
Its green golden strand,
With its bowing cedars
And its shining sand;
It sparkles and flashes
Like a shaken brand."

But to establish the reality, we must follow what winding, leaping, certain road?

"The technique of a world-changing Yoga has to be as multiform, sinuous, patient, all-including as the world itself. If it does not deal with all the difficulties or possibilities and carefully deal with each necessary element, has it any chance of success? And can a perfect technique which everybody can understand do that? It is not like writing a small poem in a fixed metre with a limited number of modulations. If you take the poem simile, it is the Mahabharata of a Mahabharata that has to be done. And what, compared with the limited Greek perfection, is the technique of the Mahabharata?...What the

[1] Sri Aurobindo. *The Life Divine.*

Supramental will do the mind cannot foresee or lay down. The mind is ignorance seeking for the Truth; the Supramental by its very definition is the Truth-Consciousness, Truth in possession of itself and fulfilling itself by its own power. In a Supramental world imperfection and disharmony are bound to disappear. But what we propose just now is not to make the earth a Supramental world but to bring down the Supramental as a power and established consciousness in the midst of the rest. This will be enough to change the world and to change Nature by breaking down her present limits. But what, how, by what degrees it will do it is a thing that ought not to be said now—when the Light is there, the Light will itself do its work—when the Supramental Will stands on earth, that Will will decide. It will establish a perfection, a harmony, a Truth creation—for the rest, well, it will be the rest—that is all."[1] "Meditation, work, bhakti are each a means of preparative help towards fulfilment... If one can dedicate oneself through work, that is one of the most powerful and indispensable means towards the self-giving which is itself the most powerful and indispensable element of the sadhana.... It is the path of self-offering of the whole being in all its parts, the offering of the thinking mind and the heart, the will and actions, the inner and the outer instruments.... But all cannot do it to the same extent, with the same rapidity, in the same way. How others do it or fail to do it should not be one's concern—how to do it faithfully oneself is the one thing important."[2]

But let us again give them our loving reverence: the Bards who put Ceugeant around Gwynfid, those who looked through the Door to a Sun that was joy, those who, finding the Star was entombed, said so, those who struggled to free it,—who have freed it.

"The mountains glow to them, the plains glow
to them,
The voice of the waves with the song of the
strand...
God the Lord has made them a Door..."

JOYCE CHADWICK

[1] Sri Aurobindo. *Letters. First Series.*

[2] Sri Aurobindo. *Letters. Second Series.*

Man in his Freedom

I

IN creating, man is created. In freedom he creates and is created free. He is born a slave.

Freedom and slavery are not opposites, but truths of distinct and separated orders which are unrelated and unrelatable save as they are related in their relation to the field of consciousness of an experiencing subject. Indeed, they are not, in principle, transcendent to this field of consciousness but are of the structure of its formation. I am not conscious *of* freedom or *of* slavery, but my consciousness is, in its structural formation, free or enslaved. I shall return to this.

So also, creativity and birth are unrelated and have a dialectical character reflected upon them only in so far as they are related in their relation to the field of consciousness of an experiencing subject.

It is the subject, in the passion and action of relating himself to himself or, as the case may be, as indeed it most often is, in the passion of disrelationship in the action of relating himself to himself, who is dialectical.

As *definienda*, freedom and slavery are not thing-property concepts but relational concepts. It is only by a process of abstraction in the direction of reducing them to thing-property concepts that one comes mistakenly, to speak of them as contraries.

If, in the passion of the movement of relating myself to myself, I am in a relation of disrelationship to the relation which is my self, either in the direction of integration, so that it may be said that I am not yet a self, or in the direction of disintegration, so that it may be said that I am no longer a self but an ego, then the truth is, not that I am *either* free *or* enslaved, but that I am *both* free *and* enslaved. It is this fact which gives to the dialectical conflict of consciousness its

bitter and terrifying quality. And it is to this fact that attention must be directed if one would uncover the ground of conflict between man and man. Here it is that one must search to discover the ground of the blasphemous and bestial.

Freedom has a much deeper ground than the ability to choose between 'this and that'; deeper even than the ability to *draw* 'this and that' out of an undifferentiated mass and to *name* them; deeper still than the ability to weld 'this and that' into an order of intelligibility. He who is free is the truth of 'this and that', their ground and constituting factor. But in his freedom man may become the untruth of 'this and that', their *abgrund*, the factor of their dissolution and disappearance.

If it be the truth that in relating myself to myself there is no disrelation, so that I am therefore a self, then it is also the truth, not that I am either free or enslaved, but that I am free. And the opposite is not one who is enslaved but another self who is likewise free, one who in his freedom addresses himself to me and elicits from me, in my freedom, a response: here there is no conflict between opposites, not yet a synthesis of opposites, but an immediate transparent contemporaneity, a transcendent immanence and an immanent transcendence.

If it be the truth that in relating myself to myself there is a disrelationship so that I am not a self but an ego, then it is also the truth that I am enslaved. And the opposite is another ego who is likewise enslaved. Here again, there is neither a conflict nor a synthesis of opposites; there is simply no relation, save as each is related to the nothing of intelligibility, the nothing of address, the nothing of response, the nothing of being: to the abyss across which each confronts the other.

If I hold, and persist in making, slavery the opposite of freedom, then I degrade man in his freedom to the condition of servitude. If I hold, and persist in making, freedom the opposite of slavery, then I exalt slavery to the nobility of freedom: I invest the nothing of being with the authenticity of being; I invest the radically absurd with the truth of intelligibility.

The argument, up to its present point, may be summarised as follows:—

I am free because I am the truth of 'this and that'.

I am the truth of 'this and that' because I am free.

These two statements are one statement. They cannot be taken apart. Neither speaks of a moment of existence which is prior to that of which the other speaks.

But: Because I am free, I may become the untruth of 'this and that'.

I am enslaved because I am the untruth of 'this and that'.

There is a moment of existence wherein these two statements are one statement, corresponding to one *factum*. It is the moment of becoming. It is not the moment of being. The moment of being is the moment of separation, wherein this one statement is seen as two statements which correspond to one *factum*, seen as two aspects of one contradiction. The moment of becoming is the form and utterance of the moment of creating.

Man in his freedom is the truth of 'this and that' *who* is becoming—the untruth of 'this and that'.

This must be taken as a primary definition of man—of every man.

This movement of becoming is not stayed if man is taken out of his freedom and brought under compulsion.

Destruction, the fruit of becoming the untruth, the *abgrund*, is a dialectical moment of man in his freedom.

It must be noted that destruction does not always take the form of disintegration, it may take the form of complete organisation. Indeed, this is its most common historical form.

The six following relations are to be found together in every concrete human situation. The first three belong to the dialectic of the self, of man as the truth of all that is; the remainder belong to the dialectic of the non-self, of man as the *abgrund* of all that is, of man in his enslavement.

1). The self and the not-self.
2). The self and the I.
3). The self and the not-I.
4). The not-self and the I.
5). The I and the not-I.
6). The not-self and the not-I.

The only non-human factor is the not-I.

God is absolute Self; the absolute Self is God.

II

Creative activity is the primary movement of the self in the act of relating itself to itself. It is, therefore, the primary movement of consciousness, which is the movement of the subject in its search for an other subject as the ground of its own integrity, intelligibility and fulfilment. In this sense, creative activity is accomplishment; but it is never an accomplishment which is over and done with, which can be put behind one as that which has come to an end. It is the posing of one's self before the face of an other, being present to the presence of an other over against the unintelligibility of a radical nothing and confusion which ever threatens to dissolve the relation. It is the accomplishment of a living participation, an inner flaming rhythmic union.

That which is created bears the image of the eternity of its creator. It does not bear within itself the seed of its own decay, but the seed of its own eternity. In the midst of change, it is the changeless. If it were not so, there would be no tragedy: no *death*, no evil, no suffering, no love, no resurrection.

The Ego is not primary, as is sometimes thought, but derivative, and is incapable of creative activity.

Spirit, that is the self relating itself to its self and disclosing in the act the ground which constitutes it a self, is primary.

The Ego is derived from a disrelationship in the passion of the act of the self relating itself to its self, whereby the self is aware of itself as a synthesis which may fall apart, because it is unaware of, or because it has denied, the possibility of a ground in which the essential structures of the relating factors may cohere.

Ego is not oneness but particularity. When a man becomes an Ego, he is no longer one, but a particular among particulars, and the particularity of the context, which is his world, is his own fashioning, the fruit of his desire: it is a world in dissolution, a world returning to confusion and nothing.

Creative activity is primary, no matter at what point in cosmic and historical times it is manifested, or for what duration in these times. It is primary, even if its first appearance is at the end of historical time.

Creative activity does not impress form upon an already 'given' thing, whether or no this 'given thing' be understood under the categories of substance or matter; neither is it its peculiar character to bring order out of chaos.

The impressing of form is not a creative act; neither is the movement towards a transcendent object, whatever be the 'nature' of this object, with the intention of bringing an authoritative will or purpose to bear upon it, a creative movement. This activity and this movement do not belong to the realm of life wherein creative activity has its source; they belong to a world which is already in being for death: they are the modes of a struggle against life and, in this sense, are to be understood as modes of dying.

The creative act achieves form and the movement is from within, outward. All form is a manifestation of the inner processes of Spirit.

Form is the shattering of Being and its persistent transformation into Becoming: it is the overcoming of the inertia of *a* world which has become in being for death; it is a shattering of the permanent and its persistent transformation into movement and change; it is the shattering of ideals, the dispersal of the fog and confusion that they are, and the persistent transformation of them into phenomena, into *that which appears*. The categories of chaos and cosmos, of disorder and arrangement, do not here apply. Form is a movement of becoming. The imagination of God is a movement of becoming, of light breaking forth from within darkness, of speech breaking forth from within silence and, much more profoundly, of silence breaking forth from within speech. Man is the imagination of God. The image of God is the light which is within reason, the utterance, the address and the silence which is within speech. The imagination of man is both God and Devil. Man is the bearer of the image of God, and is the ground of God in whatever world there is. Man is also the ground of the absence of God.

III

Man is born a slave.

Birth is separation. Reason is left without illumination and speech without address and address without silence. Light has for-

saken the darkness within which it shone; silence has forsaken the address and address has forsaken the speech within which it was heard; the inward has forsaken the outward and become chaos; the outward has been cast adrift into confusion and darkness.

Birth is not manifestation. Manifestation is not birth.

Separation does not confer freedom but slavery. Absolute separation is absolute slavery.

Loneliness and slavery are terms which cannot be defined apart.

The lonely man is the spectator, he before whom the whole world is but a show, he who, in some way, succeeds in absenting himself from the world.

There is a metaphysical connection between being a spectator and being enslaved.

Separation is not detachment. Detachment is a mode of inward participation. And manifestation is a mode of detachment.

To value others for the sake of oneself: the will to dominate; to value oneself for the sake of others: the will to be dominated; individuality, independence, the snapping of chains—these are modes of separation. It would be a mistake to assume that the forging of chains confers freedom. Yet the acceptance of them may be a manifestation of it.

Separation is not primary. It is the end of a process, the consequence of an event which has already taken place in the inner life of the spirit. Its presence in the biological and material orders is a reflection of this event.

Separation is the mode of evil. Victory over, or deliverance from evil, would be manifested in the overcoming of separation and in the healing of its wounds.

The proximity of one individual is not a sign that separation has been overcome, neither is the distance of one individual from another a sign that it still exists.

Separation is the rupture of the inner relatedness of the self, of one *with* an other, of man with man, of man with his self as with the whole, of man with God: of the many with the One and the One with the many. It is, therefore, synonymous with disintegration, with the nothing-of-being and the becoming-nothing. The mutual co-operation of the One with the many and the many with the One, of man with

God and God with man, in the relational structure of the self, which is the mode of freedom in the truth, is ruptured.

Separation is the quenching of creative fire.

Separation results in the establishment of the individual, the monad and the fragment in the order of objective existence. It has nothing to do with the person or with the unique, save to destroy them. Individuality is the negation of freedom; it may be the apotheosis of licence. On the other hand, Collectivity does not know freedom and can neither affirm nor deny it.

IV

Man is born into the world, into an order which is both in being and is in process of becoming. But he is not enslaved by the world. He enslaves the world. His entry into the world entails a new departure for the world. The world has now a history and a destiny, that is, his birth into the world is the taking up of a position outside the world, from which the world is surveyed as an object which has an accountable beginning and an imaginable end. And yet it is the case that he cannot escape from the world or from the fact that he has been in the world, that is, he cannot escape from his own accountable beginning or from his own imaginable end. It is also the case that the world cannot escape from him.

Man, sundered from the source of his own becoming, is sundered within the self and claims the right to be this source, and assumes despotic power. The claim is rooted in the will. It is possible to ground it in reason. But freedom is grounded neither in the will nor in reason; neither justice nor judgement can secure it. To will and to reason, and to *be* in the act of willing or of reasoning: these are partial states and discrete functions. Man is neither a state of being nor a function of being. Man is grounded in freedom and is created by God in the act of himself creating. He is not grounded in God. God is the source but not the act of his becoming. God is neither the source nor the act of his freedom.

Freedom is groundless; it is the *abgrund*. But when man becomes the *abgrund* of all that is, he is enslaved.

Freedom is not to be reached by the denial or destruction

of grounds. Such destruction results in chaos, in the nothing-of-being.

But freedom is not chaos. Itself groundless, it is grounded in the relational structure of the self and is thus the source and the ground of all grounds: it is the ground of all order, all discipline, all obedience and all responsibility. But if order, or discipline, or obedience, or responsibility is made into a ground, spirit is driven out, freedom is destroyed, the image of man is debased and the world, as cosmos, becomes an arrangement for the orderly burial of the dead: the "maximum number of actual avenues of opportunity are opened", but only abstractions are left to make use of them.

Freedom is the burden of being one, in the wholeness of life, with God and with one's fellow men and with every other thing that is—in God.

God is one with all that is in the wholeness of life. This may be taken as a definition of God, if it be understood that it is not the noun in the nominative case but the activity which we are defining: 'being-one-with', and if we are careful to cast and retain the definition in its verbal and not its substantival form.

Man's situation in the world is tragic.

We do not speak of the situation of a flower in the world as tragic, not even when we watch it wither in a dry season, or when we uproot and trample on it because its beauty is an offence to us. We behold the flower, and behold the perfection of the possibilities of a living thing unfolding form and order from within. The perfection of possibilities is a spontaneous event. We note, as a fact, that it is rooted in a place which we may map with ease, and we write down its immobility as the mark of an order of being in the world which is lower than our own. We note the rhythm of the change of seasons, and write down the rhythm of the unfolding of the inherent possibilities of the growing plant as contingent. Man is nobler than the plant and wise with the knowledge of an ancient freedom, of an ancient evil and an ancient good.

The ground of tragedy is not in the world but in man.

The limit situation, which is so dominant a feature of man's awareness of himself in the world, the difficulty of overcoming the 'distance' of discreteness, the necessity of submitting to pre-determined laws which are altogether indifferent to him, the flight from death which is

masked as the joy of life—this is not a fabrication of powers which are external to himself, but is the construction of his own interior processes. Law, necessity, causality: each is a victory of man in his freedom over chaos, but each is a renunciation of the victory upon the instant of its achievement. The structure of every possible limit situation which may truly describe man as being in the world, is a triumph of man in his freedom. Death, not the death of an other, nor my participation in or my beholding or my sorrow at the death of an other, but my own death, is my triumph in my freedom. And yet man is enslaved and made trivial by his victories. He is their creature: the creature of his dying and his living, of his future and his past. He is no longer *in* his acts. He is become the drift and wreckage swept on the flow of the deeds of others, even on the flow of deeds which have no doer but themselves, which perform themselves without reachable or assignable cause. Life, death, truth, falsehood, justice are become elemental formless forces, like fire and air and water, which strive no longer one with another for mastery, but each against itself: fire with fire consuming, air with air dispersing, water with water dissolving, and man is caught up in the rage of conflict to be destroyed utterly as an un-free thing of nought.

When a man ventures to act on the ground that everything is allowable, he does not overstep limits; he creates limits and sets himself securely in a limit situation. His despair, the despair at being in the world, his destructive nihilism is turned, not against the limits, but against himself, and he destroys himself.

V

Death and life, slavery and freedom, evil and good are in man as of the structure of his inwardness: he is their logos; they are not, and cannot be, imposed from without. The hierarchy of existence is in man. Its rupture, and the confusion, and contradiction which follow, is in man. The whole company of heaven and the vast concourse of hell, and the abyss which distinguishes and separates them, are in man. If there be highest and lowest, noblest and basest, greatest and smallest, these are together in man. Man contends "with dominion, with authority, with the blind rulers of this life, with the spirit of evil in things heavenly": in all this he contends with himself.

The spontaneous perfection of possibilities, which is not quite without a place among the definitions of man in his freedom, implies the perfection of evil as well as the perfection of good. The perfection of good is the achievement of authority in the abstract, of form sketched in from outside; it may be likened to the perfected structure of an uninhabitated prison which is waiting to welcome and give security to its first chained inmate. The perfection of evil is the achievement of *nothing*, the degradation and denial of the self, that is, of the worth of an other. Achievement of *nothing* is not a contradiction in terms or the fruit of a wizardry of thought which is busy thinking itself; it is a terrifying experience: it is the European and Western contribution to the experience of man.

But the spontaneous perfection of possibilities implies the perfection of the 'marriage' of good and evil, of life and death: it implies the wholeness, the health, the sanity, the sanctity of man.

Man is in the world as a sundered being. The rhythm of polarity is not expressed spontaneously throughout; there is a continuing tension of complementary principles which gives rise to tragedy and suffering. The rhythm of polarity is integral, and its spontaneous expression is synonymous with the overcoming of a deeper disjunction, which is prior to the distinction between good and good and between good and evil.

Man's inner division is grounded in the rift between divine and human freedom: in the depolarisation of God. This is not a cosmic event, but an event in the realm of the spirit. It does affect the cosmos: it is the event on account of which the cosmos has a history and a destiny, and is carried towards the past and the future.

Man has power to depolarise God, and he does so whenever he separates himself from and denies the worth of an other. Then it is that, of the Many, one separates itself with a will to establish itself as the centre of an autonomous sphere and claims the authority and power of the One.

The lewd hatred which shews itself in sexual licence, for instance, is not due to the splitting apart of the complementary principles of polarity and their consequent antagonism, but to this deeper, preonic rift.

Man is sundered from God but not from freedom, and creates a civilised non-divine, non-human, non-free, non-existential ontological

self-contained world, the kingdom of death; nay, rather, the dead kingdom, the kingdom of frozen fire.

It must be re-stated: the rift is not from compulsion, but from freedom. And, in the sundering, freedom is destroyed, and man with freedom: every defined and positive principle is split up into its strictly formal elements and emptied of content and man is left with a negation, and the crushing burden of limitations; with the burden of being shut fast in a closed, self-contained order from which there is no way of escape. And God stands over against him as a limiting concept. It is not Death but God who is now man's last enemy, his impossible possibility. Or, it may be said that there is no recognisable difference between Death and God. Man's desire to break away from restraint, which is really a decision to be irresponsible, is negative, and cannot be expressed in any positive aim. There is no goal; there is only interference to be avoided. He is then the arbitrary despot who tramples to and fro upon the earth; the man-god who rules in the wrath of his right and sells the needy for a pair of shoes and holds the world to ransom for less worthy ends.

Man is both a polarised and a sundered being, a creator and a destroyer, free and enslaved at one and the same instant.

VI

Man is the power to live and the power to die; the power to will and the power to despair; the power to good and the power to evil; the power to love and the power to hate; the power to truth and the power to falsehood. He is not the sum or the product of these; he is the structure of these, and he is this structure here and now. But the here, the place where he is, is not where his body rests or where his voice may sound; it is not to be defined as the field of his awareness or of his sensibility or yet of his consciousness. Where he is the range of the effect which he himself is as the power to live and the power to die, the power to will and the power to despair, the power to good and the power to evil, the power to love and the power to hate, the power to truth and the power to falsehood, even if his body be far out and solitary in desert space. And the *now* when he is, is the range of the *when* of the presentness of this effect, and is not to be determined by the

time when he lived or by any moment of this time. And, interred far out in desert space, may be, or wandering alone in country places, or asking the way of a stranger in a city street, or bargaining in the market-place for bread, or deep in conversation with a friend, or face to face with a third-degree examiner, he is *here now* as in the rear of himself, as moving towards himself, towards himself in his freedom.

VII

No man is free and whole in his freedom while somewhere else in the world there is an other who is enslaved. The principle involved here does not require that one shall have knowledge of the existence of the other.

VIII

Evil cannot be overcome; it cannot be legislated out of harm's way; reason has no power over it. Evil has a logic of its own; it has its own mode of rationalising and defining. There is not conquest of evil which is not evil raised to a higher power. If a man wills to be evil that evil may be glorified in him, if he wills this by an absolute decision, the way of redemption is not closed to him; but if the wills evil that good may be established and glorified in him, good is established but he is doomed.

The denial of evil is the denial of man. It is also the denial of God. The affirmation of the good does not cancel out this denial, not even if it takes the form of affirming God as the God of goodness. This is the affirmation of God as a limiting concept which confirms the denial of man.

Man may choose to surrender his freedom in order to secure victory over evil. But surrender is never his final act. There is no common bond between man and the authority to which he makes the surrender, and in the end he rebels against it.

IX

Man destroys his fellow-man because he cannot forgive himself the burden of his freedom, and for the same reason he seeks to destroy God.

If a clearly defined conflict between contraries, a crusade of life against death, of good against evil, of truth against falsehood could suffice to rid the world of its ills and to usher in a kingdom of bliss, then man would love his fellow man and God, and no inner searching of conscience would arise to disturb him. But, as we have seen, the conflict[1] is of life with life, of good with good, of truth with truth, of love with love, and its issue is the destruction of man and the world.

Where there is conflict, freedom is, but is not.

The denial of freedom is the denial of man. Affirmation of the Collective Man (as a kind of *totum simul* which is 'given', somehow, as an object) as the destined end of man's sundered objective existence in the world and of freedom as the freedom of the Collective Man, does not cancel out this denial.

The great heresy is not the denial of God but the denial of man. God cannot be affirmed if man is denied. Neither can man be affirmed if God what is then, in each case, affirmed is a monstrous tyranny: life, love, good, truth—diseased and foul with corruption. The last enemy is not death, but the foul corruption of these.

X

The burden of freedom: One ought to pray: deliver us from evil. But once one has known it, one cannot be delivered from it; one is committed to the task of redeeming it.

As a pregnant woman is 'big' with child, so is a free man 'big' with love for evil: what he brings forth is not evil, neither is it good, but love and love which simply cannot be characterised.

XI

Man has been revealed to us and we have seen his glory, the glory of freedom in the truth. But in the name of, and on behalf of

[1] I ought to distinguish, and at some time consider closely, the difference between conflict and tension and the active will to destroy, that is, the will so to deal with the other that I am able to say: "I do not know where he is; he is not anywhere; I am in his place, his kingdom is mine, his power is mine; he is not but I am, and I am because he is not." It seems to me that, as regards both conflict and tension, I *am* according to the degree in which the other *is* and is *for* me.

some abstract ideal, we have been busy through the centuries destroying man.

XII

The son of man who, in the last days, will come in power with great glory will bring with him new houses, better drains, swifter means of communication and surer means of destruction, to establish justice upon the earth, and we all shall be interchangeable.

But he who will come humbly into our midst, bearing our image, our weakness and our strength, our folly and our wisdom in great love, will bring with him life and freedom and the power of healing to establish mercy and generosity and love upon the earth, and his holy angels will be evil men transfigured and redeemed.

XIII

He who, in his freedom, chooses evil as his good, and follows to the end the course which he has set himself upon, has dignity and splendour which he who follows good upon direction can never have. He affirms the freedom of the Spirit in relation to God, and is in possession of himself at the instant of destroying himself. He destroys the image of God, the divine in himself and in others, but in the act he affirms the worth and dignity of that which he destroys, for the freedom of man in relation to God is the meeting point of the divine and human in the innermost reaches of spirit, and there is none other. God can always accept him.

But he who follows good upon direction, because some external authority requires it, renounces and surrenders the possession of himself to this external authority. He cuts himself off from immediate and vital contact with the inner sources of becoming. He denies freedom, spirit, man and God and is for ever a stranger to himself and to his fellows. There is no point where God can meet with him.

REV. E. F. F. HILL

The Place of Democracy in Human Evolution

THE word 'democracy' is, theoretically at least, simple in its significance. It means a form of government in which the supreme power is wielded by the people, where the supreme authority vests in the whole body of the people. It is obviously something quite different from a theocracy, an autocracy, an oligarchy or a monarchy, absolute or limited. Lincoln's definition is the aptest we can think of,—government of the people, by the people, for the people. A sovereign people may exercise its power directly, as in the little republics of olden times; or it may function through its elected representatives, as in a modern republic like, say, France. It is an essential condition that every adult subject should have the right to control the affairs of the State. For, it is obvious that by restricting the franchise a government, democratic in form, may be reduced virtually to an oligarchy. Old Athens was a republic in form, but, in so far as neither a woman nor a helot nor a naturalised alien had any voting rights, it fell short of the true democratic ideal. Ancient Rome was definitely class-ridden and, in spite of her undoubted greatness in so many directions, never realised the republican ideals envisaged by the ancient philosophers. Each of the two warring classes fought for its own rights and privileges, never for the freedom of the people as a whole. Roman citizenship was conferred on loyal and worthy individuals in conquered territories, much as titles are conferred today, but that did not imply a recognition of democratic principles. Equality, as an essential element of a republican State, does not appear to have been stressed even by such staunch champions of the people as the brothers Gracchi. Medieval States like Venice were republics in name only. They were under the complete control of a powerful body of merchants. Larger countries like England and France were, up to the period of the protestant Reformation, but fields of

incessant political struggle where the king, the church and the barons were striving for supremacy. Democratic slogans were not unknown, but they were used by the various contending parties only to serve their own ends. The common people, as such, were nowhere to be seen, except in the solitary instance of the Peasants' Revolt in Wycliffe's time. Ordinarily each contending party was working in its own interest. When it suited the king, he sent a cardinal to the scaffold or had an archbishop assassinated. When it suited the barons, they called in a papal legate backed by a foreign monarch, and humbled the pride of their own king. In the Great Charter wrested by the barons from King John there was a clause asserting the rights of the common people, embodying the principle of "no taxation without representation". But, evidently, no one attached any importance to it, for, it was glibly dropped by the barons a few years later when the Charter was confirmed by Henry III. Richelieu in France was a Duke, a Chief Minister, as well as a Cardinal. But his red hat sat very lightly on his head, for the pith of his foreign policy was to sap the Pope's influence in France, just as his domestic policy was to crush the power of the turbulent barons. There was, no doubt, a parliament in England and a parliament in France during this period. But what did either Valois and Bourbon in France or Tudor and Stuart in England care for the will of the people? What did Wolsey or Richelieu or Morton or Stafford care for the interests of the commonalty? Yet their fateful will was already rumbling in the bowels of the mountain, preparing to erupt when Providence called. The guildsman, the yeoman, and even the serf were beginning to assert, however inarticulately, their inalienable rights. The masses, hitherto more or less submental, were passing slowly to the mental rational stage. Gun-powder had been discovered and the printing press invented; both these played their part in the emancipation of the people. Humanity was getting ready for the struggle typified by the English Civil War and the French Revolution. But did these two great movements usher in democracy? By no means. They but cleared the air. As a matter of fact, the two countries passed into the control of Cromwell and Bonaparte respectively, rulers more despotic than even a Stuart or a Bourbon. After the downfall of these two dictators there was a swing back of the pendulum. General Monk placed a Stuart on the English throne and Talleyrand

installed a Bourbon on the throne of France. These monarchs of the Restoration had, however, learnt caution and they behaved on the whole in a circumspect manner. There were, no doubt, a few vicissitudes to be gone through yet. James II was rash and had to pay for his rashness. But, on the whole, it can be said that an era of constitutional monarchs was ushered in over Europe. By the end of the nineteenth century Russia and Turkey were about the only countries in that continent with absolute autocratic rulers, while France had decided finally on a republican form of government. Little Switzerland had already founded a democratic constitution, some time before under most difficult conditions. She had proved to the world that a nation could be formed, a republic could be established, even while the population was heterogeneous in race, religion and language. In spite of Russia and Turkey (and they, too, began to change their outlook very soon), the trend of political thought in Europe at the close of the last century may be characterised as democratic, in so far as the right of a people to govern itself was generally conceded in theory. The success of the United States in establishing a popular government on a firm basis was a great encouragement to the progressive politician everywhere. Latin America soon followed the lead of the United States and set up republics everywhere.

So far things looked very hopeful. But with the advent of the new century various hostile forces came into play, and the progress of humanity towards individual liberty received a definite set-back. It behoves the student of politics to analyse the situation and find out the reasons for this retrogression. We shall briefly indicate the causes. The most notable effort in history to realise the democratic ideal in man's corporate life was the French Revolution of 1789. It accepted Liberty, Fraternity and Equality as its basic principles. In spite of the passing dictatorship of Napoleon, already referred to, the principle of civic liberty may be said to have been accepted in France and in Europe generally. It was recognised by all thinking people that the commons of a realm should have a potent voice in the government thereof. A qualified kind of freedom was thus achieved. Even the conservative England of Pitt passed a Reform Bill to enfranchise the lower strata of the people. But the other two ideals of the Jacobin revolutionaries—Fraternity and Equality—were definitely shelved by the statesmen who set about

building a new Europe after 1815. Soon, with the advent of industrialism inequality became more marked than before. Organised capitalism became the order of the day, and the cleavage between the interests of the industrial magnates and of those that toiled for them grew wider and wider every day. An atmosphere was created which was totally inconsistent with true democracy. The man in power, the opulent Philistine began to overshadow every institution in the State; not satisfied with the influence he exercised in the field of commerce, he spread his tentacles out to control every sphere of the nation's life—art and science and literature and politics and even religion. These Philistines so distinguished themselves by an utter disregard for the interests of others that by the end of the last century people had lost all faith in the sham democratic institutions under which they lived and for which they had once worked so hard. The world was getting ready for new experiments in forms of Government, forms that would curb the power of the plutocrat. They were preparing to sacrifice a part of their individual rights to a State that would pass the steam roller over the much hated class difference. More of this anon.

Another evil appeared on the horizon about the same time, and in a very ugly form. Already in the eighteenth century the British, the French and the Dutch, following in the footsteps of their antagonists —the Spaniards and the Portuguese—had established colonies and dependencies all over Asia and Africa. The spirit that fired these bold navigators and adventurers was totally inconsistent with a democratic idealism. Even when these reckless pirates settled down as rulers, their mentality did not change. They claimed and exercised absolute authority over the dark-skinned people they had robbed of their heritage. We know that Romans and Greeks had no compunctions about enslaving other peoples; they believed that they had a divine mandate to subjugate and civilise "barbarians". Did Christianity give Europe a loftier outlook than this? It would hardly seem to be so, when we remember iniquities perpetrated by the holy Crusaders in Palestine and Syria, or when we read the Golden Bull issued by the Pope at a later period dividing the whole world outside Europe between Spain and Portugal,—America to go to the Spaniards and Asia to the Portuguese. Did the intrepid mariners of the Spanish main, men like Raleigh and Drake or their prototypes in France and Holland possess any higher

conception of human rights? Hardly, as every student of history knows. The dark deeds committed by these adventurers in remote countries were bound to have serious repercussions on their conduct at home. The Spanish inquisition, the French Wars of Religions, the cruel persecution of both Catholics and Protestants in England and numerous other things of the same kind show clearly that whatever ideas the ancient philosophers had about freedom and equality vanished completely in the Middle Ages, and that the European mind switched off quite easily from its creed of medieval Christianity and Feudalism to new ideals and ends—first of aggressive nationalism and then of Imperialism and Imperial expansion. Imperialism is not a new conception in human thought; the Greek Alexander had his empire, the Roman Augustus had his, and the Tartar Chenghiz Khan had his. The ancient Hindu, too, had his Rajachakravarti, King of Kings, who established his claim to rule over other monarchs by performing suitable sacrifices. It would be incorrect to say that in these ancient empires the people were unhappy. They were happy enough, for they knew no better. They had no rights whatsoever, and, in return for peace and protection, were willing to render divine honours to the emperor. This divine aspect of the ruler was, no doubt, very much clearer in old Egypt and Assyria, but it continued to be an important factor of royalty even in much later times. In fact, it formed the basis of the authority of the Holy Roman Empire in Christendom, and the Caliphate in Islam. There was no room for popular rights in these olden empires, where the ruler wore the garb of divine sanctity. The only people who dared challenge and limit imperial authority were the priestly hierarchy as in Egypt, or the Pope as in Christendom, or the Ulemah as in Islam. Things were, however, different in ancient India, for, we find it laid down in one of the oldest codes that the subjects of a State may, if they want to, bring to trial a king guilty of treason to the people and sentence him,—even to death. This provision is hardly consistent with the conception of the divinity of the king. On the contrary, it would seem to indicate that the Hindu jurist recognised that the people had definite rights of their own vis-a-vis the monarch. Sri Aurobindo's characterisation of the ancient Hindu State throws a great deal of light on the point: "The King was the living representation of the Divine and the other orders of

the community the natural powers of the collective self."—"The old Indian State was a complex of communal freedom and self-determination with a supreme co-ordinating authority." The whole system had for its basis the village community and the township, which were, respectively, the rural and urban units of autonomy. These units have been described as republican in character, and not without reason. But what is truly singular in the Hindu socio-political system is that it "tends to fuse together in different ways the theocratic, the monarchic and aristocratic, the plutocratic and democratic tendencies in a whole." There were a few small States in northern India (like the Kshudraka, Mallvaka and Yaudheya) which were definitely republican in form. These were, by no means, typical of ancient India. The normal Pre-Mauryan realm was as described above, a harmonious combination of various human elements, where there was little to provoke discord between the component parts. This state of things, however, did not last, when powerful alien hordes—like the Sakas, Hunas and Yavanas—pressed hard on the frontier. India, too, like so many other lands, developed large empires which completely swamped the old Hindu State. But the spirit of communal freedom and self-determination survived for a long time in the village Panchayats and is probably not quite dead even today.

