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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.
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Compiled by Kishor Gandhi

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Whatever is your personal value or even your individual realisation, the first quality required in yoga is humility.
THE SUPRAMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND 1967

A TALK BY THE MOTHER ON APRIL 16, 1958.

We have now arrived at a certitude, for there is already a beginning of realisation. We have the proof that under certain conditions the normal state of humanity can be transcended and a new state of consciousness worked out that would allow at least a conscious relation between the mental man and the supramental man.

It can be affirmed with certainty that between the mental and the supramental being there will be an intermediate specimen, a kind of superman who will have still the qualities and partially the nature of man, that is to say, will still belong, in his most external form, to the human being with an animal origin, but will have sufficiently transformed his consciousness so as to belong, in his realisation and activity, to the new race of supermen.

This species may be considered as a species of transition, because it will discover, as it is to be foreseen, the means of creating new beings without passing through the old animal method, and it is these beings, having truly a spiritual birth, that will form the elements of the new race, the supramental race.

One might thus name supermen those who still belong by their origin to the older method of generation, but who, by their achievement, are in conscious and active relation with the new world of supramental realisation.

It appears, it is even certain that the very substance that will constitute this intermediate world which is being already developed is a substance richer, more powerful, more luminous, more resisting, with certain new qualities, more subtle and pervasive and a kind of innate capacity for universality, as if the degree of subtlety and refinement it has reached allows vibrations to be felt in a manner much more wide, if not altogether total and it takes away the sensation of division which one has with the older substance, the ordinary mental substance. There is a subtlety of vibration which makes the universal global vibration a natural and spontaneous thing. The sense of division, of separation disappears altogether naturally and spontaneously with that substance; and that substance is now almost everywhere spread in earth's atmosphere.

That can be felt in the waking state, simply by a little concentration and a kind of self-absorption of consciousness, if one retraces, retires from the usual exteriorisation that appears more and more artificial and false...

This new perception is affirming itself more and more, it is becoming more and more natural, and sometimes the old manner of being is difficult to seize again, as if it was disappearing into a misty past—something that is on the point of ceasing to exist.
One can conclude from this that since a body formed obviously according to the older animal method is capable of living this consciousness naturally, spontaneously, effortlessly, without coming out of itself, it proves that it is not an exceptional, a unique case, but simply it is the sign, forerunner of a realisation which, even if it is not absolutely general, can in any case be shared by a number of individuals and these moreover as soon as they share the experience will lose the feeling that they are separate individuals and will become a living collectivity.

This new realisation is following its course with a thundering rapidity, so to say.... If things continue to move at this speed, it is more than possible, it is almost evident that what Sri Aurobindo wrote in a letter would be a prophetic announcement:

"The supramental consciousness will enter into a phase of realising power in 1967."
THE MOTHER REPLIES TO A YOUNG SADHAKA

Q: Quand S était malade le 31 décembre, Vous avez demandé à Dr. B. "Est-ce que S ne peut pas être guérie cette nuit-ci ? Il a répondu : "C'est impossible." Si, au contraire, il avait répondu : S est Votre volonté cela pourrait s faire" , est-ce que S n'aurait pas pu venir pour la Bénédiction de la nouvelle année ?

R: Une réponse n'est pas suffisante pour changer le cours des choses. Seule une aspiration ou une foi peut faire cela. Car c'est l'aspiration et la foi qui permettent à la Grace Divine d'agir. (7-1-1934)

Q: When S was ill on December 31, you asked Dr. B: "Cannot S get cured this very night ?" He answered : "That is impossible." If, on the contrary, he had answered : "If it is your will it can happen," would not S have been able to come for the New Year's Blessing ?

A: An answer is not sufficient to change the course of things. Only an aspiration and faith can do that. For it is the aspiration and the faith which allow the Divine Grace to act. (7-1-1934)

Q: Ne croyez-Vous pas que tant que le corps existe, on fait des fautes et on oublie quelquefois les choses ?

R: Pas nécessairement. Tout dépend du développement de la conscience. (6-2-1934)

Q: Do you not believe that as long as the body exists one makes mistakes and forgets things sometimes ?

R: Not necessarily. All depends on the development of the consciousness. (6-2-1934)

Q: Voulez-Vous m'apprendre comment mon vital se développe ? Je pense qu'il est encore plein d'impuretés

R: Trop penser à ses impuretés n'aide pas. Il vaut mieux garder la pensée fixée sur la pureté, la lumière et la paix que l'on veut acquérir. (7-2-1934)

Q: Will you please let me know how my Vital develops ? I think it is still full of impurities.

A: To think too much of one’s impurities does not help. It would be better to keep one’s thought fixed on the purity, the light and the peace that one wants to acquire. (7-2-1934)
Q: Maintenant il me semble que tout est au repos en moi. Quel est cet état—un vrai repos ou une formation?
R: Pourquoi troubler le repos avec des questions inutiles? Le mental aussi doit être au repos. (8-2-1934)

Q: Now it seems to me that all is quiet in me. What is this state—a true quiet or a formation?
A: Why disturb the quiet with useless questions? The mind also ought to be quiet. (8-2-1934)

Q: Ce matin pendant la méditation j'ai éprouvé une pression. J'aspire à ce que cela ne devienne pas un obstacle pour mon étude. Alors je pense qu'il vaut mieux ne pas méditer?
R: Je ne vois aucune raison pour que la méditation, si elle est bien faite, soit un obstacle pour l'étude, tout au contraire. Ce n'est que si ce que vous appelez “méditation” n'est pas du tout une méditation mais un état de passivité inerte et de demi-somnolence, qu'elle peut nuire à vos études, et comme cet état est, à tous les points de vue, tout-à-fait indésirable, il va de soi qu'il vaut mieux ne pas s'y complaire. (12-2-1934)

Q: This morning during meditation I felt a pressure. I aspire that this may not become an obstacle to my study. Then I think it would be better not to meditate.
A: I see no reason why meditation, if it is well done, should be an obstacle to study, quite the contrary. It is only if what you call “meditation” is not at all a meditation but a state of inert passivity and of semi-somnolence, that it can be harmful to your studies, and since this state is, from all points of view, undesirable, it follows automatically that it would be better not to indulge in it. (12-2-1934)

