

Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy of Evolution, By V. Madhusudan Reddy. Published by Institute of Human Study, Hyderabad-7, India. Sponsored by Osmania University. Price : Rs. 30.00.

"Of the many persistent problems of philosophy, that of 'Evolution and Human Destiny' is a uniquely intriguing one," says Dr. Reddy in his preface; and as we proceed through the pages of his work we feel convinced that if the theme mentioned above has kept him intrigued for years together, it is indeed to the splendid benefit of his readers. The work under review—an outcome of intense academic inquest—puts forth in a nutshell an account of thoughts around the theme through the ages, and then, in respect of the same, presents the vision of Sri Aurobindo.

The first part of the work, 'First Thoughts', constituted of some of the foremost topics of interest such as *Avatarhood : The Parable of Evolution*, *Will to Reason*, *The Philosophy of Change*, *The Nisus of Evolution*, etc., provides a very wide basis for an affluent development of the four facets of his theme: Omnipresent Reality (i. *Impressions of the Infinite*, ii. *The Cosmic Illusion*, iii. *Supermind and the Integral Knowledge*, iv. *The Ego and the Psychic*), The Evolutionary Process (i. *Involution and Evolution*, ii. *Modes of Manifestation*, iii. *The Apocalypse of Aspiration*, iv. *Evolution: Individual and Cosmic*), The Spiritual Evolution (i. *Man and Evolution*, ii. *The Purpose and Process of Rebirth*, iii. *The Triple Transformation*, iv. *The Flaming Vision*), Human Destiny (i. *The Spiritual Aim*, ii. *The New Humanity*, iii. *The Kingdom of Heaven*, iv. *Sri Aurobindo: The Supramental Avatar*).

Through all his amazing achievements on one hand and through all the manifestations of revolt and restlessness on the other, man is seeking today to get convinced about the justification of his existence. The vacuum he experiences in course of this conscious or unconscious seeking can never be done away with unless he becomes aware of his emerging future and of the certainty of an integral fulfilment of the aspirations inherent in him. Today, "Man's deepest need is to discover something, some being of power...something not himself, greater than himself," says the author, and his finding is corroborated by, among others, a great scientist and thinker of our time. "From all analogy," states Julian Huxley, "the human species is yet near the beginning of its evolutionary career, and man has before him vast tracts of time to set against the vastness of his tasks." In a world where developments were abundant to drive man into stark pessimism, such revelatory assurances could only surge out of some latent splendour of faith in a genuine philosopher of science, though, so far as outward evidence is concerned, "Ultimate truth," points out Dr. Reddy, "even on the physical plane seems to recede as Science advances." Of course, indications today are ample, and Dr. Reddy's book contains quite a number of them, to suggest the rapid disappearance of the hitherto prominent missing link between the scientific evidences and the truth of Spirit. Theories like the *chance* origin of man are discarded, so much so that a biologist like Edwin Conklin can declare : "The possibility of life originating from accident is comparable to the possibility of the unabridged dictionary

resulting from an explosion in a printing shop." The Evolution as explained and the Future of Man as envisaged by Sri Aurobindo are the most complete and the most marvellous ever. This completeness and this marvellousness can be intellectually better appreciated against a background of all the other prominent thoughts relevant to this theme—a background adequately furnished by the author—and which, with the author's able arrangement and treatment, serves as a genial support to approach Sri Aurobindo who "envisages a world in which Spirit and Matter, Life and Mind are all essential ingredients and work harmoniously together, and where truth is achieved not by a negation or annulment of any of these, but by a transformation and transmutation of them in the light of the highest" (S. K. Maitra). Man evolves, because, in Sri Aurobindo's vision, "An eternal Perfection is moulding us into its own image."

A stress on the intellectual alone, of course, could not be the secret of the success of Dr. Reddy's work. Intellect, after all, is only one of the faculties with which man cultivates conviction. Dr. Reddy's work is significant for even that profounder approach, which rests on intellectual as well as on sur-intellectual faculties, and is thus a more human approach, and perhaps in this respect, too, he is a forerunner of the scholars to come.

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