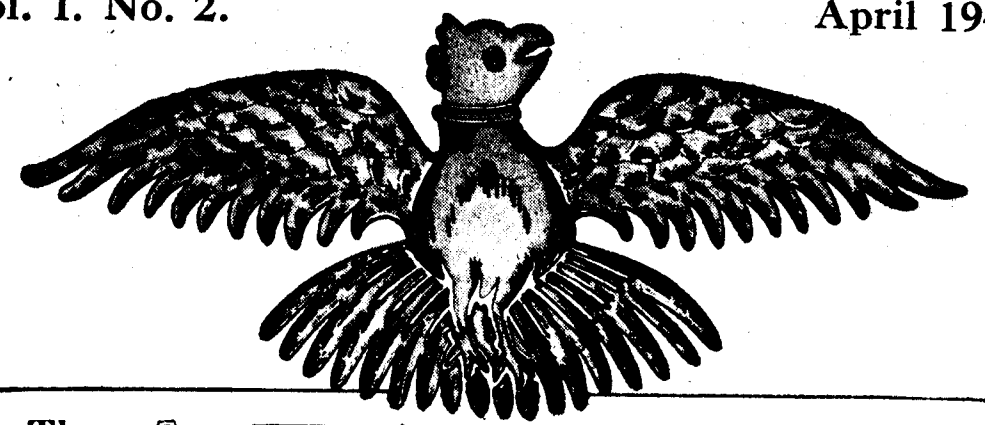


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Vol. I. No. 2.

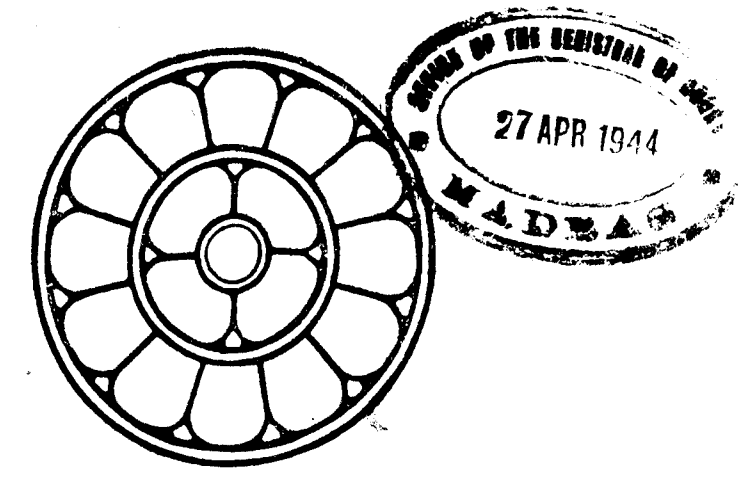
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April 1944



The ADVENT

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



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A2m1, N44AD
N44.1.2
178965

Publication Office
Aurobindo Library, George Town, Madras
Land, Rupees Five; Foreign, Twelve Shillings Six Pence
ad: Single Copy, Rupee One and Annas Eight

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Editor
R. VAIDYANATHASWAMY, D.Sc.

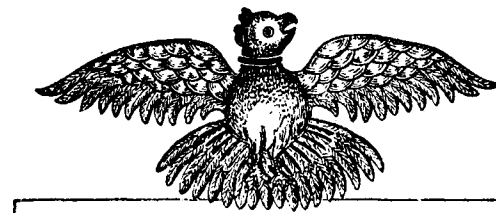
Publisher
SRI AUROBINDO LIBRARY, MADRAS

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April 1944

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The **ADVENT**



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

MATER DOLOROSA

Suffering, Distress and Death today hold the earth in thrall. And yet can there be any other issue in temporal life? That seems to be the ineluctable fate for mankind. Ages ago it was declared, the wages of sin is death.

Doubters ask, however, if sinners alone suffered, one would not perhaps mind; but along with sinners why should innocents, nay even the virtuous, pass under the axe? What sins indeed babes commit? Are the sins of the fathers truly visited upon coming generations? A queer arrangement, to say the least, if there is a wise and just and benevolent God! Yes, how many honest people, people who strive to live piously, honestly and honourably, according to the law of righteousness, fail to escape! All equally undergo the same heavy punishment.

Is it not then nearer the truth to say that a most mechanical Nature, a mere gamble of chance—a statistical equation, as mathematicians say, moves the destiny of creatures and things in the universe, that there is nowhere a heart or consciousness in the whole business?

Some believers in God or in the Spirit admit that it is so. The world is the creation of another being, a not-God, a not-Spirit—whether Maya or Arhiman or the Great Evil. One has simply to forget the world, abandon earthly existence altogether as a nightmare. Peace, felicity one can possess and enjoy—but not here in this vale of tears, *anityam asukham lokam imam*, but elsewhere beyond.

Is that the whole truth? We, for ourselves, do not subscribe to

this view. Truth is a very complex entity, the universe a mingled strain. It is not a matter of merely sinners and innocents that we have to deal with. The problem is deeper and more fundamental. The whole question is,—where, in which world, on which level of consciousness do we stand, and, what is more crucial, how much of that consciousness is dynamic and effective in normal life. If we are in the ordinary consciousness and live wholly with that consciousness, it is inevitable that, being in the midst of Nature's current, we should be buffeted along, the good and the evil, as we conceive them to be, befalling us indiscriminately. Or, again, if we happen to live in part or even mainly in an inner or higher consciousness, more or less in a mood of withdrawal from the current of life, allowing the life movements to happen as they list, then too we remain, in fact, creatures and playthings of Nature and we must not wonder if, externally, suffering becomes the badge of our tribe.

And yet the solution need not be a total rejection and transcendence of Nature. For what is ignored in this view is Nature's dual reality. In one form, the inferior (*apara*), Nature means the Law of Ignorance—of pain and misery and death; but in another

form, the superior (*para*), Nature's is the Law of Knowledge, that is to say, of happiness, immunity and immortality, not elsewhere in another world and in a transcendent consciousness, but here below on the physical earth in a physical body.

The whole question then is this—how far has this Higher Nature been a reality with us, to what extent do we live and move and have our being in it. It is when the normal life, our body, our life and our mentality have all adopted and absorbed the substance of the Higher Prakriti and become it, when all the modes of Inferior Prakriti have been discarded and annihilated, or rather, have been purified and made to grow into the modes of the Higher Prakriti, that our terrestrial life can become a thing of absolute beauty and perfect perfection.

If, on the contrary, any part of us belongs to the Inferior Nature, even if the larger part dwells in some higher status of Nature, even then we are not immune to the attacks that come from the Inferior Nature. Those whom we usually call pious or virtuous or honest have still a good part of them imbedded in the Lower Nature, in various degrees they are yet her vassals; they owe allegiance to the three gunas, be it even to *sattwa*—*sattwa* is also a

movement in Inferior Nature; they are not above, they are not free. Has not Sri Krishna said:

Traigunyavishaya Veda
nistraigunyo bhavarjuna?

The only thing we must remember is that freedom from the gunas does not necessarily mean an absolute cessation of the play of Prakriti. Being in the gunas we must know how to purify and change them, transmute them into their higher and divine potentials.

This is a counsel of perfection, one would say. But there is no other way out. If humanity is to be saved, if it is at all to progress, it can be only in this direction. Buddha's was no less a counsel of perfection. He saw the misery of man, the three great maladies inherent in life and his supreme compassion led him to the dis-

covery of a remedy, a radical remedy,—indeed it could remove the malady altogether, for it removed the patient also. What we propose is, in this sense, something less drastic. Ours is not a path of escape, although that too needs heroism, but of battle and conquest and lordship.

It is not to say that other remedies—less radical but more normal to human nature—cannot be undertaken in the meanwhile. The higher truths do not rule out the lower. These too have their place and utility in Nature's integral economy. An organisation based on science and ethicism can be of help as a palliative and measure of relief; it may be even immediately necessary under the circumstances, but however imperative at the moment it does not go to the root of the matter.

FEDERATED HUMANITY

The last great war, out of its bloody welter, threw up a *mantra* for the human consciousness to contemplate and seize and realise: it was *self-determination*. The present world-war has likewise cast up a *mantra* that is complementary. The problem of the unification of the whole human race has engaged the attention of seers and sages, idealists and men of action, since time immemorial; but only re-

cently its demand has become categorically imperative for a solution in the field of practical politics. Viewed from another angle, one can say that it is also a problem Nature has set before herself, has been dealing with through the ages, elaborating and leading to a final issue.

The original unit of the human aggregate is the family; it is like the original cell which lies at the

back of the entire system that is called the human body or, for that matter, any organic body. A living and stable nucleus is needed round which a crystallisation and growth can occur. The family furnished such a nucleus in the early epochs of humanity. But with the growth of human life there came a time when, for a better and more efficient organization in collective life, larger units were needed. The original unit had to be enlarged in order to meet the demands of a wider and more complex growth. Also it is to be noted that the living body is not merely a conglomeration of cells, all more or less equal and autonomous—something like a democratic or an anarchic organization; but it consists of a grouping of such cells in spheres or regions or systems according to differing functions. And as we rise in the scale of evolution the grouping becomes more and more complex, well-defined and hierarchical. Human collectivity also shows a similar development in organization. The original, the primitive unit—the family—was first taken up into a larger unit, the clan; the clan, in its turn, gave place to the tribe and finally the tribe merged into the nation. A similar widening of the unit can also be noticed in man's habitat, in his geographical environment. The

primitive man was confined to the village; the village gradually grew into the township and the city state. Then came the regional unit and last of all we arrived at the country.

Until the last great war it seemed that the nation (and country) was the largest living unit that human collectivity could admit without the risk of a break-up. Now it was at this momentous epoch that the first concept or shape of a larger federation—typified in the League of Nations—stirred into life and began to demand its *lebensraum*. It could not however come to fruition and stability, because the age of isolated nationhood had not yet passed and the principle of self-determination yet needed its absolute justification.

The present war puts the problem in the most acute way. Shall it be still a nation or shall it be a "commonwealth" that must henceforth be the dynamic unit? Today it is evident, it is a fact established by the sheer force of circumstances that isolated, self-sufficient nations are a thing of the past, even like the tribes of the Hebrews or the clans of the Hittites. A super-nation, that is to say, a commonwealth of nations is the larger unit that Nature is in travail to bring forth and establish. That is the inner meaning

of the mighty convulsions shaking and tearing humanity today. The empire of the past—an empire of the Roman type and pattern—was indeed in its own way an attempt in the direction of a closely unified larger humanity; but it was a crude and abortive attempt, as Nature's first attempts mostly are. For the term that was omitted in that greater synthesis was self-determination. Centralisation is certainly the secret of a large organic unity, but not over-centralisation; for this means the submission and sacrifice of all other parts of an organism to the undue demands and interests of only one organ which is considered as the centre, the *metropolis*. Such a system dries up in the end the vitality of the organism: the centre sucking in all nourishment from the outlying members suffers from œdema and the whole eventually decays and disintegrates. That is the lesson the Roman Empire teaches us.

The autocratic empire is dead and gone: we need not fear its shadow or ghostly regeneration. But the ideal which inspired it in secret and justified its advent and reign is a truth that has still its day. The drive of Nature, of the inner consciousness of humanity was always to find a greater and larger unit for the collective life of mankind. That

unit today has to be a federation of free peoples and nations. In the place of nations, several such commonwealths must now form the broad systems of the body politic of human collectivity. That must give the pattern of its texture, the outline of its configuration—the shape of things to come. Such a unit is no longer a hypothetical proposition, a nebula, a matter of dream and imagination. It has become a practical necessity; first of all, because of the virtual impossibility of any single nation, big or small, standing all by itself alone—military and political and economic exigencies demand incapable collaboration with others, and secondly, because of the still stricter geographical compulsion—the speed and ease of communication has made the globe so small and all its parts so interdependent that none can possibly afford to be exclusive and self-centred.

The organisation of this greater and larger unit is the order of the day. It does not seem possible at this stage to go straight to the whole of humanity at large and make of it one single indivisible entity, obliterating all barriers of race and nation. An intermediate step is still necessary even if that remains the final end. Nationhood has been a helper in that direction; it is now a bar. And yet an indiscriminate internation-

alism cannot meet the situation today, it overshoots the mark. The march of events and circumstances prescribe that nations should combine to form groups or, as they say in French, societies of nations. The combination, however, must be freely determined, as voluntary partnership in a common labour and organisation for common profit

VANSITTARTISM

Germany is considered now, and naturally with great reason, as the arch criminal among nations. Such megalomania, such lust for wanton cruelty, such wild sadism, such abnormal velleities no people, it is said, have ever evinced anywhere on the face of the earth: the manner and the extent of it all are appalling. Hitler is not the malady; removal of the Fuehrer will not cure Germany. The man is only a sign and a symbol. The whole nation is corrupt to the core: it has been inoculated with a virus that cannot be eradicated. The peculiar German character that confronts and bewilders us now, is not a thing of today or even of yesterday; it has been there since Tacitus remarked it. Even Germans themselves know it very well; the best among them have always repudiated their mother country.

and achievement. This problem has to be solved first, then only can the question of nationalism or other allied knots be unravelled. Nature the Sphinx has set the problem before us and we have to answer it here and now, if humanity is to be saved and welded together into a harmonious whole for a divine purpose.

Certainly there were peoples and nations that acted at times most barbarously and inhumanly. The classical example of the Spanish Terror in America is there. But all pales into insignificance when compared to the German achievement and ideal in this respect. For here is a people violent and cruel, not simply because it is their character to be so and they delight in being so, but because it forms the bedrock of their philosophy of life, their weltanschauung.

This is the very core of the matter. Germany stands for a philosophy of life, for a definite mode of human values. That philosophy was slowly developed, elaborated by the German mind, in various degrees and in various ways through various thinkers and theorists and moralists and statesmen, sometimes consciously,

sometimes unconsciously. The conception of the State as propounded even by her great philosophers as something self-existent, sacrosanct and almost divine—august and grim, one has to add—is profoundly significant of the type of the subconscious dynamic in the nation: it strangely reminds one of the state organised by the bee, the ant or the termite. Hitler has only precipitated the idea, given it a concrete, physical and dynamic form. That philosophy in its outlook has been culturally anti-Latin, religiously anti-Christian. Germany cherishes always in her heart the memory of the day when her hero Arminius routed the Roman legions of Varus. Germany stands for a mode of human consciousness that is not in line with the major current of its evolutionary growth: she harks back to something primeval, infra-rational, infra-human.

Such is the position taken up by Sir Vansittart who has given his name to the new ideology of anti-Germanism. Vansittartism (at least in its extreme variety) has very little hope for the mending of Germany, it practically asks for its ending.

A son of the soil, an eminent erstwhile collaborator of Hitler, who has paid for his apostasy, offered a compromise solution.

He says, Germany, as a matter of fact, is not one but two: there is the Eastern Germany (the Northern and the Eastern portion) and there is the Western Germany (the South and the West) and the two are distinct and different—even antagonistic—in temperament and character and outlook. The Western Germany is the true Germany, the Germany of light and culture, the Germany that produced the great musicians, poets and idealists, Goethe and Heine and Wagner and Beethoven. The other Germany represents the dark shadow. It is Prussia and Prussianised Germany. This Germany originally belonged to the bleak wild savage barbarous East Europe and was never thoroughly reclaimed and its union with the Western half was more political than psychological. So this ex-lieutenant of Hitler proposed to divide and separate the two altogether and form two countries or nations and thus eliminate the evil influence of Prussianism and Junkerism.

The more democratic and liberal elements among the Allies do not also consider that Germany as a whole is smitten with an original sin and is beyond redemption. They say Germany too has men and groups of men who are totally against Hitler and

Hitlerism; they may have fallen on evil days, but yet they can be made the nucleus of a new and regenerated Germany. Furthermore they say if Germany has come to be what she is, considerable portion of the responsibility must be shared by the unprogressive and old-world elements among the Allies themselves who helped or pitied or feared the dark Germany.

Hence it is suggested that for the post-war reconstruction of Germany what is required is the re-education of its people. For, only a psychological change can bring about a durable and radical change. But certain proposals towards this end raise considerable misgivings, since they mean iron regimentation under foreign control. Even if such a thing were possible and feasible, it is doubtful if the purpose could be best served in this way. Measures have to be taken, no doubt, to uproot Prussianism and Junkerism and prevent their revival, no false mercy or sympathy should be extended to the enemies of God and man. But this is only a negative step, and cannot be sufficient by

itself. A more positive and more important work lies ahead. The re-education of Germany must come from within, if it is to be permanent and effective. What others can do is to help her in this new orientation. As we have said there are the progressive elements in Germany too, although submerged for the moment. The task of reconstruction will precisely consist in calling up and organising and marshalling these forces that are for the Light. The Allied organisation, it may be noted, itself has grown up in this way. When one remembers how Britain stood alone at one time against the all-sweeping victorious march of the Titan, how slowly and gradually America was persuaded to join hands, at first in a lukewarm way, finally with all its heart and soul and might and main, how a new France is being built up out of a mass of ruins, we can hope that the same process will be adopted in the work that lies ahead even after victory, with regard to Italy and with regard to Germany. In the second case the task is difficult but it has got to be done.