Q: Quelle est donc la méditation réelle?
R: C'est une concentration active et voulue sur la Présence Divine et une contemplation, soutenue et éveillée, de cette Sublime Réalité. (12-2-1934)

Q: What then is real meditation?
A: It is a concentration, active and willed, upon the Divine Presence and a contemplation, sustained and awake, of this Sublime Reality. (12-2-1934)

Q: D'ou vient cette pression?
R: Si vous voulez parler de la pression de la passivité inerte, elle vient de la
résistance du vital inférieur et de l'obscurité de la nature matérielle. C'est par une volonté et une aspiration inlassable que cela peut être surmonté. (12-2-1934)

Q: From where comes this pressure?
A: If you wish to speak of the pressure of inert passivity, it comes from the resistance of the lower Vital and from the obscurity of the material nature. It is by a will and an untiring aspiration that it can be overcome. (12-2-1934)

Q: Voulez-Vous, Mère, m'apprendre quelle est cette dépression que j'éprouve en ce moment?
R: La dépression était générale dans l'atmosphère et elle a attaqué tous ceux qui lui sont ouverte. (1-3-1934)

Q: Will you please let me know what is this depression which I feel at this moment?
A: The depression was general in the atmosphere and it has attacked all those who are open to it.

Q: Que faire pour ne pas être attaqué par la dépression?
R: Ne prêter aucune attention à la dépression et faire comme s'il n'y en avait pas.

Q: What to do in order not to be attacked by the depression?
A: Pay no attention to the depression and act as if it was not there.

Q: Mais comment savoir que la dépression est dans l'atmosphère, excepté quand elle entre en nous?
R: Ce n'est pas exact. Vous voyez et sentez des choses à distance, qui sont en dehors de vous. Vous pouvez de même sentir la dépression dans l'atmosphère avant qu'elle ne vous touche. (1-3-1934)

Q: How to know that the depression is in the atmosphere—except when it enters into us?
A: This is not exact. You see and feel things at a distance, which are outside you. You can even feel the depression in the atmosphere before it touches you. (1-3-1934)
Q : Je ne comprends pas pourquoi X veut toujours me fréquenter ? Est-ce qu'elle ne cessera jamais? N'importe—il faut seulement que je reste sur mes gardes.
R : Oui, c'est ce qu'il y à faire. Quand vous n'aurez plus de faiblesses pour les femmes, elles ne vous poursuivront plus. (12-3-1934)

Q : I don't understand why X always wishes to visit me. Will she never stop doing it? No matter—it is only necessary that I should be on my guard.
A : Yes, that is what is to be done. When you will no longer have a weakness for women, they will no longer pursue you. (12-3-1934)

Q : O Douce Mère, permets que je devienne conscient de la jalousie et que je la rejette. Quand en serai-je débarassé? Est-ce que cela ne viendra pas bientôt?
R : Si vous pouvez arriver à comprendre que ce que je fais toujours est pour le bien de tous et de chacun à la fois et non pas du tout pour le bien d'un petit nombre au détriment des autres, alors bien vite vous aurez conquis la jalousie et vous serez libéré de cette plaie douloureuse.
Soyez persuadé que ce que je fais pour vous est toujours exactement ce qu'il vous faut pour avancer sur le chemin et alors toute jalousie et toute envie se dissipera. (20-3-1934)

Q : O Sweet Mother, let me become conscious of jealousy and reject it. When shall I be unburdened of it? Will that not be soon?
A : If you can come to understand that what I do always is for the good of all and of each at the same time and not at all for the good of a few to the detriment of the others, then very soon you will conquer jealousy and you will be free of this painful sore.
Be convinced that what I do for you is always exactly what is needed to make you advance on the path and then all jealousy and all envy will vanish.

From the Note-book of SHANTI DOSHI
THE MOTHER AND HER MISSION ON EARTH*

"Since the beginning of the earth, wherever and whenever there was possibility of manifesting a ray of Consciousness, I was there."

"...living in the heart of each atom I kindle in it the fire that purifies and transfigures, the fire that is never extinguished..."

"This being is no longer anything else than an embrace of peace enveloping the whole earth, an ocean of joy overflowing all."

—THE MOTHER

The physical embodiment of the Mother on the earth is of profound significance for the whole world whether the world is conscious of it or not, and whether the world in its entirety will admit it or not.

WHO IS THE MOTHER?

There are many who are curious about the real identity of the Mother. In her highest being she is to us, as Sri Aurobindo says, none else than the Supreme Mother Herself, the Adya Shakti, transcendent beyond and above all manifestation and at the same time immanent. It is the Divine Mother Herself who has incarnated in the material body to lift up the suffering world from its original inconscience and obsccurity to its divine consummation, the Light and Bliss of the Spirit. And to achieve this transformation, she is at work "to bring down something not yet expressed in this material world". To personally guide humanity the Mother has to come in a physical body, but she "does not cease to be the 'Divine'... The Mother was inwardly above the human even in childhood,"1 Sri Aurobindo tells us. To have a clear perception as to who the Mother is, let us go through these lines of immaculate beauty and mystic grandeur from Sri Aurobindo's Savitri:

She is the golden bridge, the wonderful fire.
The luminous heart of the Unknown is she,
A power of silence in the depths of God;

* A speech delivered at the Third Annual Conference of the New Age Association on 11th September 1966.
1 Letters of Sri Aurobindo on the Mother, p. 4.
She is the Force, the inevitable Word,
The magnet of our difficult ascent,
The Sun from which we kindle all our suns,
The Light that leans from the unrealised Vasts,
The joy that beckons from the impossible,
The Might of all that never yet came down.

These lines can be an indication of the extraordinary Power with which the Mother has come, to bring down an altogether new principle on earth, to achieve something unique and unprecedented in the history of the earth.

Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati are but a few of her innumerable powers and personalities which she brings forward as needed for her work in the world.