Coming back to the industrialism and the imperialism of modern times, it is not difficult to understand how these two trends of the human mind run together, and how they are both inconsistent with democratic ideals. There is nothing intrinsically degrading in organising a country industrially. Nor is there apparently any moral bar to a country conserving its raw materials and vastly increasing its manufactures. But if this policy is pushed on to its extreme limits, what would be the immediate effect? Obviously, over-production, if the country is, at all efficient industrially. Over-production is, however, an evil only if no ready market can be found for the goods turned out. If the country concerned has its own colonies and dependencies, the manufactured goods can be dumped down there and disposed of by the use (or misuse) of political power. But if it has not, then it has to persuade or coerce other countries into purchasing them. In either case, political complications are bound to set in, political complications that are not likely to bring either freedom or happiness to the nation

at large. In all such matters, the people who play a prominent part are the big capitalists who organise themselves into trusts, and, when necessary, control the elections. Wars have been fought before now at the instance of petroleum magnates, iron and steel kings and armament manufacturers. After a disastrous war has been fought and millions of men have been killed and cities have been burnt to ashes, readjustment of territories is sought to be made in the interests of the capitalists. In the olden times people fought to satisfy national greed and dynastic ambition. Today the lure is money and money, almost nothing else. We hear a great deal of talk about liberty, justice and righteousness, but the common soldier gets precious little benefit, either in liberty and justice or in money and comfort, out of these wars brought on by the money-grabbers of all countries. Where was there any democratic principle involved, when, for weeks together, England and Germany were trying to soft-soap Molotov and get into the good books of Stalin at the commencement of the last war? The protestations of friendship indulged in by Truman and Churchill and Stalin during the struggle deceived nobody, even at that time. Today we know all about it, but, strange to say, we shall indulge in the same hypocrisy over again. War to end war, how beautiful it sounds, but who ever meant it! Industrialism, with all that it involves, is not, then, the road to freedom—the freedom of the people. Something less selfish, something more honest, must inspire our action if we aim at realising the democratic ideal. In fact, as the Master has put it, the fraternity that lies at the root of democratic freedom is something that is contrary to the very nature of ego. It exists only in the soul, and by the soul, it can exist by nothing else. Man's ego-sense, either in the individual or in the group must be eliminated before he can achieve, in a true meaning, the *Liberté*, *Égalité* and *Fraternité* of the French Revolution. Perfect democracy has, so far, never been attained by man. In the course of human history, now one class, now another, has controlled man's corporate life. At the present time, the Priest and the Warrior have been deprived of all influence in the body politic. But the Merchant and the Toiler have come to the forefront and are engaged in a life-and-death struggle —a bitter struggle where all rules of fair play seem to be suspended. Whether the smug self-satisfied Mammon-worshipper of the last

century will regain his dominant position in society, or the "horny-handed tiller of the soil" and his brother, the wielder of the hammer, will impose their authority on all, is really a matter of indifference to the lover of freedom, because, in either case, the State will be class-ridden, as far from democracy as was the Egypt of the Pharaohs or the England of the Plantagenets. We shall see, later, in what direction man's group life is likely to evolve.

Let us pause a while here, and enquire if, and to what extent, man's empires and leagues and federations are going to be helpful to his political progress. Being larger units of corporate life, they, certainly, constitute a step in advance of the normal nation-state evolved by man in the sixteenth century—just as these states were, politically, ahead of the average county or duchy or principality of the Middle Ages. Human unity is our ultimate goal, and, whatever helps us to eliminate differences and disparities between groups and classes is a move in the right direction. This move towards fusion is sometimes deliberate and conscious, sometimes brought about by outer circumstances. Even in the latter case, a purely mechanical grouping may in the course of time lead to true unity, even an organic oneness. On the other hand, a league or federation brought about by necessity, or rather by outer pressure, is dissolved rapidly when the pressure or necessity is no longer there. This is what happened to Austro-Hungary after the first World War. The union of England with Scotland and Wales has led to organic unity in a common British State, while the forced union with Ireland has come to nought. Spain and Portugal, Sweden and Norway, have come together and separated many times in spite of their ethnic affinity and geographical position. The federation of many races and languages and religions in Switzerland has endured in spite of the tremendous shaking of two Great Wars. The union of many States into a larger political unit is undoubtedly a move in the right direction, as far as the ideal of ultimate human unity is concerned. But neither federation nor empire necessarily brings about or promotes a democratic constitution. The Egyptian or the Phoenician or the Chinese or the Moghul Empire, great as they were, had nothing to do with individual liberty. In India, as we have seen already, the earlier States stood for a certain amount of autonomy and self-determination; but

the empires that rose in their place—the Maurya and the Gupta—lost that character completely. In Greece, likewise, the earlier republican forms of government, where they existed, dwindled completely with the rise of Macedonia. Within the limited space of a magazine article, it is not possible to multiply such instances. Now, just as there have been all these autocratic empires in the past, so have there been others, more recent, that have never lost their original democratic trend. America (The United States) has always been a republic. The conquest of other territories, like Cuba and the Philippines, did not make any difference to its character, for, at the earliest opportunity both these conutries were developed into autonomous States. The only question that can be asked about the U.S.A. today is: Does it still retain its character as a champion of political freedom, or has it also acquired an imperialistic outlook and is seeking naval and air bases all over the world? Sri Aurobindo feared this change of outlook thirty years ago. England has today developed a commonwealth of nations, a happy combination of the two trends in modern political history,—the democratic and the imperialistic. When the commonwealth idea was first mooted, the Master remarked that Britain's honesty of purpose would be judged by her conduct towards India and Egypt. Well, Britain has proved her good intentions by the status she has given to Egypt and the constitutions she has allowed to be developed peacefully in India, Burma and Ceylon. Her generosity has forced the hands of Holland and, it is hoped, will force the hands of the great French Republic in the near future. What is more difficult to understand is the attitude of England, France and the U.S.A. towards Germany and Korea. Things have begun to settle down in Italy and Japan. But why dismember Germany and Korea? If it is a mere matter of self-interest, there is nothing to say, for group ego is a nasty thing and dies hard. But the leaders of thought in Europe and America should bear in mind that dismemberment of already existing nation-states is a retrograde step, as far as human evolution in the group is concerned. China has, by her own effort, saved herself from fragmentation. With regard to the political creed she has adopted, it is impossible to say whether she has acted through conviction or coercion or merely policy. It is so difficult to get at the truth in these matters! Have Western and Eastern Germany decided

upon their respective affinities and forms of government by free choice? Nearer home, has Hyderabad entered upon her new political career through conviction—the conviction of the people of Hyderabad?

This much is sufficient on the subject of empires and federations and their bearing on political freedom. Let us now try and determine, in the light of Sri Aurobindo's political philosophy, the place of democracy in human evolution.

In "The Human Cycle", the Master traces in brief the growth of man's collective life. It is important for us to know that "there are necessarily three stages of the social evolution or generally, of the human evolution in both individual and society." Man starts with an infrarational stage, in which he has not yet learnt to refer his life and action to the judgment of his intellect. He regulates his conduct by his instinct, intuition and impulses, much as the ant and the bee do, under the supervision of nature. From this rude beginning, man goes forward by various stages to a rational state, where his intelligent will, more or less developed, takes charge of his thought, feeling and action. It is of man in this rational stage, that Sri Aurobindo says: "His politics and society are a series of adventures and experiments among various possibilities of autocracy, monarchism, military aristocracy, mercantile oligarchy, open or veiled plutocracy, pseudo-democracy of various kinds, bourgeois or proletarian, individualistic or collectivist or bureaucratic,—socialism awaiting him, anarchism looming beyond it." This is a truly comprehensive list of man's achievements in the political field. The student of history will easily, by casting his eyes behind, discern instances of all these forms of government through the ages. But we must not look at them as separate and unconnected manifestations of man's thinking mind. "All these correspond to some truth of man's social being, some need of man's complex social being. Mankind works out these difficulties under the stress of the spirit within by throwing out a constant variation of types...." But we must realise that human reason is an imperfect light. It has ever glibly justified, according to need, every species of autocracy or plutocracy and every grade of democracy; it has supported with excellent reasons both individualism and communism.

The truth is always hidden from the rationalist, largely because it is a constant article of faith with him that his own reasoning is right

and that the reasoning of those who differ from him is wrong. He does not know that truth is infinite and that our finite reason cannot embrace the whole of it. It can grasp only that portion of which we have immediate need. Nature does not intend rational man to seize the whole truth of his being at once. He has to go on experimenting till the limit of reason is reached and its function is finished. At that stage rational man hands over the reins to the suprarational and the spiritual, and says, "There is a Soul, a Self, a God in the world and in man, who works concealed, and all is his self-concealing and self-unfolding. His minister I have been, slowly to unseal your eyes... until there is only my luminous veil between you and him. Remove that and make the soul of man one in fact and nature with the Divine." When this condition has been reached, human evolution moves towards a suprarational and spiritual stage; man is able to see a higher divine end, a divine sanction, a higher guidance for the organisation of his corporate life. The three stages are inevitable, but we must not think that they are naturally exclusive and absolute. In fact, they grow out of each other and may exist simultaneously in different regions. Moreover, man being a complex creature, the three parts of his being—bestial, human and spiritual, or rather, infrarational, rational and suprarational—are present and active in him at one and the same time. So we see that a society which is called barbaric is not wholly infrarational; it has a rational, even a spiritual, side to it. Sri Aurobindo says explicitly, "An infrarational period of human and social development need not be without its elements, its strong elements, of reason and spirituality." We know, likewise, that a highly civilised man or society acts sometimes in a barbarous infrarational manner.

In the light of what we have said above, let us try and place democracy in the scheme of man's social evolution. Reason, as a renovator and creator of society, in its march onwards passes through three successive stages—stages that constitute the very logic of its growth: the first, individualistic, and ever more democratic, with liberty for its principle; the second, socialistic (probably communistic in the end) with equality and the State for its principle; the third, anarchistic, in the higher sense of the word. It is individualism that marks the end of conventionalism and ushers in the age of reason, of which the

keynote is liberty. It is this age which recognises the free right of the individual to control not only his own life and action but also the life and action of the group of which he is a component part. We have already shown how man partially achieved freedom but failed to bring in equality and fraternity. Still, the rational democratic stage was a very necessary step in the evolution of human society. Why it has failed is obvious. The ordinary man is not as yet a rational being. Having just come out of a long period of infrarationalism, he cannot form a reasonable judgment with any facility. Usually he either follows his own impulses and prejudices or falls under the influences of men who are more active in intelligence and quicker in decision. The result is that a pseudo-democracy intervenes and the State passes into the hands of a dominant class that exploits in the name of democracy "the ignorant, numerous and less fortunate mass." This state of things cannot continue long. The ideal of liberty and equality is abroad and cannot be stifled; ultimately the worm turns, and a period of bitter class-struggle begins. Each class raises its own flag and fights for its own interests. The victory goes not to "the spiritually, rationally or physically fittest" but to "the most fortunate and vitally successful". This is not what the rational mind of man had started to accomplish.

The remedy for these defects would seem to be education, for one expects that proper education and training would produce a rational being. But what is proper education and training, who is to decide upon it? While we have to realise that democracy and its panacea of education and freedom have done a great deal for human society, it has also to be admitted that in various countries ideals of education have been altered and twisted to suit the interests of the dominant class. Frustration has, thus, turned men's minds towards democratic socialism.

The state of things that led to this socialistic phase of evolution has been described vividly by the Master: "Instead of a harmoniously ordered society there has been developed a huge organised competitive system, a frantically rapid and one-sided development of industrialism and, under the garb of democracy, an increasing plutocratic tendency shocks by its ostentatious grossness and the magnitude of its gulfs and distances. These have been the last results of the individualistic ideal and its democratic machinery, the initial bankruptcies of the rational age."

Socialism naturally sounded very attractive to the deluded masses. To begin with, it promised equal opportunities of education and training to all, and, in order to facilitate the success of its programme, it proposed to do away with the right of personal property. But this was not all. To go the whole hog, the socialist found it desirable, even inevitable, to abolish the individual altogether, to affirm that the individual belongs wholly to the group,—not only his estate, but himself, his labour, his capacities, the fruits of the education given to him by the State, his mind and knowledge, his life, the life of his family and the life of his children.

This is the inevitable character of socialism. No doubt, the democratic section of the socialists does not wholly accept these extreme ideas. But "the uneasy mental poise between two opposing principles, socialistic regimentation and democratic liberty, may have been the root cause of the failure of socialism in so many countries."

Individualistic democracy was discredited, and floundered, as a result of the disparity between life's facts and the mind's idea. Collectivist democracy, too, may find itself in difficulties for the same reasons. Life's facts cannot be ignored.

Individualism failed because man sacrificed equality in order to attain liberty. Collectivism will fail because man is sacrificing liberty in order to attain equality.

Man will, in future, be probably led to experiment with a free class-less state-less organisation based on fraternal comradeship. Communism is being tried today. But it has practically dropped its international aspect. A scheme of anarchism, spiritual if not philosophic, may well be man's future pursuit for a while.

Thus will man be led on, by his reason, to try one panacea after another for his ills. He will never get on to the right path till he realises that the liberty and equality which he has so long been seeking must be the liberty and equality of the soul. This realisation can come only when he has eliminated his egoism, transcended his rationalism and climbed up to a suprarational and spiritual plane.

C. C. DUTT

Spirituality and Indian Freedom

AFTER centuries of political subjection and economic and cultural set-back, India has achieved her long-cherished and well-merited freedom. This is as yet a nascent, a newly-won freedom and has to be carefully consolidated in every sphere of her national life, political, military, economic and social. Ignorance and poverty, the two outstanding legacies of subjection to British rule, still stalk the land and they have to be entirely liquidated before she can fully launch on the career of a sovereign state which has a distinct role to play in the comity of nations. That role, as we shall presently see, will be not only political and economic but also cultural and spiritual though her influence on the world polity will be a clear reflection of her innate and characteristic spirituality. Much lee-way has, however, to be made up in the meantime by way of spread of knowledge and education, development of arts, industries and commerce, science and technology, public health and sanitation, improvement of agriculture, animal husbandry and live-stock, extension of civil and political liberties and social and economic justice and freedom to her down-trodden masses. As it is, an immense responsibility rests on the politically conscious and economically powerful elements of the Indian society to make an intense and all-out effort to bring the benefits of freedom and peace to the common man. The zeal and earnestness with which our top-leaders are exerting themselves augur well for the future. Given sincerity, faith and good will, it is to be hoped that in the course of the next two decades, India will be a happy, peaceful and prosperous land with the breath of her free air blowing from the highest to the least of her citizens.

India has achieved her freedom but she is as yet far from reaching her goal. Political freedom is only a step, the first step on her journey towards a larger and more comprehensive freedom which is the fullest

evolution of her destiny. That destiny is not merely any political or economic social Ultimate—that is only incidental—but the spiritual realisation of her Soul and the freedom and opportunity afforded to every single individual within the state for the same consummation. Without that, she will be only one among the many so-called rich and prosperous nations of the world. But that will hardly be an index to the progress of her civilisation; for, true progress consists not so much in material prosperity and abundance—though that also is necessary and of that the Western nations have had enough—as in possessing the treasures of the Spirit of which India was once the great repository of the world. But since the decline of spirituality in India added to an over-emphasis of the material values by the West, the world has been torn by constant and unremitting conflicts of a political and economic character. These politico-economic causes accentuated by the possessive and acquisitive instincts of our nature have brought the present materialistic civilisation almost to the verge of a collapse today. We are scarcely out of the frightful nightmare and aftermath of one war when the rumours of another, a more total, ruthless and destructive war, persistently assail our ears. With the discovery and harnessing of atomic energy for destructive purposes, the world seems to be precipitating towards a worse danger, a more fearful catastrophe. Men are not wanting who predict cold-bloodedly that the end of civilisation is at hand. Nothing but a miracle, nothing short of a divine intervention can, it seems, avert the impending calamity. Mental intelligence with its main power of reason has so far failed to arrive at any solution of this crisis in human destiny. All pleas for tolerance, sympathy, understanding, reciprocity and mutual good-will among the nations, all appeals to their noble and generous sentiments and enlightened self-interest have proved unavailing with men's hearts turbid with passion, fear, hatred, suspicion and distrust of their kind. Though hope and fear have brought some nations together in sheer self-defence, the world is divided into two armed camps based on different and conflicting political, economic and social ideologies. There is no knowing when and how a small spark may ignite the fire and set the whole world in conflagration.

It is at this fateful juncture of history that men's eyes are turning more and more towards this ancient land in the hope that some solution

may yet be found in the wisdom of her sages. India had indeed long solved the problem of life in the only way a solution is possible, namely, by unfailing and repeated insistence on spiritual values of existence. "I have known this great and effulgent One who is beyond all darkness; by knowing Whom we cross death and suffering. There is no other way". This is the crux of the whole matter, this knowledge of the One. The Indian Rishis had long discovered that this universe with its myriads of apparently conflicting and irreconcilable problems was only a play of Unity in diversity and of diveristy in Unity and patterned all their laws and institutions according to this supreme discovery. This enabled them not only to live in peace and prosperity in their own country but also to avert any possibility of clash and conflict with the world outside. There was a perception not only of "I am He" of the Upanishad but also the realisation of its other grea corollary, "Thou art That," "All this is Brahman; this Self is Brahman". Interpreted in modern terms this means, "Live and let live", on the basis of the recognition of the similarity of the constitution, needs, aims and purposes of all human life. Let live others not grudgingly and with conditions and reservations, but fully, freely and gladly as part of ourselves, as ourselves. In the blind and hectic pursuit of materialistic ends, we have lost sight of this ancient wisdom; hence this want of peace, coherence and harmony in our individual and collective existence. It is the exaggeration of the materialistic aspect of life with its endless competitions, jealousies and strifes and the depreciation and utter neglect of the spiritual values that is at bottom responsible for this unbalance, disorder and crisis in human affairs. Revival of spirituality and spiritual ways of life is the only clear way out of the present tangle. There is no other.

The age of the Upanishads was the very heyday of Indian civilisation when Rishis like Manu, Parasara, Vrigu, Yajnavalkya and others lived, worked and drew up their great codes for the guidance of their fellowmen. It was the age when Yogins like Janaka, Ajatashatru and Kartavirya sat on the thrones of India and governed the fate of the nation with their remarkable spiritual wisdom. The Rishi-idea is no new conception to India. It is in line with her hoary tradition. The Rishis not only ministered to the spiritual needs of the people but were also valued counsellors to the kings and rulers

because of their intimate and direct knowledge of men and affairs. In some, though rare, instances there was a combination of the Raja and Rishi in one. It is a total ignorance to think that the Rishi was a solemn, mystic and austere figure who was cloistered in his own ivory tower of spirituality, cut off and isolated from life and having nothing to do with the world. The codes and institutes of the Rishis referred to above bear ample testimony to this. This misconception arose from a later recoil of the spiritual impulse from the life of matter and the pursuit of purely spiritual and quietistic ends, such as personal salvation and release of the soul from the bondage of material nature. It was this narrow and exclusive pursuit of one side of Truth that subsequently brought about a gradual deterioration of the all-embracing and comprehensive spiritual ideal and a sharp cleavage between the life of the Spirit and the life of the world with results that have by no means been happy to India. To this period of decline we can ascribe the downfall of India from her position of eminence in the world, her political and economic servitude and the stagnation and eclipse of her great culture.

But even in the darkest days of her misfortune India never completely lost sight of her supreme spiritual ideal. This we find in the emergence of her renowned spiritual leaders who from time to time came out of the darkness of the centuries like blazing figures of light till we come to great Masters like Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo of our own day. They have all declared emphatically that India's greatness lies in the revival of her ancient spirituality, her *Sanatana dharma*, because that is her nature, her national characteristic, the very rationale of her existence and deviation from this ideal is fraught with grave danger for her national life. Those who are at all acquainted with the life and activities of these Masters and have read their conversations or speeches and writings will at once see that they have nowhere cut off the life of the world from the life of the Spirit though they have undoubtedly assigned the pride of place to the latter. For, Spirit, Self or Soul is the fundamental reality of existence lying at the root of everything and whether we know and concede it or not, ultimately governs all our thought, life and action from behind the veil. This is the truth revealed to the world by all our Rishis, ancient or modern, though the modern age

has turned its face against it. Material life figures at the lowest end of existence rising through the vital and mental planes to the summit of the Spirit. There is a continuity of life from one end to the other so that we may scale the summit one day and reach the consummation and fulfilment of our destiny. Any excessive preoccupation therefore with one aspect of life to the exclusion of the other cannot but adversely react upon the whole. Spiritual life does not destroy or impair the value of our human existence. "The divine or spiritual life", says Sri Aurobindo, "will not only assume into itself the mental, vital, physical life transformed and spiritualised but it will give them a much wider and fuller play than was open to them so long as they were living on their own level...in their divine change they break into possibilities which in their unspiritualised condition could not be practicable or imaginable."

Spirituality and the spiritual way of life, then, are the sovereign remedy for all the ills of the world, prescribed to us by all the ancient as well as the modern Rishis. Any attempt therefore to solve our problems on a mental basis, or by political, social or economic slogans and catchwords like democracy, socialism, communism, etc., any attempt that fails to take cognizance of and fulfil the deeper and higher spiritual needs and instincts of our nature, is foredoomed to failure. In the onward march of humanity we have now reached a stage where the limited and groping powers of the mind are an insufficient and insecure guide for its further progress. A higher power and instrumentation than mind,—the power and instrumentation of Intuition and Supermind—is needed for our guidance. As these are powers and principles overtopping the mind and mental intelligence, it is only by a spiritual orientation of our consciousness and nature that we can solve the problem of life at this critical phase of the world's history. We can only hope that in any effort to reconstruct our national life, the men who are at the helm of affairs will not lose sight of this most vital spiritual need of our nature or fail to direct, as far as that can be done by mental agency, the destiny of the nation along spiritual channels. We can, in conclusion, do no better than repeat what Sri Aurobindo, the foremost of the Indian mystics, has affirmed in course of a recent message to the country: "It would be a tragic irony of fate if India were to throw away her spiritual heritage

at the very moment when in the rest of the world there is more and more a turning towards her for spiritual help and a saving Light. This must not and will surely not happen; but it cannot be said that the danger is not there. There are indeed other numerous and difficult problems that face this country or will very soon face it. No doubt we will win through, but we must not disguise from ourselves the fact that after these long years of subjection and its cramping and impairing effects a greater inner as well as outer liberation and change, a vast inner and outer progress is needed if we are to fulfil India's true destiny."

JIBENDRA

The Psychology of Indian Nationalism

(*Concluded from the last Number*)

VI. MODERN INDIAN NATIONALISM

1. Contrary Currents

FROM the foregoing survey it emerges that India has had a view of her own political development all along, although baulked by circumstances, and that we have not to begin the first stages of our political existence and that necessarily on the lines traced by the British. The British period of her history, it is clear, represents a breach with the past and India certainly has now not to revert to her ancient past,—no such returns are possible in history,—but to join the main route from which she was temporarily deflected. It was assumed by English writers on India that she was totally devoid of political tradition and political capacity except for certain primitive beginnings in early Aryan institutions and that there was no alternative to her acceptance of British models, British guidance and British lines of growth. Lord Irwin said: "Much of the current controversy in both India and this country assumes that recent political developments in India represent a violent break with India's past, an unnatural turning away from what is Indian, and from what is therefore more appropriate to Indian conditions and circumstances. If this were true, it would be a matter for anxious heart-searching on the part of all concerned, because then there would be an alternative to the purely British institutions and form of government which have been during recent years in process of establishment in India. Moreover, the alternative would be something home-grown and acclimatized to the soil. But, since it is not true, the sooner the unreal alternative is dismissed, the more speedily and effectively will the way be open to the recognition of the real forces now governing the political

life of India, and the easier will it be able to guide these into constructive channels where they may produce their legitimate effect."[1] From this it is but one step to argue that we are not different but backward and that we need political instruction or indoctrination of approved British experience.

As if to meet the bureaucracy half way, public men at the beginning of the nineteenth century and even after took it upon themselves to prove that India was apt for representative institutions judged by the criteria of the West. They tacitly admitted the absence of democractic conceptions in India, accepted British dogmas as the last word of political wisdom. They did not understand the past achievements of the race or had scant opinion of their worth and lacked independent political thinking. It is no longer necessary to collect data and educe that India is a nation answering the tests of British or other political pontiffs. We have now to get at the deeper, the deepest truth of Indian nationalism and, may be, give the concept a new significance. For the truth is that nations are real entities and if they take up the business of living in earnest, they cannot help evolving each a type of its own nationalism. Each nation is bound to evolve a pattern of its own, its outlook, its line of practical endeavour, its ethos.

In a brilliant essay on "What is a nation?" Harold Stannard says: "When the last nation has finally passed into history, it will be possible to define nationalism. Meanwhile we can but note certain outstanding phases of a developing idea." Nationalism, as we know it today, has taken long to develop itself. The form it has now assumed is not by any means the final. Nationalism is the incarnation of the soul of a people. If a great nation emerges that can creatively, spiritually build itself, nationalism may present a novel face, an unprecedented political type. If the beginnings of nationalism can be hardly recognised for such, its possibilities in the future may exceed all our present imaginings. Sri Aurobindo envisages a future for the Indian nation for which there is no example or exact parallel in history, a new type of people lifting nationalism to a new pinnacle justifying the separate existence, separate effort of a whole people in fundamental unity with entire humanity.

[1] *Political India*, Lord Irwin, pp. 6-7.

2. Nineteenth Century Nationalism in India

But this vision did not come in the first phase of British rule in India. It was inevitably a period of surprise, of the easy glamour for novel political ideals and methods, of the easy acceptance and mechanical adaptation of the dogmas of the ruling power. The effects of political domination were obvious. The British brought with them certain axioms of social and political philosophy which were genuine enough so far as they were concerned. They were the crystallised outcome of British history, of European tradition. As rulers they could and did presume the superior merit of their culture and sought to impose it on the subject population. Macaulay's philistinism and dogmatic assumption of the superiority of a single shelf of European books to all the literature of the East is a typical illustration of the inability of the Western mind to appreciate the characteristic worth of a different culture. It is an opposition of standpoints, temperamental divergencies between the two halves of the globe fully analysed by Sri Aurobindo in the first part of his rejoinder to Archer's attack on India. Political authority, missionary propaganda and educational innovations combined to operate a powerful illusion in regard to the virtue of British institutions, ideals and methods and to inspire in the first generation of Indian intellectuals a pathetic blindness and contempt for their own past.

The advent of the British in India synchronised with a low ebb of national vitality. It was the reign of passivity, a moment of Tamas, of the exhaustion of a long endeavour such as comes upon all nations. The acceptance of the rationalistic, individualistic modes of thinking was not prompted by a real need, by the insufficiency of their traditional philosophy, by the proved inadequacy or unsoundness of their prime beliefs. It was an inert acceptance, a lazy tribute to the ruling power. It meant an acquiescence in the British regime and a docile, servile apprenticeship to their methods of reforms and agitation. Nineteenth century politics in India was utterly derivative, imitative, self-forgetful. It was a barren phase of political constitutionalism, significant and effective in England where the constitution was of the people's making, a reflex of their national need and temperament, but here in India a simulacrum.

"The redress of particular grievances and the reformation of particular objectionable features in a system of Government are sufficient objects for organized resistance only when the Government is indigenous and all classes have a recognised place in the political scheme of the State. They are not and cannot be a sufficient object in countries like Russia and India where the laws are made and administered by a handful of men, and a vast population, educated and uneducated alike, have no political right or duty except the duty of obedience and the right to assist in confirming their own servitude. They are still less a sufficient object when the despotic oligarchy is alien by race and has not even a permanent home in the country, for in that case the Government cannot be relied upon to look after the general interests of the country, as in nations ruled by indigenous despotism; on the contrary, they are bound to place the interests of their own country and their own race first and foremost. Organized resistance in subject-nations which mean to live and not to die, can have no less an object than an entire and radical change of the system of Government; only by becoming responsible to the people and drawn from the people can the Government be turned into a protector instead of an oppressor. But if the subject-nation desires not a provincial existence and a maimed development, but the full, vigorous and noble realization of its national existence, even a change in the system of Government will not be enough; it must aim not only at a national Government responsible to the people but at a free national Government unhampered even in the least degree by foreign control.

"It is not surprising that our politicians of the nineteenth century could not realize these elementary truths of modern politics. They had no national experience behind them of politics under modern conditions; they had no teachers except English books and English liberal 'sympathisers' and 'friends of India'. Schooled by British patrons, trained to the fixed idea of English superiority and Indian inferiority, their imaginations could not embrace the idea of national liberty, and perhaps they did not even desire it at heart, preferring the comfortable ease, which at that time still seemed possible in a servitude under British protection, to the struggles and sacrifices of a hard and difficult independence. Taught to take their political

lessons solely from the example of England and ignoring or not valuing the historical experience of the rest of the world, they could not even conceive of a truly popular and democratic government in India except as the slow result of the development of centuries, progress broadening down from precedent to precedent. They could not then understand that the experience of an independent nation is not valid to guide a subject-nation, unless and until the subject-nation throws off the yoke and itself becomes independent. They could not realise that the slow, painful and ultra-cautious development, necessary in mediaeval and semi-mediaeval conditions when no experience of a stable popular Government had been gained, need not be repeated in the days of the steamship, railway and telegraph, when stable democratic systems are part of the world's secured and permanent heritage. The instructive spectacle of Asiatic nations demanding and receiving constitutional and parliamentary Government as the price of a few years' struggle and civil turmoil, had not then been offered to the world. But even if the idea of such happenings had occurred to the more sanguine spirits, they could have been prevented from putting it into words by their inability to discover any means towards its fulfilment. Their whole political outlook was bounded by the lessons of English history, and in English history they found only two methods of politics,—the slow method of agitation and the swift decisive method of open struggle and revolt; unaccustomed to independent political thinking, they did not notice the significant fact that the method of agitation only became effective in England when the people had already gained powerful voice in the Government. In order to secure that voice they had been compelled to resort no less than three several times to the method of open struggle and revolt. Blind to the significance of this fact, our nineteenth century politicians clung to the method of agitation, obstinately hoping against all experience and reason that it would somehow serve their purpose. From any idea of open struggle with the bureaucracy they shrank with terror and a sense of paralysis. Dominated by the idea of the overwhelming might of Britain and the abject weakness of India, their want of courage and faith in the nation, their rooted distrust of the national character, disbelief in Indian patriotism and blindness to the possibility of true political strength and virtue in the people,

precluded them from discovering the rough and narrow way to salvation.[1]

3. Religious Awakening

The Indian motive in politics had to find its entry from other sources, from the depths of the consciousness of the race which had been overlaid temporarily, dulled but not extinguished. Religious consciousness is total, emphatic and pervasive, not partial and superficial like political velleities, not lacking in intensity and effectiveness like humble petitions and advices, not again limited to certain spheres of life only but embracing the totality of existence. The phenomenon broke forth in numerous movements. The beginnings of the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj in the Punjab, the movement associated with the great names of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, the movement of orthodox Hindu revivalism, Neo-Vaishnavism in Bengal, the revitalisation of old sects and disciplines, all attest to the psychic reaction against the pressure of alien incompatible modes. A central impulse started afresh. It was not a pragmatic gesture. It was a reaching out of the nation's consciousness, not a petty purposive expression, or conscious calculated direction of the mind towards certain points but a movement of energy, a movement of light, a movement of joy at the discovery of the nation's soul. Vivekananda gave Hinduism an aggressive turn "necessary for self-preservation" against the onslaught of misconceived missionary activities in our land and necessary for a re-emergence of the faith in its plenary vigour. "In a recent unique example, the life of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, we see a colossal spiritual capacity first driving straight to the divine realization, taking as it were, the kingdom of heaven by violence, and then seizing upon one Yogic method after another and extracting the substance out of it with an incredible rapidity, always to return to the heart of the whole matter, the realization and possession of God by the power of Love, by the extension of inborn spirituality into various experiences and by spontaneous play of an intuitive knowledge."[2]

[1] *The Doctrine of Passive Resistance*, pp. 16-20.