A LETTER TO A DISCIPLE

To find the Divine is indeed the first reason for seeking the spiritual Truth and the spiritual life; it is the one thing indispensable and all the rest is nothing without it. The Divine once found, to manifest Him,—that is, first of all to transform one's own limited consciousness into the Divine Consciousness, to live in the infinite Peace, Light, Love, Strength, Bliss, to become that in one's essential nature and, as a consequence, to be its vessel, channel, instrument in one's active nature. To bring into activity the principle of oneness on the material plane or to work for humanity is a mental mistranslation of the Truth—these things cannot be the first or true object of spiritual seeking. We must find the Self, the Divine, then only can we know what is the work the Self or the Divine demands from us. Until then our life and action can only be a help or means towards finding the Divine and it ought not to have any other purpose. As we grow in the inner consciousness, or as the spiritual Truth of the Divine grows in us, our life and action must indeed more and more flow from that, be one with that. But to decide beforehand

by our limited mental conceptions what they must be is to hamper the growth of the spiritual Truth within. As that grows we shall feel the Divine Light and Truth, the Divine Power and Force, the Divine Purity and Peace working within us, dealing with our actions as well as our consciousness, making use of them to reshape us into the Divine Image, removing the dross, substituting the pure gold of the Spirit. Only when the Divine Presence is there in us always and the consciousness transformed, can we have the right to say that we are ready to manifest the Divine on the material plane. To hold up a mental ideal or principle and impose that on the inner working brings the danger of limiting ourselves to a mental realisation or of impeding or even falsifying by a half-way formation the true growth into the full communion and union with the Divine and the free and intimate outflowing of His will in our life. This is a mistake of orientation to which the mind of to-day is especially prone. It is far better to approach the Divine for the Peace or Light or Bliss that the realisation of Him gives than to bring in

these minor things which can divert us from the one thing needful. The divinisation of the material life also as well as the inner life is part of what we see as the Divine Plan, but it can only be fulfilled by an outflowing of the inner realisation, something that grows from within outwards, not by the working out of a mental principle.

* * *

You have asked what is the discipline to be followed in order to convert the mental seeking into a living spiritual experience. The first necessity is the practice of concentration of your consciousness within yourself. The ordinary human mind has an activity on the surface which veils the real self. But there is another, a hidden consciousness within behind the surface one in which we can become aware of the real self and of a larger deeper truth of nature, can realise the self and liberate and transform the nature. To quiet the surface mind and begin to live within is the object of this concentration. Of this true consciousness other than the superficial there are two main centres, one in the heart (not the physical heart, but the cardiac centre in the middle of the chest), one in the head. The concentration in the heart opens within and by following this inward opening

and going deep one becomes aware of the soul or psychic being, the divine element in the individual. This being unveiled begins to come forward, to govern the nature, to turn it and all its movements towards the Truth, towards the Divine, and to call down into it all that is above. It brings the consciousness of the Presence, the dedication of the being to the Highest and invites the descent into our nature of a greater Force and Consciousness which is waiting above us. To concentrate in the heart centre with the offering of oneself to the Divine and the aspiration for this inward opening and for the Presence in the heart is the first way and, if it can be done, the natural beginning; for its result once obtained makes the spiritual path far more easy and safe than if one begins the other way.

That other way is the concentration in the head, in the mental centre. This, if it brings about the silence of the surface mind, opens up an inner, larger, deeper mind within which is more capable of receiving spiritual experience and spiritual knowledge. But once concentrated here one must open the silent mental consciousness upward to all that is above mind. After a time one feels the consciousness rising upward and in the end it rises

beyond the lid which has so long kept it tied in the body and finds a centre above the head where it is liberated into the Infinite. There it begins to come into contact with the universal Self, the Divine Peace, Light, Power, Knowledge, Bliss, to enter into that and become that, to feel the descent of these things into the nature. To concentrate in the head with the aspiration for quietude in the mind and the realisation of the Self and Divine above is the second way of concentration. It is important, however, to remember that the concentration of the consciousness in the head is only a preparation for its rising to the centre above; otherwise one may get shut up in one's own mind and its experiences or at best attain only to a reflection of the Truth above instead of rising into the spiritual transcendence to live there. For some the mental concentration is easier, for some the concentration in the heart centre; some are capable of doing both alternately—but to begin with the heart centre, if one can do it, is the more desirable.

The other side of discipline is with regard to the activities of the nature, of the mind, of the life-self or vital, of the physical being. Here the principle is to accord the nature with the inner realisation so that one may not be

divided into two discordant parts. There are here several disciplines or processes possible. One is to offer all the activities to the Divine and call for the inner guidance and the taking up of one's nature by a Higher Power. If there is the inward soul-opening, if the psychic being comes forward, then there is no great difficulty—there comes with it a psychic discrimination, a constant intimation, finally a governance which discloses and quietly and patiently removes all imperfections, brings the right mental and vital movements and reshapes the physical consciousness also. Another method is to stand back detached from the movements of the mind, life, physical being, to regard their activities as only a habitual formation of general Nature in the individual imposed on us by past workings, not as any part of our real being; in proportion as one succeeds in this, becomes detached, sees mind and its activities as not oneself, life and its activities as not oneself, the body and its activities as not oneself, one becomes aware of an inner Being within us—inner mental, inner vital, inner physical—silent, calm, unbound, unattached which reflects the true Self above and can be its direct representative; from this inner silent Being proceeds a rejection

of all that is to be rejected, an acceptance only of what can be kept and transformed, an inmost will to perfection or a call to the Divine Power to do at each step what is necessary for the change of the Nature. It can also open mind, life and body to the inmost psychic entity and its guiding influence and guidance. In most cases these two methods emerge

and work together and finally fuse into one. But one can begin with either, the one that one feels most natural and easy to follow.

Finally, in all difficulties where personal effort is hampered the help of the Teacher can intervene and bring about what is needed for the realisation or for the immediate step that is necessary.

—Sri Aurobindo

At a certain stage in the Yoga when the mind is sufficiently quieted and no longer supports itself at every step on the sufficiency of its mental certitudes, when the vital has been steadied and subdued and is no longer constantly insistent on its own rash will, demand and desire, when the physical has been sufficiently altered not to bury altogether the inner flame under the mass of its outwardness, obscurity or inertia, an inmost being hidden within and felt only in its rare influences is able to come forward and illumine the rest and take up the lead of the sadhana. Its

character is one-pointed orientation towards the Divine or the Highest, one-pointed and yet plastic in action and movement; it does not create a rigidity of direction like the one-pointed intellect or a bigotry of the regnant idea or impulse like the one-pointed vital force; it is at every moment and with a supple sureness that it points the way to the Truth, automatically distinguishes the right step from the false, extricates the Divine or Godward movement from the clinging mixture of the undivine.

—(From Sri Aurobindo's "The Yoga of Divine Works").

QUATRAINS

DEDICATED TO THE MOTHER

I

I was searching for my fortune's rising star,
But in the heavens could not find its trace :
And how to find it ? On a level par
It was smiling sweetly on the Mother's face.

II

A lotus creeper wonderful Thou art,
Mother Divine, born in life's lucky pool :
Thy face, eyes, hands, feet are all like Thy heart,
Enchanting lotus-blooms all-beautiful.

III

What was love like we knew not, Mother, till
We found it in Thy person facing us :
Oh, how it's all tenderness and blissful smile
And all about it is miraculous !

IV

Heaven desired earth's long-lost comradeship,
It called her from above but earth too slow
Responded not ; so it came down to keep
Its promise and settled on the Mother's brow.

V

Too far, too high, Sweet Mother, Thy abode
Of Bliss eternal for weak man's desire.
We need pine no longer now, O Grace of God,
Since Thou Thyself art here, O Bliss entire !

THE ADVENT

VI

Dost Thou precede the call or follow it?—
Sweet Mother, it confounds my thinking part;
For ere Thy name addressing lips doth quit,
The movement of Thy Presence stirs my heart.

VII

The more I take Thy name the more in me
Awakes the dormant spark of love divine,
And out from choking smoke adoringly
Lifts up its flame of worship to Thy shrine.

VIII

Each time, Sweet Mother, that Thy holy name
Emerges from my heart and leaves for Thee,
A nameless something comes in bright as flame
And settles in my soul delightingly.

IX

I was a dead thing moving like a ghost
In a dark world where reigned Death's tyranny,
Till Love was born as Thou, Beloved most,
Whose Name brought me resurrection's ecstasy.

X

There is no music sweeter than the one
Which echoes in my being when I repeat
The rune-word of Thy Name in a love-steeped tone,
And in unison with which heart starts to beat.

—Punjatal .

THE NEW YEAR INITIATION

*"O Lord, the world implores Thee to prevent it from falling
back always into the same stupidities."*

"Grant that the mistakes recognised may never be renewed."

*"Grant, lastly, that its actions may be the exact and sincere
expression of its proclaimed ideals."*

This is the New Year Prayer the Mother has formulated for our sake. This is the turn She would have us give to our sadhana for the year. What is the special import of this new orientation? It is, one may say, to direct our efforts towards an objective expression, towards an application to life on the material plane.

One starts on the path of sadhana with an almost entire unconsciousness—it is so in all evolutionary process. A goal is there, vague and indistinct, far off. Within him also the sadhaka feels an equally indefinite and indefinable urge, he seems to move without any fixed aim or purpose, with an urge simply to move and move on. This is what he feels as a yearning, as an aspiration—charaivete, as the Upanishad says. Then step by step as he progresses, his consciousness grows luminous, the aim also begins to take a clear and definite shape. The mind is able slowly to understand and grasp what it wants, the heart's yearning and attraction also begin to be transparent, quiet but deep. But this cannot be called a change of nature, let alone transformation. Then only will our nature consent really to change when we become, when even our sense-organs become subject to our inner consciousness, when our actions and activities are inspired, guided and

formed by the power and influence of this inner light.

In the beginning, the sadhak finds himself a divided personality—in his heart there is the awakening of aspiration, the divine touch, but with all its outward impulses, the physical consciousness remains subject to the control of old fixed habits, under the sway of the lower nature. Ordinarily, man is an unconscious sinner, that is to say, he has no sense of what sins he commits. But he becomes a conscious sinner when he reaches the level of which we are speaking. The conflicts, fears, agonies, compunctions in this stage have perhaps been nowhere more evident than in the life of the Christian seeker. In this state we know what to do but cannot do it—the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. We want to do the right thing, we try to do it again and again, yet we fail every time. It is not that we fail only in respect of the movements of our heart and mind, in practice also we commit the same stupidities time and again. These stupidities—and their name is legion—are lust, anger, greed, ignorance, vanity, envy, distrust, disobedience, revolt; repentance, constant repentance and earnest supplication for the divine grace—that is the remedy, says the devout Christian.

But we, for ourselves, do not give any such supreme place to repentance. For, after all, it is a lower impulse, a vital impulse as we call it; it does not allow the memory of the sin to be forgotten; rather by dwelling upon it constantly, it keeps it alive, makes the impression of the sin all the more lurid. And not unoften does it lead to luxuriating in sinfulness. Behind the sense of repentance is this consciousness, this idea that man is, by nature, corrupt, his sin is original. That is why the Christian seeker has accepted sorrow and suffering, abasement and mortification as the indispensable conditions of his sadhana. This calls to our mind a witty remark of Anatole France, that prince of humorists, that one could not be a lover of Christ unless one sinned—the more one sinned, the more could one grow in righteousness; the more the sin, the more the repentance, in other words, the more the divine grace.

We have said that this is not our path. The divine grace is a fact—without that nothing is possible. From one point of view, the divine grace is unconditioned. But it does not follow that the precedent of Jagai-Madhai is the invariable law of spiritual life. The law is rather this that the field must be ready, the being and the consciousness must get into a certain mould, attain certain order and disposition so that the descent of the Divine Grace, its manifestation and play may be possible. For, just as the divine grace is true, so is it equally true that the individual is essentially one with the Divine, sin and ignorance are his external sloughs, identity with the Divine is his natural right. We, therefore, lay equal stress on this hidden aspect of man, on the freedom of his will, on his personal

effort which is the determining factor of his destiny. For in the field of ignorance or half-knowledge, in the nether hemisphere of his consciousness, it is this power that directly builds up that ordered state of the being with whose support the divine grace can fulfil itself and give a material shape to the integral fulfilment.

Hence the Mother gives the direction that though external lapses may be natural to our external nature, now that our inner consciousness has awakened, the vision and the earnestness to see and recognise our mistakes have developed—assuming that this much of development has taken place in us—we must awake to the situation and be on the alert, we must bring such control to bear upon our vital impulses, upon our nervous centres as will prevent, for good and all, errors and stupidities from upsurging again and invading our physical self and our field of action. When we have reached this stage, we have acquired the capacity to ascend to another level of consciousness. It is then that we can lay the foundations of a new order in the world—it is then that along with the purification, the achievement too will begin to take on a material form.

(2)

The scope of this New Year Prayer does not limit itself only to our individual sadhana—it embraces also the collective consciousness which is specially the field of its application. It is the muffled voice of entire humanity in its secret aspiration that is given expression here. It is by the power of this mantra, protected by this invulnerable armour,—if we choose to accept it as such,—that the collective life of man will attain its fulfilment. We have

repeatedly stated that the outstanding feature of the modern world is that it has become a Kurukshetra of Gods and Titans. It is no doubt an eternal truth of creation, this conflict between the divine and the anti-divine, and it has been going on in the heart of humanity since its advent upon earth. In the inner life of the world this is a fact of the utmost importance, its most significant principle and mystery. Still it must be said that never in the annals of the physical world has this truth taken such momentous proportions as in the grim present. It is pregnant with all good and evil that may make or mar human destiny in the near future. Whether man will transcend his half-animal state and rise to the full height of his manhood, nay even to the godhead in him, or descend back to the level of his gross brute nature—this is the problem of problems which is being dealt with and solved in the course of the mighty holocaust of the present world war.

In her last year's message the Mother gave a clear warning that we must have no more hesitation, that we must renounce one side, free ourselves from all its influence and embrace the other side without hesitation, without reservation. At the decisive moment in the life of the world and of mankind, one must definitely, irrevocably choose one's loyalty. It will not do to say, like the overwise and the overliberal, that both sides are equal—equally right or equally wrong—and that we can afford to be outside or above the prejudices or interests of either. There is no room today for a neutral. He who pretends to be a neutral is an enemy to the cause of truth. Whoever is not with us is against us.

We who have taken the side that is for Light and Evolution and the great

Future, must be thoroughly alive to the heavy responsibility that lies on us. The choice of the path is not by itself sufficient. Next to that, we have to see, at every step, and make sure that we are really walking straight along the true path, that we do not fall and slip down, that we do not stray unawares into a wrong track or a blind alley.

So far as the World War is concerned, all nations and peoples and groups on our side who have felt and proclaimed that they stand for equality, fraternity and freedom, the priests and prophets of a new future, of a happier humanity, all such warriors are also facing a solemn ordeal. For them also the time has come to be on their guard and be watchful. They must see that they give exact expression in their actions to what they have thought, felt and proclaimed. They have to prove by every means, by thought, word and deed, that their whole being is really one, whole and indivisible, in ideal and in intention.

Today at the beginning of the new year we have to bear in mind what aim, what purpose inspired us to enter into this tremendous "terrible work", what force, what strength has been leading us to victory. They who consider themselves as collaborators in the progressive evolution of nature must constantly realise the truth that if victory has come within the range of possibility, it has done so in just proportion to their sincerity, by the magic grace of the Mahashakti, the grace which the aspiration of their inner consciousness has called down. And what is now but possible will grow into the actual if we keep moving along the path we have so far followed. Otherwise, if we falter, fail and break faith, if we relapse into the old accustomed track, if under pressure

of past habits, under the temptation of immediate, selfish gain, under the sway of narrow, parochial egoism, we suppress or maim the wider consciousness of our inner being or deny it in one way or another, then surely we shall wheel back and fall into the clutches of those very hostile powers which it has been our determined effort to overthrow. Even if we gain an outward victory it will be a disastrous, moral and spiritual defeat. That will mean a tragic reversal—to be compelled to begin again from

—Translated from the Bengali of Nalinikanta Gupta.

All forms of life that cannot bear the change must disappear, all that can bear it will survive and enter into the Kingdom of Spirit. A Divine Force is at work and will choose at each moment what has to be done or has not to be done, what has to be momentarily or permanently taken up, momentarily or permanently abandoned. For provided we do not substitute for it our desire or our ego, and to that end the soul must be always awake, always on guard, alive to the divine guidance, resistant to the undivine misleading from within or without us, that force is sufficient and alone competent and she will lead us to the fulfilment along ways and by means too large, too inward, too complex for the mind to follow, much less to dictate. It is an arduous and difficult and dangerous way, but there is none other.

Two rules there are that will diminish the

the very beginning. Nature will not be baulked of her aim. Another travail she will have to undergo and that will be far more agonising and terrible.

But we do not expect such a catastrophe. We have hope and confidence that the secret urge of nature, the force of the Mahashakti will save man, individually and collectively, from ignorance and foolishness, vouchsafe to him genuine good sense and the true inspiration.

difficulty and obviate the danger. One must reject all that comes from the ego, from vital desire, from the mere mind and its presumptuous reasoning, incompetence, all that ministers to these agents of the Ignorance. One must learn to hear and follow the voice of the inmost soul, the direction of the Guru, the command of the Master, the working of the Divine Mother. Whoever clings to the desires and weaknesses of the flesh, the cravings and passions of the vital in its turbulent ignorance, the dictates of his personal mind unsilenced and unilluminated by a greater knowledge, cannot find the true inner law and is heaping obstacles in the way of the divine fulfilment. Whoever is able to detect and renounce those obscuring agencies and to discern and follow the true Guide within and without, will discover the spiritual law and reach the goal of the Yoga.