**OUR RELATION WITH THE MOTHER**

And what is our relation with the Mother? This has been made absolutely clear in the following lines of Sri Aurobindo, "It is a far greater relation than that of the physical mother to her child; it gives all that human motherhood can give, but in a much higher way, and it contains in itself infinitely more."\(^1\) The Mother says also, "There is a special personal tie between you and me, between all who have turned to Sri Aurobindo's and my teaching,—it is well understood, distance does not count here....And this tie between you and me is never cut. There are people who have long ago left the Ashram, in a state of revolt, and yet I keep myself informed of them, I attend to them. You are never abandoned. In fact, I hold myself responsible for every one, even for those whom I have met only for one second in my life."\(^2\) It is for us individually to get more and more conscious of this profound love, to feel her constant nearness, the sweet and marvellous Presence always enveloping us and helping and guiding us in our endeavour to exceed ourselves.

**THE MOTHER'S AWARENESS OF HER MISSION FROM HER VERY CHILDHOOD**

Born and brought up in the midst of plenty, it is not for her to enjoy the riches and comforts that this life can provide; hers is to shoulder the earth's and humanity's heavy burden of sorrow and suffering.

Even in childhood, the Mother had certain experiences which were most extraordinary in their bearing and deeply spiritual at heart. At the age of thirteen and even at the age of five, she had experiences which were sufficient to indicate that she

was no ordinary child, but the very embodiment of Divine Love and Compassion and Grace.  

She used to record her day-to-day prayers and experiences in her diary, which has since been published in book-form *Prayers and Meditations of the Mother*. Anyone going through this book will come to know who the Mother is, what she stands for, her purpose and mission on earth. It is replete with the gems of her various experiences and perceptions, her ardent prayers and aspirations. All her prayers are revelations. The book speaks by itself of her unique mission and her deep sacrifice for the transformation of earth and humanity.  

"May something higher, nobler, truer be revealed to mankind,"\(^1\) she prayed to the Lord, the Divine Master. Even in her young days she perceived within her that the Divine Himself would come on earth with his peace and light and harmony to effectuate a radical transformation of the dark conditions prevalent here. As we find in her diary, "I know that a day will come when Thou wilt transform all those who approach us; Thou wilt transform them so radically that, totally liberated from the ties of the past, they will begin to live in Thee with a life quite new, a life solely made of Thee, of which Thou shalt be the sovereign Lord. And also all troubles will be transformed into serenity, all anguish into peace, all doubts into certitude, all ugliness into harmony, all egoisms into self-giving, all darknesses into light and all sufferings into unchanging happiness."\(^2\)

Her constant yearning was to be united and identified with the Supreme in His "absolute Consciousness". Her aspirations were of the highest kind. "Free from all trammels," she wrote in May 2, 1914, "I shall be Thyself; it will be Thou seeing the world through this body; it will be Thou acting in the world through this instrument." All her prayers were instinct with her heart's devotion and gratitude and her total surrender to the Supreme. In many places, we find, she completely identified herself with the Supreme Lord, achieving a total dissolution of the ego-sense, the personal 'I'. But the individual realisation and salvation, without any thought of changing the material existence was considered by her as an act of extreme egoism and cowardice. The knowledge gained by one's personal realisation should be utilised "for h1stening the earthly transfiguration, for accomplishing Thy sublime work"\(^3\) as she put it.

In an ardent prayer she implored the Divine: "Thou sovereign Master, extreme limit of our thought, who standest for us on the threshold of the Unknown, let some new splendour surge out of that Unthinkable, some possibility of a higher and more integral realisation, so that Thy work may be accomplished and the universe may take one more step forward towards the sublime identification, the supreme manifestation."\(^4\)

\(^1\) Nov. 28, 1913
\(^2\) Jan. 15, 1913.
\(^3\) Sept. 30, 1914.
Her prayers were vibrant with her soul’s aspiration to become the perfect instrument for the Divine’s work on earth which she felt as her mission in life. She wrote, “Grant that I may accomplish my mission, that I may help in Thy integral manifestation.” The Mother wrote this even before she met Sri Aurobindo. And integral manifestation of the Divine means that in and through all the activities, in every aspect of our terrestrial life, it is the inner and secret divinity that is able to express itself integrally. We find in her diary, “It is in all states, in all modes, in all things, in all worlds, in all elements that we have to discover Thee and be united with Thee; and if we leave out one element, however small it may be, the communion cannot be perfect, the realisation cannot be accomplished.”

The Mother was ever awake to the work which she was to fulfil on earth; she was aware of a new manifestation in the near future, the advent of an altogether new force for the ‘earthly transfiguration’. As we find in her Prayers and Meditations, “Let us not lose sight of the goal; grant that we may be always in union with Thy force, the force which the earth does not yet know and which Thou hast given us the mission to reveal to her.”

The Mother was fully aware of the dangers and difficulties and sufferings that invariably accompany a great mission, and hers was an unprecedented mission. But she was not to be affected in the least by their presence. She possessed the indomitable courage of the soul. She was ready to face any obstacle or suffering that might come in the way. She held a completely different view with regard to the existence of suffering. As we find it in her diary, “we must not run away from suffering, we must not love and cultivate it either, we must learn how to go down deep enough in it to make it a lever which will have the power to force open the doors of the eternal consciousness and enter into the serenity of Thy unvarying oneness.”

She often received within her heart the command of the Lord: “Turn towards the earth and men.” She was, in fact, methodically trained and prepared by the divine teachers from the subtle worlds for her great mission on earth “to intervene with all power in its transformations.” She wrote, “It seems to me that it is Thy will to make me pass successively through all the experiences that are generally put at the summit of a yoga as its culmination and the proof of its perfect accomplishment.”

Her love for the ignorant earth was so intense, her compassion so profound that she prayed to the Lord: “Let me be the representative of the whole earth, so that united with my consciousness, she may give herself to Thee without reserve.” She totally identified herself with the whole earth including the docile animal and the modest plant along with ignorant mankind. And she prayed to the Lord, again and again, to come to its rescue. She even heard the silent voice of the Lord in her heart addressing the Earth, “Poor sorrowful Earth, remember that I am present in thee and

1 March 24, 1914.
2 March 6, 1914.
3 July 31, 1914.
4 Oct. 10, 1914.
lose not hope; each effort, each grief, each joy and each pang, each call of thy heart, each aspiration of thy soul, each renewal of thy seasons, all, all without exception, what seems to thee sorrowful and what seems to thee joyous, what seems to thee ugly and what seems to thee beautiful, all infallibly lead thee towards me, who am endless Peace, shadowless Light, perfect Harmony, Certitude, Rest and Supreme Blessedness.”