[2] *Life and Yoga*, Advent, Vol. III., p. 99.

There was an upsurge of consciousness of power, a new dynamis of the spirit that was bound to revivify the nation as a whole.

"It was in religion that the soul of India awoke and triumphed. There were always indications, always great forerunners, but it was when the flower of the educated youth of Calcutta bowed down at the feet of an illiterate Hindu ascetic, a self-illuminated ecstatic and 'mystic' without a single trace or touch of the alien thought or education upon him that the battle was won. The going forth of Vivekananda, marked out by the Master as the heroic soul destined to take the world between his two hands and change it, was the first visible sign to the world that India was awake not only to survive but to conquer."[1]

4. The Bengal Movement and the Religion of Patriotism

The religious consciousness extended to the political field in Bengal. The movement in Bengal prefigured the coming struggle on the wider stage of India. Swadeshi, National Education, Arbitration, the whole technique of Passive Resistance that later obtained freedom for the country as a whole were first resolutely tried in Bengal. From an outer imitative phase Bengal had entered upon a subjective, inwardly inspired stage. The religious awakening that came early, the peculiar temper of the Bengali race, their implicit faith, readiness to sacrifice all for a cause, their imaginative susceptibilities, the hurt they received from the Partition all account for Bengal becoming the first workshop of Indian nationalism. The new nation was born. Here, as in the early Sein Fein, the ideal was "to be ourselves", not to be like the English or some one else. "The Swadeshi movement was a movement which attempted to override the previous impossibility of political creation by the Indian spirit upon other than imitative European lines in the present circumstances of the country."[2] "The movement of 1905 pursued a quite new conception of the nation not merely as a country, but a soul, a psychological, almost a spiritual being, and even when acting from economical and political motives, it sought to dynamise them by this subjective conception and to make

[1] *The Ideal of the Karmayogin*, p. 22 (Sixth edition).
[2] *Arya*, Vol. V, p. 310.

them instruments of self-expression rather than objects in themselves."[1] It was a process of self-finding. In Bengal there was a first trial of all those means which later availed to secure freedom for us,—Swadeshi, Boycott, National Education, Arbitration, Passive Resistance, and being confined in the first stages to the limits of a province, the movement exhibited singular unanimity, concentration and energy. It was not, however, in the anticipation of the mere machinery of agitation, the invention or energetic application of the methods of Passive Resistance but in the rarer divination of the soul of the people that the Bengal movement really proved to be the precursor of Indian nationalism. "Our attitude is a political Vedantism. India, free, one and indivisible, is the divine realization to which we move,—emancipation our aim."[2] The exposition of the Nationalist creed by men like Bipinchandra Pal, its final Vedantic statement by Sri Aurobindo in the *Karmayogin* and the *Dharma*, and, to anticipate a little, its affirmation from the Congress Presidential chair in less metaphysical, less comprehensive, but substantially identical terms by Chitta Ranjan Das in 1925, all reflect the stamp set by Bengal on Indian Nationalist thought. The religion of patriotism enshrined in the Bandemataram of Bankim rapidly spread. It made articulate the nation's soul. If the nationalism of the first stage had been an intellectual creed which could not be transmitted to the bulk of the nation, it now found rhythmical utterance and straightaway appealed to the heart and the great mass of the people. The nation had definitely come to regard itself subjectively. It was set on the path to discover itself and the significance of the changed vision and changed direction will be evident only when spirituality is completely exemplified in the nation as a whole.

Nationalism has a physical basis, a geographical, material, objective aspect. But the real body is not the land but the people who inhabit the surface of the earth. So viewed the objective becomes the subjective. Writers on nationality include territory under the objective factors. But territory and the human portion are indissolubly wedded and a deeper subjective view is possible. Land is the basic earth-principle,

[1] *Arya*, Vol. III, p. 230.

[2] *The Doctrine of Passive Resistance*, p. 79.

the material manifestation. The people thereon are the living, animate, sentient part of it. When this entity proceeds to discover its inner life and arrives at its deepest self, there stands forth a corporate soul, Narayana. But many are the pitfalls on the way. Egoism comes to be mistaken for the self, the individual is immolated to collective egoism and great national folly and turpitude such as illustrated by the exaggerated German ego are committed. In an organic view the land and the people are fused into a single centre of consciousness, assume a living personality and the nation is inspired to heroic endeavour.

Nationalism, ultimately considered, is what binds a people together, what gives them a sense of kinship and confraternity. The people may be composite. They may be speaking various languages. But a common destiny compasses all who inhabit a common portion of land.

The explanation of community life as the product of historical circumstances, common memories, common struggles, common triumphs, common failures, fails to satisfy. The human collectivity is prior to history, subjectively regarded. It reaches back to identity of being, primordial oneness. The truth of history consists in the objective working out of consciousness, in devising an appropriate framework of living, in making life a rhythm of the Spirit. We come to share a common lot or experience. This undoubtedly reinforces our essential identity, but it is the oneness of substance, oneness of origin, unity in God of which we are all portions that is the secret of all subsequent historical evolution. History sometimes errs, takes a wrong turn when the truth of spirit is infringed, when false forms and false external ways are pursued, when the vital dominates. That is why it becomes a zig-zag, an experiment. But the only road to correcting the lapses of history is not to fetch "pragmatic sanctions" but return to our inner, our inmost apprehension of ourselves, to the Real-Idea enabling us at once to see and execute. This is what Sri Aurobindo means by "operative insight, now supermental to us," "an immediate, intuitive consciousness of things and an immediate intuitive control of things."[1] Were this path chosen, history would be a progressive ascent, not "meandering with a mazy motion", a line of trial and error. But ultimately the "stress

[1] *The Life Divine*, Vol. II, p. 908.

of the hidden spirit" will force itself to the surface and the human march is assured.

The herd-instinct is said to be the source of community living. This too is more an objective than a subjective view of the human group. We become one, because we are one. We draw together, herd, because so to do is a necessity of our being. A spiritual oneness, mutuality, an inherent consciousness of our identity is the psychological source of our collective living. The outward association, the herd is but an expression of the impelling urge in us.

"A common memory and a common ideal—these more than a common blood—make a nation." So says Renan in his famous essay emphasising the cultural over the racial element. A common divinity, a something prior to all memory, a common destiny, a something more imperative, more inescapable than an ideal binds us together. We are all one in God. We lose consciousness of this at birth which is the beginning of division. But the sense of unity, of fundamental oneness abides and makes man a gregarious animal. Common memory refers to a chain of historical happenings, but the consciousness of unity, the secret intention of Nature, is prior to all history. Common ideal refers to our strivings in the present, man's conscious activity, speculation and mental idealism. There is an ineluctable something that determines the direction of our endeavours and the fruit thereof.

Land is the primary basis of nationality. Race, religion, language all come next. A common land is the pledge of a common consciousness. It may begin with an attachment to the land, it will thence pass to the people and subjectively lead them to the discovery of the soul of the nation. Given a well-defined, territotial unit, a life of harmony and mutuality within the area is inevitable early or late. A conception embracing the whole land, a vision of the Mother is all that is needed. That took hold of the consciousness of the race since Bankim gave the Mantra. "Once that vision has come to a people, there can be no rest, no peace, no farther slumber till the temple has been made ready, the image installed and the sacrifice offered. A great nation which has had that vision can never again bend its neck in subjection to the yoke of a conqueror."[1]

[1] *Bankim-Tilak-Dayananda*, p. 14.

The prophecy is since fulfilled and it will accomplish itself yet further. "A free and united India will be there and the Mother will gather around her her sons and weld them into a single national strength in the life of a great and united people."[1]

Political divisions have no permanent force as long as the country is one. People dwelling in one country, however diverse they may happen to be, will be driven to know each other intimately and cooperate towards the solution of common problems which can neither be put off nor disingenuously met. Geography lays on the people a need which cannot be denied; it favours physical contact and commerce, unity at the gross level too,—what, given spiritual perception and spiritual oneness, renders possible unity in the complete sense, the earth-sense too no less than the spirit-sense of it all. "The feeling of almost physical delight in the touch of the mother-soil, of the winds that blow from Indian seas, of rivers that stream from Indian hills, in the hearing of Indian speech, music, poetry, in the familiar sights, sounds, habits, dress, manners of our Indian life, this is the physical root of that love. The pride in our past, the pain in our present, the passion for the future are its trunk and branches. Self-sacrifice and self-forgetfulness, great service, high endurance for the country are its fruit. And the sap which keeps it alive is the realization of the Motherhood of God in the country, the vision of the Mother, the perpetual contemplation, adoration and service of the Mother."[2]

5. Towards Emancipation

The Nationalist Party inspired by this religion of patriotism envisaged absolute Swaraj,—self-government as it exists in the United Kingdom, not as it exists in the colonies, which was the scope of the Congress demand enunciated by Dadabhai. The first formulation of the Swaraj ideal was more a matter of finding a Sanskrit equivalent for a Western political vocable than rediscovering the spirit of the India of long ago and recharging it with a new potency. But the spirit emerges. The policy of Passive Resistance was evolved as the necessary comple-

[1] *Sri Aurobindo's Message*, Feb. 5, 1948.

[2] *The Doctrine of Passive Resistance*, p. 84.

ment of self-help. "Self-development and a scheme of Passive Resistance are supplementary and necessary to each other."[1] Passive Resistance was a courageous doctrine of the soul expressing the determination of the nation at once to resist bureaucratic high-handedness and to depend on themselves for the realisation of freedom, preparedness to suffer for one's convictions, this again attesting to the high value of what we contend for. The nation had indeed travelled a long way from moderation, compromise and conciliation. There was a tendency to swing to the opposite extreme of intransigence and violent display of anti-British feeling.

"The outburst of anti-European feeling which followed on the Partition gave the required opportunity. Anger, vindictiveness and antipathy are not in themselves laudable feelings, but God uses them for his purposes. They drove listlessness and apathy away and replaced these by energy and a powerful emotion; and that energy and emotion were seized upon by the national self and turned to the uses of the future."[2] A further explanation is offered: "When tamas, inertia, torpor, has benumbed a nation, the strongest forms of rajas are necessary to break the spell; there is no form of rajas so strong as hatred. Through rajas we rise to sattwa, and for the Indian temperament the transition does not take long."[3] The newborn energy manifested itself in stray anarchical developments. Some few not merely repudiated with scorn all that savoured of British origins but indulged in violence. Rajas tended to sattwa, however.

Nationalism had found its law of being. It had clearly seen and unmistakably stated its ideal. It had ceased to look for help from the constituted powers and developed an ethic of self-reliance. "Mendicancy" was finally abandoned. A change in method and spirit both were noticeable. Not infructuous agitation but constructive-regenerative activities, withdrawal of consent and cooperation and the organization of a programme of non-cooperation became the nation's motto. Socially the movement widened itself by enlisting the youth, the masses and the women. The response of these sections of society indicated the extent

[1] *The Doctrine of Passive Resistance*, p. 39.

[2] *The Ideal of the Karmayogin*, p. 23.

[3] *The Doctrine of Passive Resistance*, p. 85.

to which nationalism had succeeded in its idealistic appeal to the heart and the imagination.

The Nationalist movement in its new fervour assumed full form under the leadership of Tilak. "He was the foremost exponent and head of a thorough-going nationalism."[1] The greatness of the Lokamanya consists in Indianising the political movement, in giving it a virile turn in rejecting Western estimates, in the application of a subtle intellect to the various aspects of political regeneration. It was spiritual not in the deepest sense of the word but in the gospel of self-reliance it inculcated, in the conception of Swaraj as a birthright, not a concession or gift and the definite acceptance of Swadharma in politics. It assumed a popular expression in the inauguration of Ganesh and Shivaji festivals and the wide diffusion of the new ideology through the vernacular press. The mass mind began to be leavened.

6. The Emancipation

With the advent of Gandhiji whose name is inseparably associated with the fruition of our protracted struggle for freedom, the nation entered upon a phase of ethical discipline. Non-cooperation was a moral campaign directed against a political system. There is no example in history of a whole people led to freedom without sanguinary violence by a man of Gandhiji's purity of temperament, single-minded dedication to the good of the country and an unbending will in the pursuit of the chosen ideal. Yet what a commentary on human nature as it is that this supreme moral effort should have been misapprehended and Gandhiji's very life not thought too precious! This should make us pause. The nation's homage to Gandhiji was assured and the misguided act of a single individual only served to bring home, to demonstrate to the world, how sound is the nation's core that sang sorrow 'up into immortal spheres'.

Yet the question remains, reviewing the whole problem, what the main leverage of life is. What is the supreme dynamis? What is its metaphysical validity? What is its practical utility? Can the ethical be regarded as an absolute or all-sufficing or all-comprehensive formula

[1] *Bankim-Tilak-Dayananda*, p. 23.

of life? A consideration of these questions by competent men will mean the revision of the foundations of life as at present constituted. Realization of the Highest Truth and its actualisation in the circumstances and conditions of life,—this has been the single problem of humanity through the ages. How to secure power, how to forge the instruments that will avail to make life divine, have been man's preoccupation. Sri Aurobindo wrote in his letter to Deshabandhu Chitta Ranjan Das in November 1922: "I have been confirmed in a perception which I had always less clearly and dynamically then but which has now become more and more evident to me that the true basis of work and life is the spiritual, that is to say, a new consciousness to be developed only by Yoga; I see more and more manifestly, that man can never get out of the futile circle the race is always treading until he has raised himself on to the new foundation. I believe also that it is the mission of India to make this great victory for the world. But what precisely was the nature of the dynamic power of this great consciousness? What was the condition of its effective truth? How could it be brought down, mobilised, organized, turned upon life? How could our present instruments, intellect, mind, life, body be made true and perfect channels for this great transformation?" This was the problem Sri Aurobindo set to work out in his own experience.

The spiritual is other than the moral; it is supra-ethical. Rising above the ethical does not mean allowing our lower nature a free rein. The moral like the mental is an intermediary phase. It has a preparatory value. None but the Jivanmuktas may transgress the moral law with impunity. But we have to realize its essential nature and limitations as well. While, in the first instance, we have everyone of us to achieve Sattwa, moral high-mindedness, we have at the same time to recognise that it is but a part of the process, is efficacious up to a point, and, beyond that, for a higher operation, we have to acquire a spiritual transcendence, —a transcendence that has its portion, its essence, in the universal, in the individual as well, and ensures to us a totality, an integrality of action. The Gandhi movement was essentially one of riddance. It achieved political freedom, a preliminary purificatory process. While it purged the political atmosphere by fixing a high ideal, by insisting on clean methods, while it ethically drew together the elements for a struggle, 'a fight to the finish' and imposed on them a technique of

resistance best fitted under the circumstances of a disarmed people dominated by armed might, it could not ideally purify the nation because a higher than moral sanction is needed for the purpose. The mass of the nation being what it is, Gandhism, by force of individual example, could only loosely organize it for a campaign of independence. In the process it suffered dilution, attrition, distortion, so that Gandhism at its rare height remains a solitary individual exemplification. This initial purificatory movement, while availing to save the people from the British and forcefully changing the current back from the channels of decadent European nationalism, helps the waters to gather for a resumed flow in its ancient bed. Spiritualising politics by direct political action, by fixing allegiance to the country and the nation as the sole godheads, will only result in a travesty of spirituality, though it brings its own incidental good. The turbid mass may respond outwardly by desisting from acts of open violence,—not always to be depended on, however, —but it neither understands the technique nor yet the spirit that saves it. It comes to harbour unregenerate passion. The higher the ethic, the severer the strain upon common human stuff and the greater the distortion and sanctimonious humbug that will prevail. Real purification can be effected only by other and more radical means, a spiritual conversion of our nature, and not mere moral medication. Externally holding back from violence, the mass mind seethes internally, and in a crisis, borne down by the weight of its own unchastened lusts and unsatisfied hungers and ravenous instincts, breaks loose into anarchic acts of arson and murder such as painted red the dawn of Indian freedom and such as has ensanguined the record of history elsewhere.

Gandhism marks the limit of the moral example. It shows the furthest that can be done in the direction of ethical discipline, ethical influence and ethical endeavour. In Bengal, earlier, the insufficiency of the intellectual effort has been illustrated. "This state of despair was the best thing that could have happened for Bengal, for it meant that the intellect had done its best, that the intellect had done all that was possible for it, and that the work of the unaided intellect in Bengal was finished."[1] It is Nature's way to carry any line of endeavour to its extreme logical

[1] *Speeches*, p. 27 (1922 edition).

limit. If ethical means could suffice, Gandhism should. The restraint, the purity, the candour, the very human ties of sympathy by which it sought to bind the people together, the rigour and suffering it cheerfully bore as part of the process, the practical success it achieved, stamp Gandhism with a grandeur of its own; it is a tribute to the individual; it is a tribute to the potency of principles and ideals conceived on the mental, the moral plane. Attested in its high purity in the individual, when the austere ethic is applied to the mass, it will find itself in the grip of giant passions which it (the mass) may hide but cannot subjugate.

There is a constant permeation of the planes, and even though we have no access to the highest, the spiritual and the supramental, we share by our aspiration whatever admixture, infiltration of the highest is achieved at our present level and by virtue thereof attain partial results. The spirit is the sole power. We give credit to our intellectual policies, our present modes of working, while all the while they are really derived from the highest planes, attenuated reflections of the Real. But for anything like transformation, for a radical remoulding of our nature, we have to lay ourselves open to the descent of the Divine, abolish the ego and convert ourselves into instruments for the work of the Divine.

We have passed through a moral phase of nationalism. It cannot be the final. "The effort at governing political action by ethics is usually little more than a pretente."[1] Exceptional individuals may regulate their political conduct by strict moral injunctions; even they, proceeding by mental and moral rule, cannot escape miscalculation. "Sattwa binds by knowledge and pleasure; it is always attaching itself to some imperfect realisation, to the idea of one's own opinions and principles or at its highest, as in the case of Arjuna, opposing some personal idea of altruism, justice or virtue against the surrender of our will that God demands of us. It is for the escape from the Sattwic Ahamkara that we have to pass beyond the attachment to the duality of virtue and sin, *ubhe sukrtaduskrte*."[2]

"There is no passion so terrible as the passion of the altruist, no egoism so hard to shake as the fixed egoism of virtue, precisely

[1] *The Spirit and Form of Indian Polity*, p. 21.

[2] *The Yoga and its Objects*, pp. 38-39.

because it is justified in its own eyes, and justified in the sight of men and cannot see the necessity of yielding to a higher law."[1]

Action will be infallible only when it draws down a higher sanction, a supra-ethical descent of divine energy, when man becomes an absolutely pure channel of His will and puissance. Meanwhile what saves us is our moral purity, loftiness of motive, integrity of conduct, —qualities not at all to be underrated but to be diligently sought after as a first condition without which there is no transcending the 'modes of nature.'

The meaning of ethics considered from a metaphysical standpoint, its transitional value is characterised by Sri Aurobindo in the following paras which I extract for a highest perspective of the entire ethical problem:

"We have to recognise, if we thus view the whole, not limiting ourselves to the human difficulty and the human standpoint, that we do not live in an ethical world. The attempt of human thought to force an ethical meaning into the whole of Nature is one of those acts of wilful and obstinate self-confusion, one of those pathetic attempts of the human being to read himself, his limited habitual human self into all things and judge them from the standpoint he has personally evolved, which most effectively prevent him from arriving at real knowledge and complete sight. Material Nature is not ethical; the law which governs it is a co-ordination of fixed habits which take no cognizance of good and evil, but only of force that creates, force that arranges and preserves, force that disturbs and destroys impartially, non-ethically, according to the secret Will in it, according to the mute satisfaction of that Will in its own self-formations and self-dissolutions. Animal or vital Nature is also non-ethical, although as it progresses it manifests the crude material out of which the higher animal evolves the ethical impulse. We do not blame the tiger because it slays and devours its prey any more than we blame the storm because it destroys or the fire because it tortures and kills; neither does the conscious-force in the storm, the fire or the tiger blame or condemn itself. Blame and condemnation, or rather self-blame and self-condemnation, are the beginning of true ethics. When we blame others without applying

[1] *The Yoga and its Objects*, p. 26.

the same law to ourselves, we are not speaking with a true ethical judgment, but only the language ethics has evolved for us to an emotional impulse of recoil from or dislike of that which displeases or hurts us.

"This recoil or dislike is the primary origin of ethics but is not itself ethical. The fear of the deer for the tiger, the rage of the strong creature against its assailant is a vital recoil of the individual delight of existence from that which threatens it. In the progress of the mentality it refines itself into repugnance, dislike, disapproval. Disapproval of that which threatens and hurts us, approval of that which flatters and satisfies refine into the conception of good and evil to oneself, to the community, to others than ourselves to other communities than ours, and finally into the general approval of good, and general disapproval of evil. But, throughout, the fundamental nature of the thing remains the same. Man desires self-expression, self-development, in other words, the progressing play in himself of the conscious-force of existence; that is his fundamental delight. Whatever hurts that self-expression, self-development, satisfaction of his progressing self, is for him evil; whatever helps, confirms, raises, aggrandises, ennobles it is his good. Only, his conception of the self-development changes, becomes higher and wider, begins to exceed his limited personality, to embrace others, to embrace all in its scope.

"In other words, ethics is a stage in evolution. That which is common to all stages is the urge of Sachchidananda towards self-expression. This urge is at first non-ethical, then infra-ethical in the animal, then in the intelligent animal even anti-ethical for it permits us to approve hurt done to others which we disapprove when done to ourselves. In this aspect man even now is only half-ethical. And just as all below us is infra-ethical, so there may be that above us whither we shall eventually arrive, which is supra-ethical, which has no need of ethics. The ethical impulse and attitude, so all-important to humanity, is a means by which it struggles out of the lower harmony and universality based upon inconscience and broken up by life into individual discords towards a higher harmony and universality based upon conscient oneness with all existences. Arriving at that goal, this means will no longer be necessary or even possible, since the qualities and

oppositions on which it depends will naturally dissolve and disappear in the final reconciliation."[1]

7. The Present: The Basis of Spiritual Nationalism

The spurious political agitation of the nineteenth century was succeeded by a realistic nationalistic phase under Tilak. The masses first emerged into notice. Independence was claimed as of right and at the same time constructive genius was displayed.

Then came the moral phase of Indian nationalism organized by Gandhiji which by internal strength and aided by world conditions availed to secure freedom for India. It completes the preliminary movement.

The trammels of political bondage cast off, India has now to answer a creative test in respect of herself, in respect of the world at large by the way in which she uses her freedom. Socialistic, Communistic, Radicalistic ideologies, most of them still Western in inspiration, are battling for the victorious possession of the national mind and the sovereign direction of affairs. The old guard representing the continuous tradition in Indian politics is at the helm. We must arrive at a deeper subjectivity and make spirituality the sole principle of the new effort if India should be true to her age-long endeavour and render to the world the gift "of her spiritual knowledge and her means for the spiritualisation of life to the whole race."[2] "When spirituality is lost, all is lost. This is the fate from which we have narrowly escaped by the resurgence of the soul of India in Nationalism."[3]

But what then does it mean? What the conditions required after the witness of Ramakrishna, the vivid and convincing realization in a master-soul of the power of the spirit, after the reaffirmation of the gospel of Ramakrishna by Vivekananda, after the awakening of the soul of the common people from the slumber of centuries, after the ethical discipline enforced by Gandhiji, after the concentration in certain directions for securing the immediate objective of freedom, was a wider

[1] *The Life Divine*, Vol. I. pp. 115-117. (Second edition).

[2] *The Fifteenth of August, 1947*, Sri Aurobindo's Message.

[3] *The Need in Nationalism and other Essays*, p. 7.

permeation of the national consciousness, a whole gathering of the past acquisitions of the race in a new synthesis, a massed structure of thought that shall base a new creation. "Its (spirituality's) real work is not to solve human problems on the past or present mental basis, but to create a new foundation of our being and our life and knowledge."[1] *The Life Divine* and other writings of Sri Aurobindo which gather in their immense scope all the heritage of our race with whatever additions it can profitably coalesce of Western thought indicate the shape the new creation should assume, in fact, they liberate the energy necessary for the new creation they adumbrate.

The time has now come when all obstacles can be surmounted. Time is an indispensable factor in all evolution, time which witnesses dramatic reversals and catastrophic changes which really all the while are a mixing up of the elements for a predestined new formation intended by Nature, the secret will in things. When the evolution is from within outward, as in India's case, time is a necessary aid. It indicates inward ripeness and then will follow precipitate expression. A thing fails in time because it has no necessity in the cosmic. A thing succeeds only when the Transcendental sanctions, the universal needs and the individual wills; this triple rhythm is the very necessity of all manifestation in time. "His is the impetus which fulfils itself in Time and once there is movement, impetus from the spirit within, Time and the Mother take charge of it, prepare, ripen and fulfil. When the Zeitgeist, God in Time, moves in a settled direction, then the whole forces of the world are called in, to swell the established current towards the purpose decreed."[2] "The time has now come when those obstacles can be overcome."[3]

"The command is now."[4]

"It is sure to succeed because the freedom, unity and greatness of India have now become necessary to the world."[5]

In these and numerous other places does the Prophet seize the Time-sense, the imminence of India's destiny.

The British period is an interregnum in Indian history. The clearance of the British, the acceptance of a federal polity, the resultant

[1] *The Life Divine*, Vol. II, p. 720. (Second Edition).

[2], [3], [5], *The Ideal of the Karmayogin.*

[4] *The Yoga and its Objects.*

integration in spite of the major rift of Pakistan all open a new chapter in India's political evolution. India is faced with the choice indicated in the Message at the opening of this essay.

The vestiges of our recent political experience which have to be worked out and which still dominate us in the framing of our new polity are the theory of a secular State and the organization of our life on a uniform unitarian basis ignoring regional diversities. Both these are an atavistic taint. If the secular State means the submission or subordination of credal and sectarian loyalties to the interests of the people as a whole, it will be a step in the right direction. But secularisation may mean a sovietising of our outlook and policy, an attempt to divest the new building polity of its age-old spirit, a ruthless rationalistic drive to reduce everything to clear outlines and mechanical efficiency at the cost of the soul which should pervade and animate the whole frame; if so it will be an irreparable error. As the notion of the secular State is Western it will be profitable to know its genesis and its development. Sri Aurobindo writes: "The emphasis of the Western mind is on life, the outer life above all, the things that are grasped, visible, tangible, and on the inner life only as an intelligent reflection of the outer world, with the reason for a firm putter of things into shape, an intelligent critic, builder, refiner of the external materials offered by Nature; the present use of living, in this life and for this life, is its whole preoccupation, the present existence of the individual, the continuous physical existence and developing mind and knowledge of humanity. Even of religion the West is apt to demand that it shall subordinate itself to this utility. The Greek and the Roman looked on religious cult as a sanction for the life of the 'polis' or a force for the just firmness and stability of the State. The Middle Ages when the Christian idea was at its height, were an interregnum, a period during which the Western mind was trying to assimilate in its emotion and intelligence an oriental ideal, though it never succeeded in firmly living it, just as for Asia the present moment is an interregnum dominated by an attempt to assimilate in its intellect and life in spite of a rebellious soul and temperament, the Western ideal and outlook; but even then the Christian idea marked in its purity by the emphasis of its introspective tendency and an uncompromising other-worldliness had to compromise with this demand of the occidental temperament and in doing that it lost its own

real kingdom. And finally the genuine temperament of the West triumphed in an increasing rationalising and secularisation of religion. Religion became more and more a pale and ever thinning shadow pushed aside into a corner of the being and lucky if not entirely exiled, while outside the doors of the vanquished Church marched on their victorious way the triumphant secular pomps of the life and reason.

"The tendency to secularism is a necessary consequence of the cult of life and reason. Ancient Europe did not separate religion and life, but that was because it had no need for the separation, since its religion, once it had got rid of the oriental element of the mysteries, was a secular institution which did not look beyond a certain supra-physical sanction and aid to the government of this life, and even then the final tendency was to philosophise and reason away the relics of the original religious spirit, exile such shadow as remained of the brooding wings of a supra-rational mystery and get into the clear sunlight of the logical and practical reason. But modern Europe, the more effectually to shake off the obsession of the Christian idea, which like all oriental religious thought claims to make religion commensurate with life and to spiritualise, against whatever obstacles may be opposed to it by the unregenerate vital nature of the animal man, the whole being, separated religion from the life, from philosophy, art and science, from politics, from the greater part of the action of society; it secularised and rationalised too the ethical being so that it might stand in itself and have no need of any aid from any religious sanction. It left religion an impoverished system of belief and ceremony to which one might or might not subscribe with very little difference to the march of the human mind and life; for its penetrating and colouring power had been reduced to a fine minimum, a superficial pigmentation of dogma, sentiment and emotion.

"Even the poor little corner that was left, intellectualism insisted on flooding as much as possible with the light of reason; it has been bent on reducing not only the infra-rational but equally the supra-rational refuges of the religious spirit. The old pagan polytheistic symbolism which had clothed the ancient idea of a divine presence and greater supra-physical life and being in all Nature and in every particle of life and Matter and in all animal being and in all the mental action of man,—an idea which to the secularist reason is only an intellectualised animism—had been swept aside. The Divinity had left the earth and

lived far aloof and remote in other worlds, in a celestial heaven of saints and immortal spirits. But why any other worlds? We will admit, said the progressing intellect, only this material world to which our reason and senses bear witness, and, for the rest, a vague idea of spiritual being without a habitation to satisfy the chilled remnants of the old spiritual sense or illusion,—Theism or else a rationalised Christianity. Or why that even? A Reason or Power, called God for want of a better name, represented by the moral and physical law in the material universe is surely sufficient for a rational mind; so we get to Deism. Or why then any God at all? The reason and the senses give no witness to God, can make of Him at most a plausible hypothesis; but there is no need of an unsubstantial hypothesis, Nature is enough and the sole thing of which we have knowledge. Thus by a quite inevitable process we have got to the atheistic or agnostic cult of secularism, and there reason and life may henceforward take their foundation and work well satisfied,—if only that inconvenient veiled ambiguous infinite something behind will leave them alone for the future."[1]

With what delicious and devastating irony is the road traced from externalised life-activity to the logical culmination of the atheistic or agnostic cult of secularism! If we do not desire to develop a godless corporation in our midst, we should be warned by the experience of of the West.