—From Sri Aurobindo's "The Yoga of Divine Works."

THE STATUS OF MAN

The keynote of our ancient culture was the high status it gave to man. The great sayings of our ancient Rishis, "अहं ब्रह्मास्मि", "सोऽहमस्मि", "तत्त्वमसि" indicate their fundamental belief that man in his essence is Divine. The Gita also, by repeating such expressions as "ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते", "ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यम्", etc. points out that the true nature of man is Divine. The Gita, moreover, is a Yogasastra, and yoga means in the Gita union with God. At the end of every chapter of the Gita there occur the words "इति श्रीभगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे etc.", which are a constant reminder to us that the Gita is essentially a Yogasastra, that is, a science which has for its object the union of man with God. But union with God means also detachment from material objects and selfish ends, and therefore the word 'yoga' acquires the secondary meaning of absolute disinterestedness, complete freedom from the sway of desires and passions. On this is based the Gita's moral philosophy, the keynote of which is expressed in the advice of Lord Krishna to Arjuna: "तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर" (III. 19). Disinterested actions, however, are not only ethically the highest, but in the practical sphere also they are the most effective ("योगः कर्मसु कौशलम्"). In this way the Gita develops its ethical philosophy, at the root of which is the idea of the essential Divinity of man.

Thus we see that the essence of the teaching of our ancient sages is that man is Divine. The greatest fact about man is that he is more than man. Nothing short of complete attainment

of Divinity can satisfy him. If he fixes his goal at a lower height, he stultifies himself, he cripples his nature, he proves false to himself. This idea of the essential Divinity of man is our greatest contribution to world culture.

In the West also we have this appreciation of the Divine status of man, but it is somewhat obscured by other tendencies. In Greek philosophy, for example, there were two main currents of thought which flowed side by side. One was transcendentalism which fixed its eye upon God and refused to accept the world at its face value. The other was humanism which looked at the world from the standpoint of man, the creed of which was the celebrated dictum of Protagoras, "Man is the measure of all things." On a superficial view, humanism might seem to give man a higher status than transcendentalism, for it places man in the centre of the universe, whereas transcendentalism, with its gaze directed towards the far-away, seems to show contempt for man and his petty affairs. But the reverse is the truth. It is transcendentalism that discovers in man the potentialities that lie hidden in him. It is transcendentalism that reveals to him his higher destiny. Humanism, on the other hand, cannot look far beyond the present condition of man. It seeks more or less to perpetuate his present institutions, such as the family, the State, etc. It cannot contemplate a radical change in the nature of man which may make these institutions an anachronism. This is exactly what is to be expected. If you look at man purely from the human

point of view, you miss those features which link him with what is Divine. The details of his present position loom so large as to obscure the view of his potentialities that are yet to be unfolded. Paradoxical, as it may sound, humanism cannot do justice to humanity. Greek philosophy is generally supposed to have given us as its chief gift humanism. But if it had merely done this, it would not have been the civilizing force that it has been and that it is even to-day. Its greatness lies in another direction. It is in the glimpse that it has given us of the higher world, it is in the picture that it has drawn of the philosopher, the man who, still remaining man, is "a spectator of all time and all existence" and has a vision of the idea of the good, that it has established its title to immortality. The humanism of Comte and Mill was a poor imitation of Greek philosophy, for it copied only the superficial aspects of that philosophy and lacked those essential features of it which made it one of the greatest spiritualising influences of the world. It has shared therefore the fate of all poor imitations; it rests in the dustheap of forgotten theories.

Coming to modern times, we find the philosophy of Kant giving man a unique status in the realm of his moral life. He is autonomous, he is self-legislative. His own law of Reason is the only law which is unconditionally binding upon him. He respects his humanity by rendering implicit obedience to it. Any other conduct, any conduct which subjects him to the rule of anything other than Reason, makes him unworthy of being called man.

This view no doubt gives man a unique status. But the question is: Does it confer Divinity upon him? Most assuredly not. His own Reason

is his standard, his own law alone is binding upon him. In spite of his vaunted freedom, he is really a prisoner in his own house, a home *detenu*, to use a term with which, alas, we are only too familiar to-day. He cannot escape his own enchanted circle. He is, as it were, eternally condemned to pursue his own shadow. To talk of his Divinity, therefore, is out of the question.

Kant has failed therefore to give man a Divine status, although he has undoubtedly given him a status which he has clearly differentiated from that of objects in the physical universe. His philosophy is an apt illustration of the truth that it is necessary to free oneself even from freedom. If freedom means realization of one's difference from the physical universe, then there is a higher realization where even this freedom is to be sacrificed for the sake of solidarity with the whole universe. This truth, in fact, is what the Gita illustrates in the eleventh chapter. What is the necessity of showing Arjuna the Lord's Visva-rupa? It is to remove all lingering traces of subjectivism or egoism from his mind. The instruction that Arjuna had already received in the previous chapters was sufficient to give him an idea of his own fundamental difference from the world of physical objects, that is to say, to teach him, in the language of Kant, that he was a free cause. But that instruction is not enough. It is necessary to give him an ocular demonstration of the fact that his true self is the Cosmic Self, and that unless he realizes that, he does not know what he really is. Not merely should he realize his difference from the physical objects, but he should also realize his oneness with the whole universe, including the physical,

Without this realization of the Cosmic Self, man cannot understand his Divinity. It is here that the Kantian philosophy fails. Its mistake lies in isolating man from the rest of the universe. As Nikolai Hartmann has very clearly shown, the chief error of Kant lies in thinking that the *a priori* is subjective and not objective. Kant probably felt that what was the subject's very own, namely the *a priori*, he could not possibly share with the rest of the universe. But the opposite is the truth. The '*a priori*' is *objective and not subjective*. What man cannot share with the rest of creation is not truth but a product of his egoistic fancy. His moral law, if it is merely *his* law, is not a *law* at all, that is to say, not a universal principle.

Escape from the Kantian error is only possible if it is clearly recognized that man can only attain Divinity by getting rid of this subjectivity which erects a barrier between him and the universe. But it is equally important to bear in mind that man's individuality is to be maintained. Otherwise we may gain objectivity but may lose man. This is in fact what has actually happened in all pantheistic systems, such as, for example, that of Spinoza or Schelling, where the all-embracing Logos leaves no room for the individuality of man. The Hegelian conception of self-realization as the goal of man is free from this defect, provided, however, that the Self which Hegel puts forward as the fulfilment of the process of self-realization can really in any intelligible sense be looked upon as man's self. But of this we are not quite sure. It is very doubtful whether the Hegelian Absolute can really be regarded as the complete fulfilment of man's self, for it does not possess any of the distinguish-

ing features of the latter. The same difficulty occurs in a more aggravated form in connection with the Absolute of Bradley, for this Absolute is explicitly declared to be not a Self, for a Self can never be anything, according to him, but an appearance.

Therefore neither the Kantian nor the Hegelian nor the Bradleyan system gives man the possibility of attaining a Divine status. When we come to the philosophy of Bergson, we find that he gives man the power of apprehending truth through intuition. He believes that the intuitive power of man has no limit, and although he does not explicitly say so, there is a tacit recognition in his philosophy of different grades of intuition. There is, for example, at one end the mystic's intuition of God which represents the highest intuition of reality, and there is at the other end the ordinary intuition of our daily life, which enables us no doubt to enter into the hearts of things but divides the world into an infinite number of particular things. Between these two extremes there are innumerable grades.

The question, however, for us is: Does this view give man the power of attaining Divinity? At the highest point no doubt, in the mystic's ecstasy, it gives man a peep into the nature of the Divine. But the mystic cannot remain long at this peak of consciousness, and for the rest of his life he gropes, like others, more or less in darkness. There is nothing in Bergson's philosophy to show that man is progressively rising from a lower to a higher status. In fact, from the Bergsonian point of view, the words 'lower' and 'higher' have no meaning, for evolution has no end, no goal or destination. It is only in relation to a definite goal or end that one thing can

be said to be higher or lower than another. Where there is no goal to be reached but only an eternal movement, all such distinctions as higher and lower, better and worse lose all their meaning.

In Nikolai Hartmann's philosophy of values, man occupies a unique position which clearly differentiates him from the rest of creation. For he is not only the seer and appreciator of values, but in one sphere he is also the agency through which values realize themselves. This sphere is the sphere of moral life. Here man is the sole medium through which values can get a chance of being realized. But for him they would have had no chance of projecting themselves into the world of existents. But for him they would have been like lampless pilgrims wandering from land to land without getting any footing anywhere. He can withhold values for any length of time from manifesting themselves in the universe. He can stop thus the progress of the world at his own sweet will.

But does this show that he is Divine? Man, by the possession of this power of making or marring the progress of the world, undoubtedly shows that he is very powerful, but does not establish his claim to Divinity. If mere possession of power could confer Divinity, then the Asuras would attain Divinity sooner than the Devas, for they are often more powerful. Unless power is joined to goodness, it has no spiritual quality. Hartmann, however, unlike Socrates, does not believe in the essential goodness of man. For him it is quite possible for man to be deliberately wicked.

Far be it from me to underrate the importance of the status which Hartmann has given to man. It is no doubt a great thing that man is not regarded

as a mere plaything of natural forces but on the contrary, is credited with the power of making or marring the world. But I think it is possible to exaggerate its importance. When Hartmann says, (*Ethics*, Vol. I, p. 243), "The cosmic insignificance of man is not the last word; besides the ontological there is still an axiological determination of the world, and in this, man plays an integrating rôle. In this his insignificance is overborne—without a re-introduction of anthropocentric megalomania. Man, a vanishing quantity in the universe, is still in his own way stronger than it: he is the vehicle of a higher principle, he is the creator of a reality which possesses significance and value, he transmits to the real world a higher worth. Nature is bound down to its own laws; man alone carries in himself a higher law, whereby he—or more correctly the law through him—creates in the world, or from Non-Being brings forth into Being that which was prefigured in its ideality," we may agree with him, provided we remember that the creation he speaks of, the bringing forth of Being out of Non-Being, is only a transfer from the domain of the ideal to that of the actual. But when he further says, "We may name this rehabilitation of man the miracle of the ethical phenomenon; it is the sublime in him, that which verily lifts him above his own mere existence in the world," we feel reluctantly compelled to observe that he is carried too far by his enthusiasm for the rôle of man as creator. For, as we have already explained, this rôle as expounded by Hartmann cannot give man any sublimity, although it gives him enormous power.

It is of course the first step towards Divinity. Unless man can maintain

himself in the midst of physical forces, there is no possibility of any spiritual life, not to speak of Divine life, for him. But it is no more than the first step. Kant, however, could not advance beyond this, and so, too, Hartmann. The only point where Hartmann's philosophy is superior to Kant's is in his recognition of the objectivity of the moral law, that is to say, in his realization that the only way in which a man can be moral is to get out of his private world and plant himself in the objective sphere.

If man were to stop here, he would make a very poor show. His fate would of course be better than that of the animal kingdom, but it would not be a millionth part of what he is capable of becoming. It is curious that with all their vaunted theories about the Divinity of man, the modern Western philosophers have not been able to give man a higher status than this.

The cause of their failure is their defective theories of evolution. Either evolution is conceived by them as purely mechanical, and then there can of course be no talk of any Divinity of man or when it is viewed as spiritual, the essence of spirituality is conceived as consisting in a complete severance from the physical. It is for this reason that the spiritual view of the West leaves man hanging in mid-air. He is cut off from the physical world and at the same time he is separated from the Divine. He receives no doubt the Victoria Cross of a free cause (Kant) or of a creator (Hartmann), but this cross is really a cross of humiliation and a perpetual reminder to him that thus far he can go and no further.

What is the solution? Well, the solution lies to use the words of Nietzsche

in an "Umwertung aller Werte" in the theory of evolution, that is to say, in a radical change in the conception of evolution. Evolution does not mean any sundering of the lower principles from the higher, but a transformation of the lower into the higher. Man need not be cut off from the material and the vital world; it is doing him no honour to so cut him off. He does not rise to his status as man by severing his connection with the physical and the vital, but by transforming them in the light of the principle that is working in him. So too, the higher movements of evolution do not bye-pass man but carry him with them, so that the Divine is nothing but a Transformed Man, a Perfected Man.

Unless this essential feature of evolution, that is to say, descent of the higher into the lower principles and integration of the former with the latter, is understood, man cannot be given the status that is his due. The Kantian and the Hartmannian conception of spiritual evolution would leave man stranded on an island, cut off alike from the lower regions of matter and life and the higher regions of the Spirit. The Hegelian conception no doubt preserves man's continuity with the Spirit, but it is like the river continuing in the ocean, where continuity is maintained at the sacrifice of all individuality. These conceptions of evolution do justice neither to man nor to the Spirit. Not to man, for man is forever shut out from all possibility of rising to the higher realms of the Spirit. Nor also to the Spirit, because the Spirit would not be able to maintain contact with all the different levels, but would have to drop one by one all the lower levels in its onward march to the higher.

Man is what he shall be. His truth lies in front of him, not behind him. It is in what he is to become, it is in his destiny, that his true status lies. His destiny is to become more than man, to become a Divine Man or a Gnostic Being, as Sri Aurobindo puts it. The function of religion is to keep burning within man the consciousness of his higher destiny. True religion, therefore, can never tie man down to any

particular level of evolution or any particular type of consciousness. It can therefore neither be, as I have explained in a recent article,* a religion of humanity or a religion of man or a religion of mysticism. We may, of course, if we like, call it a religion of man, provided we understand clearly that by man we mean not man as he is, but man as he *shall be*, as he is destined to be, that is to say, the Superman.

—S. K. Maitra.

...Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious co-operation she wills to work out the superman, the god. Or shall we not say, rather, to manifest God? For if evolution is the progressive manifestation by Nature of that which slept or worked in her, involved, it is also the overt realisation of that which she secretly is. We cannot, then, bid her pause at a given stage of her evolution, nor have we the

right to condemn with the religionist as perverse and presumptuous or with the Rationalist as a disease or hallucination any intention she may evince or effort she may make to go beyond. If it be true that Spirit is involved in Matter and apparent Nature is secret God, then the manifestation of the divine in himself and the realisation of God within and without are the highest and most legitimate aim possible to man upon earth.

—(From Sri Aurobindo's "The Life Divine.")

*Vide my article *Sri Aurobindo and the Religion of the Future* in 'Sri Aurobindo Patha Mandir' Annual for 1943.

WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY AND WHO IS A PHILOSOPHER?

Philosophy, we to-day agree, is concerned with the fullest, deepest and widest interpretation of experience. It refuses to work under the limitations, which science voluntarily imposes upon herself. Now our ordinary experience presents to us many things in mutual action and reaction. Psychologically considered and stated a human individual at the adult stage sets as over against his self a not-self. His self consists of a number of instincts and habits organised into a few sentiments, which constitute a relatively unified whole. Similarly the not-self consists of a vast number of discrete objects which constitute *somehow* a single world. Thus the average waking experience of *Homo sapiens* involves a plurality of presentations, which also possess a sort of unity. This unity, however, is a matter of progressive development. Even on the practical plane of life experience starts presenting difficulties, which compel solution through intellectual constructions. At the level of thought, however, the problem of resolving conflicts and contradictions presented by the developing experience becomes the whole problem of human understanding. Thus it is correct to say, as Sri Aurobindo observes, that "all problems of existence are essentially problems of harmony," since whatever the kind of philosophical construction that a thinker be concerned with, he is, indeed, always anxious to present a self-consistent view of reality. He must, therefore, harmonise in his view all the apparently conflicting elements

of experience. Thus the problem for philosophy, one might say, always is to discover the true *ONE* in place of the scrappy sort of *one* apparently given in experience. This true *one* must be a *one*, which will duly explain the *many* of actual experience. How to do it is the real task of each philosophical system.

Just as the history of philosophy, after long and varied attempts at constructing *weltansschauungen*, to-day counts it as a general point gained that philosophy is an interpretation of experience, so is it a point equally well-established and after much ado that with regard to no general aspect of experience can really the position be taken that it is merely an illusion. The real responsibility of philosophy is to explain and not explain away. What is given in experience does not need to be granted existence by the philosopher. By the right of its presence in experience it exists. The question which the philosopher is really called upon to decide is that of its special role and relation in the total scheme of reality. That either the one is an illusion or the many is so is happily out of court for philosophy to-day.

Philosophy with the Greeks meant love and search for wisdom. Wisdom or truth of life and existence was the only condition of the philosopher's personality. Aristotle is amongst the Greeks already modern and a complete exception. Or it would be truer to say that modern knowledge lives, moves and has its being within the steel-frame

provided by Aristotle. The modern philosopher, of course, continues the ancient search for truth, but he is to-day equally insistent that the method adopted must be that of intellectual construction. The philosopher is, therefore, to-day a distinguished intellectual, who from given facts of experience and scientific conclusions is able to develop a consistent view of whole reality. In the scientific age the philosopher has really become a greater scientist and that is all. He has become a universal systematiser and reconciler. The history of philosophy knows of many brands of philosophers but the present philosopher is the most specialised of them all and will pass down as the child of scientific intellectualism.

Yet, surely, a philosopher qua philosopher can only admit of one conditioning and limitation, that of reality itself. His supreme interest and passion is the love and search for reality. The method of knowing or experiencing it cannot be a dictating pre-condition.