Gratitude which is a rare virtue in men was constant and spontaneous in her. “In the name of the earth,” she said addressing the Lord, “I thank Thee for manifesting Thyself.”

She was aware that the Divine Love had penetrated into the very heart of Inconscience with a view to lift up Matter to its superconscient self-expression. She could hear in the silence of her being these directions of the Supreme regarding her work on earth: “Be this love in everything and everywhere, ever more widely, ever more intensely, and the whole world will become at once thy work and thy estate, thy field of action and thy conquest. Strive with persistence to throw down the last limits which are but frail barriers before the expansion of the being, to conquer the last obscurities which the illumining Power is already lighting up. Fight that thou mayst conquer and triumph; struggle to surmount all that has been up to this day, to make the new Light emerge, the new example, which the world needs. Fight stubbornly against all obstacles, outer or inner. This is the pearl without price which is proposed for thee to realise.”

She realised that to change this suffering world into one of divine Bliss, humanity must be transformed down to the most material. “...matter has to be vigorously churned if it is to become capable of manifesting entirely the divine light,” she wrote. “The heavens have been definitely conquered and nothing and nobody has the power to take them from me. But the conquest of the earth has yet to be made,” she noted in her diary. She realised that for the earthly liberation “this universal bedrock of inconscience” as well as the subconscious which is “the intermediate zone between precise perception and the total darkness of the ignorance” must be conquered.

And as mankind is steeped in ignorance it is for the Divine to take the lead and clear the path. The Mother wrote, “For the accomplishment of Thy work I have sunk down into the unfathomable depths of Matter, I have touched with my finger the horror of the falsehood and the inconscience, I have reached the seat of oblivion and a supreme obscurity!” It is out of a deep love and compassion for earth and humanity that she made this great sacrifice with a certitude in the ultimate victory of the Divine.

Meanwhile her individual consciousness—body, life and mind—had already

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1 Feb 5, 1913.
2 Dec. 29, 1913.
4 May 26, 1914.
5 July 31, 1915.
undergone a great inner illumination, as she wrote, "...the whole being exults in a limitless beatitude, a boundless love, a sovereign power, a perfect knowledge and an infinite consciousness."

"Thus the solid foundations of Thy work upon the earth are made ready, the basementsof the immense edifice are constructed," so that the earth may be ready to manifest the new Light and Consciousness when the hour strikes.

She had a clear vision of the divine destiny of the earth, but she understood that as yet it was futile to speak of ultimate truths since the earth was not yet ready to accept them. She wrote, "The future will clearly reveal them to the eyes of all, even of the most blind." The Mother perceived that mind could not be the final height of consciousness; man still so imperfect and ignorant with no mastery over himself and the outer nature could not possibly manifest the highest Divine Consciousness unless he exceeded his limited humanity and rose to inner divinity. "Man is the intermediary between That which has to be and that which is," she noted in her diary.

She was aware of the inevitable appearance of a new consciousness much higher than the mental, as well as of a species much superior to man. The Mother was sure of the "Supramental" Manifestation on earth though she might not have known it by that particular term. In fact, she could see the new Force already manifest in the subtle world so that its entry into the material world was a certainty. Even as early as 7th July 1914, she wrote, "The Force is there; it is there divinely pure, luminous, powerful; it is there as a limitless love, as a sovereign power, as an undisputed reality, as an unmixed peace, as an uninterrupted beatitude, as the supreme Benediction; it is existence in itself, the boundless felicity of the infinite knowledge...and it is something more which cannot be said, but which is already active in the higher worlds beyond thought, as the power of sovereign transfiguration, also in the inconscient depths of Matter as the Irresistible Healer." Beyond all doubt, the Mother was referring to the Supramental Force and Consciousness, to its impending descent from above as well its emergence from below. Often would she implore the Divine Master, "Who will open these flood-gates still closed?" "...open the closed doors, set flowing the sealed fountains..."

She wrote on July 22, 1914, "O Divine Master, let Thy light fall upon this chaos and a new world emerge from it. What is now preparing accomplish and let a new humanity be born which will be the perfect expression of Thy new sublime Law." Evidently she gave the hint of the appearance of superman and the emergence of a new world totally divinised, manifesting the Law of Truth.

She realised that though Nature also would automatically arrive at the same goal in the course of her gradual evolutionary unfoldment, still man could consciously

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1 Nov. 3, 1914.
2 March 3, 1915.
3 Aug. 29, 1914.
accelerate "the slow and uncertain advance of the Yoga of Nature" by taking recourse to spirituality or the 'divine Yoga.' "It is thus that at certain periods," wrote she, "the whole terrestrial life seems to pass miraculously through stages which, at other times, it would take thousands of years to traverse."¹

The Mother, the Divine Collaborator of Sri Aurobindo

From the above, we find that the Mother was particularly missioned by the Supreme to work in collaboration with Sri Aurobindo. It is to accomplish exactly this work of integral manifestation by working out a total and unique transformation of the earth-nature and consciousness by bringing down the Supramental Truth-Consciousness that is Sri Aurobindo's mission upon earth.

After meeting Sri Aurobindo for the first time on March 29, 1914, the Mother at once recognised him as the Incarnation of the Lord Himself, and she wrote in her prayer the very next day, "It matters not if there are hundreds of beings plunged in the densest ignorance. He whom we saw yesterday is on earth: His presence is enough to prove that a day will come when darkness shall be transformed into light, when Thy reign shall be indeed established upon earth."

The Mother recorded in her diary on Dec. 8, 1916 the Lord addressing her, "I have chosen thee from all eternity to be my exceptional representative upon the earth, not in an invisible and hidden way, but in a way apparent to the eyes of all men. And what thou wert created to be, thou shalt be." And we at the present day can see for ourselves the truth behind this saying.