The second tendency which again is atavistic is the tendency on the assumption that "the first and last need of India at the present moment is that it should be made a nation,"—as if it is not one and has to be new made,—to try to have a homogeneous State mistaking this for strength. This administrative policy also runs counter to the bed-rock principle of our evolution,—unity in diversity. Referring to the demand for the reconstruction of the artificial British-made Presidencies and Provinces, Sri Aurobindo says in his Message to the Andhra University on the occasion of the Presentation of the Sir Cattamanchi Ramalinga National Prize (Dec. 11, 1948):

"In taking over the administration from Britain we had inevitably to follow the line of least resistance and proceed on the basis of the

[1] *Arya*, Vol. V, pp. 608-611.

artificial British-made provinces, at least for the time; this provisional arrangement now threatens to become permanent, at least in the main and some see an advantage in this permanence. For they think it will help the unification of the country and save us from the necessity of preserving regional subnations which in the past kept a country from an entire and thoroughgoing unification and uniformity. In a rigorous unification they see the only true union, a single nation with a standardised and uniform administration, language, literature, culture, art, education,—all carried on through the agency of one national tongue. How far such a conception can be carried out in the future one cannot forecast, but at present it is obviously impracticable, and it is doubtful if it is for India truly desirable. The ancient diversities of the country carried in them great advantages as well as drawbacks. By these differences the country was made the home of many living and pulsating centres of life, art, culture, a richly and brilliantly coloured diversity in unity; all was not drawn up into a few provincial capitals or an imperial metropolis, other towns and regions remaining subordinated and indistinctive or even culturally asleep; the whole nation lived with a full life in its many parts and this increased enormously the creative energy of the whole. There is no possibility any longer that this diversity will endanger or diminish the unity of India. Those vast spaces which kept her people from closeness and full inter-play have been abolished in their separating effect by the march of science and the swiftness of the means of communication. The idea of federation and a complete machinery for its perfect working have been discovered and will be at full work. Above all the spirit of patriotic unity has been too firmly established in the people to be easily effaced or diminished, and it would be more endangered by refusing to allow the natural play of life of the subnations than by satisfying their legitimate aspirations. The Congress itself in the days before liberation came had pledged itself to the formation of linguistic provinces, and to follow it out, if not immediately, yet as early as conveniently may be, might well be considered the wisest course. India's national life will then be founded on her natural strengths and the principle of unity in diversity which has always been normal to her and its fulfilment, the fundamental course of her being and its very nature, the Many in the One, would place her on the sure foundation of her Swabhava and Swadharma."

These two tendencies corrected, one a large question affecting the spirit and form of Indian polity, the other a detail of policy and internal adjustment, but both involving central principles of our civilisation through the ages, then a right beginning will have been made towards spiritualising nationalism.

8. Spiritual Nationalism

A clear conception of spirituality and its application to national life in all its aspects is the single test of the world-value of Indian nationalism. "Spirituality is not a high intellectuality, not idealism, not an ethical turn of mind or moral purity and austerity, not religiosity or an ardent and exalted emotional fervour, not even a compound of all these excellent things; a mental belief, creed or faith, an emotional aspiration, a regulation of conduct according to a religious or ethical formula are not spiritual achievement and experience. These things are of considerable value to mind and life; they are of value to the spiritual evolution itself as preparatory movements disciplining, purifying or giving a suitable form to the nature; but they still belong to the mental evolution,—the beginning of a spiritual realisation, experience, change is not yet there. Spirituality is in its essence an awakening to the inner reality of our being, to a spirit, self, soul which is other than our mind, life and body, an inner aspiration to know, to feel, to be that, to enter into contact with the greater Reality beyond and pervading the universe which inhabits also our own being, to be in communion with It and union with It and a turning, a conversion, a transformation of our whole being as a result of the aspiration, the contact, the union, a growth or waking into a new becoming or new being, a new self, a new nature."[1]

The first turn to the spiritual, the first movement will begin only when the individual is able to resist the glamorous outward life, when the individual is drawn within, when he transfers the centre from the vital and physical to which he is now riveted by a thousand bonds to the subjective and there arrives at the deepest truth of himself, not in the world of mind, not in an ethical idealism or aesthetic

[1] *The Life Divine*, Vol. II, p. 688 (Second edition).

thrill or gratification, but in the world of the spirit which is the source of all these experiences and can alone provide the right rule of living, the right law of enjoyment. The spirit, once found, it will be realised, is not only static but dynamic as well, though it is possible to seek a beatitude of Nirvana and abide in the Transcendent. The spirit is capable not only of working on all these lower members, on every one of these instruments of mind, life and body but also of converting them to its law, in a word, transforming them to a higher knowledge, higher power, a higher delight. As long as we are centred in the outer vital and the physical, it is natural that they should seem more real, more tangible than the inner subjective being which, just because it is insufficiently developed, not properly seized in the consciousness, seems comparatively feeble and ineffectual, but the subjective, the inner is ever the origin of the outer. "The outer has a value only in so far as it is expressive of the inner status."[1] The spirit must not be reduced to the inferior formulations of the mind, rather the mind must know itself as the power, the instrument of the spirit. The spirit must not be reduced to the terms of life, rather life must find its force in the spirit and operate as a channel of the supreme energy. The body too must not attempt to reduce the spirit to its gross level but seize the intuition of its inherent divinity, not simply aim at increased material functioning but undergo a spiritual transformation. The moment this Spirit-sense as the Real, the Sole-Existent dawns, our normal view of things will be transfigured.

We must arrive at a decisive crisis of transformation, not simply be content with a modicum of spirituality, a little leavening or modification of our normal life with the spiritual motive. So far man's achievement has been partial or maimed. If he aimed high at the true, the good, the beautiful, he either chose to let alone the vital and the physical or effected a compromise with the lower nature; the higher and the lower existed side by side, the higher no doubt controlling the lower but not setting its total stamp upon it. "There was a dominance, but not a transformation." At the first chance, life will assert its claim or if forcefully held down, suffer an atrophy, a loss of vitality, a decay of itself causing a decay of the whole society.

[1] *The Life Divine*, Vol. II, p. 884 (Second Edition).

In the age typified by German vitalistic philosophy, the higher powers of the mind and intelligence catered for the vital and physical impulses instead of subjugating them to a higher law. The suffering that inevitably accompanied unbridled vital indulgence has meant a transferring of the centre to the mental and with its aid a better ordering of individual, of national and international life. This is roughly the road traversed by Bhrigu in the Upanishads, first beginning with the material, then passing on to the vital and again to the mind. But not until the last ascension of the spiritual is made will man know either rest or satisfaction. The spiritual self must conquer man, the *manu*, commandeer the forces of the mind not in its characteristic modes but spiritualised and likewise the clamorous vital and the inert physical. "Our right and natural road is towards the summits."

"A third stage has been long in preparation, its idea often cast out in limited or large, quiet or striking spiritual movements and potent new disciplines and religions, but not successfully yet, because the circumstances were adverse and the hour not come, which will call the community of men to live in the greatest light of all and to found their whole life on some fully revealed power and grand uplifting truth of the spirit. Not until that third enlarging movement has come into its own,—a thing not so easy as the purist of the reason or the purist of the spirit constantly imagines and by that too hasty imagination falls short in his endeavour, can Indian civilisation be said to have discharged its mission, to have spoken its last word and be fully *functus officio*, crowned and complete in its office, of mediation between the life of man and the spirit."[1]

Before this decisive turn can come, there must be a fortunate coincidence of two factors. The individuals who initiate, who communicate the impulse and the mass which receives, responds, must meet in fruitful conjunction. If either of them shows defect, if the individual is imperfectly evolved and is in undue haste, or the mass is dull and impervious, not susceptible in the right degree, the divine consummation cannot be. The key to the evolution is the individual.

[1] *Arya*, Vol. VI, p. 160.

The group is static, conservative. Society suppresses the individual at its peril, for the individual is the luminous point of the social formation, the spirit-head of the community in whom the dumb instincts and impulsions of the man become articulate, assume energy and throw out creative possibilities. These impacts of light and energy from the individual permeate the mass and raise it to new levels. Left to itself the mass would wallow; it is a leviathan that cannot understand, manage itself but lies "floating many a rood". A group-soul that has understood itself or has the right psychic sense will recognise in the individual its own crystallised expression, the embodiment of its own possibilities and help him to flower into his perfection so that he may pour forth his idealism, spiritual quality and raise society to new heights. If, on the other hand, the group entity is only a collective ego, it will require the individual to annul himself, in the end bringing about its own stagnation and possible extinction from failure of living inspiration and direction from the individual.

"Within the general nature and general destiny of mankind each individual being has to follow the common aim on the lines of his own nature and to arrive at his possible perfection by a growth from within. So only can the race itself attain to anything profound, living and deep-rooted. It cannot do it in the mass, regarding the individual as if he were only a cell of its body, a stone of its edifice, a passive instrument of its collective life and growth. Humanity is not so constituted. We miss the divine reality in man and the secret of the human birth if we do not see each individual man as that Self and sum up all human potentiality in his own being. That potentiality he has to find, develop, work out from within. No State or legislator or reformer can cut him rigorously into his perfect pattern; no Church or priest can give him a mechanical salvation; no order, no class life or ideal, no nation, no civilisation or creed or ethical, social or religious Shastra can be allowed to say to him permanently, 'In this way of mine and thus far shalt thou act and grow and in no other way and no farther shall thy growth be permitted.' These things may help him temporarily or they may curb and he grows in proportion as he can use them and then exceed them, training and teaching his individuality by them but asserting it always in the end in its

divine freedom. Always he is the traveller of the cycles and his road is forward."[1]

Led by an increasing number of individuals, the standard-bearers of the spirit, society must learn to regard itself as a collective soul. It must give up its compacted egoism seeking to immolate the individual on its altar. An inwardly turned society should make "the revealing and finding of the divine self in man the whole first aim of all its activities, its education, its knowledge, its science, its ethics, its art, its economical and political structure."[2]

Basing all the vision and endeavour of a spiritual society will be three essential truths of existence; God, freedom, unity. To the sceptic and agnostic of today, an endeavour that begins with God may seem remote and illusory, but that is where it has to begin. "As the old vedic seer puts it 'our divine foundation is above with its rays reaching downward, out through our inner being,' *nichinàh sthur upari budhna eshàm, asme antar nihitàh Ketavah syuh.*"[3] To point to a rough analogy in Nature's organic realm, it is a sort of an immense stalactite formation hanging down from the roof of the heavens. The nourishment is from the super regions.

God is the highest term of liberation; all other freedoms are relative; once man realizes God he knows his place in the cosmos, can obey lesser divinities and finds the just meaning of all human ideas and institutions. God gives meaning to the universe; God gives meaning to individual life. Freedom and unity become real only when founded upon the absolute.

"Three things (God, freedom, unity) which are one, for you cannot realise freedom and unity unless you realise God, you cannot possess freedom and unity unless you possess God. The freedom and unity which otherwise go by that name, are simply attempts of our subjection and our division to get away from themselves by shutting their eyes while they turn somersaults around their own centre. When man is able to see God and to possess him, then he will know real freedom and arrive at real unity, never otherwise. And God is only

[1] *Arya*, Vol. III, p. 421.

[2] ibid., Vol. V, p. 370.

[3] ibid.

waiting to be known, while man is seeking for him everywhere and creating images of him, but all the while finding and creating only images of his own ego. When this ego pivot is abandoned and the ego-hunt ceases, then man gets his first real chance of achieving spirituality."[1] A spiritual society will concede the largest measure of freedom to the individual; it will admit the superiority of inner sanction to outer regulation; it will diminish the element of external compulsion. "For the perfectly spiritualised society will be one in which, as is dreamed by the spiritual anarchist, all men will be entirely free, and it will be so because the preliminary condition will have been satisfied. In that state each man will be not a law to himself but the law, the divine law, because he will be a soul living in the Divine and not an ego living mainly if not entirely for itself. His life will be led by the law of his own divine nature liberated from the ego.

The third word of the spirit is unity. Each man has to grow into the Divine within himself through his own individual being, therefore is freedom a necessity of the being and perfect freedom the sign and condition of the perfect life. But also the Divine whom he thus sees in himself, he sees equally in all others, and as the same Spirit in all. Therefore too is a growing unity with others a necessity of his being and perfect unity the sign and condition of the perfect life. Not only to see and find God in oneself, but to see and find God in all, not only to seek one's own liberation or perfection, but to seek the liberation and perfection of others is the complete law of the spiritual being."[2]

A spiritual nation knows no exclusions nor limits. Science, progress, democracy are welcome to it but only on a new basis as the joyous expressions and activities of the spirit, as aids to the realization of the Divine. "True spirituality rejects no new lights, no added means or materials of our human self-development." It includes them all and when moulded by the spirit they become the phenomena of a full and varied existence. How philosophy, science, art and poetry, politics, society and economy will reflect a change in spirit, how spirituality

[1] *Arya*, Vol. IV, p. 683.

[2] ibid., p. 687.

takes them all and gives them a greater, diviner, more intimate sense and what the elements of a spiritual culture are may be understood from the following paragraph:

"Philosophy is, in the western way of dealing with it, a dispassionate enquiry by the light of the reason into the first truths of existence, which we shall get at either by observing the facts science places at our disposal or by a careful dialectical scrutiny of the concepts of the reason or a mixture of the two methods. But from the spiritual view-point truth of existence is to be found by intuition and inner experience and not only by the reason and by scientific observation; the work of philosophy is to arrange the data given by the various means of knowledge, excluding none, and put them into their synthetic relation to the one truth, the one supreme and universal reality. Eventually, its real value is to prepare a basis for spiritual realization and the growing of the human being into his divine self and his divine nature. Science itself becomes only a knowledge of the world which throws an added light on the spirit of the universe and his way in things. Nor will it confine itself to a physical knowledge and its practical fruits or to the knowledge of life and man and mind based upon the idea of matter or material energy as our starting point; a spiritualised culture will make room for new fields of research, for new and old psychical sciences and results which start from spirit as the first truth and from the power of mind and of what is greater than mind to act upon life and matter. The primitive aim of art and poetry is to create images of man and Nature which shall satisfy the sense of beauty and embody artistically the ideas of the intelligence about life and the responses of the imagination to it; but in a spiritual culture they become too in their aim a revelation of greater things concealed in man and Nature and of the deepest spiritual and universal beauty. Politics, society, economy are in the first form of human life simply an arrangement by which men collectively can live, produce, satisfy their desires, enjoy, progress in bodily, vital and mental efficiency; but the spiritual aim makes them much more than this, first, a framework of life within which man can seek for and grow into his real self and divinity; secondly, an increasing embodiment of the divine law of being in life; thirdly, a collective advance towards the light, power, peace, unity, harmony of the diviner nature of humanity which the race is trying to evolve. This and nothing more but nothing

less, this in all its potentialities, is what we mean by a spiritual culture and the application of spirituality to life."[1]

9. Conclusion

The subject of Indian nationalism could not be more than sketched in these notes; for it has to be as wide as Sanatana Dharma, and that is universal in scope. It has been argued above that the evolution of consciousness, the unity of consciousness is the only evolution, the only unity that will abide, that this evolution is complex having to reckon with all the parts of man's nature, that the Rishis realized consciousness in its whole gamut of the Transcendent, the universal and the individual, that they laid the foundations of a religio-philosophic polity in their efforts to embody consciousness in all its vastness, that the political is but the partial, the inadequate, that a federation reconciling the claims of the individual, the communal, the regional, the national and the international is the true line of progress, that such an evolution aiming at unity in diversity and issuing from within outwards is bound to be slow, that the historical eovlution of India was interrupted, deflected at one crucial stage by the imposition of an inimical alien culture, that in the process of recovery, preceded by a religious awakening, we have successively passed through the phases of intellectual, political and moral nationalim, that all this should be but a prelude to spiritual nationalism, that the time is ripe for this great orientation, new creation, in fact, that now is the hour for the true apprehension of spirituality in its application to the various aspects of national life, that India is faced with a choice, and that her national destiny and her value to the world will be determined by the choice she makes,—whether she shall be like one of the existing nations of the world "evolving an opulent industry and commerce, a powerful organization of political and social life, an immense military strength, practising power-politics with a high degree of success, guarding and extending zealously her gains and her interests, dominating even a large part of the world, but in this apparently magnificent progression forfeiting its Swadharma, losing its soul," or whether

[1] *The Renaissance in India*, pp. 77-79 (1920 edition).

she will be true to her heritage, "live also for God and the world as a helper and leader of the whole human race." For a full illumination of these lines of thinking, the reader has to go to *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *Essays on the Gita*, etc. The essay catches in fragment what "high-piled books, in charact'ry Hold like rich garners the full-ripen's grain",—what all aspirants may glean at will and in abundant measure in the wide fields of Sri Aurobindo's fruitful realizations.

A. VENKAPPA SASTRI

For the most part we are much too busy living and thinking to have leisure to be silent and see.

SRI AUROBINDO

A miracle can be a moment's wonder. A change according to the Divine Law can alone endure.

SRI AUROBINDO

Mysticism and Einstein's Relativity Physics

NOTE: Einstein has once again got into the headlines with his "unified field theory" perfected after thirty years of acute mathematical thinking. As yet the details of it are unknown, except that it is a generalised theory of gravitation bringing gravitational and electromagnetic phenomena, which have so far fallen apart, under one comprehensive concept, and that it copes with microphysics as well as macrophysics and absorbs into the theory of relativity the occurrence and behaviour of the ultimate particles. It is thus an extension of the General Theory of Relativity propounded by Einstein in 1915 to deal with accelerated motion as he had dealt with uniform motion by means of his Special Theory of Relativity in 1905. His work up to the present new discovery remains, therefore, unsuperseded in essential thought and an exposition of it with an eye to deeper significances than the scientific cannot fail to be apposite. The following essay is both critical and constructive in treating of the relation between mysticism and the Einsteinian "field", "energy" and theoretical method. The major portion of it is constructive, but in leading up to it and laying bare the genuine promise of profundities beyond the scientific in Einstein's physics it briefly tries to clear from the way whatever false hopes might have got attached to the work of the greatest mathematical mind of our century. In the course of the treatment, comments have been found necessary on also some of Einstein's own philosophical ideas.

I

WHEN Archbishop Davidson, in the early days of relativity theory, asked Einstein what effect his theory would have on religion, Einstein answered: "None. Relativity is a purely scientific theory and has nothing to do with religion." This answer seems to give short shrift to any attempt at aligning with a mystical view of the universe the revolution in scientific thought which Einstein brought about. But Eddington suggests that Einstein's remark must be understood in the context of the times in which it was made. In those days, Eddington explains, one had to become expert in dodging persons who were persuaded that Einstein's four-dimensional continuum was what spiritualistic séances were supposed to reveal:

Einstein's hasty evasion was therefore not surprising. But, according to Eddington, the compartments into which human thought is divided are not water-tight: fundamental progress in one cannot be a matter of indifference to the rest. He caustically offers an analogy: "Natural selection is a purely scientific theory. If in the early days of Darwinism the then Archbishop had asked what effect the theory of natural selection would have on religion, ought the answer to have been 'None. The Darwinian theory is a purely scientific theory, and has nothing to do with religion'?"

Is Eddington's interpretation of Einstein's remark correct? Before we pass judgment we must note, by the way, that Eddington's excuse for Einstein does not seem quite pertinent. Einstein may have wished to dissociate his theory from the claims based on table-rapping and the ouija board. But Archbishop Davidson could scarcely have appeared to him their champion. The more serious-minded among the religious interpreters of relativity theory believed that Einstein confirmed an attitude which was usually considered favourable to religion, the attitude of subjectivism. When, for instance, Einstein declared that space and time are not absolute but relative and that measurements of them depend on the state of the observer, he appeared to make the observing mind the determinant of space and time. Physics prior to Einstein was supposed to present us with a world in which the observing mind made no difference to what was observed; but if space and time vary with the state of the observer, does not the world become permeated with subjective values and does not the materialistic world-view based on the old physics collapse, giving precedence to the power of the mind?

No doubt, Einstein himself employs the word "subjective", yet to connect his theory with religion *via* subjectivism in the common acceptance of the term is to misconstrue him. The word has a special connotation in physics, and what Einstein calls subjective has, in the universe of discourse to which it belongs, no psychological content in any determinant sense: it does not mean that the differences in measurement arise from the state of the observer's mind and occur because he is making use of his consciousness. On this point there is a consensus of scientific authorities. Sullivan, in his article *The Physical Nature of the Universe* in *An Outline of Modern*

Knowledge (page 99), writes: "It is hardly necessary to say that by referring to an 'observer' we do not imply that there is anything 'subjective' or 'psychological' about this theory of relativity. Instead of 'observer' we could substitute the phrase 'automatic measuring apparatus' without affecting the validity of any of our conclusions." Whitehead, on page 142 of *Science and the Modern World*, has the same thing to affirm: "There has been a tendency to give an extreme subjectivist interpretation to this new doctrine. It is perfectly legitimate to bring in the observer, if he facilitates explanations. But it is the observer's body that we want, and not his mind. Even his body is only useful as an example of a very familiar form of apparatus." Jeans makes a similar statement on page 65 of *Physics and Philosophy*: "It is the body of the observer we want and not his mind; a laboratory equipped with cameras and various instruments of measurement would serve our purpose just as well." Eddington also, on page 183 of *Space, Time and Gravitation*, speaks of relativity employing "the different possible impersonal points of view.....those for which the observer can be regarded as a mechanical automaton and can be replaced by scientific measuring appliances." Bertrand Russell explains on page 219 of *The ABC of Relativity*: "People have been misled by the way in which writers on relativity speak of 'the observer'. It is natural to suppose that the observer is a human being, or at least a mind; but he is just as likely to be a photographic plate or a clock. That is to say, the odd results as to the difference between one 'point of view' and another are concerned with 'point of view' in a sense applicable to physical instruments just as much as to people with perceptions. The 'subjectivity' concerned in the theory of relativity is a *physical* subjectivity which would exist equally if there were no such things as minds or senses in the world."

All these pronouncements have, of course, to be taken in reference to a particular limited issue and not to the general philosophical problem whether anything can exist independently of consciousness or else, existing, be to consciousness anything other than what the constitution of consciousness makes it like. They should also not be taken in reference to the truism either that even physical subjectivity can have no meaning and no place in physics in the absence of consciousness or that it is, for the purposes of science, always a part of the

plan and procedure which emanates from and depends on consciousness. The question fronting us is nothing more than the following: Is the observer's consciousness *directly* and *immediately* necessary for the "odd results" of relativity physics? To return a true answer let us pause a moment on the phrase "physical subjectivity". It is worth while bringing the meaning of it to sharp focus by marking it off from other species of subjectivity similarly leading to disagreement between observer and observer. Subjectivity by which, within our sphere of discussion, differing statements can be made are of three types. There is psychological subjectivity. If I recite Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* to an audience, half of whom know English and half do not, those who know it will understand him, while, for the rest, wonderful lines like

> The superconscient realms of motionless peace
> Where judgment ceases and the word is mute
> And the Unconceived lies pathless and alone

will be no more than a series of rhythmically arranged sounds. Nor will those who know English find in the lines the same wonderfulness. Lovers of mystical poetry will be enchanted and exalted, lovers of modernist poetry will not respond so whole-heartedly; lovers of the so-called matter-of-fact will be quite out of tune with Sri Aurobindo's profound and spell-binding vision of superconscient peace and will perhaps feel because of it only a desire to stretch their legs and have a quiet nap in a corner. All these different impressions are instances of psychological subjectivity. Then there is physiological subjectivity. My audience may be composed of those who hear well, those who are hard of hearing and those who are stone-deaf. So, some will catch every word, some will miss a word or two here and there, some will only see my lips moving inaudibly. The different impressions result not from states of mind but from the body's normality or defectiveness. Then there is physical subjectivity. Part of the audience may be near me, part far from me. Or else some hearers may be standing in one place, others moving about. What I read will be received differently by the near, the far, the standing and the moving. The differences will depend neither on the mind's condition nor on the

state of the body's organs but only on the circumstances of situation and motion. The minds may be all akin, the bodies may be utterly similar, and yet these differences will come to pass. For, they are purely physical and can exactly be reproduced by putting, in place of the people, recording instruments all alike. They arise from "observation" in a sense in which observation can go on without minds or bodies being present, since all that is required is recording instruments. And if the human observer himself acts as such an instrument the character of the subjectivity involved is not changed: it remains physical and within our sphere of discussion, has no bearing in the least on any problem connected with psychological subjectivity.

Physical subjectivity is what all physics, classical or Einsteinian, speaks of. According to Einstein, if the observer is moving at such and such a speed relative to an object under observation, a particular kind of effect will be observed in the object: the object will have a certain behaviour. Change the speed and the behaviour of the observed object will be changed. Obviously what affects the observation is the state neither of the observer's mind nor of his bodily organs but the motion of his body. This implies that the point about the difference either of mental or bodily condition does not arise: were the mental and bodily condition exactly the same in all observers but the rate of motion dissimilar, the variations observed would still be there. The essential factor is not psychological, not even physiological but totally physical. And if it is totally physical we can break up the observation into two parts: an instrument's recording an effect and the observer's reading off what is thus recorded. It is with this break-up in view that Philipp Frank, in *Between Physics and Philosophy*, makes what is the final elucidation in brief of the whole issue. He writes: "It is only essential in relativity that in accordance with the motion of the measuring instruments the results of the measurements will be different. But in this there is nothing psychological, at any rate not more than in classical physics. The role of the observer is in both cases entirely the same: he merely substantiates the fact that in a certain instrument a pointer coincides with a division mark on a scale. For this purpose the state of motion of the observer is of no account." To sum up in our own words: a moving laboratory fitted with recording apparatus can be a substitute

for both the mind and the body of the observer and, though the observer's mind-body accompanies the moving laboratory in order to substantiate its readings, the mind-body need not move at all for a particular behaviour to be registered of an object. The observer plays no determinant part in any immediate sense raising a special subjectivist issue.

So, relativity theory, in this context, is to be understood simply as changing our old ideas about what happens when one frame of reference or co-ordinate system or physical standpoint is in relation of motion to another: the term "observer" can be dropped from a formulation of it with as much or as little impunity as from a formulation of classical physics. And, unless we choose general philosophical grounds having nothing to do in particular with any physics, we cannot here subscribe to subjectivism in the common acceptance of the term. In all physics the "subjective" does duty only for the "variant" and the "objective" for the "invariant." The variant is the different characteristics an object or event has in its relation to diverse physical standpoints outside itself, carrying measuring instruments: the invariant is what characteristics must be possessed by it or be attributed to it in order to correlate and unify the variant characteristics. The variant is the pointer-readings unique to a particular place: the invariant is the common factor found in or suggested by the unique pointer-readings from all possible places. The variant is the local or relative feature of an object or event: the invariant is the feature that is universal or absolute.

If Einstein, as Eddington believes, was discouraging popular confusions when he refused to see any religious significance in his theory, the mixing up of the scientific variant with the psychologically subjective was more probably in his mind than séances. But it is doubtful whether any excuse that could be found for him has force. Einstein's remark is really of a piece with all his other pronouncements on science and religion. Religion, in his view, is of two sorts: either it considers God to be personal, a Being other than the universe and interfering with natural events, or it feels that a mighty intelligence is within the universe, imbuing it with a rationality, an ordered regularity, which nothing can break and which is discovered progressively by the human mind when this mind functions as scientist. Science,

according to Einstein, is in conflict with the first sort, while it is actually based on the second. "What deep faith," he exclaims, "in the rationality of the structure of the world, what a longing to understand even a small glimpse of the reason revealed in the world, there must have been in Kepler and Newton!" But, beyond the derivation of science from a "cosmic religious feeling", there is for Einstein an utter divergence between science and religion. Science, he believes, deals with what *is*, religion with what *should be*: the one with truth, the other with value. Science is impotent to provide principles necessary for judgment and action, it is not even able to justify its very basis—the value of the search for truth. Religion is equally impotent to give any knowledge of the world-process, it is not able to tell us what principles operate in the working of cosmic nature. "Science without religion," says Einstein, "is lame; religion without science is blind." When the two, by being complementary, are entirely different in field and function, how, asks Einstein, can science have any bearing on religion and how can we talk of any religious significance in the theory of relativity?

Einstein's conception of science and religion is open to criticism on many heads. We, however, do not need to go into a detailed philosophical discussion. Suffice it to say that his cutting asunder of science as the realm of truth, from religion as the realm of value, is arbitrary. What science gives is a certain type of truth: surely we cannot restrict the discovery of truth to the scientific method. The human consciousness has many modes of operation and each comes into contact with reality in a different aspect: we cannot dogmatically deny that the artistic imagination or the mystical intuition is incapable of finding truth. The truth they find may be of another type than the scientific, but truth it can remain no less. The knowledge of *what is* cannot be confined to science; even the realm of value is concerned with the discovery of *what is*, for unless we know that our ethical aspirations are supported, however secretly, by the nature of reality we shall have no genuine sanction against selfishness and cruelty and deception. As Einstein realises, the pursuit of scientific truth itself has no justification without our being convinced that reality is such as to make it worth while for the researcher in pure science to tear himself away from immediate practical life and devote himself

to the terrific exertions without which pioneer creation in scientific thought can never come into being. It is not only a "cosmic religious feeling", a sense of an ordering mind within the universe, that inspires a Kepler and a Newton and an Einstein, but also an admitted or unadmitted reliance on the discovery by intuition that reality supports by its nature the ideal of truth. Take away from the non-scientific domain the quest for knowledge of what is and you make the disinterested passion of the pure researcher in science a mighty foolishness. Religion without science is not blind: it is blind merely to scientific truth while being open-eyed to truth of a different order. If this is so, it would be a perfectly legitimate question whether one scientific theory is more favourable than another to religion.

Eddington's citing the example of Darwin's theory of natural selection is most apt. Samuel Butler revolted against Darwinism by shouting: "It banishes mind from the universe." Strictly speaking, he is not right. Darwinism merely stated that evolution proceeds not by an urge in the organism towards a certain way of living but by a series of accidental variations out of which some are accidentally preserved by the fact that they happen to fit in with the environment while the others do not. How can such a theory banish mind from the universe? It just banishes the operation of mind in the evolution of species. To banish mind from the universe can mean either of two things: there is no consciousness present in the world or, if there is, it is totally explicable in physical terms. Darwin points to neither conclusion. But his theory does definitely lessen the importance of consciousness in the world-process. If religion involves stress on the play of consciousness, as it certainly must, the Darwinian theory is anti-religious. If there is an intelligence at the back of the world, we surely do not deny it by saying that it chooses natural selection as the means of evolution; but we cannot overlook the extreme oddness in this intelligence's manifesting itself in a mode which so little stresses the role of consciousness. The unimportance of the role of consciousness strongly suggests, though it does not prove, that there is no intelligence at the back of the world and that soul and freewill and miracle are non-existent. Similarly, a theory in physics may favour materialism or lean towards a mystical world-view: all depends on the implications of the mathematical structure it regards

as final. The terms employed are not abstract symbols as in pure mathematics: they are a symbolic language interrelating, at the end of a long or short process of deduction, actualities of observation and experience. In physics, unless the contrary is proved, every formula of structure can be taken to correspond to a world-reality, and the nature of that reality to be suggested by the manner in which the terms of the formula are combined. We commit no "howler" in inquiring whether relativity theory sheds on world-reality a light in the direction of mysticism.

II

To come to the correct conclusion it is best to make a short survey of the rise and development of Einsteinian physics. Einstein *versus* the ether! That is the form in which the first battle was fought between the new physics and the old. For, the ether was vitally bound up with the problem with which he was occupied: Newton's absolute motion, absolute space and absolute time.

To observe absolute motion we should have a frame of reference absolutely at rest. Otherwise motion would be merely relative—that is, a body[1] to which reference is made when calculating another body's motion may itself be moving but is taken to be at rest for only convenience's sake and so the rate of motion it yields for the other body is not absolute. Thus the sea is moving relatively to the earth which seems to be at rest, but the earth is itself moving round the sun and the sun too is moving relatively to the so-called fixed stars and they in turn are moving relatively to one another. Newton, however, declared that though all bodies are in relative motion the frame of reference that is absolutely at rest is space and that such a frame is necessary for the purposes of physics. He further declared that there is one time flowing uniformly so that at any chosen moment we can say that events are happening everywhere in space simultaneously with it. Indeed, as motion is measured as a certain number of space-units traversed in a certain number of time-units, time as well as space has to be absolute

[1] A "body" in physics does not mean a human body: it is a brief way of designating a frame of reference or a co-ordinate system.

if we are to have absolute motion. But is any experiment possible by which these absolutes can be verified?

Space can hardly prove a frame of reference absolutely at rest if we regard it as empty. Luckily, to explain the phenomenon of light there was invented the undulatory theory. Light was found to behave as if it were a wave. To be a wave was thought to imply something in which the wave could form. A universal substance called ether was postulated to fill all space to permit light's vibratory motion. Having postulated the luminiferous ether, physicists naturally attempted to discover its other properties than that of being vibrated. Certain experiments seemed to show it to be dragged with celestial bodies, like a super-atmosphere, as they moved; many more seemed to show it to be not dragged with such bodies but fixed in space, though capable of internal movements such as light.

Taking it to be some sort of subtle material stuff, composed of particles like all matter, Michelson devised an experiment which has often been repeated. Our earth's atmosphere is dragged with the earth, but for moving objects on the earth it is fixed as a whole, though capable of internal movements. That is why we find an air-drift when we speed through air in a Dakota plane. When we are stationary, there is no air-drift of the same kind. Similarly, if the ether is dragged with the earth, an appropriate stationary apparatus will record no ether-drift. But if it is not dragged and is fixed in space the apparatus will record the drift. By measuring the speed of the ether-drift we should know our own speed through a fixed ether and thus know the earth's motion in reference to something not only at absolute rest but also practically playing the role of space by being all-pervasive. Here was a chance to get at absolute motion and absolute space. Further, by knowing one piece of absolute motion we can translate all known motions into absolute terms. Thus, we can know the absolute speed of light and by making allowance for the time-lag between the moment when light leaves a source and the moment when it reaches us we can know what moment anywhere in space could be considered as simultaneous with the moment at which we receive the light-rays. So absolute time also can be found if we can measure the ether-drift.