However, one further condition he has to recognise, namely whatever his view or vision of reality he must express it orally or in writing in terms as best understandable to the intellect as possible. The reason is obvious. When the philosopher states his view of reality, he does so for the general man, whose instrument of knowledge is intellect. Thus reality and next a rational expression of it are the only two conditions, which a philosopher can permit to qualify his search and seeking. A method in itself fine and precise may yet be ill-adapted to reality and will, therefore, naturally disappoint the philosopher, as it will give either a false reality or no reality, unless the philosopher himself is more in love with the method than reality itself. Kant

strikes me as the classical example of this tragedy. He developed a fine instrument of knowledge, but while he thought it was of knowledge as such, it was, in fact, of scientific knowledge and the result is well-known: antinomies and agnosticism. As to method, therefore, the philosopher must remain free and allow reality to suggest its own method or methods.

Even contemporary psychology tends to militate against this modern ideal of a philosopher. Dispassionateness or impartiality in judgment is a cardinal principle of scientific observation and thinking. Philosophy rightly accepts the same. But the question is how is this quality to be acquired? Psychology tells us that the logical faculty tends to develop as a relatively separate function from about the stage of adolescence and through a special cultivation it can be exercised independently. Such intellect has evidently produced objective results in science. But in science external conditions and co-operative observation serve to eliminate whatever subjectivity may still be persisting in a scientist's work. Where wider hypotheses are concerned, as in modern physics, external checks are obviously of no avail. In philosophy the same is the case. Individual philosophers can easily follow their partialities and predilections. Personality and temperament have, therefore, become recognised determinants of philosophical thinking. But it appears to me that western philosophers in admitting personality and temperament in this connection have surrendered their claims of dispassionate knowledge too soon.

The question is, whether there is any method of freeing the human mind from the play of personal prejudices and predilections and making the

instrument of knowledge more dispassionate even for philosophical work where objective checks of scientific investigations are wanting. Of course the laws of thought themselves are the best safeguards of objectivity. But where the fundamental perception and the initial position are concerned those laws are no protection. Who knows how the initial sense of pessimism regarding life was determined in Schopenhauer. Of course, that given, later on it is all a work of elaboration and substantiation through intellectual work according to the rules of logic. But a philosopher as a **seeker after truth and reality** will be more interested in that initial perception rather than the subsequent elaboration. If that initial perception was determined by, let us say, dyspepsia, then we can admire his logical ability but will not trust his philosophy as a view of reality.

Modern psychology has almost demonstratively shown how disturbances in emotional life affect a man's will and intellectual activity. In other words, conflicts of mental life are a source of danger, deflecting or tending to deflect a scientist or philosopher from an impartial exercise of reason. Of course if the conflicts are not too serious and the subject-matter under investigation is physical affording external checks, the thinking faculty can work reliably enough, but in philosophy, where from inadequate data a view of the universe is sought to be constructed, the need for perfecting the human instrument of knowledge is much greater. A whole and a harmonious life, of which all the energies converge on the single point of seeking for reality is obviously the most necessary condition of the discovery of reality. In Indian life Yoga has gone closely to-

gether with philosophy. Perhaps Yoga was a propaedeutic to philosophy. Recalling Kant we might say, yes epistemology before metaphysics, but surely Yoga before both. By Yoga we mean essentially the instrument or art of self-perfection. It is the method of attaining to a harmonisation of the life's energies. There are, of course, Yogas and Yogas and Indian thought knows of a vast literature on the subject. But the writer has found in **Sri Aurobindo's** extensive writing in the 'Arya' entitled the 'Synthesis of Yoga' a profound and a comparative appraisal of the different systems resulting in the development of a comprehensive and a most illuminating system of his own, called by him the Integral Yoga.

When Yoga or a discipline for the harmonisation of life's energies comes to be recognised, we can hope to witness, in place of what we have to-day for philosophical seeking—an erratic vagary of individual idiosyncracies, a real progress towards a knowledge of reality. The association of Yoga with philosophy in India led to an interesting extension of experience, which philosophy is to interpret. Not only waking experience, but, more than that, the supra-intellectual or spiritual intuition was to determine the philosophical position of a philosopher. For that reason perhaps the Indian systems are called '**Darshanas**.' It is a most interesting comparison between Western and Eastern systems of philosophy that whereas the former are in their initial stand ordinarily determined by the fact of temperament, the latter are governed by a fundamental realisation or intuition of reality. Fichte had declared so confidently 'Tell me the character of a man and I will state to you the philosophy that he is likely to have.' In

India, on the other hand, for Buddha or Shankara it was the nature of the spiritual realisations which determined their philosophies. In the case of Buddha the point can be perhaps more easily appreciated. His illumination under the Bodhi tree has been described as that of Nirvana i.e., of cessation of the mental process....

This experience is obviously the original source and inspiration for the world-view that Buddha and Buddhism maintained. Take it away and the validity of the thought-structure of Buddhist philosophy becomes relatively difficult to appreciate. In the case of Shankara again a certain central realisation seems to provide the life-blood to the entire brilliant structure of thought. That realisation, to my mind, can best be represented in the famous aphorism **ब्रह्म सत्ये जगत् मिथ्या**. Does the philosopher's entire exposition not breathe the spirit of this realisation as in Buddha it is that of Nirvana?

Now I feel persuaded to contend that where purely intellectual systems are concerned, as is generally the case in modern European philosophy, the fact of personal predilection as a fact of temperament is the first thing to determine in seeking to appraise philosophical thought-constructions. And where there are world-views which on the part of their authors seem to presuppose a spiritual discipline and the possibility of a supra-intellectual intuition or realisation, then such intuition or realisation is the first thing to characterise. It is also pretty obvious that what is in the experience of an individual a dominant and determining trend should be taken account of in understanding and explaining the thought-product of his experience. It can be admitted that there is difficulty in reducing this factor

to logical terms. But surely we cannot afford to ignore such a fact either.

The effects of ignoring this fact have been pretty grievous. William James had sought to formulate his pragmatic method for resolving philosophical conflicts. However his attempt proved almost abortive. Often a student of philosophy, not only a general reader, experiences great perplexity. He sees arrayed before him in the history of philosophy a brilliant line of philosophers. Each one of them gives a portrait of reality. But each portrait is different while the object remains the same. And he finds most philosophers by themselves convincing. Now how is a student to recover the peace of his mind in this situation of perplexity? Is the nature of truth so elusive or is the portraying reason too confident? Perhaps both things are true. But if the philosophical systems are taken as logical constructions by themselves their mutual opposition becomes obvious and irresoluble.

Now if they were viewed in their proper relation with the temperamental fact or the initial perception, it could be probably more easily seen and appreciated why Leibnitz and Hegel presented such different philosophies.

And by a wide consideration of philosophers and philosophies, it may be possible to find out their mutual relations in the way of being supplementary or complementary or related in any other way of opposition. The story of the six blind men who went to see an elephant comes to me as illustrative of the situation. Surely, the quarrel amongst them, if they were left to themselves in the exclusive possession of their particular points of view, would be endless. It was only the realisation of the particular circumstances of each

man's point of view that could create the possibility of discovering the supplementary character of them all. Of course, in the story the seeing man, who knows the elephant as a whole, comes in to show to each blind man his partiality. Surely, we do not have a 'seeing' man amongst us to give us an idea of the whole elephant of reality. But even if there were one we could not easily accept him as a superior seeing man. However we do realise more or less the partialities of our points of view and we can appreciate more fully the particular circumstances of each philosopher's way of looking at reality and thereby better assess and appreciate his philosophy.

Similarly, in the case of Indian thin-

kers the specific spiritual realisations when considered together could perhaps show amongst them some relation and harmony. Sri Aurobindo, in fact, affirms such a thing. He states that spiritual realisations are of varying levels and degrees. From each successively higher status the lower positions become reconciled and understandable. Now from this point of view a possibility is immediately thrown out for discovering a true principle of reconciliation amongst the apparently conflicting world-views taken as pure thought-constructions.

Is this position the same as humanism? Surely not, since it does not question the possibility of objectivity in knowledge.

—Indra Sen

ON HUMILITY

Pride, arrogance and vanity—means man trying to impose his self-valuation on others. Humility means man allowing others to value himself without grudging.

* * * *

Pride, arrogance and vanity are, spiritually speaking, man's false proportions of himself: They make him look out of proportion and therefore produce spiritual ugliness.

Humility is the spiritual sense of proportion which is the source of true beauty.

* * * *

Humility is taking the wind out of ego's sail.

* * * *

True humility recognises God as the source of all power, all knowledge, all greatness: He who is humble does not appropriate the power of the Divine to himself.

* * * *

Humility abandons the ego-centric view of the world and life, and has therefore few complaints against universal arrangement.

It often ends by perceiving the hand of the Divine in the world and lives in heaven upon earth.

* * * *

The Consciousness Divine is high above man. It cannot enter into the human consciousness so long as it is filled with ego to overflowing.

Humility creates room for the Divine in man, (by reducing ego to its littleness.)

—A. B. Purani

INDIA IS ONE

II

The Vedic Aryans were yet in the midst of their victorious campaigns to Aryanise the whole of India and bring it within the unifying discipline of a common culture and civilisation, when rose the great king Bharata who, as mentioned in the Rig Veda, extended the Aryan supremacy over a vast territory and consolidated different parts of it into a regional entity bound by the dynamic influence of the Aryan ideals. It is from him that India derives her ancient name *Bharatavarsha*, just as Rome is derived from Romulus. To these Aryans came the earliest vision of the oneness of India expressed in the river-hymns of the Rig Veda. Even today the Hindus chant these hymns and recall and worship the image of their mother-country as the land of seven rivers which cover between them the whole of India. There is another prayer which conjures up the picture of India as the land of seven sacred cities representing the important regions in the north and the south. There is besides a number of religious practices prevalent among the Hindus from very early times which as well as the prayers, mentioned above, indicate that the religious mind of the Hindus is deeply imbued with a conception of the continental integrity of India whose sacredness is enhanced by the influence it exerts in shaping the common destiny of the country as visualised by the ancient seers. Pilgrimage also is another sacred institution, most popular among the Hindus, which accentuates this notion and gives it a

still more definite shape. Every principal faith or sect of the Hindus has its holy places spread over the length and breadth of the country. Pious Hindus visit these places and meet their fellow-pilgrims and feel a sense of comradeship with them fostered by their allegiance to common ideals that are the ideals of their common mother-land. Religious fairs contribute no less to the making of this sense in the Hindu mind.

If it is the land of India that reared up her body of humanity and gave on it the stamp of its own unity, it is her culture, evolved out of the vision of her thinkers, which gave the soul of that body its meaning and intention. What that culture is has been discussed by Sri Aurobindo in a series of luminous essays called *A Defence of Indian Culture*, published in the "Arya," from which we shall quote appropriate extracts to show how the life of the Hindus is essentially one in all their varied creative endeavours. Spirituality, says Sri Aurobindo, is the master-key of the Indian mind. It is this dominant inclination of India which gives character to all the expressions of her culture. In fact, they have grown out of her inborn spiritual tendency of which her religion is a natural out-flowering. The truth of the unity of her various religious efforts as well as their synthetic sublimity has been revealed by Sri Aurobindo in the following words:—"The Indian mind has always realised that the Supreme is the Infinite and perceived that to the soul

in Nature the Infinite must always present itself in an infinite variety of aspects. The aggressive and quite illogical idea of a single religion for all mankind, a religion universal by the very force of its narrowness, one set of dogmas, one cult, one system of ceremonies, one ecclesiastical ordinance, one array of prohibitions and injunctions which all minds must accept on peril of persecution by men and spiritual rejection or eternal punishment by God, that grotesque creation of human unreason which has been the parent of so much intolerance, cruelty and obscurantism and aggressive fanaticism, has never been able to take firm hold of the Indian mentality. Men everywhere have common human failings; intolerance and narrowness especially in the matter of observances there has been and is in India, violence of theological disputation, querulous bickerings of sects and their pretensions of spiritual superiority, sometimes, at one time especially in southern India in a period of acute religious differences, even local out-breaks of active mutual tyranny and cruelty. But these things have never taken the proportions which they assumed in Europe; they have been confined for the most part to the minor forms of polemical attack, intolerance and social obstruction or ostracism and have transgressed very little across the line to the major forms of persecution. Behind these weaknesses of human egoism there has stood always in India the saving perception of the higher spiritual mind, which has had its effect on the mass mentality, the living perception that since the minds, the temperaments, the intellectual affinities of men are unlimited in their variety, a perfect liberty of thought and of worship must be allow-

ed to the individual in his approach to the Infinite.....The fundamental idea of Indian religion, the recognition of a one and infinite Godhead who can be approached and worshipped through any of his infinite aspects, a supreme and supracosmic Existence which manifests itself in the cosmos and enters into multitudinous relations with the souls in the universe who are one with or part of its own being, gives a many-sided appearance to Indian cult and spiritual experience...When the Indian mind sees the One without a second, it still admits his duality of Spirit and Nature, his many trinities, his million aspects. When it concentrates on a single limiting aspect of the Divinity and seems to see nothing beyond it, it has still at the back of its consciousness the sense of the All, the idea of the One. When it distributes its worship among many objects, it looks beyond the multitude of godheads to their unity. This synthetic turn is not peculiar to the mystics or the literate or the thinkers nourished on the high sublimities of the Veda and Vedanta, but permeates even the popular mind which is filled with the thoughts, the images, the traditions, the cultural symbols of the Purana and Tantra; for the Puranic and Tantric ideas, names, forms and symbols are only concrete representations of the combined monism, unitarianism, universalism and synthetism of the Vedic scriptures.....To understand the effect of Indian spiritual culture on the life of the individual and the community, we must recognise its synthetical character and embracing unity. The One Existence to whom sages give different names of the Veda, the One without a second of the Upanishads, is the fundamental seeing of Indian spiri-

tuality. All comes from, exists in, returns and amounts to that One. To discover, closely approach, enter into whatever unity with this Infinite, this Eternal is the height of spiritual experience. That is the first idea of the religious mind of India. The second idea is the manifold way of man's approach to the Eternal and Infinite. This Infinite is full of many infinities and each of these infinite aspects is the Eternal in his glory. In the limitations of the cosmos God manifests himself to man and fulfils himself in the world in many ways, but each is the way of the Eternal; in each finite we can discover and through all things approach the Infinite. All cosmic powers and manifestations are of the One and behind the workings of Nature are to be seen and adored powers, names, personalities which are the godheads of the one Godhead. The divine Will and Energy are behind all happenings, whether to us fortunate or adverse, and over each way of the universal dealings stands a form of the presiding Deity. He creates and is Brahma, preserves and is Vishnu, destroys or takes to himself and is Rudra or Shiva. His supreme Energy is beneficent in upholding and protection and is the Mother of the worlds, Luxmi or Durga, or beneficent even in the mask of destruction and is Chundi or Kali, the dark Mother. He manifests himself in form of his qualities; the God of divine love of the Vaishnava, the God of divine power of the Shakta appear as two different godheads but are the one Deity. These things we try to explain now as symbols, which is by the way of an intellectual compromise with modern rationalism; but the Indian religious mentality saw them not only as symbols but as realities, because bet-

ween the highest spiritual being and material being it is aware of other psychological planes of consciousness and experience and these things are truths of these planes no less real than the outward truths of material universe. Men approach God at first according to his psychological nature, experience, capacity for this deeper experience, *swabhava*, *adhikara*, whence comes the variety of religious cult, belief and way of divine union. But also there is a third idea of strongest consequence, that not only through aspects of the universal spirit and all inner and outer Nature can the Divine be approached, but each individual object and being is in its spiritual being intimately one with the one divine Existence. In each individual man is the divinity, Narayana; all corporate or collective being is a form of the divine Narayana. God is in ourselves and in ourselves we have to find him. The supreme truth of all divisions is a secret unity. These three ideas govern the Indian religious mind and the seeing of them is its whole seeing. Indian spiritual culture opens up a hundred ways to arrive at the truth of our religious being, but its consummation is to see God in man and man in God, God in Nature and Nature in God, God in all things and all things in God, and to go beyond them to their origin in the supracosmic Absolute, Eternal and Infinite." The luminous extracts quoted above unravel the hidden meaning of the religious culture of the Hindus and its essential oneness. They explain why one Hindu is a worshipper of Shiva, another of Krishna and the third of Shakti; why it is that there is a multiplicity of gods and goddesses; and yet how all of them are bound by the golden thread of the same soul's aspiration towards the same spiritual

perfection which to them has always been the ultimate end of human existence.

In ancient India knowledge was transmitted by oral method. Like the *raconteurs* of ancient Greece who preserved and disseminated the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, India also had her reciters and declaimers who carried down from generation to generation and from court to people the great epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. It was these national minstrels who used to wander about the country singing the story of the epics, thereby imparting the best popular education to the people. The epics abound in noble examples of sages and saints and kings,—people who are the makers of empires and builders of societies,—in ideals of human conduct that exalt and inspire, religious and social teachings that guide and give shape; all these have always been the most profound influence in the life of the race forging it, as it were, into a unity of endeavour to live up to the lessons that the characters in the epics so powerfully inculcate. Even to-day in very remote villages in every part of India the epics whether in Sanscrit or in vernacular versions are recited by the *Kathakas* before gatherings specially organised for the purpose. The art and literature of the Hindus are not a little indebted to them for the themes they have always drawn from these almost inexhaustible fountains of sociological knowledge. The Mahabharata represents the whole history of the race in one of the heydays of its glory. Its authorship goes by the name of a great poet, but it has in it contributions from many sources. A great people speaks through it. Its very name suggests the greatness of India's unity. Says Sri Aurobindo, "The Mahabharata is not

only the story of the Bharatas, the epic of an early event which had become a national tradition but on a vast scale the epic of the soul and religious and ethical mind and social and political ideas and culture and life of India. It is said popularly of it and with a certain measure of truth that whatever is in India is in the Mahabharata. The Mahabharata is the creation and expression not of a single individual mind, but of the mind of a nation; it is the poem of itself written by a whole people." To whatever sect he may belong no Hindu can conceive of spiritual life without its never-failing source of inspiration, the Gita. In the thought of every school of spiritual idealism can be traced the influence of this great scripture. The Gita presents the first synthesis of Hindu thought, and in it lies the secret of a yet greater synthesis of which a revealing exposition has been given by Sri Aurobindo in his *Essays on the Gita*. The influence on the mind of the Hindus all over India of the vast range of literature, both sacred and secular, is no less a unifying factor in the community life of the people.