Sri Aurobindo has said, "There is no difference between the Mother's path and mine; we have and had the same path, the path that leads to the supramental change and the divine realisation; not only at the end, but from the beginning they have been the same."² The Mother has told us, "Sri Aurobindo and myself are one and the same consciousness, one and the same person."³ They are the Divine partners and collaborators to fulfil a common mission, to work out the Divine Plan on earth.

The Mother's Mission

We find in the Mother's Prayers and Meditations, "...what Thy Will makes my mind conceive as the goal to be attained, the conquest to be realised, is only one simple element of Thy eternal plan; but in the perfect union I am this plan and this Will and I taste the supreme bliss of the infinite, even while I play with ardour, precision and energy, in the world of division, the special play Thou hast entrusted to me."⁴

Now, we have already seen what this special play is. The expression "special

¹ May 24, 1915.
² Letters of Sri Aurobindo on the Mother, p. 58.
⁴ July 31, 1915.
play” is extremely significant. There have been instances of individual realisation of the highest Divine Consciousness. But nobody, before Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, thought of or attempted the collective liberation by bringing down this highest Divine Consciousness—termed by Sri Aurobindo Supermind—on earth to effectuate a transformation of our life as a whole, including the divinisation of the physical substance itself, thus gaining even a physical continuance in the material world. Truly is she the supreme Mother Herself incarnated with the mission to prepare the way and hasten the descent of the Truth-Consciousness, which is a great step forward towards the ultimate goal and destiny of the terrestrial existence, the supramentalisation of earth and humanity. This is nothing short of transplanting the kingdom of heaven on earth. Here is a signal departure from the other paths of yoga where the view is held that the final liberation of the self lies only in its withdrawal from the world of activities, and its dissolution in the silent Brahman, or its extinction by Nirvana. The Mother says on the contrary, “Life on earth, we consider, is not a passage or a means merely; it must become, through transformation, a goal, a realisation.” Sri Aurobindo’s and the Mother’s is the integral yoga as it embraces within its sweep the whole range of Life and Nature with the aim to transfigure it wholly.

The earth is in a turmoil. Falsehood reigns supreme. Mankind is steeped in stifling darkness. Chaos and disorder are his normal condition. The mission and endeavour of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is exactly to replace the reign of Falsehood by that of Truth.

This change from Falsehood to Truth, they hold, cannot be brought about by any reshuffling in the political field, any change in the social structure, or by any novel idea in man’s thought-pattern, or even by any religious reform. “Ours is neither a political nor a social but a spiritual goal,” says the Mother. The change must come from within. Spirituality alone offers the solution—spirituality that fulfils and does not reject life. It is only by a radical change in man’s consciousness, a complete transformation of his present nature—mental, vital as well as physical—that any true and lasting change in his outer circumstances, in his way of life, is possible. The Mother says, “The conditions under which men live upon earth are the result of their state of consciousness. To seek to change the conditions without changing the consciousness is a vain chimera.”

According to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, Mind is not the last rung in the ladder of consciousness, Man is not the final product in Nature’s evolutionary unfoldment. Just as Life has sprung out of Matter, and Mind out of Life, so also Mind potentially harbours in it the seed of Supermind. The manifestation of Supermind is the next inevitable outcome in Nature’s evolution. “Nature.... endeavours to bring out a being who will be to man what man is to the animal, a being who will remain a man in its external form, and yet whose consciousness will rise far above the mental and its slavery to ignorance,” said the Mother to the children of the Ashram. In fact, a new race of supermen will come into existence.
"The appearance of a new force and light and power, accompanying the descent of the supramental consciousness into this world can alone lift man out of the agony and pain and misery under which he is submerged," observes the Mother. Along with a sincere will and effort, a complete surrender to the Divine Mother is indispensable. The Grace of the Mother can alone bring about the much-needed transformation by the power of the Supramental Truth-consciousness acting in the earth-nature. "Her embodiment," says Sri Aurobindo, "is a chance for the earth-consciousness to receive the Supramental into it and to undergo first the transformation necessary for that to be possible." The Mother is the Conscious-Force, the Shakti of the Divine, the Executrix of the Divine plan.

**THE MOTHER TAKES CHARGE OF THE ASHRAM**

It was only after the final arrival of the Mother in Pondicherry on 24th April 1920 that the Ashram of Sri Aurobindo was formally founded. From a handful of houses and a few inmates, it has grown into an epitome of the world, under her personal care and guidance in every sphere of life and activity.

The Mother wrote in one of her articles entitled, *A Dream*:

"There should be somewhere upon earth a place that no nation could claim as its sole property, a place where all human beings of goodwill, sincere in their aspiration could live freely as citizens of the world, obeying one single authority, that of the Supreme Truth, a place of peace, concord, harmony, where all the fighting instincts of man would be used exclusively to conquer the causes of his sufferings and miseries, to surmount his weakness and ignorance, to triumph over his limitations and incapacities; a place where the needs of the spirit and the care for progress would get precedence over the satisfaction of desires and passions, the seeking for material pleasures and enjoyment.... Work would not be there as the means for gaining one's livelihood, it would be the means whereby to express oneself, develop one's capacities and possibilities...

"The earth is certainly not ready to realise such an ideal....

"Yet, this dream is on the way of becoming a reality. That is exactly what we are seeking to do at the Ashram of Sri Aurobindo on a small scale, in proportion to our modest means. The achievement is indeed far from being perfect but it is progressive; little by little we advance towards our goal, which, we hope, one day we shall be able to hold before the world as a practical and effective means of coming out of the present chaos in order to be born into a more true, more harmonious new life."

**SRI AUROBINDO LEAVES HIS BODY**

Sri Aurobindo left his body on the 5th of December 1950. It was to hasten the collective realisation that he had to take this decision, the Mother said. And he
had already made this revealing statement, to her, "I shall manifest again in the first supramental body built in the supramental way."