Of course, the ether is too subtle to tackle directly. But if light is an ether-phenomenon we can get at the drift by marking light's move-

ment in a particular fashion. Michelson's experiment was meant precisely to do this. In principle it consisted in sending two beams of light from the same source in two directions, one in the direction in which according to astronomical observations the earth was judged to be moving and the other at right angles to this, and then getting them reflected by mirrors fixed at equal distances from the source. The reflection of the beam sent in the direction of the earth's movement would naturally take less time to reach the source than the other reflection, for the earth would be moving forward to meet it and there would be less distance for the beam to travel. The difference in the two times would indicate the speed with which the ether-drift was felt by the moving earth and therefore the rate at which the earth was moving in reference to a fixed ether. The experiment was a masterpiece of delicacy and could have detected even one-hundredth of the extremely minute difference expected; but it failed totally. There was no difference at all. Light coming towards us as we moved towards its source travelled with the same speed as from other sources!

Could it be there was no ether? Michelson, rather than face an etherless physics, concluded that the ether was dragged with the earth and thus counteracted the difference in speeds. But the majority of physicists, relying on astronomical data, would not hear of any dragging. Fitzgerald opined that somehow the rod with which the distances travelled by the two beams on their return journey were measured had contracted when put in the direction of the earth's movement. Lorentz went further and deduced from the then-current laws of electrodynamics that the electrons composing the rod would so readjust themselves in the direction of the rod's movement with the earth that the rod would get short by exactly the amount that would be needed to make the two distances travelled by the returning beams appear equal. According to Lorentz, there was no wonder that the times taken were the same and that light behaved so paradoxically: the null result of the Michelson experiment was due not to the absence of the stationary ether but simply to rod-contraction.

Einstein was the only thinker unsatisfied with Lorentz's idea. He brought three arguments against it. In the first place, if rod-contraction would always exactly hide the speed of anything in reference to a stationary ether, then, whatever other functions the supposed

ether might serve, the function of being a concrete form of Newton's absolute space would never be served by it. A subtly material stationary ether is as good as non-existent for physics, since every measurable quantity it might have yielded is precisely compensated for by a contraction in the measuring rod. Such an ether is a useless hypothesis. In the second place, if we take for reference a body which is moving relatively to another body but which for convenience's sake we regard as being at rest relatively to our own motion, our rod will show exactly the same contraction as we attribute to it in reference to a hypothetically stationary ether. So there is no reason to believe that the rod-contraction conceals from us a stationary ether, an absolute frame of reference. By means of the rod-contraction there is no possibility of distinguishing between an absolute and a relative frame. In the third place, since in all relativities of motion between two bodies the mathematical terms remain the same whether the first body be accounted as moving and the second as at rest or the second as moving and the first as at rest, the rod on either body must be thought of as showing the same contraction. The unchanging mathematical terms imply that from the standpoint of the one body the rod going with it would contract while from the standpoint of the other body the contraction would occur in its own rod. The contraction is a common and mutual feature of relative motion and gives not the least indication as to which of the two bodies is moving in reference to a stationary ether. In the face of this ambiguity, what sense can there be in talking of it as compensating for and hiding any particular quantity of motion which reference to such an ether might yield?

Why then cling to a subtly material ether which must be considered as capable of being a frame of reference at absolute rest? Why even hypothetise that it is dragged and therefore inaccessible as such a frame? Do we require it as a medium for light's vibrations? Clerk Maxwell proved light to be a species of electromagnetism. For several years physicists tried to figure out an electromagnetic wave in terms of waves of air or water or a jelly-like solid; but all attempts failed. Hertz, to some extent, and Lorentz, fully, made it clear that light could not be explained as a vibratory movement carried on from particle to particle as in the case of matter. If light was a wave, it was a wave *sui generis* and could not be understood in terms of oscillating particles,

like all other waves. The medium postulated for light's transmission was left sufficiently immaterial by its being not composed of particles. And if a subtly material ether was unnecessary for even the mathematical description of motion, why not eliminate it?

Einstein eliminated the ether composed of fine particles which had stood for Newton's absolute space. Absolute space, he said, does not exist for physics. If absolute space is non-existent for physics, no absolute motion can be measured. And if absolute motion cannot be measured, how shall we measure absolute time? To know what time it is at a distant place when the clock here shows a certain hour, we must have a message from that place, a signal by light or radio: every message, be it ever so fast, travels at a finite speed and, if we never know the absolute value of any speed, how allow correctly for the time-lag between the starting and the arrival of the message? Hence physics has no means of judging absolute time: a time flowing uniformly in the whole universe cannot figure in our equations. With the impossibility of the ether's serving as a frame of reference at absolute rest, the entire construction of Newtonian physics topples down.

Einstein began a new construction founded on the fact that light's speed is constant, whether we move towards it, away from it or stay where we are. Speed being measured, as we have already said, in terms of certain space-units travelled in certain time-units, Einstein argued that not only rods shorten because of movement but also clocks slow down. This conclusion at once illuminated the equation Lorentz had based on rod-shortening, for in it there had figured a term which could not be identified: now Einstein identified it as a sign of change in time-measurement owing to the slowing down of clocks. He even indicated a method by which the slowing down could be experimentally confirmed in a direct fashion by studying rhythmically vibrating atoms. In 1936, H. Ives of the Bell Telephone Laboratories, New York City, carried out the experiment with positive results. So Einstein has sound experimental backing. And, according to him, both the shortening of rods and the slowing down of clocks are proportional to the rate of movement of one body in relation to another which is itself moving. Readings of space and time made on a moving body are shared by another only if the latter has the same speed. When the

speeds differ, the readings also must differ. As a consequence of relative motion, there is a relativity of space and time.

We have nothing non-materialistic, nothing mystical, so far. But to get to the heart of relativity theory we must fix our attention on one fact pointed out by Einstein and already noted by us: the reversibility of relation when motion is considered relatively. Just as our rod is shortened and our clock slowed down when we are in a certain relation of movement to a body which is itself moving, a rod and a clock on that body would in relation to the body which is our frame of reference undergo exactly the same changes which we observe in our instruments. If the mathematical terms denoting relative speed remain the same, whether we regard one body as at rest and the other as moving or *vice versa*, the question crops up: on which of the two bodies can really the rod be said to shorten and the clock to slow down? Well, if we consider both the bodies together as standpoints, the judgment of Daniel would be that the change really occurs in rod and clock on both. If we adopt one of the two standpoints, the change is real on one of them. If we adopt neither standpoint but some entirely other, a different reality will be registered by our measuring instruments. They give us variants according as we adopt one standpoint or another. To say this is to say that measuring instruments like clocks and rods can never give a reading that would be invariant from all standpoints.

But physics always aims at invariants. The laws of nature must be so formulated that they hold for all standpoints. It is not sufficient to find a "transformation" rule by which we may make the requisite adjustments in calculation as we pass from standpoint to standpoint. We must find a rule for the same reading from every standpoint: then alone can we give a description that is universal and absolute, a calculation of the fundamental quantity that different standpoints differently evaluate. But how are we to get beyond the relativity which Einstein disclosed of all space-measurements and time-measurements?

The mathematician Minkowski showed the way. When the time-measurements are multiplied by themselves—that is, squared—and then subtracted from the square of the space-measurements we get a quantity which is the square of what is universal, absolute, invariant. Distance of space and distance of time alter with the rate of motion,

but as soon as we follow Minkowski's rule we strike upon a distance or interval between two events which is found to be unaltered no matter what the rate at which we move. This rule is somewhat analogous to the one for calculating the distance or interval between two points in three-dimensional space. The latter rule is: Take the three co-ordinates of both the points, x and x_1, y and y_1, z and z_1, and deduct the lesser co-ordinates from the greater and, squaring the result, add up all the squares: the sum gives the square of the distance or interval. Considering x, y and z to be the lesser co-ordinates, we write the equation:

$$D^2=(x_1-x)^2+(y_1-y)^2+(z_1-z)^2.$$

Minkowski's equation introduced a fourth co-ordinate, as it were, which was time and had a minus sign unlike the others:

$$D^2=(x_1-x)^2+(y_1-y)^2+(z_1-z)^2-(t_1-t)^2.$$

Mathematicians, however, cannot be completely at ease with this equation. In the first place, the minus sign is not quite to their liking: it is an irregularity. Minkowski comes to their rescue by saying: "Multiply the minus-signed time-measurements by the square root of minus one and, as every schoolboy knowing mathematics will understand, we reach immediately a plus quantity like all the other dimensional quantities, and the equation becomes:

$$D^2=(x_1-x)^2+(y_1-y)^2+(z_1-z)^2+(t_1-t)^2.$$

Everything is now symmetrical and there is no technical distinction between time and the other variables. It is as if we had, instead of a continuum of three space-dimensions, a continuum of four space-dimensions completely isotropic—that is, similar in all directions—for all measurements; no direction can be picked out in it as fundamentally distinct from any other." But one step more is required to systematise everything for mathematical purposes. In the new equation, as in the old, time-measurements are left in time-units. How can units like seconds be added to or subtracted from units like inches?

We can multiply or divide time-units and space-units by each other: for example, we divide the number of inches a moving object traverses by the number of seconds elapsed and we get the velocity of that object. But every schoolboy knows that it is mathematically inadmissible to subtract seconds from inches or add them. Minkowski again comes to the rescue. He says: "Luckily, in all the measurements concerned in relativity theory the speed of light remains constant. So we can use it as a common denominator. Thus, we can consider one second as equal to the 186,000 miles which light travels during a second. So we substitute for the time-measurements the miles which light would travel. Then we have complete symmetry, and the whole equation is completely as of a space of four indistinguishable dimensions. Further, the new statement of the equation facilitates the employment of the equation and any development that may be possible."

The procedure adopted by Minkowski in the interest of systematisation is often looked upon as vital to the conception of the four-dimensional continuum. This is a capital mistake and is responsible for the notion that the four-dimensional continuum is created by artificialities. It is argued: What can be the justification of the square root of minus one and how can the substituting of miles for seconds give us a time-dimension really like the space-dimension? Well, if Minkowski's systematisation did create the concept, we can look on his two steps as acts of analytic insight discerning and supplying what was missing in the steps by which a necessary concept was to be created. This way of looking is open as an alternative to the view of his steps as being artificialities, though that view is likely to be more stressed. But the alternative is not even called for. There is a fact which modifies the entire complexion of the controversy. The fact is: when Minkowski found that the time-measurement had to be substracted from the space-measurements in a certain manner in order to get the invariant without which physics ceases to be physics, he found space-time to be the unavoidable invariant without needing to flourish in the face of the world his square root of minus one and the miles-equivalent of a second. In Minkowski's original formula which can be accused of waving no such stage-conjuror's wand as the square root of minus one and the miles-equivalent of a second might seem, we have space-time no less than in the new formula, since it actually subtracts time-

terms from space-terms and therefore implies terms that are neither space nor time or are both together and are best described as neutral. Of course, we have not shown why, if space and time are indistinguishable, there should be a subtraction sign: we shall touch on this point later. It is not crucial here: here we are concerned not with the *de jure* indistinguishableness but the *de facto* indistinguishableness which is involved by substracting one quantity from another. To such indistinguishableness Minkowski's seeming artificialities make no odds. We can drop them without jeopardising anything essential. When we realise this, we learn to see them as neither artificialities nor creative acts of analytic insight, they lead not to the creation of the concept but to the schematisation of it so as to make it most amenable to mathematical employment and possible development.

All the same, it must be admitted that the concept would never have emerged clearly without the schematisation. For, thus alone the invariant wanted by Einstein's physics was cast into a proper mathematical mould of four indistinguishable dimensions and brought to a focus. But, when we avoid the impression that it was not implicit in Minkowski's original equation, we must also avoid the impression that Minkowski gave us a four-dimensional *space*. Time is indeed spatialised by the form he put forth as mathematically the best for the four-dimensional continuum and the process begun by physics of reckoning time in space-terms by means of a clock or any other clock-like space-mechanism reaches its apex in a manner undreamt of by the old physicists. But it would be a mistake to think that the four-dimensional continuum is conceived with a space-bias. Of course, a clock stands for time in physics, but after multiplying time-terms by the square root of minus one in order to get a plus sign we can perform the next operation in just the opposite direction: we can reduce space-terms to time-terms by considering 186,000 miles as equivalent to one second. The temporalisation of space instead of the spatialisation of time is equally possible. The point is that somehow space and time should be made indistinguishable dimensions. The four-dimensional continuum, therefore, is best designated space-time or time-space rather than space or time. The dimensions, being equally designable as four of space or four of time, cannot be reckoned in terms either of time or space. The reading made for any event must be taken to be in

units which are neutral. Also, the interval between any two events must be read in neutral units.

The neutral character can be realised, too, from another angle. It was found, mathematically, that to get the invariant interval between two events we had to attend to three conditions. If the space-distance between the events is such that an object can travel from one to the other before light from them can reach an observing standpoint, the interval between them for all standpoints is just what a clock on that object would record as the time taken by the object during its travel. The interval is then to be called "timelike." But if an object cannot travel between two events before light from them reaches a standpoint, the interval is just what a rod on that object would record as the space-distance travelled by the object. The interval is then to be called "spacelike." If the two events are the leaving of a ray of light from a source and the reaching of it at any standpoint the interval is such that both a rod and a clock would record it as zero. For, at the progressive rate at which, during motion, a rod shortens and a clock slows down, the rod would be shortened to nothing and a clock stop completely if they were put on a ray of light which travels 186,000 miles per second. The progression-rate can be understood if, for instance, we look at the increase of mass due to motion: here there is a progressive increase instead of decrease but the essence of the rate is the same. At half the velocity of light the mass of an electron or any object is increased by one-seventh. At nine-tenths the velocity the mass is nearly two and a half times greater, while at ninety-nine-hundredths of the velocity the mass has seven times its value at relative rest. At higher speeds the mass increases with such leaps that at light's velocity it must become, mathematically, infinite. From this we can say that no object can travel as fast as light: light becomes a limiting velocity. We can also say that like the mass-increase the decrease in the size of a rod and in the rhythm of a clock would be, mathematically, infinite. The interval, therefore, in terms of an object carrying a rod and a clock and travelling with light from the event which is light's leaving a source to the event which is light's reaching a measuring instrument is nil, if the interval is to be invariant from all standpoints. To sum up: the interval is in certain cases reckonable as timelike, in others as spacelike and in yet others as no time and no space! Obviously, it must be a neutral unit

and we get clean beyond space-terms and time-terms to terms of space-time or time-space in which the interval cannot be legitimately deemed either space or time. If it can be either in different cases and neither in particular cases, it is something *sui generis*: we can also regard it as a fusion of space and time, in which both are indistinguishable and become a *tertium quid*, a "third something".

The indistinguishableness of space and time is most commonly underlined by also pointing out that from different co-ordinate systems in relative motion at different rates the interval between any two events will be differently split up into time and space. Suppose we take the famous eruption of Krakatoa and the outburst on the star Nova Persei. The interval between these two events may be measured from a coordinate system on the earth as so many years and so many millions of miles. But a system on the Nova will measure it as a different number of years and miles. A third system, neither on the earth nor on the Nova, will have still different readings. And what figures as miles in one measurement will figure as years in another!

We must not conclude, however, from the indistinguishableness and from the fusion, that Minkowski meant to deny the difference between space and time in common human experience by any given individual. In this experience they are indeed inseparable—at least as far as measurements are concerned, no place having been measured except at an instant and no instant having been measured except at a place. But they are felt to be different in spite of their inseparableness. Space has three dimensions, while time has only one, since we can move only from past to present to future as in a straight line. There is also a difference psychologically in the very texture, so to speak, of extension which is space and duration which is time. Even in physics the experimental modes are dissimilar: a clock is indeed a measurement in space-terms, yet it is not at all a mode like the measurement in space-terms which we call a rod. Moreover, when a physicist measures *his own* movement in space-coordinates and a time-coordinate, the two are never interchanged. Relativity leaves all these unlikenesses what they are in common human experience by any given individual of his own history and what they were in the old physics. What is new is, in the first place, the discovery of the way in which with relative motion both time-terms and space-terms vary in measurement.

A variation of a kind had been acknowledged in space-terms in even the old physics. Thus, if a stone falling from a tower to the ground were measured from different standpoints moving at different rates, the space-coordinates would be different. But the difference did not take into account the rod-shortening and it was fitted into a context of absolute space. Also, it did not go hand in hand with any difference in time-measurements. Time was thought to be unvarying and every moving standpoint was thought to give the same measurements of time. Now that both time-terms and space-terms are declared to be radically variant with standpoints, a novelty is introduced, which, when we search for the goal of all physics—the invariant, the uniform, the absolute from all standpoints, the universal reading—necessitates the concept of fused space and time. Therefore what is new is, in the second place, the concept of a four-dimensional continuum in which the dimensions are indistinguishable.

What is the precise import of the concept? And is it merely a mathematical convenience or does it represent a state of reality of which we have no cognisance in common human experience and the old physics had no idea? Is it an utterly revolutionary concept with serious supra-physical consequences?

III

Einstein, in several places, has made pronouncements tending to dissipate the air of mystery which comes with the idea of four-dimensionality. Thus, in collaboration with Infeld, he writes on page 219 of *The Evolution of Physics*: "Four numbers must be used to describe events in nature. Our physical space as conceived through objects and their motion has three dimensions, and positions are characterised by three numbers. The instant of an event is the fourth number. Four definite numbers correspond to every event; a definite event corresponds to any four numbers. Therefore: the world of events forms a four-dimensional continuum. There is nothing mysterious about this, and the last sentence is equally true for classical physics and the relativity theory." On pages 54 and 55 of his book, *Relativity, the Special and the General Theory*, Einstein informs us: "The non-mathematician is seized by a mysterious shuddering when he hears

of 'four-dimensional' things, by a feeling not unlike that awakened by thoughts of the occult. And yet there is no more commonplace statement than that the world in which we live is a four-dimensional continuum....That we have not been accustomed to regard the world as a four-dimensional continuum is due to the fact that in physics before the advent of the theory of relativty, time played a different and more independent role, as compared with the space-coordinates." Again, on page 30 of *The Meaning of Relativity*, Einstein declares: "The conception of something happening was always that of a four-dimensional continuum; but the recognition of this was obscured by the absolute character of the pre-relativity time."

Is not Einstein forgetting that the new role played by time in his theory has converted the old inseparableness of time and space into indistinguishableness? Is he not ignoring the essence of the situation by labelling the old inseparableness as four-dimensionality? To count a continuum's dimensions just by the descriptive numbers required for an event is a loose manner of specification. Space is a three-dimensionality strictly and precisely because its dimensions are indistinguishable in basic character and composed analogously to one another and form one methodical block. If pre-relativity time which is the time of common calculation can only accompany but never fall in step, so to speak, with this methodical block and increase a dimension systematically instead of by a mere tacking-on, can it legitimately be held to constitute, together with space, a four-dimensional continuum? Let us make a brief inquiry into the meaning of the terms involved in this discussion and ascertain how dimensions must be conceived if they are to build up a continuum.

A continuum, of any number of dimensions, is something that is continuous, admitting of no gap anywhere. Mathematically, this is expressed by saying that between any two specified components of it there can be an infinite number of arbitrarily small steps. If the number were finite and the steps not arbitrarily small, there would be no continuity: each step would be distinct and disparate and, instead of a continuity, we should have a mere aggregate. A line is a one-dimensional continuum and it is made up of an infinite number of successive points. A surface is a two-dimensional continuum and

it is made up of an infinite number of successive lines. A volume is a three-dimensional continuum and it is made up of an infinite number of successive surfaces. Thus each continuum is formed by a continuous succession of components of the next lower number of dimensions. And a four-dimensional entity would consist of an infinite number of successive volumes. Suppose we take a brick which is a three-dimensional object, and ask how we are to conceive it as constituting by continuous succession an entity of four dimensions. Just a row of bricks will not do: it will not give us a four-dimensional entity. Moreover, a row is not a continutiy such as we want: between any two bricks we cannot put an infinite number of bricks. Also, no fourth dimension of space is available: the only dimension other than the available three of space is time, the continuum of moments or instants. But if we take time to be the fourth dimension to make a four-dimensional entity the continuous succession of a three-dimensional entity in it must be properly understood. Time must be a genuinely new dimension which was not there for any of the entities of the other dimensions. As a line is strictly one-dimensional, a surface strictly two-dimensional, a volume strictly three-dimensional and none of them has any other dimension than those already specified, an entity having time as its fourth dimension must be something that extends in time in a sense in which none of these entities do. But time, as ordinarily understood, is already there for a line, a surface and a volume: all of them need it in order to be themselves. Simply to continue in time as normally things do is not to have the genuinely new fourth dimension we require. To revert to our brick: a brick existing in time will not thereby become a four-dimensional entity any more than an infinite number of bricks in a row in three dimensions will do so. It will have to exist in the time-dimension in an entirely new way. What the new way must be can at once be grasped by analogy. A line has a co-existence of continuously consecutive points, a surface a co-existence of continuously consecutive lines, a volume a co-existence of continuously consecutive surfaces: similarly, our four-dimensional entity must have volumes co-existing along the time-dimension in a continuous consecutiveness. In other words, all the moments of time in which a brick continues must be co-existent! This is the sole valid sense we can attribute to

time as a continuum adding a fourth dimension not already present for entities made up by the other three.

It is in this sense that time operates in Minkowski's continuum. Evidently, here is much more than is meant by the necessity felt even by the old physics to regard space and time as inseparable though not indistinguishable and to use four numbers in describing an event. Nor have we here what Einstein appears on occasion to suggest in *The Evolution of Physics*: merely a four-dimensional form of the representation known to us in a geometrical graph. The stone falling from a tower, which we have mentioned before, can be geometrically plotted, after it has fallen, as if the time-dimension were also stretched out like a space-dimension and all the moments during the fall were co-existent. There would be a time-axis perpendicular to a one-dimensional space-axis showing the one direction "down", and lines joining different moments on the time-axis to different positions on the space-axis would be time-coordinates and space-coordinates and a line drawn through the joinings of the coordinates would indicate the path of the stone's fall downward through space and time. Indeed, what is done here with two dimensions is implied with four-dimensions in Einstein's concept. But there are two dissimilarities beyond the fact that a four-dimensional representation is not picturable and can be expressed in nothing save mathematical terms, a mathematical and not a graphical geometry. One is that the time-dimension is not concerned with only what has already occurred: it is also concerned with what is occurring and is going to occur, all the moments are co-existent in it. The other is that because of the co-existence of all the moments we cannot equate the graph with things as we ordinarily observe them. The line showing the stone's fall answers to what was observed: the "world-line", as Minkowski called the path of events in his continuum, crosses the present and the future no less than the past and we can answer with it to observed things only by choosing not to conceive it in its total significance. The four-dimensional concept is more than a plotting out of Nature, it plots out that which seems to transcend or underlie Nature, and of which Nature seems a projection within a certain framework. So, all matters considered, Einstein misses the mark when he deprecates the mysterious shuddering and the thoughts of the occult which he finds

in the non-mathematician on hearing what he calls the commonplace statement that the world in which we live is a four-dimensional space-time continuum. There is really nothing commonplace in the statement if the reference is to Minkowski's concept which Einstein accepts as integral to his own theory; and the mathematician, deluded by the ease with which he can abstractly tackle any number of dimensions through his symbols, is likely to overlook the definitely supra-physical suggestion here. To be precise, Einstein's continuum carries the suggestion of what philosophers have conceived as *Totum Simul*, the All-at-once, a state of existence in which the whole past and present and future are a grand simultaneity and all that is in space is not only existent together but each thing is existent in its reality at all moments past, present and future!

This state of existence is deterministic in one sense, for all is already there and cannot be changed, but the determinism is not of the ordinary kind, since in ordinary determinism the present is dictated by the past and the future by the present whereas here there is no sign of any direction and we can with the same justification say that the future dictates the present and the present the past or that the present dictates both the past and the future! In the last alternative we have room for an utter freewill; in the first alternative we have room for an utter fixity of fate; in the middle alternative we have room for—God knows what! Living as we ordinarily do in the present, with the past vanished and the future unrealised, we are permitted by Einstein's concept as much to believe in freewill as to be determinists.

The concept of freewill is a most difficult one to state, for in common statements it looks like asking for something which is unconnected with the past to the degree to which the freedom is granted. Especially scientific thought feels foreign to such a lack of connection, since in it the convention has been to regard the past as leading to the future: most of experimental physics is concerned with expecting results which, however unforeseeable at times, are supposed to follow from antecedents and all theoretical physics is concerned with forming mathematical equations of rigorous interconnectivity. No doubt, indeterminsim is ascribed by many to quantum phenomena, but Einstein is not one of these many: he is an out-and-out

determinist, hoping for a "unified field theory" which would account for all quantum phenomena without the assumption of indeterminism. And he is unable to conceive of freewill. "Honestly I cannot understand," he remarks, "what people mean when they talk of the freedom of the will. I feel that I will to light my pipe and I do it, but how can I connect this up with the idea of freedom? What is behind the act of willing to light the pipe? Another act of willing? Schopenhauer once said: Man can do what he wills, but he cannot will what he wills." Evidently, Einstein implies that if we allowed the statement "I will that I will to light my pipe", we should have to explain the new willing and say "I will that I will that I will": we should have to go on like this without end and that seems meaningless as well as contradictory of our experience. The reasonable thing, in Einstein's opinion, is to postulate, behind every act of willing, a number of events we are not aware of whenever we have the feeling that we are free to will something. In other words, our willing is determined by other events that are themselves determined and we can never significantly be thought free. Einstein's idea is that all happenings hang together without any break and with complete continuity, the whole universe thus hangs together at every instant and its hanging together every instant hangs together with all that precedes and follows every instant. The idea is in consonance with the four-dimensional continuum and the geometrical mode of representing events in all space and all time. But, as we have seen, determinism which makes the future an effect of the present and the present an effect of the past is only one of several conclusions from it, and, philosophically speaking, Einstein's continuum does not negate freewill. All it negates is discontinuity such as quantum physics seems to demand, and Einstein is a determinist essentially in the sense that he is all for continuity: the view that negates freewill and makes the past determinative of everything else is merely a conventional interpretation of the kind of continuity involved in a continuum of four dimensions—a kind which, if established over even quantum phenomena, would not philosophically discomfit freewillists.

Perhaps our knowing only the present and having the past and the future clipped off is a clue to the alternative we should regard as the best of the three offered by the continuum. Instead of saying the future dictates everything or the past dictates everything we may say the

present dictates both the past and the future and holds them actually co-existent in itself. Then the *Totum Simul* would be also a *Nunc Stans*, an ever-standing Now. But it is impossible to equate the ever-standing Now with any space-terms or time-terms or both terms merely combined. A neutral factor is to be posited and this can only be called what traditional language has called Eternity which is also Infinity. Not, of course, an Infinity-Eternity negating space and time: it holds in itself their essence, as it were, and that is why it allows itself to be calculated in space-terms and time-terms combined without being fused.

It is appropriate here to explain that, by being Infinity-Eternity, not only does the neutral factor hold the one essence of both space and time but also contains the *raison d'être* of their difference in common human experience. We must remember that Minkowski's original equation has a minus sign and is not symmetrical. Although implying the indistinguishableness of time and space it does not show the time-coordinate to be utterly like the space-coordinates. So we must conceive space and time as a dual expression of one and the same reality: to use Aurobindonian phrases, space is the reality stretched out for the holding together of objects and time is the reality stretched out for the deployment of a movement carrying objects. The former expresses the Infinity-aspect, the latter the Eternity-aspect. Inasmuch as Infinity and Eternity are different aspects of the one reality, there is in even the invariance or absoluteness of the one reality something answering to the difference between space and time in the world of variants and relativities. This "something" is the ultimate significance of the lack of symmetry with which the fourth dimension enters Minkowski's original equation. Minkowski removed the lack and thereby gave mathematics an easier instrument to use. If he had not done it, Einstein himself would have encountered greater difficulty than he did—though the actual difficulty was great enough—in moving to the second statement of his theory which came many years after the first formulation in 1905. Yet the central discovery of space-time as being in physics not only two elements inseparable but also fused in a literal and unavoidable sense has its most accurate embodiment in the original equation which is a-symmetrical, it is philosophically finer and, without in the least wanting in the radical fusion which Minkowski

embodied more smoothly in the later equation, it makes us understand how the distinction between space and time, the absence of fusion, in spite of their inseparableness becomes possible in common human experience.

One further point about the *Totum Simul* which is Infinity-Eternity. Just as determinism in the ordinary sense is not the single deducible conclusion from the nature of the *Totum Simul*, so also it is illegitimate to deduce only the conclusion that the *Totum Simul* is static. We can equally deduce the conclusion that in the *Totum Simul* everything everywhere is happening together, as that everything everywhere has happened together. If we use the words "has happened" we are thinking in terms of the past. But the *Totum Simul* has no partiality for the past. It can be described by us in terms of the present and when we think of the present we cannot help thinking of "happening"—that is, of dynamism and not stasis. Again, it can be described in terms of the future and then we can legitimately say that in it everything everywhere will happen together. To designate it static is insufficient or, rather, irrelevant. Here, as in the case of determinism and freewill, our knowing directly only the present may be regarded as favouring the alternative of "happening". But, accurately speaking, we should not equate this "happening" with any term pertaining to time and space separately or merely combined. A neutral factor has to come in—an Eternity which is also Infinity—and it does not negate either stasis or dynamism but holds the essence of either while transcending both, just as it does with regard to determinism and freewill.

Evidently, the *Totum Simul* carries us far beyond the usual materialistic view of the world. A materialist may argue that so long as Einstein's continuum is not thought of as a consciousness it does not non-materialise anything even if it is a reality and no mere convenient device. But it certainly mixes up things a great deal and will not permit any of the old materialistic dogmas to hold unchallenged sway. As we saw, it leaves, for one thing, a loop-hole as much for the validity of human freewill as for that of determinism. And once we grant this validity we bring in a host of others which would shatter materialism to bits. So where is any security for the materialist? He may protest that there is no security for the non-materialist either. But that is surely to confess that fundamental issues go into the melting-pot as

soon as we warm up to relativity theory. And when a large look is taken at the riddle of the universe, even the most rabid materialist must grant that the *Totum Simul* is more in tune with the concept of God than with the concept of a universe having no consciousness at its back and bearing a soulless insignificant humanity on its blind breast. Mystical experience gives the closest description possible of a God, who, besides being many other wonders, is a *Totum Simul.* And if the *Totum Simul* is a reality and no convenient device for calculation, mystical experience seems more to be trusted than anything else. The poor materialist is in for a severe headache once he concedes the reality of Einstein's continuum.

Has he any ground for not conceding it? We have now to find an answer. Let us ask what would be meant by calling this continuum a mere convenient device. We have seen that no charge of artificiality can be levelled against the concept of it as put forth by Minkowski. Perhaps it will be urged: "Time in physics is measured by a clock or some clocklike mechanism which gives space-quantities and no genuine time at all. If such artificialised time is shown to be fused with space, we have only a convenient device." But, Mr. Convenient-Devicer, are you not forgetting that time, even in the old physics, was measured in space-quantities by a clock? Nobody ever maintained that in the old physics space and time helped materialism just because time was measured in space-quantities. To think spatially of time through a clock was more than irrelevant to the issue of materialism, for everybody was saying that though time was measured spatially by a clock it could never be fused with space and any suggestion of a fusion would have occasioned a doubt about materialism. So, if the fusion has to take place, the clock-measurement of time cannot logically be pressed against the fusion having a significance which is non-materialistic.

Is there any other argument left? Well, the very idea of looking for an argument becomes ridiculous if we but analyse the phrase "convenient device." There are many convenient devices in physics. Have they any resemblance to the fusion of space and time? If the fusion is a convenient device, it is one on which hangs the whole status of physics as a science. If physics cannot reach the invariant, uniform, absolute, universal description of phenomena, it cannot satisfactorily

move forward. There is unavoidable and basic necessity here. To compare the fusion of space and time to any mathematical quantities created for convenience is to fail to mark this necessity; none resembles it in being unavoidable for the very basis of physics. They are also dissimilar in never involving the literal fusion of any two terms combined. Take the concept of "light-year." Two entirely different ideas are joined to render easy the indication of astronomical distances. Instead of running into inordinately long series of integers to indicate how distant a star or nebula is, we adopt the device of employing as a unit the number of miles traversed in a year by light travelling at the rate of 186,000 miles per second. The light-year is no necessity: it is an arbitrary combination, we can do without it altogether and nothing in physics will suffer: it may be called also a figurative fusion and not a literal one, since in no sense are light and a year to be taken as indistinguishable. The light-year is not in the least comparable to space-time: it falls into another category.