The earliest evidence of some kind of synthesis in the religious life of India is supplied by the seals of the proto-Indian civilisation of Indus valley which along with other antiquities of similar nature are believed to indicate a common religious life of the people about whom a more remarkable fact is that they were free from the fear of violence and war, as shown by the absence of war weapons, walls, ramparts or fortifications among the relics that have been so far unearthed of those oldest cities of India. Gerald Heard is of opinion that this is most likely the earliest form of pacifism in the world. The influence of the Vedas in shaping the religious

life of the Hindus requires no recapitulation. Says Sri Aurobindo, "The mind of ancient India did not err when it traced back all its philosophy, religion and essential things of its culture to the seer-poets of the Vedas for all the future spirituality of her people is contained there in seed or in first expression." There are many hymns in the Rig and the Atharva Vedas which emphasise in a more subjective sense the need and importance of unity in the community life. They fervently exhort man to be united with all, in heart, in aim and in work, to be friendly with all and to pray so that all may be friendly with him. In the Upanishads the call goes forth from the Rishis to the whole of mankind to come and share with them the delight of their spiritual visions. The Upanishads permeate the entire range of Indian thought. They are also the common source of inspiration to all schools of Indian mysticism. In a word, Vedanta, as the Upanishads are called, represents the highest spiritual idealism of ancient India. Says Sri Aurobindo, "The Upanishads have been the acknowledged source of numerous profound philosophies and religions that flowed from it in India like her great rivers from their Himalayan cradle fertilising the mind and life of the people and kept its soul alive through the long procession of the centuries, constantly returned to for light, never failing to give fresh illumination, a fountain of inexhaustible life-giving waters. Buddhism with all its developments was only a restatement, although from a new standpoint and with fresh terms of intellectual definition and reasoning, of one side of its experience and it carried it thus changed in form but hardly in substance

over all Asia and westward towards Europe."

The social institutions of the Hindus contributed no less towards strengthening the bonds of social and cultural unity among the different classes of the people. The essential idea in all their social thinking is that man is not a machine but a god in the making born to blossom forth to the best of his potentialities; and the chief function of the society is to give him every facility so that he might fulfil his highest destiny both in his individual and collective life. Says Sri Aurobindo, "The business of culture and social organisation in ancient India was to lead man, satisfy and support him in some harmony of the four aims of life; desire and enjoyment, material, economic and other aims of the mind and body, ethical conduct and right law of the individual and social life and finally spiritual liberation, *kama, artha, dharma, moksha*. The insistence was always there that except in rare cases the full satisfaction of the first three of these objects must precede the last, fullness of human experience and action prepare for the spiritual liberation; the debt to the family, the community and the gods could not be scamped." By fulfilling the first two of these aims man enriches his mental and physical being, by the third he finds himself bound up with the society, and by the fourth he attains the highest objective of life. But the institution of caste was a more potent force in consolidating the social basis of the Hindu culture. The four grades of culture implicit in the system were integrated into an important factor in the progress of Indian civilisation in the past. The modern idea of a classless society negates the fundamental nature of

human being which generally was divided into the four categories evolved by the psychologists of ancient India. Says Sri Aurobindo, "The real greatness of the Indian system of the four *varnas* did not lie in its well-ordered division; it consisted in the ethical and spiritual contents which the thinkers and builders of the society poured into these forms. They started with the idea of the intellectual, ethical and spiritual growth of the individual as the principal need of humanity, society as its necessary frame-work and its system of relations. A secure place had to be found for him in the community from which he could serve these relations, maintain and pay all his debt to the society and proceed to his self-development with the best possible help from the communal life. This place they conceived as one provided for him by the indications of his capacity, temperament and nature. Birth was taken in practice as the first test; the heredity was of a high importance; it was taken even in later thought as a sign of the nature and the needed surroundings which the individual had prepared for himself by his past sub-development in former existences. But birth was not considered as the sole test of *varna*. The intellectual capacity, the turn of the temperament, the ethical nature, the spiritual elevation were the important things." There are many instances of Kshatriya kings excelling in spiritual knowledge. Many of the Upanishads were composed by them. Visvamitra's attaining Brahmanhood is not of course a solitary instance. A society thrives on the intrinsic worth of its members. And the members can prove their worth only when they are given freedom to grow into the height of their possibilities.

This livingness of social organism is sought to be replaced today by deadening mechanical means with the object of moulding the human material into a single Procrustean type; and to achieve that end freedom is tabooed lest free-thinking should create opposition, and obedience is exacted forcing man into an artificial existence so that he might conform to the law of the machine. It ought to be clear to those who sponsor these views that the weak who are deprived of their freedom are thereby helped to gather strength to assert their birth-right when the time will come for them to rise. Ancient Indians recognised that true social harmony is possible when every member in the society has had ample opportunities of self-development. The system of caste which was always elastic and flexible was guided by this attitude of the Hindu mind. It is not birth but, as the Gita says, his action and spiritual attainment that determine man's position in society to which every member of any caste, be he a Brahmin or a Shudra, was equally important. It is real worth that matters. In the ancient literature of the Hindus there are many examples of great saints and sages being born of low and unknown parentage. Even young men of doubtful antecedents were admitted to instruction by great sages simply on the score of their personal nobility and earnest seeking for knowledge. Satyakama's cannot certainly be the only example. The strength and cohesion of the Hindu society lay in this catholic outlook which largely prevented division of the people into hostile factions, as well as any series of internecine wars, which have disgraced many countries. With the advent of the foreigners into India, the process of racial chemistry began

to be active again and in the first few centuries of the present era we find that the Hunas, Sakas and Pallavas were being absorbed into the Hindu social structure; and for their valour and devotion to Aryan ideals they were accepted by the Brahmins as Kshatriyas and given equal status in the society. Caste did not stand in the way of this notable racial assimilation, but helped it by recognising the intrinsic merits of

those peoples and their readiness to be naturalised as Indians. In the days of India's decline, the system was exploited by interested people for the satisfaction of their selfish ends and for dominating the society whose downfall they brought about by pursuing a policy of deadening obscurantism.

—Sisirkumar Mitra.

The Spirit is a higher infinite of verities; life is a lower infinite of possibilities which seek to grow and find their own truth and fulfilment in the light of these verities. Our intellect, our will, our ethical and our aesthetic being are the reflectors and the mediators. The method of the West is to exaggerate life and to call down as much - or as little - as may be of the higher powers to stimulate and embellish life. But the method of India is, on the contrary, to discover the spirit within and the higher hidden intensities of the superior powers and

to dominate life in one way or another so as to make it responsive to and expressive of the spirit and in that way increase the power of life. Its tendency with the intellect, will, ethical, aesthetic and emotional being is to sound indeed their normal mental possibilities, but also to upraise them towards the greater light and power of their own highest intuitions. The work of the renaissance in India must be to make this spirit, this higher view of life, this sense of deeper potentiality once more a creative, perhaps a dominant power in the world.

—From Sri Aurobindo's 'The Renaissance in India'.

SRI AUROBINDO'S PHILOSOPHY AND A JUSTIFICATION OF MAYAVADA

Prof. G. R. Malkani undertakes to justify Mayavada as part and parcel of Advaita in the Philosophical Quarterly Vol. 18 (p. 221) and in this connection, he states that his justification of this doctrine was prompted by his reading of the *Life Divine*, of Sri Aurobindo. Obviously his first complaint is that all those who attacked Mayavada accused it without taking into consideration its birth and growth under the shadowing wings of Advaita or Monism.

He pleads that a system must satisfy the following criteria in order to satisfy him. The first condition is that it must be grounded in and justified by our experience so that there is nothing in it that transcends our experience. He naively adds 'after all we can only interpret this experience and not speculate about things that fall outside our experience.' (p. 222). Let me first of all point out what he really means by this test. First and foremost, he rules out any experience that transcends his present experience, his limited conscience, if we may so call this overweening vanity of ignorance parading as experience. Secondly, he speaks of being grounded in and justified by our experience as almost purely an experiential affair, though, to be sure, this justification is to be sought and the grounding is discovered by his very corruptive rationality or conceptualisation. No one denies the right of Prof. Malkani to pat himself on his back with his being so very less speculative than others who have at least the wisdom to admit their limits.

The second test is not serious and indeed is welcome. No system must have 'internal incoherence or instability'. Now even here the second term very much recalls a metaphorical reference to toppling from a table when placed in unstable position. We shall show that Mayavada itself is a very unstable thing, and its coherence with Reality is intolerably difficult, not to speak of its being simply unacceptable and intolerable.

The third criterion is that no problem should be left unsolved. Now the fundamental truth of Mayavada rests on inexplicability of any problem, and there is nothing for it to solve, for all is a mighty mysterious illusion. What problem can remain before this grand disaster? Unanswered they ever will remain.

The fourth and the last criterion is 'There must be nothing hypothetical about its truth; for a philosophical truth cannot be verified. It must be absolutely certain and self-evidently true. This is only possible when the certainty is both rational and intuitive' (p. 222). This last is a very fine sample of the kind of argumentation that pervades the thesis of Prof. G. R. Malkani. First let me start with the last sentence. The certainty of the system must be both rational and intuitive. Now is it the rational or the intuitive experience that falls within our competence? Further are rational and intuitive apprehensions of reality mutually contradictory or complementary? Does not the evidence of reason

contradict the evidence of intuition? If they are complementary or supplementary, then, is not the figment of Mayavada, a construction, a conceptual construction, itself negated? The world as objective is stated to be a conceptual fiction—an illusion: What is the experience that brought it about? Is not our experience itself of the sensory level or intuitive level and not of the rational level? If philosophy is of the rational level which contradicts the evidence of the senses and intuition, is not a system conceptually erected on what might be called coherency of concepts a ghost-frame work? Is not philosophy then itself impossible even as the mayavada that has been brought into existence by such a philosophy is impossible? Is there any possibility of self-evidence to intuition? If intuition has to legislate for reason how can the learned professor seek the help of something that he states to be akin to delusion or mysticism? At least Sri Sankara was more aware of the need for the super-rational intuitive as the final arbiter of philosophical intuition than the pseudo-attempts made to reconcile the relational *savikalpaka-jnana* and the unrelational *aparoksa-jnana*, which made one directly aware of Reality as the entire One indivisible experience, super-sensory, super-discriminatory. The self-evidence of Reality is the direct exhibition of its totality in intuition, which includes a powerful annihilation of all differences of subject and object and revels in Supreme Spiritual subjectivity of Oneness. Plurality as separate existences ceases on its attainment.

Having thus shewn that Prof. Malkani's four axioms of Advaita are open to serious internal incoherence, I shall then see what are his justifications.

First, Prof. Malkani takes up the question of our knowledge of the external world. He sees that the *prima facie* refutation of Mayavada consists in pointing out that since all is Brahman without external or internal difference, the very fact of the existence of something called the world or its explanation the Maya is a secondary fact that impugns the sovereign unity of the One Brahman. Thus there results a dualism worse indeed in some respects than the original dualism of Spirit and World. He answers, 'we never know the world at all, all the time we have been knowing only Brahman alone'. We merely *conceive* it. Reality is what we *know* but the world we only *conceive*. Lest we should ask the question as to what difference is there between knowing and conceiving, he answers that knowing is absolutely immediate to consciousness or coincides with it, whereas conception is that which is outside consciousness and distinct from it. He proceeds to point out that consciousness alone can be utterly coincident with itself and therefore reality is consciousness. The thesis so established firstly seeks to make 'knowing' something of immediate intuition; but this goes further and makes out that Reality is not known at all, for nothing as such remains. Of course mentalists are not baffled by this non-existence of Reality other than their consciousness. The primary question is firstly why conceptualising? Secondly, why *Outside* Consciousness? Even if conceptualising cannot stand by itself, and therefore must have a consciousness to support it and can only stand as a Self, how did it ever arrive at that outsideness and objectivity? These things are not answered, and Prof. Malkani quietly says "there is nothing forced about this

view". Surely what else but forced is a view which forces concepts to be outside the self or consciousness, though this equation of consciousness as self itself is something a mystery unexplained in the exposition: The author however leads us to quite a different topic in order to prove that conceptions or perceptions never *fall apart* from the self (p. 225).

Having found that conceptions and perceptions do not *fall apart* from the self if we sufficiently go back in time in our experience, he concludes the world never existed because the *truth* is that there is no self and no conception. Indeed there are no knowings. Silence is the Truth. If after so much laborious argumentation this mouse came into existence (or non-existence?) why deny the charge levelled against them that they are nihilists or ajativadins? and why try to *prove* this with the help of a repertory of useless dialectics? Prof. Malkani again says that 'a dualism to us need not be a dualism in reality' feeling perhaps certain qualms of conscience at having to give up his job any way of being a philosopher. And uncertainly he seeks to bridge the gulf between the human and the Real standpoints, with the hope,—anent the first axiom of his system—building criteria—that the Real is something that falls within his experience, though he himself, to be sure, is a conceptualisation of some reality which he conceptually professes to understand, and ill. The truth is grasped by Prof. Malkani when he writes, "No amount of juggling with thought can succeed in eliminating all dualism" (225 p.). Do

we forget that the fourth axiom stated that when we feel uncomfortable with reason that distinguishes and discriminates and analyses we should have recourse to intuition to support and save not reality, but us, from utter damnation? Unfortunately the problem of the many to be reconciled in unity or oneness refuses to be solved as he wishes. Damn it: let us like Canute say: "It shall not be". That satisfies our conceit—the conceit of Reality; the soul of man has become the Superman, the One without a second!

Then, having prefaced this wonderful Reality-exposition, as above, Prof. Malkani finds that Maya must have a reason! There is something contained in the concept of Maya that came to explain the existence of duality or manyness. "The opposition between Brahman and the cosmos of our experience has to be resolved; and it is resolved through the concept in question. But does this concept successfully achieve this result?" asks Prof. Malkani (p. 227). Or does it refute itself or does it add to his griefs?*

The whole contention of even adventitiously-minded schools of Philosophy is that Mayavada is not a satisfactory instrument for the purposes for which it was devised, and therefore the advaita can exist without the acceptance or even through a refutation of it. Firstly let us see what are its benefits.

- (i) We contend that the world is not made at all. It is simply a product¹ of illusion. Maya is the name for this illusion, the illusion of Brahman appearing

*Life Divine Vol. 1, p. 261.

1. The distinction between making and producing is a rather knotty one and is hidden under the cloak of these two synonyms which mean the same activity.

as the world. It is ultimate irrationality.

- (ii) Either the world is real to us or the Brahman but never the two simultaneously. The illusory never is.
- (iii) Maya can be a power in a general sense in which an illusion is a power. But Maya has not created or produced the illusion. We cannot say there is illusion because there is Maya.

Then follow these questions: "Can we not explain this illusion in some way? Can we not go beyond it?" To which he answers "We contend that we cannot."

However he contends also in the same breath that we can go beyond illusory appearance. Then follow a series of propositions which hinge round this getting out of the illusory appearance, which are all due to the ultimate irrationality (p. 229), which he straight away equates with the *avarna* and *vikshepa*, *avidya*, *upadhi* etc., all those entities which make diversity possible. And with quiet resignation is uttered the words "Beyond this we cannot go" (p. 229, 230).

Then he begins begging the question that has been at issue, how and why did the individual superimpose the quality of self-hood upon the non-self, why should there be illusion in the ever infinite consciousness, the so-called *asraya* and *vishaya* of itself? To this question alone was an answer demanded, and it is evaded by saying that it is a mystery or fundamental irrationality: 'Beyond that we cannot go'.

No one denied that the reality behind everything is Brahman, the support of all things is in Him, and by Him are all kept in their appointed places. By

denying the individual soul or the reality of the world we have not untied the knot nor 'dissolved' it by any means (p. 231). The learned professor has debunked it.

The imputation of ignorance to all the pramanas does not avail. The precise process or manner of the deepening of the self in each or the 'perception' (very uncomfortable word that for an Advaitin to use) of the self within which cancels the world and ourselves certainly presupposes the two-fold knowledge of present ignorance and the truth, *simultaneously*, even if this simultaneity be only for a moment. Indeed Advaita has found it necessary in actual practice to accept the period of simultaneous experience of illusion and reality to be considerable—as witnessed to by its postulation of *badhitanuvritti*.

The problems of error as fact, error as *ajnana*, and that illusion is not nothing but that it really resolves into its ground, are then discussed, and not always happily, because the confusion reigns in the mind of Prof. Malkani that knowledge is not awareness, that knowledge is relational and infected with error, a position which we shall have to remember as inconsistent with his thesis, that knowledge or knowing is immediate absolutely (p. 223). Finally with a gusto declares Prof. Malkani: 'Maya! There is no Maya and no problem of Maya'! (p. 238).