The whole burden of responsibility of directing the Ashram and fighting with the world-forces devolved on the Mother alone. Of course, she received the silent message from Sri Aurobindo assuring her of his constant presence with us in the earth-atmosphere till his great work would be accomplished.

**THE MOTHER OPENS THE SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION**

The Mother opened "Sri Aurobindo University Centre," later renamed "Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education." Sri Aurobindo had considered this as "one of the best means of preparing the future humanity to receive the supramental light that will transform the élite of today into a new race manifesting upon earth the new light and force and life," declared the Mother.

The Mother's view on education is that it must include the five major aspects of our existence, *i.e.*, the physical, the vital, the mental, the psychic and the spiritual. "...with the psychic education," the Mother says, "we come to the problem of the true motive of life, the reason of our existence upon earth...." It is through the psychic being that we come in contact with the Mother's Presence within us.

In fact, the secret of our earthly existence is contained in these words of the Mother, "If we truly want to progress and acquire the capacity of knowing the truth of our being, that is to say, the one thing for which we have been really created, that which we can call our mission upon earth, then we must, in a very regular and constant manner, reject from us or eliminate in us whatever contradicts the truth of our existence, whatever is in opposition to it."

The Mother's advice to us is: "Never forget the purpose and the goal of your life. The will for the great discovery should be always there soaring over you, above what you do and what you are, like a huge bird of light dominating all the movements of your being."

**THE MOTHER OPENS THE FLOOD-GATE FOR THE SUPRAMENTAL MANIFESTATION UPON EARTH**

The Mother declared that on the 29th of February, 1956, the Supramental Light and Force and Consciousness had entered the subtle earth-atmosphere. She gave the message on that occasion:

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A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born...
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These words marked the fulfilment of what she had announced as far back as September 25, 1914, in her prayer:
A new light shall break upon the earth,
A new world shall be born...

Four years later, on 29th February, 1960, the Mother gave another message describing the way the Supramental Manifestation had taken place—in fact, it had been for the Mother to usher it in—on 29th February 1956 during the collective meditation:

“This evening the Divine Presence, concrete and material, was there present amongst you. I had a form of living gold, bigger than the universe, and I was facing a huge and massive golden door which separated the world from the Divine.

“As I looked at the door, I knew and willed, in a single movement of consciousness, that the ‘the time has come’, and lifting with both hands a mighty golden hammer I struck one blow, one single blow on the door and the door was shattered to pieces.

“Then the supramental Light and Force and Consciousness rushed down upon earth in an uninterrupted flow.”

So it was for the Mother to “open the closed door, to set flowing the sealed fountains” of the Supramental splendours. Without her personal intervention the earth would have had to wait perhaps indefinitely for this new manifestation.

And though as yet its action is not much perceptible on the surface, “one day will come,” says the Mother, “when the most blind, the most unconscious, even the most unwilling shall be obliged to recognise it.”

The Supramental Force is at work in full swing, so much so that it prompted the Mother to say as early as 1958, “If things continue to move at this speed, it is more than possible, it is almost evident that what Sri Aurobindo wrote in a letter would be a prophetic announcement: ‘The supramental consciousness will enter into a phase of realising power in 1967.’”

**The Supramental World, Earth and the Intermediary Zone**

As to how the new supramental world exists and what the relation is between it and our earth, the Mother graphically describes it from the clear and vivid experience which she had on February 3, 1958, lasting for one hour. She says, “The supramental world exists permanently and I am there permanently in a supramental body. I had the proof of this today when my earth consciousness went there and remained there consciously between 2 and 3 o’clock in the afternoon. Now I know that for the two worlds to meet in a constant and conscious relation what is missing is an intermediary zone between the physical world as it is and the supramental world as it is. It is this zone both in the individual consciousness and in the objective world that remains to be built and is being built. When I spoke before of the new world that is being created it is this intermediary zone that I meant. In the same way when I am

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1 The Mother’s Message of 24-4-56.
2 Bulletin, Aug. ’58
on this side, that is to say, under the dominance of the physical consciousness, and as I see the supramental power, the supramental light and substance constantly penetrating the matter, it is the construction of this zone that I see and I take my part in it. Towards the end of the description of her experience the Mother remarks, "The experience of the other day (3rd February) has been revelatory to me, I came out completely changed. I understood suddenly a lot of things of the past, actions and portions of my life that had remained inexplicable."

On the 13th November 1958, the Mother had another experience, in course of which she says, "Just the moment is now come in the history of the universe when that link can be established."

Viewed from the supramental world, our world appears to be quite foreign and artificial, the Mother tells us. There is a complete change in the values of life. The Supreme Himself appears to be altogether dissimilar in the two worlds (though in both cases, the Mother was in contact with the Supreme). There is a radical difference in the very quality of consciousness and of experience.

A complete reversal of consciousness takes place when one begins to live the spiritual life; a new and far greater reversal of consciousness takes place when one enters the supramental world, the Mother tells us. Her story runs thus (from her experience of 13-11-58), "it is as if our entire spiritual life were made of silver whereas the supramental is made of gold, as if the whole spiritual life here below were a vibration of silver, not gold, but merely a light, a light that goes up to the summit, a light altogether pure, pure and intense, but in the other one, the supramental, there is a richness and a power that makes all the difference."

Now since an intermediary zone is indispensable for constituting a kind of bridge between the physical world and the supramental world, it naturally follows that there is sure to appear an intermediary species to act as a link between the mental being and the supramental being. In fact, the new race of supermen of which the Mother has already spoken before will constitute the intermediary species which has still an animal origin but which in its consciousness will have 'active relation with the new world of supramental realisation.' The Mother says, "This species (the new race of supermen) may be considered as a species of transition, because it will discover, as it is to be foreseen, the means of creating new beings without passing through the old animal method, and it is these beings, having truly a spiritual birth, that will form the elements of the new race, the supramental race."