Now look at a quantity like momentum or horse-power. We multiply mass and velocity to give momentum, divide energy by time to give horse-power. Is space-time like these quantities? Hardly. They may not be dispensable conveniences like the light-year; they may be necessary to physics but even they are necessary only for getting variants. Like mass and velocity themselves, momentum is always a variant; like energy and time themselves, horse-power is always a variant. They change as the standpoint changes. Space-time is an invariant. The two necessities are not on the same footing. Besides, when we construct momentum or horse-power, there is no implication that mass and velocity are indistinguishable, or energy and time are indistinguishable. The implication would come only if one is added to or substracted from the other. It is only addition or subtraction that, according to mathematics, shows the essential sameness of terms.

Perhaps the sole concept that gets nearest to the fusion of space and time is the interchangeability of mass and energy—a conclusion drawn by Einstein himself from his own theory of relativity. We shall not explain this concept at the moment, but it has two characteristics relevant to the discussion in hand. First, the interchangeability implies a genuine oneness, so much so that we can actually convert mass into

energy and energy into mass. There is no question of a device here. Second, the genuine oneness is still on the level of the variant. Space-time is on the level of the invariant. It is, thereby, a deeper necessity for physics and, in any case, it is not shown to be a device. So to call it a mere device adopted for convenience is to institute everywhere incongruent comparisons. It cannot be likened to any other combination or fusion effected by physics of two different kinds of terms. In short, no meaning attaches to the labelling of it as a convenient device!

And if there are any difficulties or oddities to be tackled in connection with space-time, we must do our best to avoid sliding into a view which tends to bring in that blessed label: we must watch out for an alternative. Thus, there are what are called "lumber" equations. Relativity mathematics grinds out equations that seem to have no equivalents in perception, nothing we can verify by experimental observation. How are we to avoid the dangerous sliding and still explain their presence? Perfectly easy, my dear Watson! We have only to fall into the arms of Eddington and agree with him to regard the "lumber" equations as the mathematical symbols of unperceived properties of something objective. To Eddington, even perceived properties of the world are subjective in the Kantian sense that they are imposed on an unknown objective reality by the constitution of one's mind. But the rightness or wrongness of this point is not of importance here: what is of importance is that all the mathematical symbols grinded out by relativity correspond, in the ordinary sense, to objective properties: some of these properties are perceived, some unperceived. The unperceived are shadowed in the "lumber" equations.

Once we interpret thus the "lumber" equations, we get a new "slant" on the fact that no experimental observation has found anything to contradict them. They may not be confirmed, but why are they not contradicted? Some equations of Einstein's are marvellously confirmed, some are not, but none are contradicted. Is this not curious? One single contradiction would disprove his theory. Einstein, being no epistemological physicist like Eddington, does not dare to say that no contradiction will ever appear. But it is a tremendous tribute to his theory that the last forty years and more have not

disclosed anything to throw doubt on its essential correctenss within the domain of macrophysics. With all objections out of the way, this tribute gains the colour of an argument that "caps, crowns and clinches all."

To sum up: nothing disproves the actuality of the four dimensional continuum whose concept seems so much a mathematical formulation of the mystic's vision.

IV

When we go from the special or restricted theory of relativity propounded in 1905 to the general theory developed in 1915 after years of intense concentration on several possibilities, the implication of a supra-physical reality becomes acuter.

The special theory proved Newton's invariants to be no invariants for physics, but it did not cover all the problems Newton had dealt with. The chief problem it kept aside was "acceleration." Newton had divided motion into two parts: one was uniform, the other was accelerated. Accelerated motion meant change in the rate of speed or in the direction of speed. There was one factor which was thought by Newton to induce on the widest and most general scale acceleration both in rate and direction. This factor he called gravitation and enunciated a law for it. The law extended to a vast range of phenomena, but at certain points it broke down. Its failure as well as the invalidity shown by Einstein of Newtonian invariants in physics made it impossible of acceptance. An alternative was badly required and to search for it became the master-passion of Einstein, particularly as, in the first place, gravitation involved both types of accelerated motion which still remained outside the relativistic scheme and, in the second place, gravitation involved peculiarities marking it out from any other force—namely, that heating or cooling a body, difference of chemical constitution and the interposing of a screen have no effect in the least on gravitational attraction, and the attraction is across a distance without any medium seeming to convey it.

Broadly speaking, the problem was to explain how the planets of the solar system remain moving in their elliptical paths round the sun and how at certain arcs of their paths they move faster. Newton

said that all objects have an attractive force and an enormous object like the sun must draw towards itself smaller ones like the planets. The sun, according to Newton, would bring all the planets crashing into it, were it not that they were in motion and this motion acted so as to make them fly away from the sun but was not strong enough to free them from the sun's gravitation and, as the result of balance of forces, could only set them moving round it in elliptical paths. On analysis, we see that Newton's picture is systematic only if we grant one thing: an object in motion tends to follow a straight path in space unless disturbed by another object, either through impact or through gravitation. If we do not grant this, there is no compulsion to believe that the planets are held in elliptical paths by the sun's gravitation, thus being prevented from moving straight away into outer space. Gravitation as a force directly acting on objects is not a necessary concept without the concept of the straight path as the most natural for motion. The change in speed, on the other hand, can be ascribed to gravitation only if we grant that an object tends to move not only straight but also at a uniform rate. Einstein, therefore,—when faced with the question: How are the facts ascribed to gravitation to be accounted for, so as to need none of Newton's absolutes nor his law, which had been found faulty, of a force of gravitation?—decided to throw doubt on the concept that straight uniform motion is the natural one for bodies.

In this he was helped by Minkowski's equation of a continuum of four symmetrical and isotropic dimensions. For, Minkowski had formulated a geometry of the continuum symbolised by his equation. Geometry, we may remark, is essentially an abstract science and the mathematician does not bother what meaning in terms of common human experience is to be attached to the dimensions he symbolises. On the analogy of a geometry of three dimensions such as worked out by Euclid the mathematical geometrician can build up many self-consistent systems. Whether a system applies to the conditions of common human experience is an issue to be tested by instrumental observation. In the nineteenth century, mathematical geometricians like Gauss, Lobatschewsky, Bolyai and Riemann built up strange systems different from Euclid's. They admitted that if Euclid's initial axioms and postulates were right all his propositions

logically followed. But they refused to admit that his axioms and postulates were self-evident as truths. Neither would they admit that Euclid had been completely borne out by instrumental observation. Riemann emphasised in particular the fact that a triangle drawn on a curved surface does not have the sum of its angles equal to two right angles, nor the ratio of the circumference of a circle to the diameter equal to π, the well-known Ludolph number 3·14159265... And just as Euclid had extended to three-dimensional space the geometry of a flat surface, Riemann dared to extend the geometry of a curved surface to three-dimensional space. He posed the query: "Why should geometrical figures in space not exhibit properties as do geometrical figures on the curved surface of a sphere?"

His query remained academic because nothing was found to contradict Euclid directly. There was the indirect contradiction in the faultiness of Newton's law of gravitation in small isolated cases; for, the law assumed space to be Euclidean, with the straight line as the shortest and therefore most natural path for an object in motion to pursue. But everything else was overwhelmingly on Euclid's side. When the special theory of relativity dethroned Newton's absolutes and, with them, his law of gravitation, it became possible to think of space non-Euclideanly. But not till Minkowski's genius came to the aid of Einstein's was the possibility taken advantage of. Minkowski rendered it easy to tackle the mathematics of Einstein's continuum and thus tackle also the riddle whether the world of common human experience, the world of space and time which this continuum was meant to correlate by means of invariants, was Euclidean or no.

Minkowski's own answer, in effect, was: "When you have the geometry of a continuum which is as much time as space, Euclidean geometry which is exclusively of space cannot be wholly valid. Take a triangle ABC. In terms of space, if you measure with a scale from A to B and B to C, the sum of your readings will be greater than the reading obtained from A to C. Two sides of a triangle are greater than the third. But if you take three events A, B and C and measure with a clock the time which would be taken in moving from A to B and B to C, there crops up a condition which is unique. To measure with a scale from A to B, the scale must lie so as to touch A with one end and B with the other: the scale has to be present at both A and B.

Similarly, the clock has to be present at A as well as B. This means that when the events A and B happen, the clock must run with such speed as to be present at both the events. Now, speed affects the rhythm of a clock: the faster a clock moves across space the slower its rhythm. So, if the distances from A to B and B to C are very great, while that from A to C is small, the clock in running along the two greater distances will go much slower than in running along the one shorter distance. The sum of the readings of the two sides of a triangle formed by three events will be less in this instance than the reading of the third side. Euclid's geometrical rules will not universally hold. The geometry of space-time is not quite Euclidean: it is semi-Euclidean."

The suggestion that a geometry other than Euclid's could be actually applicable to the invariant reality whose variants are observed by means of scientific apparatus fell like a most fruitful seed into Einstein's mind. Could gravitation be accounted for in terms of the geometrical structure of space-time? In answering that it might be thus accountable Einstein was aided considerably by his realising more and more that gravitational effects could not be distinguished from other phenomena of acceleration. For instance, when a lift starts to rise, the occupants feel all the effects of a sudden though temporary increase of weight. Indeed a mass hung from a spring-balance would weigh heavier till the upward speed of the lift becomes uniform. Further, it is not logical to say that when an object is falling freely through space it gives rise to the phenomenon of weight which we attribute to gravitation: only when it is prevented from falling by a weighing machine placed under it the phenomenon of weight is shown. Weight therefore may be regarded as due to upward acceleration impressed on the object by the bombardment of the molecules of the piece of the weighing machine upon which it drops. Again, a motor cyclist riding on a circle and trying to keep at a uniform speed will feel that the constant bending of his movement, the constant change of direction he has to maintain, acts as if he were drawn towards the centre of the circle. This draw would make him fall inside the circle unless, to avoid the slant induced, he inclined his machine to the vertical. Finally, the mass of a body as measured by the amount of resistance to another body colliding with it or dragging it and thus being liable to produce

non-gravitational acceleration is exactly equal to the mass as measured by the amount of attraction between them according to Newton's law. In all these instances are such effects as are attributed to gravitation.

Instead of stipulating a gravitational force acting directly from body upon body across a distance, why not formulate laws embracing all phenomena of motion both uniform and accelerated? The only conceivable laws which would not exclude gravitational phenomena would be of some change worked upon whatever is between bodies, some change guiding the less massive body into the accelerated motion which imitates or is equivalent to the assumed effects of a direct gravitational force. In other words, what is between the two bodies should be so affected around the massive one as to induce the acceleration of the less massive. Gravitational force as such will not be denied, but it will not be a force of the Newtonian kind: a body will involve a certain structuring of what is between bodies and this structuring will make the less massive behave towards the more massive as if pulled in its direction at a constantly increasing rate.

Now, what is between bodies is, in ordinary computation, either empty space or some medium filling space. There is no air in the outer expanses of space where gravitation still acts. The luminiferous ether, even if it exists, has never been found competent to explain gravitation. But electromagnetism itself, of which light is a phenomenon, is proved impossible to interpret in terms of an ether composed of particles—that is, a subtle material ether which can serve also as a static frame of reference for absolute motion. Einstein opened Lorentz's eyes to the mathematical superfluity of postulating a static frame. So a subtle material ether cannot be thought even to exist. Empty space is all that remains—unless we introduce a new concept.

But before we introduce a new concept we must recollect that there can be no concept without a background of space-time. Acceleration, like all quantities, is relative: from different coordinate systems different readings would be obtained. The laws of motion both uniform and accelerated which would cover gravitational phenomena as well as others and which would operate through a structure of what is between bodies must arise from a four-dimensional continuum of fused space and time. The symmetrical and isotropic equation of Minkowski, involving a semi-Euclidean geometry, turned Einstein's

attention to the many systems of non-Euclidean geometry of symmetrical and isotropic dimensions built in the near past. Riemann's extension of the geometry of curved surfaces to three dimensions struck him as the most promising. He extended the geometry to four dimensions and took the simplest formula for what would be an unobstructed body's natural path in them. The natural path of an unobstructed body on a flat surface is the straight line between two points: it is the shortest path. On a curved surface it is the shortest curve. The shortest distance or interval is called the geodesic. Einstein found the formula for the geodesic in a four-dimensional continuum and, translating it into terms of separate space and time, compared the result with gravitational observations. Eureka! The problem was solved. As Whetham puts it on page 255 of *The Recent Development of Physical Science*, Einstein's geodesic of space-time is found to bend in space towards a mass of matter and, in time, to move faster the nearer it passes to the mass—precisely like the path of a planet swinging round the sun.

Einstein then connected the amount of mass with the character of the geodesic. Geodesics are different according as the amounts of mass present. If the masses are not disproportionate the geodesic describes in space the natural motion of a body as Newton conceived it. If they are disproportionate, the natural motion in space would not be a straight line but a curve. The curve is not due to a pull of gravitation directly from body upon body: it is due simply to the structure of space when disproportionate masses are present in space-time: space is as if non-Euclidean or Riemannian in the neighbourhood of bodies—not flat but curved.

With the help of his Riemannian geometry Einstein found he could explain all the facts of gravitation Newton had explained as well as one important fact which the Newtonian theory had not explained —the erratic behaviour of the planet Mercury in certain sections of its elliptical path. On top of this, he offered beforehand the calculations which would be obtained if two crucial experiments were carried out. One concerned the passing of the rays of stars through the sun's neighbourhood and the other the rate of vibration of atoms in the sun. The study of the star-rays was made by several astronomical expeditions during two eclipses of the sun when alone the rays could be distinctly

measured. Einstein had predicted the curved continuum would deflect the rays to such and such an amount: his prediction was completely confirmed as against that which the Newtonian theory allowed. The measuring of the vibration-rate of the sun's atoms proved very difficult but the results were regarded as a satisfactory approximation to what Einstein had foretold. Hence the curved four-dimensional continuum was accepted as scientifically proved.

Not only gravitational phenomena but all other motions become natural deductions from the formula connecting the character of geodesics in space-time with the amount of mass present. An immense simplification is achieved: a vast correlation is made. But we seem to be confronted with a puzzle in the idea of curved space and also of the curved space-time that results in space-curvature. The puzzle, however, is verbal. We mean by curved space nothing more puzzling than what we mean by flat space. How do we conceive space, which is not a surface, to be flat like a surface? What is the sense in calling space Euclidean? All we can mean is simply that, just as on a flat surface, the shortest line is the straight line between two points, the shortest line between two points in space is straight. On the basis of this we deduce a whole geometry of how bodies behave in space: a triangle in space would have the sum of its three angles equal to two right angles. Similarly, by non-Euclidean or Riemannian or curved space we simply mean that the shortest line is a curve. And in the geometry of curved space a triangle would not be found to be as on a flat surface. In no other sense is space-curvature to be understood. That is to say, it must not be understood literally any more than space-flatness. When forms existing in three dimensions are measured, they exhibit certain geometrical charecteristics. It is these geometrical characteristics that we meet with our instruments when we meet curvature.

In specifying these characteristics Einstein's theory of gravitation specifies mathematically the phenomena of gravitation. But this is not the end of the story. The characteristics come about because of something happening between bodies. When we think of something happening between bodies so that they exhibit non-Euclidean characteristics we bring in again the notion of some kind of force. The characteristics describe a "potential" or "stress" or "strain" in what is between bodies. If what is between is empty space, there can be no stress mani-

festing itself in the Riemannian behaviour of bodies: empty space cannot get structured so as to guide bodies into Riemannian behaviour. On Einstein's theory of gravitation space becomes "substantial" without being composed of particles or having any qualities which would lead us to deem it subtle matter like the old ether or would make it serve as a frame of reference for motion. Inasmuch as it is "substantial" and not void, it is legitimate to bring in the term "ether" again: only, this ether does not fill space but is itself identical with space!

In the sense that it is not empty Einstein calls this ether-space physical. Physicality, however, is here Pickwickian: it is devoid of all that can properly be called physical unless we can speak of physical emptiness. Emptiness is itself a disconcerting concept, but becomes physicalised when we fill it with an all-pervading ether which is subtle matter. Take away such an ether, and what is left? Surely not something which we can clearly identify as "vital" or "mental" or "spiritual", yet something so non-material, non-physical and still substantial as to look like the most natural emanation, as it were, of a conscious omnipresent Being in terms of a stretching out of itself for the holding together of objects that are physical and material.

So much for Einstein's space. What about his time? If ultimately time and space are fused, it is impossible to regard time as an emptiness either. No empty space, no empty time. A time-ether, non-physical, non-material and still substantial, has to be conceived—the most natural emanation, as it were, of a conscious omnipresent Being in terms of a stretching out of itself for the deployment of a movement carrying physical and material objects.

When we take the space-ether and the time-ether in fusion, we have as a result of the curvature-concept a space-time explicitly substantialised. All the more it becomes no fiction, no convenient device but a reality existing in its own rights. And there is now yet another helpful feature which emerges on our asking: Are the material masses, which lie at the centre of the curvature-pattern and whose amounts bear a fixed ratio to the pattern, the cause of this pattern or themselves a peculiar manifestation of it? On the mere strength of the general theory we cannot give an entirely decisive answer, but important indications are against their being the cause. The fundamental quantity termed interval of space-time yields a number of mathematical expres-

sions which call for comparison with mathematical expressions concerning what physics names matter. Matter, for instance, is conserved. It is curious that precisely an expression for conservation is derived also from the quantity named interval. But what is here derived refers to some property of space-time—a specific kind of curvature. We may, therefore, submit that where there is this curvature there is, in another language of mathematical equations, conserved matter. Several other observations we associate with matter are similarly matched. The physical quantities we know as density, velocity, internal stresses etc. obey certain mathematical relations. Now, some equations got by analysis from the interval happen to have exactly the same number of components as matter, and these components are put together in exactly the same way. The query, as stated by Sullivan, inevitably occurs: "May we not affirm that these components which express features of the space-time continuum are identical with density, stress and the like?" That is to say, what we usually name matter may be what space-time holds as curvature of a certain sort. The curved four-dimensional continuum appears to be the original reality and matter its manifestation.

What relation matter has with space and time as we normally know them we need not here consider. It is sufficient for our purpose to have shown how the general theory of relativity drives home more vividly than the special theory a reality which, to say the least, renders materialism utterly inadequate and, to say the most, suggests a spiritual substance of *Totum Simul* variously manifesting itself.

A question, however, which we must tackle is raised by the concept of curvature *vis-à-vis* our description of the four-dimensional continuum as Eternity-Infinity. An ever-new endlessness of time is not doubted by science, but there is the phrase current in Einsteinian physics: "boundless yet finite space." Some years ago, the astronomer Edwin Hubble calculated that on the average the distribution of masses in the universe known to the telescope is .00000000000000000000000000000001 gramme per cubic centimetre. According to Einstein's equations of the relation between masses and curvature, Hubble's figure involves a small uniform curvature of all space over and above the non-uniform curvatures involved by the different masses. Thus space becomes a hypersphere, finite yet unbounded in three dimensions in a way analogous to that in which the two-dimensional surface of

a sphere is limited in area yet allows endless repetitive movement over it. Hence curved space-time, it may be argued, cannot be an infinity, and infinity is negated by science and a barrier set up against mysticism which talks of an infinite Being.

Two answers may easily spring to the mind. We may argue that all concepts of curvature call for room in which the curving can take place: beyond the hypersphere there must be space to accommodate it, just as the curving of the two-dimensional surface is accommodated by a third dimension. Or we may argue: "Let us be clear about the terms we use. Curved space means that there is no straight line except as a short-distance illusion and consequently the universe is 're-entrant' in space. If one could ferry oneself across space and survive for an enormous number of years and always continue along what one would believe to be a straight line, one would at length arrive somewhere near one's starting point. Nothing can escape the 're-entrance'. But surely here is just the fact that there are geometrical limits to our exploration of space. Boundless yet finite space implies this fact: it does not imply the negation of space-infinity by science."

Unfortunately, neither argument is cogent. The first is built on a double error. To begin with: a two-dimensional surface has room to curve in because it curves in space which has three dimensions; but a hypersphere has itself three dimensions and if it curves in anything it would be in a fourth dimension, but a fourth dimension of—what? The hypersphere, being three-dimensional, exhausts all the dimensions of what we call space; so, what it might curve in cannot be space! By the analogy of a two-dimensional surface we do not get the space-infinity that is denied. Furthermore, in geometrical physics the term "curvature" has no reference to room to curve in. Surface-geometry in physics, though having a background of actual flatness or curvature, is essentially concerned only with the behaviour of measuring-rods and the properties deducible from various arrangements of them: it abstracts the rods, as it were, from the surface on which they are laid and omits reference to the surface's actual shape. A reference to it would stop all extension of geometry from a surface to space which is evidently not a surface; and the reference is technically avoided by the device of calling a surface itself a space. Thus a curved surface is called a two-dimensional space with a curvature

measured in terms of arrangements constituted by rods. The question of curved shape within room to accommodate it is ignored and rendered irrelevant from the beginning: the physical presence of the measuring rods is the sole connecting link between two dimensions and three: unless this were so, the concepts of surface-geometry could never be adapted to three dimensions or more. If there is known to be room to curve in, we accept it but scientifically no such room is considered in our concepts and when we speak of a hypersphere we confine ourselves to the behaviour of measuring rods and never bring in a hypothetical room in which it can be hyperspherical. We have to hold on to relations which exist *within* the space we speak of and drop reference to anything external to it.

The answer to the second argument—and this could apply also to the first—is quite short: "Since in very principle we can never observe what may lie beyond our 're-entrant' space and since under no conceivable circumstances can anything beyond it figure in our equations any theory assuming such a beyond is superfluous in science and science can supply no basis to any philosophy erected on such a theory."

We have to look for other arguments if we are to talk of infinity of extension on scientific grounds. Only one argument is possible. It is admitted by all that, according to its very nature, Einstein's finite though boundless hypersphere cannot be stable: it must either contract or expand and the current astronomical interpretation of the red-shift in the spectrum of nebulae as a sign of their recession tends to show that the hypersphere is expanding. Eddington computes that the present circumference of the universe is between 6,000 and 60,000 million light-years but that the size of the universe is doubled about every 1,300 million years. A curious point is that it is not the masses of matter that are expanding but the space between them: if these masses expanded together with the space there would be no means of measuring any expansion. But an expanding universe, however "re-entrant", involves the concept of more and more space not merely in the sense of boundlessness through which we may move over and over again as on the surface of a sphere: it is analogous to a growing larger of the very surface! And though at each stage of the expansion the amount of space remains finite, it is a greater finite each time and what we have is *extra* and *new* space. The extra and new space definitely involves a beyond of

space to each amount of finiteness. The hypersphere could not have this extra and new space if none were available beyond the geometrical limits of our exploration at each stage. And once we admit this availability constantly coming into our observation we break through the concept of the finite and though we do not directly have the infinite we have it indirectly in the constantly realised possibility of the hypersphere's expansion. Hence physics with its curvature does not shut the door against the infinity of the four-dimensional continuum but points in its direction, and the boundlessly finite space that is expanding can be taken to correspond to a certain diminishing delimitation within the limitless Spirit—a selective play, as it were, of the original reality so that a particular range of possibilities is actualised with a wider and wider scope. There is nothing here against the infinite Being of whom mysticism talks.

Even if there were anything, we should do well to remember that while non-uniform curvatures connected with different masses are accepted by science as proved, Hubble's estimate has no finality and the small uniform bending of all space is only a rather plausible speculation. Convincing proof is wanting—and it can come only if the light of a distant object in the sky, sent out in all directions, reaches us not only from the front of it but also from behind it by getting curved in the long run and arriving on earth by the opposite route! General space-curvature should enable us to see a remote nebula twice—in a front-view and a back-view in parts of the sky exactly opposite to each other. Unless the new 200 inch telescope recently set up at Mount Palomar gives us the two views the hypersphere offered us will not pass from plausibility to certainty and infinite space will not be disproved. Astronomers have little hope of getting these views. Of course, the failure may be due to the radius of overall general curvature being too great; but it may just as well be due to utter lack of such curvature.

V

Two topics remain now to be dealt with in order that we may have a complete picture of the mystical implications of relativity. One is the equivalence of mass (or what is commonly called matter) and energy, about which we have already spoken *en passant*.

Before Einstein came on the scene of physics, the atom of matter which had been supposed to be the ultimate constituent of things had already been broken up and found to consist of electrons and protons. Today we know of many other particles—neutron, positron, meson. But to approach Einstein's concept of equivalence of mass and energy we need consider only the electron, the particle of negative electricity. The electron in very rapid motion had been observed to increase in mass while ordinary matter in all the motions that had been observed never disclosed any increase. Of course, one could have said that ordinary matter had never been observed moving so fast as the electron. But here it was pointed out that Maxwell had established certain equations of electromagnetism, which described the behaviour of electric energy. From these equations we could deduce that if the electron was a concentration of electric energy it would show exactly the increase of mass that it did. Since the atom of matter was electrically neutral, ordinary matter was supposed not to increase in mass with motion.

Einstein broke down this distinction. There are several ways of indicating how he did it. We may choose a few simple ones. As change of velocity of any kind brings about a change in our measurements of the space-quantity of length and the time-quantity of duration, whatever is associated with velocity must undergo a change as measured by our instruments: mass, therefore, of all bodies and not simply that of an electron can never remain constant. Again, motion being relative, we can reverse the relation of movement and quite legitimately regard our frame of reference as moving and the electron as at rest, instead of doing the opposite as at present. So, not the electron only but our own co-ordinate system from which we observe it, can be said to increase in mass: from the electron's point of view it is our co-ordinate system that is whizzing past at 100,000 miles per second and getting its mass increased! Electrical properties have thus no monopoly of conducing to increase of mass. Finally, when we consider the rate at which with increase of motion rods shorten and clocks slow down we observe that the progression of shortening and slowing down is such that at light's speed—represented in physics by the letter c—rods would shorten to absolute nothingness and clocks stop dead. This shows that nothing can exceed the speed of light. With this conclusion before us, we can reason in the following manner: "When motion increases, momentum

increases with it. Momentum is mass multiplied by velocity, but if a body were to move at c, the momentum would not increase by an increase in velocity, since c cannot be exceeded. So what would be affected and change is the mass. The extra momentum would be as if a body with more mass were moving at velocity c. This means that, since there would always be an impossibility for the motion of a body to increase so as to reach c, there would be with every increase of momentum a certain increase of mass resulting from the thwarted development in motion." The increase mathematically calculated by Einstein from several angles happened to be exactly the same as had been experimentally observed in the electron before the reativity theory was formulated. It was proved all-round that the electron's increase in mass is not due to any electrical properties and that it was observed merely because its speed is sufficiently large to make the increase perceptible and that all bodies whatever have the mass-increase though their small speeds prevent it from being perceived.

Nor was the universality of mass-increase with motion the sole revolutionary concept introduced by Einstein in this context. Still more revolutionary was the new concept of energy in general, which implied that we could consider matter itself and all particles constituting matter as a state of energy. How the concept was arrived at can be grasped if we examine the rate at which the mass of a body increases with motion. The rate, as we have already noticed, is such that if motion reached light's speed the mass would become infinite. This, meaning as it does that motion can never reach c, means too that as motion increases we find it more and more difficult to increase it further. According to Newtonian physics, the speed of matter makes no difference to the amount of force wanted to increase the speed: a certain amount of matter needs the same force to increase speed from 10 miles per hour to 11 miles as to increase speed from 100 miles to 101, and this force depends exclusively on the amount of matter. Now, if motion, the faster it becomes, is found to resist increase more and more, it acquires the property usually attributed to matter—resistance to whatever acts upon it—the property which makes a greater amount of matter resist more than a smaller does. This property is inertia, involving mass and weight. Now, motion is a form of energy: as a body moves, it acquires what is named kinetic energy. Kinetic energy, therefore,

behaves like matter. Nor is this all. The increase of mass the material body gets by motion is exactly the increase of mass the kinetic energy exhibits. The two masses are one and the same—we can look upon the extra mass as either the kinetic energy's or the material body's. Hence the kinetic energy and the material body must be the same kind of entity. But kinetic energy is only one form of energy: it can be converted into other forms—chemical, electric, radiant. It is the conversion of one sort of energy into another that leads to the law of conservation of energy: the amount of energy remains constant throughout the conversions. So all energy must be deemed the same kind of entity as a material body. And if it is the same kind, all energy and all matter must be interconvertible. In that case, how can the law of conservation of energy be kept apart from the law of conservation of matter which tells us that matter remains constant in amount throughout its conversions? The two laws get merged into one law based on the interconvertibleness of matter and energy. And through calculation of the amount of energy which leads to the increase of mass the law can be made to tell us that a very small amount of matter represents a very great amount of energy—in fact, the amount of energy into which matter can be converted is 34,596,000,000 times the amount of matter.[1]

Here the question becomes pertinent: If matter and energy are interconvertible, is matter proved to be energy or energy proved to be matter? In physics, energy used to be defined as matter's capacity for doing work. The capacity was considered a property of matter and matter the more fundamental reality. Now it is shown that the capacity itself possesses the essential property of matter: inertia, mass, weight. If energy is a property of matter, it cannot itself possess a materiality of its own and bring extra inertia, mass, weight to matter whose property it is! This argument is irrefutable and final. Energy, therefore, cannot any more be regarded as a property of matter. Can we say that it has itself become a state of matter because it exhibits inertia, mass, weight? How can we? It exhibits something else, too—namely, work-capacity: otherwise it would not be energy. Can we then say that matter has

[1] It is Einstein's new law of conservation and his calculation of the energy-amount to which matter is convertible that formed the basis of the research whose result was the atom bomb.

become a state of energy? Well, matter must be thought of as exhibiting inertia, mass, weight differently than energy does. The difference lies evidently in the work-capacity exhibited with inertia, mass, weight by energy. In matter there is no work-capacity shown. But, since matter and energy are interconvertible because of the common property of inertia, mass, weight, the work-capacity must be looked upon as what is hidden in matter and brought out in energy. To be more accurate: when a certain quantity of inertia, mass, weight is in the phenomenon called matter, it hides the work-capacity which is brought out when the same quantity is in the phenomenon called energy. With the passing of the one phenomenon into the other and the conversion of matter into energy, this quantity does not disappear, as commonly supposed: it remains in existence but is part of a phenomenon not found before. Thus, in the sun's radiation that is the energy into which the sun's matter is converted, there is the precise inertia, mass, weight of the converted matter—the energy radiated every second is computed to weigh 4,200,000 tons—but there is with these tons something else not openly carrying them prior to the conversion. Hence the concept of energy is fuller than that of matter, and we can regard matter as concealed energy. Conversely, we can regard energy as matter revealed in its completeness. But this just means that there is an incompleteness in matter as such and energy is the more comprehensive and fundamental phenomenon whose checked and bound state is matter. It is because of being checked and bound that a very great amount of energy is represented by a very small amount of material substance.

When energy is no longer a property of matter but a more comprehensive and fundamental phenomenon which is work-capacity with inertia, mass, weight of its own it cannot be considered purely physical, though we cannot explicitly designate it Life or Mind or Spirit. Or, rather, it becomes something in which the physical is subsumed under a mysterious more-than-physical reality—quite unlike the old energy which was never independent of matter and was subsumable under a reality quite physical. An indirect testimony to the metamorphosis is the new definition found necessary in the fourteenth edition of *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*: "That by which work is done and which diminishes in proportion to the work done."

This is so vague that it is merely an effort to define the physically indefinable.

The mysterious more-than-physical energy to which, if we analyse Einstein's ideas, the entire universe is reduced joins up philosophically in the most natural manner with the curved space-time, the conscious divine *Totum Simul* suggested by relativity theory, because this energy renders modern physics open to a non-materialistic interpretation: the world as a Will at work. On the scientific plane itself, a connection between it and the curved continuum has been attempted. As we saw, what we ordinarily call matter seems to be what space-time holds as curvature of a certain sort. And, if matter is concealed energy, energy would be this curvature interpreted in terms of space and time instead of in terms of space-time, the *Totum Simul.* It appears to be the World-Will of the Infinite and the Eternal.