It is a thin defence but the best possible under the circumstances perhaps; it could have been done better, if only he were loyal to Sankara who at least did not make reason an ultimate arbiter, though he shewed that reason could only demolish and it is intuition that could grant. Advaita monistics is intellectual, incurably in-

tellectual; and an inverted intellectuality pervades it; for it makes the real world a conceptual creation, and the primal cause which it has discovered as the truth of its intuition, the transcendent, it makes into an unattainable unknowable substrate, and as such also a conceptual entity. Maya is the concealing force it has recourse to, but this, true to its main purpose, it makes into an element of complete and utter irrationality or unintelligibility, since, for Prof. Malkani, it does not explain illusion; it explains not itself, and it can be of no help to Brahman, the sole existent; it cannot explain emergence. It had never been and therefore why talk about it?

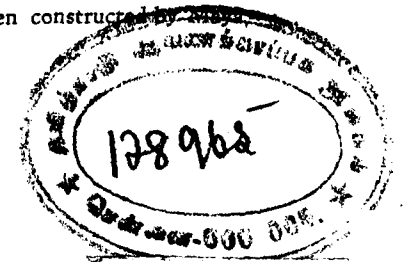
Then, that is, after having to his own satisfaction established the non-existence and non-problem of Maya, having after all thought that Maya yet is something to be talked about, he proceeds to answer the objections raised against this non-existent problem. We may well remark that it is he who found a convenient inexplicable peg to hang his brand of Advaita, not we, and he cannot get away with its argumentation about its 'unlimited' or penultimate existence or reality. We have every right to ask whether the reality that is awareness is an existence or not, is it or is it not. No recourse to two standpoints in reference to the same thing is available, for its self-contradiction is patent on the face of it. He now begins answering objections.

The first objection: "If Brahman is the only reality why speak of Maya at all? But if we have to admit the principle of Maya in order to explain

our present experience, there will always be some form of ultimate dualism. Maya will have some relation to Brahman" (p. 238).

Prof. Malkani begins with the preface that thought can start with some kind of dualism, and admits otherwise it has no scope. He speaks immediately about planes. Are these planes in Brahman or in us and if in us or in anything else *why* are they? He says that it is the fault of philosophizing itself. Of course no body expects one to jump over one's own shadow. Naively comes the sentence: "Maya (the problem) is the end of all problems"—rather we do not see any end to it. But no sooner he says this than he recovers his philosophical judgment and remarks "Maya is an entity which is real only in the absence of discriminating thought". Well may one exclaim, where are we going to? Thought is essentially dualistic; yet only without thought can we see that maya is an end of all problems; and now maya is refuted by thought. Thought indeed walks in three paces to suit the logical incoherency of the three planes*. But then what can be coherent in this world? The second criterion (that of coherency) is crashing on us and is being swallowed up by the fastest running river in the ravine. "Surely the concept of maya is liquidating itself and all dualism". The naivety is all the more true to type, constant throughout, "And there is no forced logic about it". "The maya stands fully revealed to thought in its true nature when it is described as "anirvachaniya".

* Life Divine 1. "Nowhere in the Upanishads is it actually laid down that the three-fold status is a condition of illusion or the creation of an unreality; it is constantly affirmed that all this that is,—this universe we are now supposing to have been constructed by Maya is the Brahman, the Reality."



The whole argument is a sample of the incoherency of the structure of thought raised by the learned professor. An omnibus-howl that there is no problem; incomprehensibility is something that stands revealed, acceptance of Ignorance of true nature is understanding;—these are all of a piece with the attitude that does not see that the whole approach to the problem of Unity-Multiplicity has misfired, and this cussedness pervades the entire thesis so efficiently carried out in its presentation as in its defence.

The second objection: "The world cannot be *all* an illusion. The illusory is never really known to us but merely conceived. The world is not merely conceived by us. It shows the reign of law and order. It has real objectivity..." The objection is a consequence of the first, for it attacks the maya-concept from the side of the effect—the world.

Prof. Malkani admits that "Thus we have to admit that the illusory is just like any real object" (p. 240), and proceeds to make both the illusory objects and the 'so-called real' objects conceptual or rather a 'construct of thought'. He airily propounds that every thing about the world could ultimately be traced to thought. But is it not the thought that taught him to discriminate? Changing the front he may explain that thought has two modalities (i) constructive or creative and (ii) discriminative analysis. He holds that once we separate the one from the other, we shall arrive at a stage when we shall have no objectivity. And as we shall have no objectivity, neither is there a place for subjectivity. Prof. Malkani however wants to make out that illusion, imagination and conception are different; but having reduced every thing to what we are not capable

of ever knowing, he assumes that perception, conception and imagination are all of the same kind (p. 241). But he contends also that there is a difference between conception and imagination, using the so-well-known but well-exploded myth of free-association in the one case, and controlled-association in the other. This resort has already been so thoroughly ruined by the Psycho-analytic school which shows that free-association is in fact an association or redintegrative process that takes place under the guidance of the Unconscious and repressed subliminal consciousness, that we may well call our conceptualising more free than that; but it may yet claim to be free if we mean by it something that is subjective; but then, even this is impossible for the control exercised by the unconscious or the subliminal consciousness is of the universal instincts, the most universal and racial, and as such it is spurious subjectivity that pervades the free-association process. It appears then that the specific conceptualisation that takes place when I conceive a chair and not a table, the control is of the object and not of the subject and there is no choice left for Prof. Malkani to call it by any other name.

Prof. Malkani here diverts himself by describing the illusory as *consciously* perceived and not *consciously* imagined. The rub then is consciousness, and not either objectivity or imagination or perception, and as for that consciousness surely there can be no imputation that it is doing havoc. But precisely the whole complaint of Mayavada is against this Consciousness, this Absolute Consciousness, that does all this tricky business of appearing illusorily in imagination, in perception and in conception too. This truth is, as Sri Aurobindo

has stated, and there are weighty authorities and testimonies of Sri Ramana, Sri Bhaskara, Sri Madhva, Sri Krishna Chaitanya and a whole host of mystics who point out that there is absolutely no meaning in holding that the 'created', 'manifested', 'exhibited' is less real than the Uncreate, Unborn, Unmanifest, Unexhibited or Uncreatable, Unmanifestable, Unexhibitable, which however does appear, does exhibit itself to itself, so to speak. The *vivarta-vada* is an expedient in a refutation of Buddhism; it is futile as an explanation of Vedic and Upanishadic Intuition. The whole doctrine of unreality of the three states of waking, dreaming and sleeping propounded by Mayavada under the distinguished auspices of the Karika-kara-Gaudapada, is alien to the structure of spiritual experience and whatever experience is at the back of the value theories of Mayavada, it is a sheer disservice to the Reality of the Supreme Consciousness, Being-Bliss.

The reply to the third objection (c) (p. 241) complains, in one word, that the refuter of the Mayavada has unfortunately a notion and the objector here holds, that there are real individuals, real knowledge and real liberation. True, these have absolutely no place in Advaita Mayavada, indeed there is no place therein for anything, not even for Sachchidananda. Having argued however that much may be said in favour of the common-sense position seeking a real liberation for a real individual, he holds that freedom is not 'change of a quality for another quality' on the part of a self-identical entity' (p. 241); for he holds that freedom is not equivalent to changing of one quality, that of being bound, to one of freedom, for here there is no modification but a

dropping of limitation. Change here is certainly not the word to be employed except as a general term. The whole difficulty for Prof. Malkani is that he starts with a very wrong use of the word 'real' and refuses to see that it is leading him and his like to the *cul de sac* of perfect darkness: witness his impervious sentence "A real bondage could not disappear through right knowledge, but a false bondage must" (p. 243) and perhaps students of Mayavada will recall the analogy of fire dying out along with that which burns in it applied to the right knowledge itself; for you will remember that real individuals, real knowledge, and real liberation are unacceptable to Advaita. For blatant logic without relevance this piece is hard to beat. But then we are in such a world and the freedom granted to the individual is, in the Grace of the Divine, to be a *kamacari*.

The accusing fingers of many thinkers who are also mystics, and not an intellectual bourgeoisie, are raised against the advaitic view that He is Brahman and point out that the *upasana* of *Aham-brahmasmi* is itself capable of being misdirected towards the exaltation of egoism as in the case of the mythical heroes. And the mystical finger raised against the school of Advaita Mayavada cannot be rebutted unless there is the acceptance of humility by the one who achieving salvation of cancellation of his existence sees not others as even waiting to be liberated or cancelled, though he (?) continues his high spiritual cancellation-business remaining out of the world. Sri Aurobindo as a Seer-mystic lays his unerring finger on this which Prof. Malkani with his own brand of self-justified consciousness (?) speaks of as a private grievance (p. 244). Further Prof. Malkani

betrays his lack of understanding of the metaphysical theory of Sri Aurobindo when he says that the individual is 'a phenomenal existence' and a creation of the Lord! (foot note to page 244).

Then comes the reply to the objector who really works out a *reductio ad absurdum* by saying "If indivisible consciousness is the only reality then the world is not and never existed, can never have been conceived." "For do we not first conceive it and then deny it?" Now comes Prof. Malkani with his reply; no doubt we have to accept at the level of thought—the terms of duality and multiplicity,—(quite a convenient excuse for thinking in terms of that). Then with as much dogmatism he asserts that 'a unity which accommodates multiplicity can only be, as we have shown, a spurious unity'—the showing as we point out at once is a mere affirmation, not sanctioned by logic, by experience, not even by integral experience. This is sheer nonsense; for the whole problem of any metaphysics is to discover the unity, that unity which shall not cancel but uphold the multiplicity and make experience possible. Abolishing is a child's act of solution and cancelling, sublating and other terms are but veils of this process of a mentality which is unable to stand up to a critical exposition of the integrity of Reality. The fact is, it needs a painstaking effort to understand the secret of unity. Identity is the first-look solution and a false solution. And 'after all we can only realise a real unity when we can go with the aid of thought beyond thought and its dualities,' is a statement of despair when one never makes up his mind to go to that bleak height but goes on rather towards excellent suppers at professorial concerts. And Prof. Mal-

kani's ways of thinking, having been seen for what they are, cannot through any effort on his part but involve his thinking his position to be *reductio ad absurdum*. But the problem of the one and the many is crucial, and has other repercussions on the very structure of society and ethics and these are all debunked by the sweeping phrase, Hitlerian as people will admit, 'Cancel,' which is another way of saying 'put them in the bucket' like puppies. And we know they cannot survive, even the stoutest of them.

The last objection is against the existence of Maya: Maya is, the duality therefore is. But we can, from what has gone before, conclude that the explanation will be swift and surely given Maya never is, never was, never will be. But he allows that the whole business is irrational, and we must of course recognize it. After all, that is what philosophy is out to make known, our limits and possibilities. Surely no one underrated the dimensions of the task undertaken to make irrationality respectable and even honourable. No doubt, the Mayavadin has taken all this trouble not for nothing but to make thought irrational and cancel it if possible in a super-irrational which swallows up all the appearance, for that is the meaning of sublation (p. 237)—a swallowing up by the ground leaving no residue either positive or negative, though what exactly this second alternative means, I leave the reader to discover. Force of habit, you know, in dialectics!

We have arrived at intuition—an intuition that succeeds to the throne where intellect has failed (p. 247). This is a grand quack-business. The magic wand has after all come and lifted us up, our problems, our freedoms as well

as our bondages have all disappeared. You know Intuition—it is Omnivorous.

Unfortunately there are intuitionists, revelationists, enjoyers of God, in his absolute Transcendence as His supreme wonderful immanence, who having simultaneously seen and moved and had their being in all the Supreme Vastness, Bliss and Reality, hold that a superficial attraction, a false attraction alone has been presented by Mayavada; an attraction to the Divine so that they may for a while withdraw their own identifications with the world in order to perceive the Divine relationships. Or even when there is to be had indeed a fundamental psychical identity realised by the individual soul, it is not the essence of the search; for God alone is realized as the most perfectly absorbing Reality, and the completest immanence in Him is seen to be the finale or rather the most complete realization of the union, this being the purpose of the search with which the soul started on its struggle after liberation. Complete surrender gives the fullest immanence of oneself in the Divine in every respect, including the loss of this ego-centrism that has marked it out as separate and self. It then perceives what it should ever know that as in the absorption and this total unification which permits the soul to be able to say 'I am not; Thou alone art' or rather 'I am Thou' to use the most pregnant usage of the Upanishads, for 'I no longer am or can be divested of Thee' and 'Thou art all that is I', so also it knows that the vastness infinity of the Divine had always held it to it-

self and in itself in an inseparable relationship a fundamental mystic and wonderful unity which alone the individual soul did not become aware of and therefore fell into the avidya; even this avidya is for the purpose of the Divine Essence to enjoy Himself, in an extensity and separation that is not separation in essence, in the externally inseparably related souls (aprthaksiddha-sambandha).

It is equally true that the panthesism that is sought to be arrived at by certain thinkers is not the whole truth about the reality; and monism can never be considered to be anything but an intellectual version of the deeper unity or integral Organicistic Personality of the Divine. So truly have certain advaitic thinkers themselves realized the fruitlessness of the reasonings and so completely have western thinkers and philosophers exhibited with their thorough-going consistency the goal of monism, whether it is the Haeckelian, Hegelian, Beyersonian or Machian kinds, to be the outcome of the intellectual attempt to discover the uniformities of nature, that it is a noteworthy development when we see them claiming that their monism is of the intuitional order. The seven refutations of the Mayavada made by Sri Ramanuja give classical examples of its shifty logic and inspired inconsistency and they have yet to be answered fully. Nor are the objections raised by Prof. Malkani all that can be stated against the school, for the orthodox have many more objections.*

* Sri Ramanuja refutes advaita notion of the Absolute as Consciousness as suffering from very serious faults; he shows that consciousness as substance is faulty, for in fact it is but the function of a self and may be called a substance because it changes not because it is changeless. It is not something that subsists as substrata of all states for as pointed out it is but the activity or function of a knower; it is not eternal either because it is an interim activity as our experience

Prof. Malkani wishes to point out that Sri Aurobindo accepts indeed Maya and whether he calls the same *daivi* or *apara maya*, one of these answers to the maya of the advaita. The word Maya is derived by Sri Aurobindo

from the root *ma*, measure, and higher maya is that which 'exhibits' the 'vast illimitable truth of infinite existence' whilst the lower is delusive, separative and of the ignorance. Sri Aurobindo also accepts two levels of evolution.

itself points out that we cognized, we did not cognize etc.; our contraction or limitation of consciousness or intelligence is due to Karma that is beginningless and this limitation does not affect or infect the knowing self; further it is inconceivable that this consciousness as *anubhuti* should be capable of being deflected or segmented by different avidya or mayas; for if it were so and if this *anubhuti* be indeed the reality which becomes knowers, known objects and knowings, then avidya would overwhelm all uniformly. But this cuts at the root of the theory of Uniform Reality. This is not the teaching of the Scriptures (of course Prof. Malkani has not had recourse to scriptures in his article and has treated it from the standpoint of the modern western-philosophers). The whole theory of Nescience or Avidya is unprovable, by which we mean a wholesale universal nescience, Sri Venkatanatha refutes the Advaita in the following manner:

"Since it is said that all that is other than Brahman is illusion, there is no testimony at all by which to intimate that thing. Nor could the transcendental Brahman prove any of these. Even if the testimony of the phenomenal consciousness is accepted, soon after the phenomena have ceased to appear as true, there can be no adherence to one's own tenets, as they are said to become false and are identical with dream evidence. Further they themselves have surrendered the validity of testimonies as something not being unqualifiedness (of Brahman itself) and the world illusoriness, the knowledge of other systems, the knowledge of the world etc., thereby becoming true, these (other and opposed views) would become valid knowledge!" Further he writes "To not one of the examples he brings forward helps or harmonises with his doctrine." (Paramatabhanga: Ch. XI, my trans. JSVOL. 1.)

That whole chapter should be read for a thorough-going refutation. Thus it can be seen that the whole procedure of Mayavada has been to go the way of nihilism, and nothing can prevent one from going that way once we abandon the criteria we have. The sorriest plight is that of Prof. Malkani who started with the four-point programme of being loyal to human experience, and has straightway disloyally sought to refute every human reality and standard and has finally ended by saying that Ignorance never was, Maya never was, World never was, Reality never was or if or will be. As Sri Ramanuja stated, in every respect Mayavada is an unacceptable doctrine.

Bhaskara, an earlier commentator on the Vedanta Sutras, has severely criticised Sankara's theory. "In seeking to establish the stability of the absolute the Mayavadin cuts at the root of teach *sad-vidya* and *sat-karya-vada*; false judgment cannot lead to real knowledge, and there is no sublation of one state of the self by the other, and it culminates in that inexplicable nescience, called *sarva-anirvaciyatva*. Nor can the practice of upasanas and the resort to intuition have any place in the system of identity. The two-standpoint theory is a fertile source of self-delusion. Students who would like to know more about the orthodox way of refutation should read Prof. P. N. Srinivasacharya's work on the *Bhedabheda Philosophy* (p. 57-73). He calls these refutations as anticipations of Sri Ramanuja's *Saptavidha-anupapatti*.