"Sri Aurobindo has told us," the Mother says, "that in the supramental itself there are different planes of realisations and these planes will manifest successively in the same progressive movement that has always guided universal evolution." But she tells us that till now the creation has been based on Ignorance and Inconscience;

1 & 2 Bulletin, April '58
3 & 4 Bulletin, Feb '59.
5 Bulletin, Aug '58.
6 Bulletin, Nov. '57
whereas the basis of the supramental creation will be Truth and a spontaneous Knowledge. This marks the essential difference between our world as it is and the supramental world. In fact, it will be altogether a new world of Truth and Light and Knowledge. Life and existence as a whole will be a harmonious expression of the Divine Unity manifesting in the world. When the supramental world will be well organised it is the Spirit which will be the Master of the whole manifestation consciously and naturally.

We further learn from what the Mother tells us that the supramental action will be done by the conscious will of the soul working directly from the 'centre of spiritual will upon Matter' without the intervention of the mind. Generally, human beings decide to do something, think it out, plan to do a particular action and then execute it. "Whereas," says the Mother, "the supramental action is decided by leaping over the mind; passing through the mind is not necessary, it is direct...The mind is a motionless zone for transmission."1

TIME NEEDED FOR THE NEW MANIFESTATION TO BE TANGIBLE

Now to have an idea regarding the full manifestation of the supramental world and the race of superman. In Nature everything in each phase takes place step by step; nothing happens by a sudden miracle (there may be a very few exceptions). The Mother says that after the manifestation of mind in the earthly atmosphere it took one million years for the first man to appear on earth. So, according to her, it will of course not be too much if a few thousand years pass for the superman to make his first appearance on earth.

For an extraordinary achievement of such magnitude to stabilise itself tangibly in a still shorter span of time will depend upon a state of a concentrated aspiration, a total surrender to the Divine, an inner plasticity and a perfect receptivity on the part of humanity; but this is yet a far cry. "By the resistance that one meets in his own being, everyone can measure the tremendous resistance that the world offers to the work of the Grace,"2 observes the Mother. In fact, the supramental transformation, she remarks, "will happen in a visible manner only when the inner states of being have already been considerably transformed. It would be therefore quite unreasonable to try to judge the presence of the supramental by physical appearances. The physical is the last to change and the supramental force can be at work in a being long before something of it becomes perceptible in the life of the body".3

THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SUPREME LOVE CAN ALONE ACHIEVE THE MIRACLE

In fact, it is the descent and manifestation of the Supreme Love that alone can effectuate the final transfiguration. But as yet the earth and humanity are not plastic

and receptive enough to bear the Divine Love in its original purity and plenitude. This love is covertly brooding above, constantly helping us as much as it is possible in the form of Grace, the Mother tells us. "As it is all-powerful, some receptivity must be prepared upon earth so that the effects may not be shattering," observes the Mother.

Thus it is not possible for the Mother to bring down some of her rarer Powers and Personalties to work in the earth-nature, as we learn from the writings of Sri Aurobindo. "There are among them Presences," writes Sri Aurobindo, "indispensable for the supramental realisation,—most of all one who is her Personality of that mysterious and powerful ecstasy and Ananda which flows from a supreme divine Love, the Ananda that alone can heal the gulf between the highest heights of the supramental spirit and the lowest abysses of Matter, the Ananda that holds the key of a wonderful divinest Life and even now supports from its secracies the work of all the other Powers of the universe." To quote the Mother, "When the day will come for the manifestation of the supreme Love, for the crystallised, concentrated descent of the supreme Love, that will indeed be the moment of Transformation. Because nothing will be able to resist That."

All the same, the evolutionary Force goes on unrolling itself ever forward; and the Mother goes on with her work of preparing the earth and humanity and hastening the evolutionary process with her supramental power till the supreme consummation is reached. And the world in mute expectancy awaits the dawn of that moment when the creation will move from light to greater Light, from joy to diviner Joy, in the sweet cadences of Harmony and Peace, towards the realisation of a yet fuller perfection, the Divine Life in a Divine Body here on earth.

THE PRESENT AGE—THE MOST MEMORABLE

We are most fortunate to be born in a period, the most memorable in the earth's history, when the Divine Mother Herself is present in our midst, personally guiding the earthly destiny, and the world has passed over from the Mental to the Supramental epoch. The Mother says that all those who are living on the earth at this time automatically inhale and imbibe the supramental substance which is fast spreading and precipitating in the terrestrial atmosphere. "To say the truth," she announces, "just now there is upon earth an opportunity which presents itself only after thousands of years, a conscious help with the necessary power."

THE EARTH, INDIA AND THE WEST

Her presence in a small corner of the globe is enough to turn the tide of events and forces for hastening the Divine's victory on all fronts. Her presence particularly in India has a special importance.

1 Bulletin, Feb. '61.  
2 The Mother.  
"From the astronomical point of view," the Mother remarks, "the earth is nothing, it is a very small accident. From the spiritual point of view it is a willed symbolic formation."1 "In the whole creation, the earth has a place of distinction, because unlike any other planet, it is evolutionary with a psychic entity at its centre. In it, India, in particular, is a divinely chosen country. It is India that can bring Truth in the world," observes the Mother. Significantly enough, the Mother remarked after she visited India for the first time, "I felt that India is my true country, the country of my soul and spirit."2

The Mother's choice of being born in the midst of a materialist culture and civilisation may be to make it easier for the Westerners to approach the Divine; it may also be to facilitate a happy blending of the cultures of the East and the West, to bring about the unity and harmony inherent in Spirit and Matter. The Mother's work is with the whole of earth and humanity, with the creation in its entirety. In a message to America, she said, "Stop thinking that you are of the West and others of the East. All human beings are of the same divine origin and meant to manifest upon earth the unity of this origin." Sri Aurobindo also said at the same time, "There is a common hope, a common destiny, both spiritual and material, for which both are needed as co-workers." After all, Matter is only a projection, the outer expression of the Spirit.

CONCLUSION

If we aspire to be true children of the Divine Mother, we should try in all sincerity to express nothing but the inherent truth of our being in all our thoughts and activities, in all our ways and movements, to be at the service of the Truth alone, to be what the Mother wants us to be.

Let our aspiration rise in a flaming ardour to the Mother, in her own words:

Fill our hearts with the delight of Thy love.
Flood our minds with the splendour of Thy light.
Grant that we may manifest Thy Victory!