VI

The second topic is the philosophy implicit in the scientific method established by Einstein. This method falls into two parts. To begin with, there is the principle of rejection of the unobservable. Every statement must be made with reference to what can be observed. Of course, this brings in always the observer, but, as we have already shown, there is no subjectivism here. By observation we mean in physics the procedure of reading off the results produced on scientific measuring instruments by nature's phenomena either as they are or as adapted to particular ends in the laboratory. The observer in Einstein's physics plays the same role as in classical physics. To quote Sullivan: "we must not interpret the word 'observable' too narrowly. It would be more correct to substitute for 'observable' 'definable in terms of physical processes.' If an entity is to be considered as a scientific entity we must be able to say what physical processes would enable us to detect it. This is the basis of Einstein's objection to Newton's absolute space and absolute time." That is to say, we know of no physical operations, no experimental techniques, no manipulation of scientific apparatus and instruments by which absolute space and time can be measured or even their existence detected.

By "observable", however, is not meant something of which we must have direct experimental evidence. Consider the interior of the earth. There are no experiments by which we can observe it. But the absence of observation is due to practical difficulties. We disregard practical difficulties and, on indirect evidence, assume that the earth has an interior. Einstein has no quarrel with an unobservable of this kind. Nor are such quantities as the electron's mass rejected. We do not directly observe an electron's mass, but there are observations from which we infer or deduce this quantity. It is the imperfection of scientific apparatus that keeps the electron's mass away from observation. The unobservable that came under Einstein's, censure is not due to imperfection of scientific apparatus or to practical difficulties.

It is due to a special factor which may be called compensation. When a quantity investigated is always and automatically and exactly compensated for by an equal and opposite one, it can never be observed. There seems to be a conspiracy on the part of nature's processes to keep certain quantities for ever beyond observation. If, when an effect x is supposed to be produced on phenomena, we find that there is also produced a countervailing effect -x, all processes of nature appear to be in a league against the observer. How are we to interpret such a perfectly organised conspiracy of compensation? Are we to go on saying that the quantity under inquiry still exists although unobserved? If we do, what utility are we to ascribe to it? Since physics will never come across it, it is for physics an utterly useless and gratuitous supposition and as good as non-existent. It will never figure in the observations we make by experiments: so, we must build our equations as if it were not there at all. It may be in itself logically conceivable, but it is not logically admissible in physics; it may be in itself philosophically necessary, but the philosophy of physics can have no place for it.

Not that physics should be confined to the observable, actual or potential. What it has to do is, in the first place, not to allow a quantity that is inutile by compensation to enter the equations built on the observable, and, in the second place, not to allow such a gratuitous quantity from entering fundamental theory. Fundamental theory is the postulate or set of postulates by which we seek an

explanation of observed phenomena: it correlates and unifies them. If a compensated quantity enters it, the postulates will never admit real verification: there will always remain in the alleged verification a hypothetical and superfluous component. After rejecting the unobservable, the method of physics *à la* Einstein is, therefore, concerned with finding the correct type of fundamental theory beyond observation, actual or potential.

Here we strike upon an extremely significant characteristic of Einsteinian science. Although Einstein acts the "observer" in essentially the same manner as Newton or Galileo or even Archimedes and imports no special subjectivism into physics, yet when it comes to correlating the data of observation and reaching fundamental theory he works with a radical dissimilarity to the manner of physics in the past: his mind so proceeds as to give consciousness an entirely new value and to convince us that the path to ultimate truth in physics lies not in an effort to arrive at a mere generalisation from the observed world but in a creative flight breaking away from observation. Doubtless, observation cannot be dispensed with: we have to start from it for reaching fundamental theory and we have to return to it in order to test the theory, but our theory is no longer at the mercy of what is observed. The mind is made to act with a certain degree of independence of all observation of the world, and in this independence is a hint not only that truth in physics is to be found subjectively but also that the reality at the back of phenomena is of the nature of consciousness.

Perhaps the most concise approach to this hint is in some passages of Einstein's *The World as I See It*. Writes Einstein on page 180: "The theory of relativity admirably exemplifies the fundamental character of the modern development of theoretical science. The hypotheses with which it starts become steadily more abstract and remote from experience. On the other hand it gets nearer to the grand aim of all science, which is to cover the greatest possible number of empirical facts by logical deduction from the smallest possible number of hypotheses or axioms. Meanwhile the train of thought leading from the axioms to the empirical facts or verifiable consequences gets steadily longer and more subtle. The theoretical scientist is compelled in an increasing degree to be guided by purely mathema-

tical, formal considerations in his search for a theory, because the physical experience of the experimenter cannot lift him into the regions of highest abstraction. The predominently inductive methods appropriate in the youth of science are giving place to tentative deduction. Such a theoretical structure needs to be very thoroughly elaborated before it can lead to conclusions which can be compared with experience. Here, too, the observed fact is undoubtedly the supreme arbiter; but it cannot pronounce sentence until the wide chasm separating the axioms from the verifiable consequences has been bridged by much intense hard thinking. The theorist has to set about this Herculean task in the clear consciousness that his efforts may only be destined to deal the death-blow to his own theory. The theorist who undertakes such a labour should not be carped at as 'fanciful'; on the contrary, he should be encouraged to give free rein to his fancy, for there is no other way to the goal. His is no idle day-dreaming, but a search for the logically simplest possibilities and their consequences."

What have we here? An underlining of "purely mathematical, formal considerations" rather than "the predominantly inductive methods appropriate in the youth of science" and a clear realisation that the final formulas are "abstract and remote from experience" and an open admission that the theorist has "to give free rein to his fancy." Surely this is no denial of the principle which rejects the unobservable: theory is not to assume quantities unobservable through compensation but, provided it does not assume them, it can be any kind of mathematical construct, no matter how unfamiliar and unvisualisable in its terms. What makes direct contact with the world known to experiment is not the theory but only the consequences logically deduced from it: the theory itself remains akin to pure mathematics—that is, to structures raised with no immediate practical aim but as mere expressions of imaginable possibilities. It is what Einstein, on pages 135 and 136 of his book, calls a free fiction or free invention or free creation of the mind. Its only difference from the various other structures that can be freely created is that it is not only self-consistent but also makes the fewest possible assumptions from which consequences are to be logically derived for verification by means of scientific apparatus.

Apropos this difference Einstein makes on page 136 a pronouncement which is the most significant in the methodology of modern physics. "If the axiomatic basis of theoretical physics," he says, "cannot be extracted from experience but must be freely invented, can we ever hope to find the right way? Nay more, has this right way an existence outside our illusions? Can we hope to be guided in the right way by experience when there exist theories (such as classical mechanics) which to a large extent do justice to experience, without getting to the root of the matter? I answer without hesitation that there is, in my opinion, a right way and that we are capable of finding it. Our experience hitherto justifies us in believing that nature is the realisation of the simplest conceivable mathematical ideas.[1] I am convinced that we can discover by means of purely mathematical constructions the concepts and the laws connecting them with each other, which furnish the key to the understanding of natural phenomena. Experience may suggest the appropriate mathematical concepts, but they most certainly cannot be deduced from it. Experience remains, of course, the sole criterion of the physical utility of a mathematical construction. But the creative principle resides in mathematics. In a certain sense, therefore, I hold it true that pure thought can grasp reality, as the ancients believed."

Free creations thus fall into two classes—those that correspond to reality and those that do not. What is the precise significance of the former for a philosophy of physics? First we must note the status which, among ideas, Einstein accords to free creations. Can they be put on a par with what Kant calls *a priori* ideas? The so-called *a priori* ideas are those that some other philosophers label as logical generalisations from experience: Kant considers them forms of thought inherent in the mind and imposed by it on the stuff of sensation. When Einstein declares the fundamental concepts of physics to be no generalisations from experience, he sets them outside the class of ideas taken to be *a priori*. The fundamental concepts, according to

[1] "Simplest" does not mean for Einstein the easiest to conceive or memorise: as already mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, it means the ideas which, however difficult or complex, are the minimum required to correlate the greatest number of observations.

Einstein, are not dictated by any necessity arising either from experience or from the mind's inherent forms of thought. Of course, they must have contact both with experience and whatever inherent forms of thought there may be in the mind, but they are still free and found by a creative activity of the mathematical consciousness, akin to the activity of the artist.

Being artistic in quality they are reached by a sort of inner vision, a sort of intuition. They are divined. In Einstein's view, the mathematician's mind has a capacity of sheer insight into reality. The capacity, as far as Einstein knows, is not quite like what the ancients believed—a royal and plenary penetrativeness; it does not carry an absolute self-certainty and must get its final seal from experiment after logical deductions from the axioms found by it have been made, but something it still retains of the self-guidance, the direct grasp, the interior apprehension attributed to pure thought by the ancients. Such a capacity implies, however pin-pointedly, that somehow the mind is able to be one with reality and know it from the inside, as it were, by getting identified with it. The oneness, the inside knowledge by identification, argues for reality itself having a secret nature analogous to the mind.

No wonder Einstein believes in a world-intelligence and regards physics as a search for truth which has at its source a unison between one's mind and the world-intelligence, a pre-established harmony without which neither the search for truth nor the divining of truth can have sufficient explanation. Einstein is a Spinozist, affirming with Spinoza that the ultimate reality is a universal Substance with the dual aspect of mind and matter. He also calls himself a pantheist, with—in his own words—"the firm belief, which is bound up with deep feeling, in a superior mind revealing itself in the world of experience."

Here we may hark back for a moment to Einstein's contention, noticed at the beginning of our essay, that only science can find truth and that what religion finds cannot be given the same name. " 'Religious truth,' " he has said, "conveys nothing clear to me at all." But once intuition is granted a place in knowledge, we should be arbitrary if we ruled out of court various other kinds of intution than the one which the mathematician practises in physics. Mystical insight is an

intense type of intuition and there is no point in denying off-hand that it can both arrive at fundamentals of the universe and perceive their unfoldment in a wider manner than mathematical intuition plus mathematical logic can. What mystical insight would lay bare may not be mathematical structure; but that does not invalidate it as knowledge, as discovery of truth, as the formulation of what is.

Spinoza himself does not seem to have depreciated mystical insight as a gateway to knowledge. Einstein's Spinozism is therefore somewhat faulty and narrow. Nor is Spinozism an entirely satisfying philosophy in itself. For one thing, it does not realise that if universal mind and universal matter are dual aspects of one Substance they need not be merely parallel attributes but must be capable of interaction. Again, it puts the two universal aspects on an equality in spite of universal matter seeming to be expressive of universal mind's scheme and purpose and therefore to be its manifestation in a new form. Further, this logical primacy of universal mind argues the one Substance to be an ultimate Existence that is Consciousness. Lastly, Spinozism leans towards an impersonal divinity and does not account for the individual human soul and its supporting truth in a Super-person who is more than the universal existence He has emanated. Yes, the metaphysics of Spinoza, for all its sweep and grandeur, does not go far or high enough. But the general theoretical method of Einstein's physics unequivocally suggests that if Spinozism is to be criticised the criticism must come from above it and not below. A cosmic consciousness into which we have a pin-point entry through mathematical divination is the irreducible minimum this method implies. To make that minimum yield a Spinozistic philosophy is to express a particular type of intellectual and emotional disposition. A deeper and richer *weltanschauung* may be extracted from it. So we need not take Einstein's Spinozism as the only possible scientific philosophy to which the free mathematical creativity exemplified by his theorising from the data of relativity is a pointer. But, while something more than Spinozism may be approached, nothing less than it will serve. This means that the general theoretical method of Einstein's physics turns away from materialism in a subjectivist manner foreign to classical physics. Not that classical physics knew of no divination, no intutive leap of the mind, by which a gap in physical knowledge was filled—a leap which

necessity neither from experimental evidence nor from inherent forms of thought could justify. Clerk Maxwell made such a leap when in stating his famous equations for electromagnetism he postulated a certain term which was not necessitated by anything at the time and which was found correct by experiment many years later. Without that term wireless and radio and radar would have been impossible. But the Maxwellian leap figured in the method of classical physics as an astonishing freak and had no pervasive significance. Einsteinian theoretical physics, making it the common rule instead of an astonishing freak, acquires an utterly new orientation. Although the attempt to escape materialism by putting a subjectivist interpretation on the role of the observer is misguided, the moment Einstein's physics tries to correlate and unify facts found by observation it stresses a creative and intuitive activity of the mind, by which, from subjective depths within us, a glimmer is brought of the vast subjectivism of a Supreme Spirit who is the single secret self of human observers and of the whole universe and whose consciousness not only pervades but seems to have become all things.

VII

We may now briefly take stock of our conclusions from Einstein's relativity physics. By three independent routes we arrive at an undeniable implication of the supra-physical, the mystical: 1) the Einsteinian "field" whose four-dimensional continuum of indistinguishable space and time is revealed by the special theory of relativity as a mathematical approximation of the mystic's Infinity-Eternity and by the general theory of relativity as an utterly non-material space-time ether rendering the approximated Infinity-Eternity all the more real and even originative of matter: 2) the Einsteinian "energy" which, by positing something indefinable by any scientific concept, points beyond materialism to a World-Will; 3) the Einsteinian theoretical method with its "free creation," involving the discovery of scientific truth by our mind "insighting" a World-Intelligence that seems all-formative. The independence we have given to each of the three routes results in a threefold strength to the suggestion of the supra-physical and the mystical.

Einstein himself does not appear to be always aware of the direction in which his theory leads. This is because of many reasons. He lacks a full intimate grasp of the relation between science and religion. There is missing also the reading of the true philosophical significance of four-dimensionality. Again, little philosophical endeavour is made to identify the sense of his new concept of energy. Only in connection with his theoretical method he seems to discern a direct *liaison* between science and the religious frame of mind which, he confesses, can never be absent in the true scientific pioneer. Einstein is content in general to affirm an indirect *liaison*—a *liaison* merely of an original stimulus and initiative to scientific research by a pantheistic feeling and outlook. But the fact that he has not himself sounded all the philosophical depths of his own theory is no argument against the existence of those depths. Neither is it an argument against the supremacy of scientific genius that is Einstein's. We should be extremely thankful to this supremacy for providing us, independently of mysticism, with mathematical formulas and processes which we can interpret best in terms of mystical experience.

K. D. SETHNA

Rasa: Its Meaning and Scope

(Concluded from the last issue)

RASA: THE CONTEMPLATIVE AND CREATIVE DELIGHT

THE attitude of the artist, at the apex of its awakening, resolves itself into ineffable calm, into contemplative and creative delight. This delight is even regarded as the one and only *rasa*. What manner of experience is this and how is it related to the various modes of consciousness?

Bhoja states that all *bhavas* which attain individual *Prakarsha* or intensity like *Rati*, *Hasa*, etc., culminate in one *rasa* called *Preman*, love. Through *Preman* or Love, they pass again into the one basic *rasa* of *Ahamkara* or individual consciousness. Bhoja thinks that all *bhavas* are of the form of love. The warrior fights because he loves to fight. The clown laughs because he loves to laugh. This *Preman* is the culmination of *Ahamkara* as *Shrangara* through *Abhimana*. It is the aesthetic attainment that a cultured being is privileged to have. Every *bhava* is a kind of love and, after passing through the *bhavana* stage or attaining intensity, the *bhava* enriches the individual's consciousness and merges into it in a plunge of delight. We thus come to the stage: "ripeness is all". The various *bhavas* dissolve themselves in the act of contributing to the ripeness of the individual consciousness.

This process of enrichment and expansion is rendered possible by the artist's *sattwika Ahamkara* which enables him to enjoy himself or other persons and objects as objects of pure aesthetic contemplation. *Tamas* is inertia and leads to *moha*, stupor. *Rajas* is restlessness or constant movement and leads to agitation or sorrow. It is the *sattwa guna* or the capacity for harmony that leads to aesthetic bliss or repose: भग्नावरणा चिदेव रसः, says Jagannatha. The elimination of other modes of

consciousness and the predominance of the *sattwic* mode paves the way for the revelation of the soul which is pure delight.

This delight is not exactly ब्रह्मास्वाद (Brahmasvada) but ब्रह्मास्वाद सहोदरः। The definition of aesthetic experience given in the *Sahitya Darpana*, III, stanzas 2-3, is reproduced below as translated by A. K. Coomarswamy: "Pure aesthetic experience is theirs in whom the knowledge of ideal beauty is innate; it is known intuitively, in intellectual ecstasy without accompaniment of ideation, at the highest level of conscious being; born of one mother with the vision of God, its life is as it were a flash of blinding light of trans-mundane origin, impossible to analyse, and yet in the image of our being." This has been stated with reference to the *Sahradaya's* or reader's delight. But it applies equally well to that state of *Preman*, Love of delight in the artist which is the final phase of his contemplative experience. It applies as much to self-identification of the artist with the appointed theme as to that of the spectator with the presented matter. This *preman* is said to be *rasa* par excellence.

Aesthetic experience is thus a transformation of feeling as well as understanding. It is to be had by an exaltation of the *sattwa*, i.e. by resolving all affective and mental barriers (*Avarana Bhanga*) and making the chosen theme the single object of his devotion or meditation. The two chief *avaranas* to be removed are, (i) *Kleshavarna*: sensual attachment or affections, (ii) *Jneyavarna*: mental hindrances or prejudices. Ideal beauty is unconditioned by natural affections. It is super-sensual. The mental image (*jnana-sattwa-rupa*) of the object arises by an act of attention or *dharana*. According to Eckhart, as interpreted by A. Coomarswamy, aesthetic experience is the vision of the world-picture as God sees it, loving all creatures alike, each in its divine nature and in unity, as a conscious eye situated in a mirror might see all things in all their dimensions, apart from time and space as the single object of its vision. "This sharing of God's vision of himself in his 'work' which in so far as we can have an 'inkling' of it is what we mean by aesthetic experience is likewise what we mean by Beauty as distinct from loveliness or liking which have their drawbacks in their opposites." Aesthetic sympathy is felt in the presence of all artistic representation,—whether of good or evil, pleasure or pain.

Aesthetic experience is super-mundane or transcendental. It transcends the limits of worldly experience. Abhinavagupta shows that

it is not *Nirvikalpa* or unrelated knowledge like the perception of the Absolute, for *Rasapratiti* involves the knowledge of the *vibhavas*, etc., in their generalised form. It is not quite *Savikalpa* or related knowledge for it is not related to any particular name, *jati*, etc., does not attach much value to them and is, at the moment of realisation, an indefinable, blissful state. Again, it is different from the knowledge of the Yogi, for the Yogi realises the Absolute Brahman, whereas the bliss of *rasa* is not incompatible with an awareness of differences,—the dome of many-coloured glass. It therefore stands by itself, between the worldly and spiritual states.

According to Sri Aurobindo, there is an Infinite of Being which is also an Infinite of power of consciousness. An infinite Consciousness must hold within itself endless truths of its own self-awareness. These in action would appear to our cognition as aspects of its being, to our spiritual sense as powers and movements of its dynamics, to our aesthesis as instruments and formulations of its delight of existence. The eternal delight of being moves out into the infinite and variable delight of becoming and affects by its movement the variations of pleasure, pain and mental indifference in our sensational existence. But this is a superficial arrangement created by the limited mental self. Behind it is the much vaster consciousness which takes delight impartially in all experiences. It exposes the external self as a sensitive covering to contacts of the world and these it assimilates into the values of a creative experience.[1]

What do we imply when we say that the artist reaches out to this delight through the *sattwic* quality in him? What form does this self-exceeding take? We have already seen how the artist invariably generalises his experiences,—he discovers the core or essence of the object and seeks to identify himself with it. The artist's mission, therefore, is so to generalise and universalise his reactions to external contacts as to enable him to transcend the dualistic consciousness and experience the impartiality, detachment, peace or joy itself, of his vaster delight of consciousness. The poet has his *bhoga*,—his imaginative, recapitulatory, logistic, emotional or mental (or all these put together) reactions to the object. Persisting deeper, he grasps the *rasa* or essence of the object

[1] *The Life Divine*, pp. 156-157.

through his higher mind or *Jnana buddhi*; probing still deeper and attaining the superconscient level of vision, he sees that his *rasa* is beauty which, along with love, is an expression or form of *Ananda* created by it and composed of it. This beauty conveys to the mind the delight of which it is made. The artist's or the *rasika's* enjoyment of *rasa* is thus the mind's and the vital's reaction to this perception of beauty. The process could be analysed as follows:

(i) The poet's experience born of his contact with the object or *Vibhava* or *Karana.*

(ii) His perception of *rasa* or essence of the object or *Sadharanikarana* or *bhavakatwa* (generalisation and universalisation). This is also the perception of the Collective Unconscious to which Jung refers and the experience of "Psychological reality" or the emotional, supra-personal life mentioned by Miss Bodkin in her book, *Archetypal Patterns of Poetry.*

(iii) His apprehension of the Beauty underlying the *rasa* or essence (*Bhojakatwa*).

(iv) His realisation of the Ananda which has created Beauty and of which Beauty is composed.

These four movements represent the contemplative phase of the process,—from individual awareness through the many-coloured dome to the white radiance of Beauty.

The second phase which is creative may be set forth as follows, indicating its origins in *bhoga* or enjoyment:

(1) Realisation of the Ananda of which Beauty is composed.

(2) The mind's and the vital's reaction to this perception of Beauty, *bhoga.*

(3) A continuation of *yoga* in its executive sense,—*karmasu koushalam*, skill in work, attempting to convey this delight to others through a work of art.

(4) The aesthetic realisation may be partial or complete and include any or all of the following steps:

(i) The simple joy of creation such as is seen in nursery rhymes.

(ii) The heart's ease proceeding from a pouring out of one's own feelings, such as is experienced by all poets.

(iii) Detachment from one's own emotions so as to have the

freedom and restraint necessary for expressing them calmly. This is seen in the intellectualised poetry of Arnold and Meredith.

(iv) The joy of the subliminal or psychic activity which accompanies a spontaneous overflow or imperceptible movement of feelings to the surface and brings with it a touch of the inner delight. This is seen in the poetry of Shelley (*Skylark; Cloud*) and A.E. Housman.

(v) The contemplative peace or calm which follows the overflow and the psychic activity. This is frequently seen in Wordsworth.

(vi) The positive delight born of a perception of beauty in an inspired moment, as in Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* or Shelley's *Epipsychidion.*

(vii) An experience of the delight which transcends sorrow and evil even when the artist is aware of them. This is seen in the great Tragedies of Shakespeare and Keats' *Hyperion.*

Sri Aurobindo has shown where the artist parts company with the spiritual seeker, the Yogi.

The truly spiritual realisation passes beyond the aesthetic limit, sees the Universal Beauty and passes beyond *rasa* and *bhoga* to pure *Ananda.* The aesthetic reception of contacts "admits us in one part of our nature to that detachment from egoistic sensation and to that universal attitude through which the one soul sees harmony and beauty where we divided beings experience rather chaos and discord. The full liberation can come to us only by a similar liberation in all our parts, the universal aesthesis, the universal standpoint of knowledge, the universal detachment from all things and yet sympathy within our nervous and emotional being."[1]

The *tamasic* happiness consists in vulgar pleasures,—smug satisfaction, indolence, inertia. The pleasures of the senses and the body and the kinetic will and intelligence are all the joy of life to the *rajasic* mind. This joy is nectar to the lips at the first touch, but there is a secret poison in the bottom of the cup and, after it, the bitterness of disappointment, satiety, fatigue, disgust, sin. This must be so because there is always something beyond the transience of the mere

[1] *The Life Divine,* pp. 164-165.

form. The *sattwic* attitude seeks the satisfaction of the higher mind and the spirit. This happiness does not depend on outward things but on the flowering of what is best and most inward within us. This means much struggle and bitterness in the beginning, due to the insistence of vital forces. But when the necessary conquest of our nature and self-discipline have been attained, the nectar of immortality rises in the place of bitterness. The self-exceeding of the *sattwic* nature is seen when we pass on to the eternal calm of the self and the spiritual ecstasy of the divine oneness. It is, then, no longer the *sattwic* happiness, *sukha* but *Ananda.*

Art is not in itself *Yoga.* We should not mistake the mental, moral and aesthetic idealisms and their inferior degrees for spirituality or spiritual values. The mental intuitions of the metaphysician or the poet, for the most part, fall short of a concrete spiritual experience; they are distant flashes, shadowy reflections, not rays from the centre of light.

But all things in the *Lila* can turn into windows that open on the hidden Reality. The Divine can take a mental formula, a piece of sculpture, a strain of music or a line of poetry as its channel of touch and one feels the invasion of the Infinite. Such touches can come through art or poetry to their creator or to one who feels the shock of the word or the hidden significance of a form.

Poetry can start from any plane of consciousness although, like all art, or one might say all creation,—it must come through the *vital* if it is to be alive. And as there is always a joy in creation, that joy, along with a certain *Anandamaya Avesha*—must always be there, whatever the source. One might write from a purely vital inspiration and another from the linking of the vital creative instrument to a deeper psychic experience. The joy that is the simple joy of creation as well as the joy of expression of the psychic being seeking for an outlet, justifies the writing of poetry as a part of *Sadhana.* Poetry and music come from the inner being and, to write a great poem or compose great music, one has to have the passage clear between the outer mind and the inner being. Again, as one offers a flower, a prayer or an act to the Divine, one can offer too a created form of beauty, a song, an image, a strain of music, and gain through it a contact, a response or an experience.

Still, so long as one is content with shadowy reflections, the gain is only initial. One day one will have to take the pilgrim's staff and start out on the journey to where Reality is for ever manifest and present. A search eventually imposes itself on the artist for the Light which he strives to figure.

When the divine consciousness grows within, then, too, creative activities can have a place in life. In their ordinary functioning, art, poetry and music create mental and vital, not spiritual values. But they can be turned to a higher end. They will take new value from the Divine Consciousness that uses them and they can be admitted as part of a life of *yoga*.

The six paragraphs immediately preceding this are a summary of Sri Aurobindo's views on the relations between aesthetic and spiritual consciousness. These views have been gleaned from his *Bases of Yoga*, *Lights on Yoga* and *Letters*. They clarify the affiliations between the two modes of consciousness and also explain wherein the aesthetic approach falls short of the spiritual. They also show how the pure delight of the spirit lurks behind the contemplative and creative delight of the artist.

It may now be asked how exactly this delight is experienced in the presence of pain, sorrow and evil. There is a good deal of illuminating speculation on this subject in Sanskrit literature. Bhattanayaka remarks that, since disinterested contemplation is possible only through the predominance of the *sattwic* quality, sorrow and pain themselves are contemplated in this way. Since the dominance of the *sattwic* quality results in *sukha* or experience of happiness, pain and sorrow themselves lead to an experience of delight. Abhinavagupta ascribes the transformation or culmination of pain and sorrow into delight to this very capacity for disinterested contemplation. The poise of the mind is *sukha*, oscillation or disturbance is *dukha*. This is in accordance with *Sankhya* thought. *Hrdaya samwada* or utter absorption in the object disengages us from worldly distractions and induces in us the *visranti* or repose which is *Ananda*. This repose, along with *priti* (love), *sukha* (happiness) and light (prakasha) is one of the characteristics of *sattwa guna*. It is the *sattwic* or the sublimated consciousnesss that gives us the gift of empathy and delight.

Abhinavagupta thought that *aswada* or aesthetic experience is of the identical nature of *Ananda* in all attitudes. This *Ananda* is *Preman* of Bhoja and the contemplative and creative delight that we have referred to. But it seems reasonable to recognise variations and different degrees of intensity in this delight. Firstly, to what level and measure of this delight the artist rises depends on the quality and level of his seership. Secondly, when the transformation of unpleasant attitudes is involved, much of the imaginative energy of the artist is expended in overcoming initial distractions and he succeeds in arriving only at an ultimate calm and very rarely at the pure delight of the spirit, unless he is himself a mystic. In dealing with pleasant attitudes, however, there is less of distraction and the artist's consciousness flowers naturally and petal by petal into the deep perfection of *Ananda*. This is so because the painful emotions are perversions of the true delight whereas the pleasurable emotions are only imperfect versions. They can be transmuted with less difficulty into their original nature of *Ananda*.

Two distinctive varieties of contemplative delight therefore emerge,—the dominant one of delight against a background of calm and the mood of calm and serenity with a suggestion of delight lurking behind it. Madhusudana Saraswati admits that *rasaswadana* differs in quality and quantity with regard to the various attitudes:

रजस्तमोंशमिश्रणात् तारतम्यम् अवगन्तव्यम्।
अतो न सर्वेषु रसेषु तुल्यसुखानुभवः॥

Dr. Raghavan quotes in his thesis[1] the view that the unpleasant attitudes are like the sour and pungent flavours. They are not sweet but they enrich our experience of Reality and of the artist's genius and are therefore pleasing: "It is to witness the art of the poet and the actor that people crowd to see even such plays, though nothing but unhappiness is produced in their hearts while witnessing them. These four *rasas* (*karuna, roudra, bhayanaka, beebhatsa*) resemble the hot and sour tastes which also add to the tastes of the dishes as much as the taste of sweetness." We shall see in the final section how the

[1] *Srangara Prakasha* of Bhoja, Vol I, Part II, p. 495.

thirteen primary modes of the artist's consciousness result in nine *rasas* or states of aesthetic experience. Each state has its own distinct flavour and carries with it a suggestion of eternal delight or enduring calm. Four of these states have already been set forth in Sanskrit aesthetics. They are applicable to the experience of the artist as well as to the reader,—to the response to life as well as to its representation in art. These are the mountain paths that lead the human consciousness to the twin summits of calm and (or) delight. Equal delight—the transformation of the triple vibration of pain, pleasure and indifference into *Ananda*—is possible only for the universal aesthesis, for the Yogi, who first cultivates neutrality to the imperfect touches of pleasure and the perverse touches of pain and then gradually acquires the conversion to equal delight. But the aesthetic reception, as opposed to the spiritual, admits *rasas* like sorrow, terror, horror and disgust. In the presence of tragedy, poets like Shakespeare close on a note of grandeur and calm. It is only in a Blake or Sri Aurobindo that we detect the note of equal delight.

This is what Sri Aurobindo has to say on the subject: "Pain and pleasure themselves are currents, one imperfect, the other perverse, but still currents of delight of existence. The reason for this imperfection and this perversion is the self-division of the being in his consciousness by measuring and limiting Maya and in consequence an egoistic and piecemeal instead of a universal reception of contacts by the individual. For the universal soul all things and all contacts of things carry in them an essence of delight best described by the Sanskrit aesthetic term, *rasa*, which means at once sap or essence of a thing and its taste. It is because we do not seek the essence of the thing in its contact with us, but look only to the manner in which it affects our desires and fears, our cravings and shrinkings, that grief and pain, imperfect and transient pleasure or indifference, that is to say, blank inability to seize the essence, are the forms taken by the *rasa*. If we could be entirely disinterested in mind and heart and impose that detachment on the nervous being, the progressive elimination of these imperfect and perverse forms of *rasa* would be possible and the true essential taste of the inalienable delight of existence in all its variations would be within our reach. We attain to something of this capacity for variable but universal delight in the aesthetic reception of things as represented

by Art and Poetry, so that we enjoy there the *rasa* or taste of the sorrowful, the terrible, even the horrible or repellent; and the reason is because we are detached, disinterested, not thinking of ourselves or of self-defence (*jugupsa*), but only of the thing and its essence. Certainly, this aesthetic reception of contacts is not a precise image or reflection of pure delight or reflection of pure delight which is supramental and supra-aesthetic; for the latter would eliminate sorrow, terror, horror and disgust with their cause while the former admits them: but it represents partially and imperfectly one stage of the progressive delight of the universal Soul in things in its manifestation and it admits us in one part of our nature to that detachment from egoistic sensation and that universal attitude through which the one Soul sees harmony and beauty where we divided beings experience rather chaos and discord."[1]

If, in his own life, the artist comes across situations evoking disgust, resentment, sorrow, repulsion, etc., he is, at first, completely under their spell. He identifies himself with these emotions in the beginning. His higher mind gradually awakens and he soon grasps the generic and essential significance of his misery. A sense of reconciliation dawns on him, a condensation out of the flying vapours of his pain, as it were, of an enduring law or principle, an attitude of acceptance, of resignation. A chastening calm, a soothing peace, caresses him. At this stage, delight touches him in one of the two ways, or both. In this state of peace, he feels the psychic or the superconscient touch and is blessed with a vision or touch of the Divine within or above him; and the touch brings him ineffable delight. Or he is able to embody both the repulsion and the acceptance in some telling phrase or an enduring image or, later, a sustained work of art. This brings to him the joy of creation which, in its own way, is divine.