Madhva defends the difference theory against the Advaita theory and shows even as Sri Ramanuja does that there is no cognition by any *pramana* of the undifferented; and the identity texts must be interpreted in consonance with the Dvaita, the difference-view. Sri Ramanuja alone grants that both the texts—advaitic and dvaitic—must take into consideration the texts which are mediating (*ghataka-srutis*), which in one sense form the key to the whole science of textual criticism.

the evolution in the Ignorance and the evolution in the knowledge; the material, vital and mental evolution are of the Ignorance. What is precisely the status of this Ignorance, since 'Self-Ignorance is the root of all perversity of our existence?' No advaita can accept the view, says Prof. Malkani, that reality, the most absolute, can ever suffer from self-ignorance not to speak of Ignorance. Now this cannot be explained by the theory of lapse into ignorance of the most perfect Consciousness-Force: he even holds that 'falling away from Self-Knowledge and Self-illumination into the lowest strata of inconscience can never be a play or *lila* which would fill the heart of reality or *sachchidananda* with joy' (p. 248). It cannot be that error or rather falling into error is a way to truth (p. 248 footnote). Nor is evil inevitable. And triumphantly, says Prof. Malkani, once we admit or accept error as colouring our view of the cosmos or of the things as they are in themselves, we must simply go all the way with Advaitism and admit no explanation of the world except in terms of *maya* or the power of illusion." (p. 249).

The above statements of Prof. Malkani betrays a complete lack of intuition into fundamentals of spiritual life. We have already referred to his definitions of reality or the real, his conception of *maya*, his conception of knowing and conceiving and imagining, and his complete confidence that nothing really can be and nothing has been and we are ever as we were. The advaitic technique suffers from a vague identification of reality with permanence, illusion with knowing and a confusion between intellect and intuition which is facilitated by a surreptitious hypostatizing of intellectual monism into an

intuitive realization or awareness. The truths of spiritual life reveal the grades of ascent of the consciousness, and as Sri Ramanuja pointed out eight centuries ago the technique of Advaita is to deny every evidence and finally hold that all evidences point to their own destruction and to the awareness of Reality. A psychological somersault is the need. The advaitin cannot explain the wherefore of this illusion, while the realists at least realise the actual fact of untruth and seek to get over it and find in the blaze of the illumination that all the untruths have indeed been real and really revealing the wonderful beneficence and even reality of the ascent to Divine nature. True it is that there are several standpoints; the stand-point of the human reveals the *maya* working out the passion of the manyness or multiplicity of souls each seeking an individual ascent into the Divine mansion and it may appear technically as that of the ignorance since it operates diffusively; but this is an ignorance which is implicit or veiled knowledge in the depths and appears to the Supreme Transcendent or the Supermind not as an ignorance but as the puissance of the Self-illuminated operating on the extremest limit of the multiplicity which it gathers in the Divine evolution into the Unity of these in the higher. The language of dimensions is essentially symbolic and yet true of the mystical life, and none who is a mystic can miss these terms in literature. Rightly thus Sri Aurobindo has said "For this ignorance is still in reality a knowledge seeking for itself behind the original mask of Inconscience and missing and finding; its results are the true consequence of the lapse,—in a way, even the right working of the recovery from the lapse,"—

this sentence is nothing more than what I have stated, that the implicit multiplicity in its creative urge of expansion affirms at once on one side the multiplicity as separately working out a harmony or an affirmation through the many individualised personalities, affirming egoism, mind, vital movement, material distension etc., while all through the secret unity, in the depths, sustains and leads and projects these upward and organises in its own freedom the essential ecstasy of the perfections of the Divine. Sin, error, ignorance are the inevitable representations of the figures of these movements on the surface, real and poignant to the individual souls, but in the final culmination of their ascent into the Supermind these can be seen as the real, essential and necessary steps of its ascent in these integral processes or integrating processes. The secret of the system of Sri Aurobindo lies in this essential dictum: the Divine Oneness seeks the self-delight in terms of the eternal and implicit multiplicity of its nature in each and in all simultaneously or successively in space-time nexus.

Mayavada cannot bear this large formulation of the Nature of Brahman, being absorbed by the Oneness, staticism, permanence as statically construed and not dynamically possible without lapse into imperfection or unconsciousness. Sri Aurobindo shews that the two, Oneness and multiplicity, Change and Permanence, Transcendence and Immanence, are all *sat-cit-ananda*, and the *Anandatva*, *chaitanyatva*, and *satyatva* are characteristic of both the two types of Self-existence, only they are expressed in terms of the typical formulations and both are at every point capable of being perceived as co-existent. That is to say, to the

seer-vision there is visible change in Permanence, as permanence is seen in change; oneness in multiplicity as well as multiplicity in oneness; transcendence in nature or immanence as well as immanence in the transcendence; the stress being different. In the creative Process what we perceive are the dynamic, multiplicity, change, immanence which express the permanent, oneness, transcendence in terms of process in a space-time. It is in this sense the Supreme is supremely wonderful mystery and the *sachchidananda* requires and has its dynamic formulation in the Supermind-consciousness; in this sense too we can speak of dual-governance, *dampatya*, of the Divine in diunity as Siva and Sakti, Vishnu-Laksmi; it is this that is the essentially mystic reality which derealises nothing that is or was or will be but uplifts all and integrates all in the supreme ecstasy of an integral experience. Thus the final criticism of Prof. Malkani that Sri Aurobindo colours his scheme with error and that therefore he must walk into the mayavadic parlour is disposed of as merely a rhetorical pose needing summary rejection.

Prof. Malkani does not raise the value questions to which idealists usually resort having made no success with logic; and that saves our trouble a lot. In a universe wherein everything has no value, and all values are cancelled summarily by closing one's eyes to the problems, there happens not sublation of the values nor yet the transvaluation of all values but the values do not exist at all, the only value being the hypostatized intellectual Absolute raised to the status of a mystical Reality by thinking so hard that it has passed to the level of intuition (or is it hallucination, which also

we are told is the cause of its occurrence?).

Monistic metaphysics excludes love as well as Freedom. And a criticism of the concept of Freedom which is aimed at by monistic theology or philosophy of Religion, reveals that freedom may be the source of both evil and sin as well as of real triumph over creatureliness, though it must be confessed that the former leads ultimately to bondage to the created. It is true also that real mysticism aims at the realisation of the transcendent God, the non-revealed God, who is not revealed in the History, the Para of the Pancharatra-Visishtadvaita, the God who is not even the creator—the apophatic God. But this is indeed not the end of the mystical experience. If Advaita as mysticism is to be considered it can only be described as the effort to arrive at this Non-creator God, the Supreme Unknown. But even this experience finally ends as a personal experience, profoundly so, which appears to 'discard and dissolve personal existence in the impersonal and the super-personal existence! This is what was meant by the illumined sages when they spoke

about the Origins and the Deity as transcendent to the Process, which the process cannot know, which however contains in itself the mystery of both personality and impersonality; and since impersonality is usually intellectually reduced to a false generality or pseudo-concept, in the language of Signor Croce, there is a denial of these *jati-vyakti* classifications of experience. Advaita monistics does not go beyond this generality and never emerges into universality. The fact is true universality can only be represented by Supreme Personality. This is the message of Sri Aurobindo and Rabindranath and such a personality permits the impersonal as law, as universality, as the figure of identity in all process. As Adrain Coates remarked "Personality is focal to reality," and this personality is certainly not the psychological personality as described by modern psychologists who wander without souls, but the Supreme Sachchidananda and Supermind. It is Sri Aurobindo that has stated it most luminously and shown that the Supermind is the Need for New Spirituality, the Integral Divine Life or Gnostic Being.

—K. C. Varadachari.

THOUGHTS ON CURRENT EVENTS

NEEDED A SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT

The generous and spontaneous manner in which people in and outside India reacted to the recent famine in Bengal has raised great hopes that the whole world is growing into one vast human family. The causes of that terrible calamity are being investigated and attempts are being made to prevent its repetition. But there is one aspect of the problem which has not received sufficient attention and we want to refer to it here as to us it seems to go to the very root of the matter. In a broadcast from the Calcutta station, Major General Stuart, Military officer in charge of relief operations in Bengal, observed: "There is however one fact which has impressed me very strongly during my tours of the Bengal famine area. I am speaking very frankly because I feel you should all realise the true situation. It is that the average peasant and town-dweller is utterly callous to the suffering of his fellow brethren, men, women and children. He sees so much distress around him, yet he seems entirely unwilling to render practical assistance or to do anything to help. There are voluntary workers of course and they are doing heroic work but their number is comparatively small."

That this is a true presentation of fact is not disputed. Indeed other observers also have made similar reports; thus in the Amrita Bazar Patrika of the 24th November, 1943, a special representative of that paper touring in the villages remarked: "The milk of human kindness seems to have disappeared from the land altogether."

That is also the report of volunteer relief workers—the villagers are narrowly selfish, apathetic, self-centred. Whence has come to the people this dejection, this stain and darkness of the soul in this hour of difficulty and peril? The Amrita Bazar Patrika, which does not dispute the fact, attempts an explanation by saying that chronic poverty has made the people callous. But that is beside the point. The charge of callousness is brought not against the poor but against those who are above want and can help others if they like. Indeed if the richer and higher classes in the villages had taken any interest in the condition of the poor or made any movement to ameliorate it, they would not certainly have rushed to die in thousands in the streets of Calcutta and other towns.

The scarcity in Bengal was only a question of a few months and the condition there was not so bad as that of the war-ridden countries in Europe. Leningrad for example had to pass through a siege for 900 days. Bengal lacked food, but Leningrad lacked fuel as well with which to warm its people, in the terrible winter of Russia. The enemy was entrenched around the walls of the city; communication with the rest of the country was cut off. The supply of food and fuel ceased. To add to this the enemy was shelling and bombing the city night and day. But it refused to submit. Whatever stores there were in the city and whatever could be somehow brought from the outside were strictly husbanded

and economically distributed and by God's grace the people gloriously came out of the ordeal. If the villages of Bengal had a little of the spirit of Leningrad, this terrific death roll due to starvation and allied diseases might not have happened at all.

Certainly our people are not heartless, they have not lost all the virtues of social beings, but they have been overtaken by a terrible load of *tamas* or inertia. It is against this evil in this country that Vivekananda raised his voice and started his plan of campaign. But the battle is evidently not yet won. Political, social and economic movements so far have been of little avail in awakening a true throbbing of life in the country, though there have been some spectacular hectic movements which have even worsened the situation in reaction. Indeed Vivekananda foresaw it when he said: "So every improvement in India requires first of all an upheaval in religion. Before flooding India with socialistic or political ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas." ("My plan of campaign"). Since the Swadeshi days, Bengal has been in the forefront of the political movement in India, but that has not been able to infuse a new life and spirit into the people—that is the glaring lesson of the present crisis. And if this is the state of things in Bengal, we can safely infer that the condition is nothing better in other parts of this great sub-continent. It may be said that the true remedy is political freedom. Freedom is no doubt indispensable; but that by itself is not sufficient. If the people are not roused from their present lifelessness, they will not be able to make a proper use of their freedom and may indeed lose it again before long.

The history of India has repeatedly shown that it is only a spiritual movement that can bring about a true awakening in the people of India. By spiritual movement we do not of course mean giving an impetus to the present religious habits of the people; indeed both the Hindus and the Muslims of India are perhaps more religious than any other people in the world, but that has not prevented them from falling into the deepest slough of despondence; Religion is no longer a living spiritual force, the spirit has gone out of it, and it is mostly the outer crust to which people cling through sheer force of habit and custom—and that is a sure sign of *tamas* and lifelessness. What is needed is a revival of the true spirit of religion, breaking the old forms and moulds and creating new ones suitable to the needs and conditions of modern humanity. "To speak again to the world the eternal word under a new form adapted to its present mentality." In short what is needed is a movement like that started by Buddha, but this time with a greater and vaster aim for which humanity has been preparing itself through all its vicissitudes. We find a similar indication in the Gita, where the Lord says to Arjuna, "The ancient Yoga was lost in the great lapse of time, that has been to-day declared to thee by Me". We are on the threshold of a new synthesis which will be even richer and vaster than that of the Gita.

"We do not belong to the past dawn, but to the noons of the future. A mass of new material is flowing into us; we have not only to assimilate the influences of the great theistic religions of India and the world and a recovered sense of the meaning of Buddhism, but to take full account of the potent

though limited revelations of modern knowledge and seeking; and, beyond that, the remote and dateless past which seemed to be dead is returning upon us with an effulgence of many

luminous secrets long lost to the consciousness of mankind but now breaking out again from behind the veil. All this points to a new, a very rich, a very vast synthesis." —*Essays on the Gita.*

RELIGION IN RUSSIA

One remarkable development of the present war is the manner in which Soviet Russia, under the leadership of Stalin, has definitely given up the Marxist attitude towards all religion and spirituality. This is a clear sign that the world is emerging out of an age of materialistic philosophy which has been invaluable as the inspiration for applied Science and also as a corrective of the ascetic denial of life, but which has, at the same time, led to a neglect of other values, a neglect that is, in the words of a scientist, "perhaps the ultimate cause of the present war." (The Structure of Morale By J. T. Maccurdy). The ground for this revival of spiritual values was already prepared by Science itself. Not only Matter cannot give a sufficient explanation of Mind, Matter itself cannot be explained by Matter alone; modern Science has shown that Matter is a manifestation of some Force or Energy, about the ultimate nature of which Science cannot say anything. It is not that Science has furnished proof of Spirit, that cannot be in the nature of things, as Science, that is Physical Science, has no means of testing truths

which are beyond sense-experience. But modern Science has definitely given up the 19th century attitude that the ultimate Reality is something material and inconscient, and thus has taken away the basis of the so-called "scientific materialism" on which Marx and Engels relied. Indeed even they in their time admitted that the spiritual view cannot be refuted on theoretical grounds; their objection to religion was primarily on practical grounds, such as "religion is the opium of the people." This view has been found to be untenable by Soviet Russia after a long period of the most determined anti-religious drive of modern times. Stalin may not have become a religious or spiritual man; but as a realist he has found out that it is false psychology which regards the religious instinct in man as something which can be uprooted and that religion is not necessarily a force of reaction. It is to be hoped that the religious revival in Russia will not be a mere repetition of the old forms and ritualism but will bring in something of the ever-invigorating and creative power of the Spirit.

Critic.

REVIEWS

Spirit and Reality: Nicolas Berdyaev: Geoffrey Bles. The Centenary Press. Two Manchester Square London. pp. 203.

This book is an English Translation of the author's Russian work on one of the most important aspects of Mystical thought. It is an exposition of the Christian standpoint but of the new school.

His philosophy of Spirit is that Spirit is the highest reality superconscious, existential, which has primacy over being, which is to be known only through persons, whose essential quality is Freedom, it is the agency of the superconscious in consciousness (p. 15), it is creativeness, concrete, subjective, which can and must be interpreted 'above all in a personalistic way' (p. 12), it is 'meaning, creativity, integrity, love, value, and orientation towards the highest Divine world and union with it' (p. 32); it emanates from God but it is not a Divine Creation like Nature; it is a Divine infusion, an inspiration; (p. 33) Spirit is irrational, extra-rational and supra-rational (p. 34), 'Spirit is not being but the purpose and truth of being' (p. 34). Nicolas Berdyaev holds further that Spirit is 'not the same thing as consciousness, but consciousness is formed through Spirit and through it again reaches superconsciousness.' Spirit is other than the soul, the former is spiritual, the latter is psychic. "Everyman has a soul—such is his nature—but his spirituality may remain undiscovered or suppressed... Spirit is axiological it is not nature, not even psychic nature, but truth, beauty, purpose, freedom' (p. 39) "The soul is invariably fragmentary and partial; spirit alone is whole and universal. Nor is spirituality opposed to body or material but implies its transfiguration, the realization of the highest quality of the whole man—his personality" (p. 40).

Thus according to Nicolas Berdyaev Spirit is to be interpreted in a dynamic manner as that which is the essential truth of existence. He opposes the view that spirit is objective though he holds it is possible to objectify it. The intellectual interpretation of Spirit is foredoomed to failure, for they are all abstractions or rather abstract interpretations of that which cannot be at any time abstract or non-existential. "The abstract interpretation of Spirit common to intellectuals who as a class are denied the full life, is the result of a false dualism of spirit and flesh, of spiritual and intellectual work on the one hand, and material and physical labour on the other. It is a classic heritage of aristocratic Greek intellectualism" (p. 43).

Students of Indian Philosophy will be able to see that the illusionistic theory is nothing but the abstractification of Spirit, and thus a falsification of Spirit, due to the aristocratic primacy granted to intellect. The primacy is always to Spirit.

Having thus disowned any possibility of objective Spirit and shown that even the vigorous Philosophy of Spirit by Hegel errs on the side of abstraction, the author points out that the one sign or test of Spirit is Freedom. "There is no determination from without. Everything spiritual is subject, inward. There can be no spiritual emanation from the object. The spiritual has no significance other than freedom. Objectification is a secondary and derivative process, it should be grasped from within" (p. 48). "Objectification is a descent into materiality, exterior existence—it loses its chief attribute freedom in this process (p. 47). This means that

the method of grasping at the truth of the objectified spirit, namely nature or matter, should be from within; by this means its essential freedom gets liberated. The intellectual and any other means of understanding the objectified spirit is only through symbolism.

In the Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo we can see that this is what we call the involution of Spirit, a descent of Spirit into finality into mechanism. But there is a vast difference between Berdyaev and Sri Aurobindo in the fact that Berdyaev does not accept evolution of spirit in and through matter with its higher evolutes of life and mind, the planes through which it became objectified. "The agency of Spirit is not evolutionary. There is no consistent development of Spirit, for this would imply a law and would be a negation of Freedom" (p. 47). Thus Berdyaev considers law always as restrictive and never anything but organizational, or rather self-organizational or purposive in any other manner. The attribute of purpose that he granted to spirit earlier (p. 39) is not shewn to have a primacy which would be a regulative expression of its own primacy over matter or being or intellectual conformity. On this principle, freedom could be restrictive, degrading, even as he himself finds it necessary to hold that the Evil is to be considered to be freedom itself in one of its forms. "Causality is not the only reason why evil, injustice and unjust suffering exist in the world; freedom is another reason because it has a certain tendency to become inevitable causality" (p. 118). This is but correct, for human freedom cannot be absolute freedom at all times; it must either ascend to the superconscious or else it will face the movement towards causal necessity, *karma*. The problem of Evil is very important, and Berdyaev makes freedom itself a mystery whose rational explanation would only kill it. (p. 113-115). Reverting to the question of Objectification of Spirit, he calls this socialization. "It produces the bourgeois state (in the spiritual sense) and thus leads to the exhaustion of creative vital energy and activity. It inevitably

breeds fiction, generally accepted as a socially useful instrument" (p. 51). Thus all objective organizations which started for preserving the riches spiritual ended in a mass of symbolism and truth was left languishing under the debris of efficacy administrative and otherwise. In the brilliant work *Science and Politics in the Ancient World*, Benjamin Farrington pointed out that much more falsification and myth-making took place under the guise of Spirituality in the Philosophy of Plato than under the most efficient of materialistic philosophies. The way out of this condition of stagnation and lifeless philosophy which idealistic schools of political philosophy and objectivists have made possible is only by arriving at that stage when man will begin to understand all things in and through the subjective, mystically speaking, and the personalistic. "The triumph of spirit in society would be a triumph of personalism, of personal communion of the relation of one personality to another in a human and Humane We, the recognition of the supreme value of every personality. This is the creation of subjective rather than an objective society." This is not individualism, but a true concrete universalism. Human happiness cannot be organised even as one modern Indian writer states: Organization kills the individual, makes him void of personality. He becomes just a number. But it is not possible to hold that it is the business of a spiritual society to enhance the ego-sense or egoism of the individual. Rightly human happiness cannot be established utterly unless the individual impulses of self-seeking and self-increase are also abolished for these two instincts are not spirit-increasing but objectifications of spirit that is within. "The greatest of all rationalistic illusions is that ultimate deliverance from human suffering and unhappiness will be realised in the external sphere of organized life" (p. 101). "Man's spiritual history is a search for inner deliverance both from his own suffering and that of the world" says the author, and the highest solution offered for this is love. Rightly too the author

finds that this love is a fact not of the consciousness which is partial and fragmentary, but either of the subconscious or the superconscious. The ancient Indian solution was that the love of the Supreme is the first step towards the love of all, indeed the subconscious or unconscious love is a veiled objectification of the superconscious love for the Divine in each individual. This is love that is a total offering to the multiple Divine.

The most illuminating chapter is the fifth which deals with the nature of mysticism. "Mysticism is essentially a spiritual as distinct from a psychic state and implies a spiritual penetration of the soul. It is the birth of the spiritual man, who apprehends realities in a better and more incisive way than natural or psychic man." (p. 131). He sketches how the mystic consciousness seeks for the Unknowable God, the apophatic God, the Non-revealed God or what we can call as the Para, the Transcendent. Berdyaev however errs when he considers that non-christian mysticism is abstract and impersonal for in truth real mysticism embraces both the archetypal realities of the things viewed as the Real Idea, and their subordination to the Supreme Transcendent, the entirely Concrete, which is amenable to personal relationship even at its highest. The supreme merit of Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy of the Supermind is that not only does he hold that we can reach the pinnacle of the Supermind within ourselves, for that is the only way—and this has been done by the Vedic Rishis who symbolised this as the Solar Orb—but we can also return to the Earth and transfigure the Earth, Life and Mind with its dynamic puissance from within, that is, subjectively and spiritually.

Nor is the author right in contending that Hindu Mysticism is a mysticism of Identity, abstraction from the world, absorption in the Brahman, mere acosmism, abnegation of the plural world. This criticism is justified only in the Mayavadic advaitism. Sri Aurobindo's

Philosophy is far from this type as any pluralistic philosophic can be. Monism and Mysticism are opposed to one another; for mysticism seeks integral life, though how it does it is more than the author is aware of. He writes "Of all relations the most mysterious and the most difficult to realise in life is that between freedom and Divine Grace, between the human soul and the Divine or Holy Spirit. This relation defies both monistic and dualistic interpretations; it is situated outside our category of thinking" (p. 155). The bafflement of the method of achieving unity between Freedom and Grace is surely got rid of by the Integral Philosophy which reveals the fact that the whole process of divine evolutionism is a two-way movement of free ascent and aspiration of the individual one of the many of the Integral Divine assisted, stimulated, vivified, transformed and integrated by the Free Omniscient Descent of Grace from above of the One Divine, the eternal One in the eternal multiple. The organistic view too, in its own limited intellectual way, gets over this problem of relationship through its two processes of autonomy and co-operative subordination to the whole. In the Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, as in the thesis of the author, it is clear that "Spirituality is the immanence of the Divine in the human, but this does not infer undifferentiated identity. It is paradoxical that while mystical experiment is both a confrontation and an experience of the transcendental, the transcendental is immanent in it; and that the distinction between the transcendental and the immanent is resolved without the Divine being completely absorbed in the human.... There can be no greater error than to interpret mystical experience in terms of monistic metaphysics. Monism postulates rationalization, a mental process rather than experience" (p. 133). The defect however in Berdyaev's thesis is that while he is able to go thus far, he is not able to visualise the more fundamental dynamism of the Supermind or the Divine Consciousness. The supra-mentalisation of the mind or the human

is within the competence of the Divine Grace that descends and confronts the human, and Christian Theological mysticism cannot stay out when it is so confronted. Nor would Gnostic Mind or Supermind when once earned by the human not be also capable of the Light and Love that vivifies in ever so much obscured a way, nor be disposed only to work in one direction of knowledge or illumination and not of love. The Supermind, as pointed out by Sri Aurobindo, is integral *Sacchidananda* mediating between its own transcendent Nature and the manifest lower nature, uplifting and sustaining the entire process through so-called Ignorance (veiled superconscience) at the lower levels and at its higher levels by its own illumined nature.

The final chapter is the most important in one sense, for the author himself states that all the earlier chapters were written to justify his main theme of New Spirituality. It states that the way of New Spirituality through freedom of Spirit, freedom from objectification, and from the subjectification of spirit to the influence of a wicked and fallen society (Bourgeoisie), leads to emancipation from spiritual symbolization to

spiritual realization, and manifests the creative essence of spirit and it should justify the purpose of creativeness. Throughout this work one looks for the nature of creativeness and finds that though it is stated to be a quality of spirit, even as it turns out to be a fundamental attribute of spiritual life, it is nowhere clear as to what it could create. He has only delineated what spirituality should not and could not be—in other words negatively. But the New Spirituality that Sri Aurobindo points out is something of a fundamental transformation of the human, a fundamental Divine passion having its achievement in the *Sacchidananda*, the One who is the many souls. This Union in the Divine itself is a creative act, and what it connotes to the Soul born in the Supermind-Consciousness is a *terra incognita*.

Despite its several weaknesses the thesis put forward by Nicolas Berdyaev is stimulating as an index to the spiritual ferment and direction to the future which all of us are so eagerly anticipating. In his own words "A new movement of the Spirit is imminent and will help to enlighten further our conception of it."

K. C. V.

Niti-vijnāna (Bengali). By Sri Birchandra Sinha. Published by Sri Sitiesh-chandra Sinha, Khanjarpur, Bhagalpur. Rs. 1/8.

Sj. Birchandra Sinha is an experienced Professor of Philosophy and he has successfully carried out the task which he set to himself—that of acquainting the Bengali-reading public with the main currents of Western ethical thought. One striking feature of the book is that nowhere we find a single English word or phrase; the author has found suitable Bengali words for all Western technical terms and has shown that whatever is essential and important in Western thought can be expressed through Bengali, and this itself is an achievement. The book will serve as a very good introduction to Western Ethics, and University students also will find it useful. But

where we cannot agree with the learned Professor is his comparison of Kant's Ethics with the teaching of the Gita and his finding that the two are very similar. It is a fundamental mistake often committed by Indian Professors of Philosophy to regard the Gita as a book of moral life, *naitik jiban* or even of religious life *dharma jiban*. The Gita is really a book of Yoga and spiritual life, *adhyatma jiban*, and as such stands on a higher level than any system of Morals, not excluding that of Kant or Hegel. No doubt the Gita, as a great synthesis, assigns to morality and religion a proper place, but only as a preparatory discipline; these things belong to the mind, but the Gita asks

the disciple to go beyond the mind and reason, to rise to a higher spiritual consciousness where one finds his unity with Self, with God—a unity which is lost in the mental consciousness of man, *traigunyahavisaya veda nistrigunya bhavarjuna*.

According to Kant the only truly moral action is one which is done following a moral law for its own sake without regard to any other consequences; this is supposed to be essentially the teaching of the desireless action of the Gita. But the similarity is superficial. To Kant the moral law is a command absolute, a categorical imperative. The Gita recognises no moral law or maxim as absolute, commanding allegiance under all circumstances; it also does not make a sharp opposition between duty and happiness like Kant. Thus the Guru in the Gita, after giving an exposition of his Yoga, tells Arjuna: "Therefore arise, get thee glory, conquer thy enemies and enjoy an opulent kingdom (11/33)." This certainly does not agree with the stern moral teaching of Kant. The Gita enjoins desireless action not because it recognises any moral maxim as absolute like Kant, but because desire keeps us bound to the movements of the lower nature and thus is the arch enemy of our upward progress, of our rise into the higher nature and the higher consciousness. In ordinary life desire is the ruling principle of action, and as action constitutes the greater part of our life, if we can give up the habit of acting from desire, we shall go a long way in getting rid of desire altogether and rooting it out of our nature thus laying the foundation of a higher spiritual life. This is the true significance of the *niskama karma* of the Gita. According to Kant, we should act only from a sense of duty; but according to the Gita this sense of duty in man is based on an illusion, for the very sense of being a doer is itself an illusion. "While the actions are being entirely done by the modes of Nature, he whose self is bewildered by egoism thinks that it is his 'I' which is doing them." (3/27). But

as long as man is living in the ignorance and does not realise this truth, but has the sense of being the doer, he should acquire the habit of not making the desire for the fruit the motive of his action; in this way he will rise above the illusion and be established in true self-knowledge. But as in ordinary life desire for the fruit is the usual motive of action and it is very difficult to give it up, the Gita points out that this desire for fruit, this looking forward to the consequences of our actions is useless as the consequences do not depend on us but on the operation of complex forces over which we have no control. This is the true significance of the much-quoted saying of the Gita, "Thou hast a right to action, but only to action, never to its fruits." This is quite different from the "Duty for the sake of duty" principle of Western Ethics. As the Sadhaka of the Gita progresses in desireless action, he realises that he is not really the doer but only an agent, a channel and he gives up all his action to the Divine who is the Lord of all action in the world.

So that ignorant men may not fall into *tamas* or inertia and give up the battle of life which is indispensable for their upward progress, the Gita says that they have a right to action and that they must not have any attachment to inaction. At the same time to get rid of the rajasic principle of desire they are asked not to act from the desire for fruits. What then should be the standard of our action? The Gita says, the *Shashtra*, and here we find some similarity of the teaching of the Gita with ordinary moral teaching. But for the Gita, it is only a preliminary and preparatory stage in the path. The ultimate teaching of the Gita is to abandon all *Shashtra*, all dharmas, rules and maxims and to take our utter refuge in the Divine alone so that the Divine may make us a perfect instrument and channel of the fulfilment of his will in the world, *nimitta matram*. The ideal Karmayogin of the Gita has no sense of duty or being the doer, has

no allegiance to any Shashtra or maxim. "He has flung away from him all egoistic, personal and mental initiative whether of the inner or the outer act (*sarvārambhaparitijagi*), one who lets the divine will and divine knowledge flow through him undeflected by his own resolves, preferences and desires, and yet for that very reason is swift and skilful in all action of his nature, because this flawless unity with the supreme will, this pure instrumentation is the condition of the greatest skill in works." (*Essays on the Gita*).

Showing the similarity of Kant with the Gita, Professor Sinha observes, "Sri Krishna condemns as a weakness of the heart and an obscurity of the soul the affection and love towards our near and dear relations which we value so much and which is the source of so much good in the world; Nature-given affection, compassion, fellow-feeling are the brightest ornaments of human nature, and to deprive human nature of these things is to deprive it of much of its natural beauty. Still this is the injunction of Krishna to Arjuna, and in this his teaching is on par with that of Kant." There can be no greater misunderstanding of the teaching of the Gita than this. The Gita does not want us to be cruel and hard-hearted; from the Vedantic point of view the ordinary pleasures and pains of men are egoistic deformations of the spontaneous delight of the Spirit, so the Gita asks us to root out this ego from our nature and for this it is necessary to bear the shocks of the dualities of life with *samata*, equality, so that we may realise the equal Spirit that is within us, *samam Brahma*. The sadhaka as well as the liberated man of the Gita are "occupied in doing good to all creatures" (p. 5/25, 12/4). "He who has no egoism, no I-ness and my-ness, who has friendship and pity for all beings and hate for no living thing,"—that is the description of the *bhakta* of the Gita who is dear to the Divine. Friendship, compassion, love, delight are the very stuff of the spiritual consciousness which is the goal set before

man by the Gita. The pity of Arjuna, which is so severely condemned by Sri Krishna, "is quite different from the godlike compassion mentioned later on in the Gita, which observes with an eye of love and wisdom and calm strength the battle and the struggle, the strength and weakness of man, his virtues and sins, his joy and suffering, and enters into it all to help and to heal. Arjuna's pity is a form of self-indulgence, it is the physical shrinking of the nerves from the acts of slaughter, the egoistic emotional shrinking of the heart from the destruction of the Dhritarashtrians because they are 'one's own people' and without them life will be empty." (*Essays on the Gita*).

What Professor Sinha calls *sneha* and *mamata* are really egoistic attachment to one's wife and children and other relations because they are "one's own people", "my son," "my wife" and so forth. The wife, the son are dear not for their sake but for the sake of the egoistic self. This attachment to one's relations is good for men of a lower grade who, the Gita says, should not be disturbed in their attachment as otherwise they will lose all initiative to work and remain immersed in *tamas* or inertia (p. 3/26). But to a developed Aryan like Arjuna such an egoistic attachment is a bondage, an obstacle in the further growth of his soul and must be discarded. Indeed the egoistic attachment to the family is a great stumbling block on the spiritual path; that is why the Gita raises the issue so trenchantly at the very beginning of its teaching. The ego is not our true self and all relations through it are based on ignorance and must be discarded, we must become *nirmana*, *nirahankara* so that we may find our true self in which we are one with God and all other creatures. It is this realisation of unity which is the basis of the highest love and the most intense delight.

The Gita like Kant and all other systems of Morality enjoins self-discipline, the control of the senses, of the lower nature but the method is fundamentally

different. According to Kant, the senses are to be controlled by reason, following categorical imperatives or maxims determined by reason; the Gita finds this to be an impossibility, because the human reason itself is under the clutches of desire, is the seat of it (3/40). The senses and the lower nature can only be mastered by seeing the Self and living in it, *param dristva* (2/59, 3/43). According to Kant the Self or the ultimate Reality cannot be known. The Gita says, the supreme Reality can be seen, known, entered into by a devotion or *bhakti* which adores and loves the Divine alone in all things (11/54). Be a doer of my

works, says the Lord, accept Me as the supreme being and object, become my *Bhakta*, be free from attachment and without enmity to all existences; for such a man comes to Me, O, Partha (11/55). "In other words superiority to the lower nature, unity with all creatures, oneness with the Cosmic Godhead and the Transcendent, oneness of will with the Divine in works, absolute love for the One and for God in all,—this is the way to that absolute spiritual self-exceeding and that unimaginable transformation." (*Essays on the Gita*).

—A. B.

We speak of the evolution of Life in Matter, the evolution of Mind in Matter; but evolution is a word which merely states the phenomenon without explaining it. For there seems to be no reason why Life should evolve out of material elements or mind out of living form, unless we accept the Vedantic solution that Life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life because in essence Matter is a form of veiled Life, Life a form of veiled consciousness. And then there seems to be little objection to a farther step in the series and the admission that mental consciousness may itself be only a form and a veil of higher states which are beyond Mind. In that case, the unconquerable

impulse of man towards God, Light, Bliss, Freedom, Immortality presents itself in its right place in the chain as simply the imperative impulse by which Nature is seeking to evolve beyond Mind, and appears to be as natural, true and just as the impulse towards Life which she has planted in certain forms of Matter or the impulse towards Mind which she has planted in certain forms of Life.....The animal is a living laboratory in which Nature has, it is said, worked out man. Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory, in whom and with whose conscious co-operation she wills to work out the superman, the God. Or shall we not say, rather, to Manifest God?

The Life Divine.

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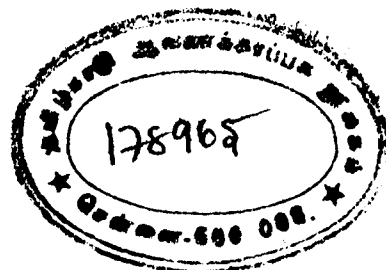
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Edited by R. Vaidyanathaswami, D. Sc.
Printed and Published by T. K. Venkatesan at the Jupiter Press, Ltd.,
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