If it is the misery of the world, external to himself and his own life, that he is confronted with, as a nerve that feels the else unfelt oppressions of the earth,—he is, again, obsessed with it in the beginning and it is resolved in very much the same way in which his personal sorrow and disharmony is resolved; with this difference that, in the dilation of his sympathy for others, he has the subdued and chastening

[1] *The Life Divine*, Vol. I, pp. 163-165.

joy of a capacity for self-identification with others in their sorrow. There might be less identity but there will certainly be more comprehensiveness in his response, more of calm, lesser delight of revelation perhaps and lesser relief through self-expression, but certainly much more of the joy of creation.

To take an instance, if a callous critic points out to a sensitive painter certain natural gaps and deficiencies in his work, not patiently but with heartless intolerance, the consequent unpleasantness rankles in the mind of the sensitive man. It clouds out, for the moment, all other considerations from his being. But he soon begins to think, if he is imaginative enough, of the common lot of humanity; of the cold-heartedness of the world which, in its blind, cantering way, rides rough-shod over human hearts; of the inevitability of such disharmony in life as long as the world hugs its limited consciousness; of its significance for him, in his own life, as a divinely ordained event shaping the evolution of his consciousness in the manner and with the means deemed proper by the Divine Will. He is, then, reconciled to it. Such an acceptance resolves the conflict and brings him calm, peace. In this moment of calm, a peace forms itself in his mind's shell,—a sentence is crystallised: "He pointed out the inevitable shortcomings in my work as one might point out the holes in the tattered rags worn by a poor woman,— laying on and passing his finger through each one of them." The satirical sting in the sentence is expressive of the man's sense of repulsion at the happening. The undertone of humour is the tone of quiet and wise acceptance,—a tone which reveals the reconciliation effected within him. The crystallisation of this sentence gives him a veritable thrill of delight. He has thus succeeded in transmuting sorrow itself into delight by universalising his sorrow and viewing it impersonally in its generic aspect, by relating it to his system of sentiments or basic attitude towards life through disinterested contemplation. When the sense of misery rises to its peak and the resulting disharmony is more intense, it is even possible that a greater delight will precede the joy of creation,—a vision or a contact with Reality that will have illuminated his consciousness immeasurably.

V. Rasa: The Potentiality in the Material

We have seen in a preceding section how the white radiance of the artist's seership breaks into prismatic colours with the love-tryst of the subject and the object. Thirteen primary attitudes have been formulated. But the aesthetic object also brings some of its own potentialities into this complex creative activity. These have to be recognised and distinguished from the basic attitudes of the subject or the artist.

The object or *Vibhava* has also been called *rasa* by some aestheticians. Since *rasa*, the supreme Reality, is immanent in the subject as well as the object and since it emerges from the complex process of the identity of subject and object as *Ananda* or Reality in its aspect of bliss, the word has lent itself to subjective as well as objective extensions of meaning. The whole, as well as its parts, are *rasa*. Thus there is no reason why we should deny the name of *rasa* to the object or theme or to any of its parts. We should only remember to what aspect of the entire *rasa* we refer when we use the word and not confuse it with any other.

Some have called *Vibhava* the only *rasa*. This implies the sovereignty of *Prakriti* over *Purusha*, of object over subject. It rests on the assumption that Reality resides in the object and that the seeing eye is only a passive witness. But we believe that Reality permeates both the subject and the object. Both, therefore, are *rasa*.

The determinant in the artist's life is called *Karana* and in the life of the work of art, *Vibhava*. Thus the huntsman killing the mating bird is the *Karana* or determinant of Valmiki's anger and sorrow. Ravana carrying away Sita is the *Vibhava*.

What, exactly, is the artist's object? The object is, essentially, life itself, or *prakriti*; or that section of *lokadharma* or life which the artist endeavours to present in a work of art. He starts with a *Karana*, a determinant. But the mating bird that is killed gradually begins to live on in Valmiki's imagination. It begins to attract to itself the lives of all parted couples and star-crossed lovers. It becomes Tara and Sita. It even assumes a powerful abstract life,—that of a family ideal subjected to barbaric inroads. A contemplation of this ideal even induces an awareness of the struggle for its establishment, of a

conflict between race and race, of the foundation of a new civilisation. Then is the great epic, Ramayana, born. The mating bird died, but it lived on in Valmiki's imagination and grew co-extensive with a whole aspect of life. The entire aspect, then, is the aesthetic object in this context.

This is what is meant by the reference to the four states of existence of the aesthetic object,—sensuous, imaginative, archetypal and spiritual. The object may be a thing or person, a collective object or an abstract quality. But it is, ultimately, *prakriti* itself,—life in all its infinity.

The artist selects a theme to convey his vision of *prakriti*. We have seen that, in a sustained work of art, the theme contains certain potentialities which are untapped, either by the artist's central attitude or by his fugitive emotions at the moment of creative vision. These kindle the poet's emotions in the course of creative activity, and, consequently, receive artistic sanction. Certain gaps or perplexities in the theme induce sudden flashes of insight in the artist,—as is seen in the Porter's scene in *Macbeth*. The aesthetic object is thus an active factor in the moulding of a work of art.

It is maintained by some that the theme alone is *rasa*; that the character or characters alone are *rasa*; and that the *anubhavas*—the "doings" of the characters—alone are *rasa*. We can only say that they are *rasa*. There can be no aesthetic experience without the transparency of a theme reflecting the poet's primary and secondary modes of consciousness; without the central character which gripped first the artist's consciousness; without the other characters which are indispensable for unfolding the entire plot which alone contains the artist's integral apprehension; without the doings of these characters which make up the story; without the scenes, episodes, descriptions and particular beauties of thought and phrase scattered in profusion throughout a work of art, which constitute the infinite variety—the very life—of the work of art.

We can examine, in this context, the three assumptions that (a) the character or characters are *rasa*; (b) that episodes, situations and descriptions are *rasa*; (c) that *rasoktis* are *rasa*. Apart from their significance as parts of a whole, i.e. the work of art, we shall see whether they have an independent excellence and, if so, in what manner.

The question arises pointedly with regard to characterisation. A character will have certain well-defined sentiments of its own, as human beings have. It is with regard to dramatic and narrative poetry that this question assumes great importance. Thus Bhoja refers to four kinds of heroes,—*Dhirashanta* (the serene), *Dhiralalita* (the romantic), *Dhiroddhata* (the proud) and *Dhirodatta* (the magnanimous) and remarks that the four new *rasas*—*Shanta*, *Preyas*, *Uddhata* and *Udatta*—are illustrated in these dramatic types. Bhoja was, in a sense, justified in using the word *rasa* in this connection. The four dramatic types that Bhoja mentions can be illustrated from Shakespeare, by Prospero, Romeo, Coriolanus and Hamlet respectively. The serenity of Prospero, the innocent and romantic love of Romeo, the self-centredness of Coriolanus and the idealism of Hamlet are, no doubt, master sentiments and have to be recognised as such. But these are the sentiments or attitudes of the characters drawn by the dramatist, not those of the dramatist himself. The meaning that Shakespeare had in mind when he wrote the plays of which these characters are heroes is to be extracted, not merely from a study of these dominant heroes but of the entire plot, —of all the characters and circumstances in their proper setting and not merely of one character, however important the character may be. The celebrated controversy as to the primacy of plot or character can be easily resolved by a consideration of the primary and secondary *rasas* present in a work of art. Plot is of the first importance in a work of art, however outstanding the characters delineated in it; for it is the accredited vehicle of the artist's attitude. Characters are only one aspect of plot,—of the providential scheme of which the artist is the creator. Thus, if one were to extract Shakespeare's own attitude towards life as set forth in *Macbeth*, one would say that it consists in a marvellous sense of the pity, the terror and the grandeur of life as seen in a particular fragment of it,—the story of Macbeth and another characters. But Macbeth himself embodies the sentiment or *rasa* of ambition or *Akanksha*. The *Akanksha* of Macbeth, the *Udattata* of Hamlet, the *Uddhatata* of Coriolanus, the *Asuya* of Othello and even the serenity of Prospero are secondary *rasas* inherent in the object or the theme, however close the affiliation of some of them may be with the attitude of the artist himself.

Apart from characters, one has to recognise also the existence

of certain thematic *rasas*,—the significance of situations and episodic descriptions inherent in the object or the theme. If characters are comparable to the *sthayins* or basic sentiments of a play, the thematic *rasas* correspond, on the objective side, to the *sanchari bhavas* or transitory emotions on the subjective plane. These are the high lights of an otherwise uniform artistic delineation, just as transitory emotions are the flame-jets of a central attitude. They inhere in the theme and the artist releases them from the bondage of lifeless or cold fact by animating them with his imaginative energy. These situations also have been called *rasas*. For instance, the *Dasarupaka* is said to record a view that मृगया i.e. hunting and dice were considered by some as *rasas*: मृगया क्षादयो रसाः। Belinda at the toilet in *The Rape of the Lock*, the Ferdinand-Miranda scene in *The Ordeal of Richard Feveral*, the sleep-walking scene in *Macbeth*, —all these interesting situations are developed with feeling. Bhoja who mentions a few *rasas* of this type is at a loss how to account for their *sthayins*, etc. in the orthodox manner. But we are not discussing sentiments or attitudes constituted with a propensity or a conceptual core or cores at the centre. When the artist handles a large theme, it has numerous potentialities. It contains situations or episodes which, if they are well developed, can have an independent and self-contained excellence of their own, in addition to their function as coloured pieces in a mosaic of meaning. The description of a landscape or castle, the psychological analysis of a particular type of character, the portrayal of a special kind of atmosphere,—all these and their like can have an individuality of their own in drama fiction and epic or narrative poetry. These can, therefore, be considered as thematic *rasas* or manifestations of the potentiality in the material. That the vision and the craftsmanship of the artist contribute ultimately to this consummation need not invalidate our assumption which has a certain practical basis and utility. Bhoja confused thematic *rasas* with basic sentiments or attitudes. But they are transitory or *Vyabhichari rasas*, being अप्रधान and अस्वतंत्र i.e. ancillary and dependent.

Bhoja even enlarges the meaning of the word *rasa* so as to include any literary expression that can be relished or tasted. रसनाद रसः। आस्वाद्यत्वात रसः। Thus *rasa*, as Dr. Raghavan points out, is considered as रस्यमान अंश even as Dandin defined *Alamkara* as शोभाकर धर्म. This need not be objected to. Of the three kinds of *Ukti* or utterance that Bhoja mentions

—*Swabhavokti* (direct expression), *Vakrokti* (oblique expression) and *Rasokti* (emotive expression), *Rasokti* consists in the expression of feeling or an emotional state. It is the utterance that goes straight to the heart. Dramatic, narrative or lyrical poetry and even imaginative prose is replete with such utterances. Portia's great speech on mercy, Hamlet's speech on man as the quintessence of dust, Prospero's speech about the "great globe itself"—all these are *Rasoktis* and have an independent beauty of their own. Whole volumes, in fact, of extracts from Shakespeare's plays have been published as "Beauties from Shakespeare". The expression of the feelings proceeding from the poet's basic attitude in the course of his endeavour to embody it in a work of art results in *Rasoktis*, metaphysical shudders, flashes of insight and felicities of phrase, passing and surpassing beauties of thought, feeling and utterance. They contribute to the ultimate effect but have, nevertheless, an excellence of their own.

Character is a system of sentiments,—their organisation into an attitude. In all full-length portrayals of character it is such systems that are embodied into secondary *rasas*. We have seen how fugitive emotions and consequents can develop into sentiments when they get linked to a conceptual core and even into attitudes. But some aestheticians regarded them as *rasas* even when these remained themselves, without attaining any higher status. This is possible only in a restricted sense. Just as a theme (the *vibhava* or object contains characters having sentiments of their own, it may contain characters which are nothing more than embodiments of an idea or feeling or automatons of a particular type of repetitive action. Jealousy, for instance, can be typified as in Ben Jonson's *Kiteley* or raised to the status of a master sentiment or attitude on the tragic plane as in *Othello*. Inner conflict can be presented comically as in Drawcansir of *The Rehearsal* or set forth tragically as in *Hamlet*. Sleep can be presented as a symbolic attitude, as in Sleeping Beauty or presented comically in a character like Joe in *The Pickwick Papers*. Reticence can be tragic as in Cordelia or comic as in a young bridegroom covered with blushes. The great characters in world literature, even comic characters like Don Quixote, Falstaff and Uncle Toby, are embodiments of attitudes. The caricatures and comic and melodramatic types are embodiments of simple ideas, fugitive emotions or "consequents". There is no

idea, transitory emotion or "consequent" that cannot be raised to the tragic plane or to the status of a master sentiment.

Even yawning can have a tragic significance. If it has not been so used in the past, it can be used in the future. Pride, bashfulness, perspiring, trembling, crying,—these and their like can develop into sentiments and rise in the scale of literary creation or sink to the level of caricatures and types without having any such affiliations. We thus see how *sanchari bhavas* and *anubhavas* can be embodied into minor types of character and become *rasas*. (These types are different from sketches like Enobarbus and Kent who embody sentiments but are drawn sketchily on a crowded canvas.) Enough has been said to prove that every theme contains certain minor potentialities, by way of character material, which can be embodied into minor *rasas*.

Whether the *bhavas* are turned into great characters or mere types, depends on the basic attitude of the artist. If it is the point of view of Ben Jonson or Kyd, the whole stage will be littered with humours and emotional types. If the poet's attitude is one of high seriousness, the delineation will be equally lofty. The kind of drama, fiction or narrative poetry, whether romantic or realistic, comic, tragic or melodramatic, and of characterisation, whether individual or typical, will depend on the basic attitude of the artist, his tastes and talents and the material he chooses.

VI. Rasa: The Technique in the Tool

The transmission of the artist's contemplative delight into a work of art is facilitated by his *tastes* and *abilities*. If sentiments connote likings and dislikings for objects, tastes, as McDougall remarks, are likings and dislikings for particular modes of activity. Sentiments determine the major goals; tastes determine the choice of means in pursuing the goal. If a taste is to be indulged, there must be some motive springing from some other source than taste itself. The average pleasure seeker only indulges his tastes. But the essential condition of happiness, as has been pointed out by McDougall himself, is activity springing from a system of sentiments. Tastes are thus developed in the service of sentiments. They determine the artistic *fashion* or *form* utilized in a work of art. There is plausible ground

for speculating that *Hamlet*, if it had been produced during the nineteenth century, might have come down to us in the form of a novel rather than a play.

It is the *abilities* of the artist that serve to transform his contemplative delight into creative delight. His skill in construction and imitation and his play-attitude affect the transition and build up an illusion which becomes a satisfying vehicle of his delight.

A work of art is called *rasavat*. But this is said to be simply a manner of speaking by projection, imputation, or inference, for it is insisted that *rasa* is not an objective quality present in the work of art or any of its parts[1]. *Rasa* as *essence*—as the significance of life seen through a temperament—is certainly to be found in a work of art, not in the print or pulp of the pages, but in the expression or language in which it has been embodied by the artist. An object or event or person in the external world is permeated by Reality and is, to that extent, capable of arousing the imagination of the artist. The object can thus be said to contain in itself *rasa*,—essence, the essence of Reality in its own kind, the common and essential traits of its class. Similarly, a work of art which moves the *rasika* or "Taster" to aesthetic delight can be said to contain in itself *rasa*,—an essential attitude, —the distilled, transmuted and concentrated essence of certain aspects of life as seen through a temperament. Bharata remarks that the *sthayi bhavas* or dominant sentiments presented in a drama with the aid of emotions and histrionic presentation are tasted by the knowing or the cultured through their mental palate and they are therefore called *natyarasas*.

Rasa as *essence* is embodied in a work of art. As *experience* it resides in the reader who has the capacity for tasting the experience.

Moreover, in the section on *rasa* as object, we have seen how there are secondary *rasas* embodied in a character or characters of a given theme, thematic *rasas* arising from collateral description or presentation and *Rasoktis* or emotive utterances which are the particular beauties of a work of art.

Thus, in the linked chain of sweetness that is aesthetic experience, a work of art is itself an invaluable link. What is a culmination

[1] *The Transformation of Nature in Art*, A. K. Coomarswamy, p. 196.

and fulfilment for the artist is a *vibhava* or determinant or a starting point for the reader whose fulfilment lies in a sublimated consciousness, in enriched and illuminated experience.

Once the artist's attitude, brought into full play by contact with the object, has been experienced and resolved into delight, his creative activity occupies the foreground. He pours his delight and his vision into a work of art and experiences the joy of creation. It is through the magic of language that the poet achieves his object. He presents his basic attitude through a suitable theme which becomes the *vibhava* or determinant for arousing the reader's imagination in the direction in which he wishes to take it. This is the stage of *anubhava* for the artist,—of a bodying forth of his experience. Literary form has अभिधा or a significative aspect. This is the presentation, in words, of a fusion of plot, character, stylistic excellence, decorative design, grace and the immanence of *rasa*. The artist avoids structural and stylistic flaws. By employing direct, oblique and emotive expression, he secures the immanence of *rasa*. He objectifies his own *Sthayibhava* or attitude in this way so that the reader's *Sthayibhava* might be enkindled. For the *karana* or the immediate cause that aroused his own imagination, the artist substitutes a *vibhava* or an appointed theme. In the course of his unfoldment of his own attitude, the artist's Pegasus strikes sparks with its hooves. These are the artist's fugitive emotions and the expression of these, in turn, becomes a series of stimulants or उद्दीपन भावाs for the reader. That is how the artist achieves an intensive delineation of his own attitude.

A *rupa* or image is produced by a co-ordination of the sensational and intelligible (formal) elements of appearance,—*Bhuta mātrā* and *Prajna mātrā* (*Kaoshitaki Upanishad*, II. 8). Art has to maintain *pramana*, the norm of properly conceived design. The creative faculty is of three kinds,—innate (*sahaja*), acquired (*aharya*) and learnt (*aupadesika*). Thus poets are *saraswata*, *abhyasika* (trained), and *aupadeshika* (taught) depending on rules). *Abhyasa* (practice) or *anusila* (devoted application) is essential for every artist. This alone results in *shlishtatwa* or technical skill which is necessary for *madhurya* (grace or facility) in the performance. (Rajashekhara's *Kavyamimamsa*. Chap. II). "The true artist is both born and made, both theoretically and practically equipped by genius (*sakti*), imagination or vision (*pratibha*), scholarship (*vyutpatti*)

concentration (*samadhi*) and practice (*abhyasa*)'[1]. "Ascertained rules", remarks A. Coomerswamy "should be thought as the vehicle assumed by spontaneity, in so far as spontaneity is possible for us, rather than as any kind of bondage."[2] The beauty of the work will in no way depend on the beauty of the theme itself or its component parts. It is pointed out that any theme whatever, "lovely or unlovely, noble or vulgar, gracious or frightful" etc., may become the vehicle of *rasa*.[3]

It is the concomitance of sound and sense or the identity of form and concept embodied in a work of art that conveys to the reader the ultimate context of art.

The *bhavana* or *bhavakatva* or the generalised presentation of his own attitude is secured by the artist, by avoiding what Abhinavagupta calls barriers to the realisation of *rasa*:

(i) The artist should be steeped in his theme and prefer "probable impossibilities" to impossible probabilities.

(ii) An avoidance of the distraction of the local and the particular beyond the bounds of propriety, of the pressure of the age and body of a particular time or locality.

(iii) Failure to disengage the reader or the spectator from a pre-occupation with his own affections and prejudices without providing suitable attractions for his imagination, intellect and taste.

(iv) The absence of adequate means provided in the work of art itself for an immediate realisation of its significance.

(v) Lack of perspicuity.

(vi) The absence of unity, the crowding out of the original design by a disproportionate place given to particular beauties.

(vii) The absence of a clear presentation of design which leaves the meaning of a particular episode, speech or gesture in doubt.

Rasa is bodied forth when there is a harmonious co-ordination of all the parts, the subordination of the parts to the whole, of particular beauties and even of outstanding characterisation to the basic attitude of the artist.

[1] *The Transformation of Nature in Art*, A.K. Coomarswamy, p. 186.

[2] ibid. p. 23.

[3] ibid. p. 48. Quoted from *Dasrupa*, IV. 90.

It is when these conditions are fulfilled that the imaginative sympathy of the reader is aroused. The reader identifies himself with the presented matter and criticism, as A. K. Coomarswamy says, "repeats the process of creation." It is by the operation of ideal sensibility, aided by the means provided by the artist, that the soul of the reader breaks through the enclosing walls.

The basic attitude has to be presented with the utmost intensity if it is to lead to aesthetic delight. But there will naturally be many degrees of intensity. There is the full-fledged state of *Prakarsha* or complete emergence. This is possible in a sustained work of art. It is usually in the full-length portrait of a hero or heroine or of the author himself, if he is the central theme, that this identification is seen. In the second kind, which is called *bhavarupa*, we have undeveloped *rasa*, as in sub-plots, episodes or lyrics. *Rasa* is seminally present in these because presentation of determinants, stimulants, consequents, etc. is not possible in them on the same scale on which it is possible in an epic or drama. There should be no extended development of a transient emotion for it becomes an inhibition of *rasa*. Again, even if *rasa* has been delineated elaborately, with the full presentation of stimulants determinants, transient emotions, etc., if either the context or the attribution of it to a particular character is inappropriate, there is *rasabhasa*, or *bhavabhasa*,—the inhibition of *rasa* or *bhava*. Such an inhibition may be used as a source of humour, as in Chaucer's *Tale of Chaunticleer*.

When the work of art happens to be a drama, the technique of the artist has to be aided further by the talents of the actor and the producer, even as a lyric has to be interpreted by a reciter, whether the reciter is the poet himself or any other individual. The view that there is a *rasa* called *nepathya rasa* and the view that the actor is the seat of *rasa* are justified in this context. The equipment and decoration of the stage so as to harmonise with the theme, the capacity of the actor to identify himself with the role he plays, to the minutest point of intonation and gesture,—these are necessary for exhibiting the *rasa* latent in the play so as to arouse the imagination of the spectator. Moreover, production and histrionics can also be enjoyed separately in their own right and for their own excellence.

Matragupta mentions a *rasa* called *nepathya rasa*: माल्यभूषण वस्त्राद्यै नेपथ्यरस उच्यते। (Quoted by Dr. Raghavan in his thesis on Bhoja, p. 458).

Since stage-production can give delight and excite admiration both independently and in relation to the play, it can be said to have an independent artistic validity evoking a corresponding aesthetic response.

VII. Rasa as Bhoga: The Recipient's Delight

We now come to the final phase of the aesthetic process, the form that *rasa* takes in the consciousness of the *rasika*, the cultured recipient. The supreme Reality has split itself into subject and object for its own *leela* or delight. Every object has thus a core of reality or ideal beauty in it and every subject has the capacity to experience it. The approach of the subject towards the object or *prakriti*, of the *sattwic ahamkara* or awareness sublimated but still limited and divided in its consciousness, results in the evolution of several basic attitudes. These, in their turn, culminate in integral knowledge or experience achieved through the identification of the subject with the object. Such a perception or experience results in a calm of spirit or pure delight. This delight then seeks to embody itself into a work of art, partly impelled by a love of the pure joy of creation and partly for intensifying itself by communicating itself to other minds. It thus reaches the *rasika*, *sahrdaya* or *pramatru*, the cultured recipient.

The heavenly Ganges of pure delight descends on the head of Siva, the world's redeemer from the world-poison. She is lost in Siva's locks of matted hair and gives him the cool and divine touch he needs. She then issues forth in a second profusion led by Bhagiratha, the responsive interpreter, who leads her on for the resurrection of his vast brotherhood,—the community of deadened souls. In the inevitable march of humanity towards a higher and nobler life, art is the torch held high, the light, the guide and the redeemer.

The *rasika* is himself a rare person, as rare a person as the artist. रसः अस्य अस्तीति रसिकः। The faculty of disinterested aesthetic contemplation is innate in the *rasika*. It is this faculty which distinguishes him from the vulgar multitude. Not that this capacity is denied to other human beings. It is latent in them and has to be aroused by a *rasika*, an *interpreter*. The *gramya* or rustic has to be shown how to cultivate the qualities of the heart and the power of imaginative sympathy. The *sahradaya* is one whose heart or entire being is permeated by such

sympathy. He has the power of *Bhogi-karana* or the *sattwic* imagination which responds to the generalised presentation of emotions or of basic attitudes. Through complete identification with the presented theme the *sahrdaya* loses his own individuality for the time being. Such a contemplation brings his own system of sentiments or basic attitudes into full play,—that aspect of it which is related to the attitude portrayed. Rising to its peak, the attitude resolves itself into a thrill of delight. We detect the following factors in this aesthetic experience:

(1) The sense of satisfaction arising from an awareness of our capacity to identify ourselves with others, to experience the joys and sorrows of others as our own. By "others" is not necessarily meant the characters in a given work of art. It is not the tragedy of Desdemona that moves us to tears, but the tragedy of any woman placed in the circumstances in which Desdemona was placed. This is what is meant by referring to the generic aspect of an emotion.

(2) The actual experience of joy or sorrow arising out of the identification.

(3) The admiration for the genius of the poet (and the actor) who present it and the pleasure born of 'tasting' a perfect work of art, a pleasure which is the counterpart of the artist's joy of creation.

(4) If it is the pleasurable emotions that are evoked, the ultimate delight that transcends both pleasure and pain, reveals itself accompanied by the glow and warmth of contentment, *prasannata* or the serene diffusion of spirit,—the exuberance of spring. If the painful emotions are evoked, the delight reveals itself accompanied by chastened calm,—the calm after the storm, the wintry heroism and humility of dreary-nighted December. But the delight lurks behind both the flow of contentment and the chastened calm and is distinct from both. Tragedies which produce a merely depressing effect are, to that extent, indicative of the incomplete contemplative activity of the artist, his failure to carry his conflict through to its triumphant conclusion. There is the flowering of the soul fanned by the cool breezes of spring or the flower's unshrinking calm beneath the scorching rays of the sun,—gazing back at the sun with an eye as effulgent as his.

The Sanskrit aestheticians distinguish between various kinds of aesthetic experience by the *rasika*, which should suffice to prove that several of them recognised qualitative and quantitative variations in

the enjoyment of *rasa*. The features possessed in common by all kinds of aesthetic experience are:

(i) The sense of satisfaction born of a capacity for identification.

(ii) The admiration for the artist's (and the actor's) genius.

(iii) The transcendent delight that lurks behind both pleasure and pain.

It is easily seen that variations are possible here too because no two *rasikas* have the capacity in an equal degree, no two works embody the same kind and degree of genius and no two poets have the capacity for evoking pure delight in the same measure. The one distinguishing feature is the actual state of joy or sorrow delineated in the work and experienced by the *rasika*. This causes considerable variations in the sum-total of his experience.

But we should not ignore the background of unity and sameness present in all aesthetic experience. Poetry 'moves' us. Sanskrit aestheticians use the word *druti* or *dipti* to signify the same process,—poetry *melts* the frozen current of the soul. It *kindles* our consciousness. All genuine poetry generally does this for us.

But there is a variety in this unity of aesthetic experience. The words *druti* and *dipti* have themselves a special connotation. Pity melts the heart. Enthusiasm or the delineation of thrilling exploits and adventures kindles it. As a result of the predominant delineation of one or more basic attitudes in a work of art, the general effect is sure to differ from one work to another. Certain broad types emerge in this connection. *Vikasa* (unfolding), *Vistara* (heightening), *Kshobha* (churning, tumultuousness, agitation); and *Vikshepa* (penetration, the piercing or stabbing effect) are recognised in Sanskrit. The following analysis is based on the thirteen basic attitudes discussed in a preceding section. Each type of aesthetic experience is illustrated with reference to relevant attitudes.

(i) *Chittavikasa*: (the expansion of consciousness): realism in its normal and traditional aspect; impressionism; the 'wit' of the comedy of wit and manners; the egoistic and expressionist approach; optimism; faith and doubt; surrealism; the intellectual or neoclassical approach; detective fiction; the attitude of the comic spirit.

(2) *Hitting or bruising the consciousness*: the satirical and cynical attitudes.

(3) *Tumultuousness*: *Kshobha*: *the agitation of consciousness*: resentment; scorn; the sardonic; repulsion.

(4) *The contraction of consciousness*: *freezing or depressing it*: fear; settled despair; misanthropy; pessimism.

(5) *Vikshepa*; *piercing or stabbing the consciousness*: *Shoka* or lamentation.

(6) *Dipti*: *the kindling of consciousness*: the apprehension of the supernatural, or of the romance of the past; revolt against tradition; the revolutionary light of the future; fantasy; mystery; burlesque and parody; *utsaha* or enthusiasm.

(7) *Druti*: *the melting of consciousness*.—pity; *vatsalya*; universal sympathy; melancholy or divine discontent; love; platonic love; friendship; nature-worship; Kierkeguaardism.

(8) *Vistara*, *the heightening of consciousness*: the endeavour to maintain the mind in an attitude of 'prayer'; sublimity; stoic calm or peace.

(9) *Prakasha*: *the illumination of consciousness*: superconscient vision; the apprehension of the enduring significance of an object.

Of these nine aesthetic states, the first is predominantly one of the cognition,—the continual drinking in of knowledge. The expansion of consciousness is achieved through the stimulus supplied by introspection, by an apprehension of reality through the intellect. We have included here the perceptions of the comic spirit and of the core of an object as in Hardy's *At the Time of the Breaking of the Nations*. These perceptions seem to *illuminate* the consciousness. But they have no pronounced connection with a superconscient source.

The second is a more active process. The consciousness is teased and roused through exaggeration, undue emphasis, irony and other acute appliances.

This process is intensified in the third,—the consciousness is now in a state of great agitation.

The fourth state brings about a shrinking or contraction of the consciousness. It is benumbed by the sensuous, intellectual or emotional apparatus used for *freezing* it.

There is a piercing or stabbing of consciousness in the fifth. It is no mere agitation or bruising but almost a dissolution of the consciousness,—the overpowering of a stricken animal in the dark.

The sixth is a kindling of the consciousness. Wonder and surprise give it a foretaste of *light* and *heightening*.

The seventh indicates a melting of consciousness,—the *udreka* emanating from a touched and moved heart.

Behind each of these seven states—the Pleiades—is the calm light of the setting sun or *santi* or the soft and pure delight of the moon, *ananda*.

These states can be spoken of as the *nine rasas*. Any one or more of them can be the dominant effect of a work of art. Galsworthy's plays leave us in a state of tumultuous and unsettled emotion. A romantic comedy like Shakespeare's melts the heart. A satirical comedy like Ben Jonson's *Volpone* hits the sense with its satire and cynicism. A melodrama has a freezing effect, it benumbs the mind. The last book of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* leaves us depressed and appalled. A classic or great work of art leads us through as many of these emotional states as possible to a heightening or illumination of consciousness. Shakespeare's Tragedies heighten our consciousness, while kindling, agitating and melting it at the same time. They impart a sense of pity, terror and grandeur. Every great work of art plays on some or many of these chords of the human heart and leaves a final impression of calm, of ineffable peace, or its twin brother, the delight of the spirit, which always lurks behind it.

Needless to say, untrained and primitive responses to aesthetic presentation are ruled out of consideration here. The lady who exclaimed after witnessing the tortuous treatment meted out by Othello to Desdemona "you black fool! Can't you see?" or the Muslim spectator who went forth to slap the actor who played the role of Harischandra for the suffering inflicted on Taramati,—these and their like stand for a raw vital response which is not relevant to a consideration of pure aesthetic experience.

It is true that every one cannot respond to all the varieties of aesthetic experience. That is why Abhinavagupta remarks that only certain *rasas* appeal to certain persons. A few sentiments, like love in its common aspects, have a universal appeal. Very few can identify themselves with a work of art capable of inducing in them a state of *santi* (serenity) or pure *ananda*. These few, in their turn, will not very much appreciate the presentation of the erotic. One is reminded

here of the humourless professor of English reading a novel by Dickens with his pupils in the class and remarking, when he came to an unusually humourous situation or comment, "Here, gentlemen, you are expected to laugh." The poetry of one generation is likely to pall on the palate of another. What one nation worships, another may only glance at curiously. The classics that have a universal appeal are limited in number. A uniform excellence of aesthetic taste is one of the miracles which humanity has yet to achieve.

Aesthetic experience helps the diffusion of *shanti*, *pushti* and *tushti* —peace, strength and content—in society. It makes for man's *sayujya* and *samrajya*,—his empire over self and over his cosmic environment. *Rasa*—the Supreme Reality—splits itself into Purusha and Prakriti. It reunites itself and, through the projection of various modes of consciousness or *leela dharmas*, tries to realise itself as the conscious and cosmic Immanent Divine,—the *samarasa* or harmony of a glorious *samashti* or emancipated and divinised humanity.[1]

V. K. GOKAK

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