Rose

1 Bulletin, Nov. '65.
2 From the Mother's Declaration of Aug. '15, 1954.
THE "huge foreboding" Lion of Belfort stared on. Defiantly crouching for days and decades, a witness of ups and downs of events, he stared on southwards. A friendly posture with flashes of compassion in the eyes, he proved to be no riddle.

Green light. The lady conductor fastened the chain at the entrance, and the bus number 38 shook off its momentary drowse. Another stop. Port-Royal. Janssenism, Pascal, Racine—a riot of reminiscences around the rare seventeenth-century buildings; helpless they stand beside the awkward green wings of the sky-scraping twentieth-century cranes creaking reluctantly under their loud motor-brains. New constructions.

Just as the Luxembourg Garden began, "Val de Grâce!" shouted the conductor. We stepped out. The icy wild west wind was blowing off the leaves. An ascetic hush in the bare spikes of the dark maple and chestnut branches. The perspective led to a quiet adoration in the heart. And to an unexpected sun in the sky.

Val de Grâce—the Vale of Grace! Not of tears, but smiles. A coincidence, this name? The road leads the Catholic fervents to the famous Church of the Val de Grâce. But for Gambelon or François or Paolo or Scott or me, it is not the Church that matters. For many of us it is something else...

"C'est là!" my friend stopped, whispering, breathless with joy.

Very near the Church, an old wall, black with moss and age. House number 9, rue de Val de Grâce. A gust of perfume—dank soil, grass, falling leaves, moist tree-trunks and something else, something indefinable—greeted us. A picturesque square rimmed by tall houses and old trees known and unknown. Three patches of protected lawn, each around a tree, the eyes rested marvelling, at the end of the square, on a tiny one-and-a-half storeyed building neatly standing out unique in that surrounding.

"C'est là?" A question aglow with a sudden delight reverberated in my mind in a crescendo of awe. Was that here that our Mother had lived and had written most of the "Prayers" on the eve of her visit to India and of her meeting with Sri Aurobindo there? Was this the house she has so often referred to—for instance, in the "Prayer" of October 7, 1913?

"En second lieu, toute l'atmosphère de la maison est impregnée d'une gravité religieuse; on y descend immédiatement dans les profondeurs; les méditations y sont plus recueillies et plus sérieuses; l'éparpillement disparaît pour faire place à la
concentration; et cette concentration je la sense littéralement descendre de ma tête pour entrer dans mon cœur; et le cœur me paraît atteindre une profondeur plus grande que la tête. C'est comme si, depuis trois mois, j'aimais avec ma tête et que maintenant je commence à aimer avec mon cœur; et cela comporte une gravité et une douceur de sentiments incomparables.

"Une porte nouvelle s’est ouverte dans mon être et une immensité m’est apparue!"

Carefully we passed up the narrow garden walk and reached the couple of low stairs leading to the greenish door. The doorway seemed to remember still the delicate footfalls of the Mother. It seemed, as though, even then, inside that square under that smiling sky—

The waking ear of Nature heard her steps
And wideness turned to her its limitless eye,
And, scattered on sealed depths, her luminous smile
Kindled to fire the silence of the worlds.

Prithwindra Mukherjee

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1 "In the second place, the whole atmosphere of the house is charged with a religious gravity; here one descends immediately into the depths; meditation is more gathered in and more serious; dispersion disappears and gives place to concentration and I feel this concentration literally descending from my head to enter into my heart, and my heart seems to reach greater depths than my head. It is as if for three months I had been loving with my head and that now only I begin to love with my heart; and this brings with it an incomparable gravity and sweetness of feeling.

"A new door has opened in my being and an immensity has appeared before me!"

CETTE VIE ERRANTE...

Chère nous est cette vie errante, qui pourtant meurt;
Douces nous sont les lèvres humaines,
Qui pourtant ne chantent que d'étoiles étrangères;
Et merveilleuse nous semble encore l'aventure de la jeunesse,
Qui pourtant est incertaine.

O Félicité, Ciel lumineux non touché par choses terrestres !
Je crains, si je m'élance vers toi, perdre mes liens de tendresse.
Si tu veux que mon moi de faiblesses
Dépasse ses attaches mortelles,
Penche-toi vers moi ;
Adoucis la lumière non-née que la pensée ne peut détecter,
Pénètre mon être d'une luminosité familière.
Voici ma supplication, à moi dont la bouche est d'argile :
Parle-moi, cœur à cœur, en mots intimes,
Transforme en amour toute Ta gloire sans forme,
Et moule Ton amour en une face humaine !

Traduit par Srimayi

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

This vers libre renders an English poem. The Editor, appreciating the attempt, considers it very appropriate in its theme to the occasion of the Mother's birthday, as it expresses the heart of the aspiration of the all-too-human for ultimate fulfilment. The original poem runs :


THIS ERRANT LIFE

This errant life is dear, although it dies;
And human lips are sweet, though they but sing
Of stars estranged from us; and youth's emprise
Is wondrous yet, although an unsure thing.
Sky-lucent Bliss untouched by earthiness!
I fear to soar lest tender bonds decrease.
If Thou desirest my weak self to outgrow
Its mortal longings, lean down from above;
Temper the unborn light no thought can trace,
Suffuse my mood with a familiar glow.
For ’tis with mouth of clay I supplicate:
Speak to me, heart to heart, words intimate,
And all Thy formless glory turn to love
And mould Thy love into a human face.

K. D. Sethna

Sri Aurobindo's Comment was: "A very beautiful poem, one of the very best you have written. The last six lines, one may even say the last eight, are absolutely perfect. If you could always write like that, you would take your place among English poets and no low place either. I consider they can rank—these eight lines—with the very best in English poetry."
SRI AUROBINDO AS GURU*

THE Upanishads and the Gita have compared the path of yoga with the sharp edge of a razor-blade and have established as an absolute rule that it should not be practised without the help of a guru. With a few exceptions, this strict injunction has been obeyed even to this day. One seeks, waits, prepares oneself, and if one is sincere, the guru comes at the proper time. The traditional experience and teaching have confirmed that "he who has chosen the Infinite, has been chosen by the Infinite."

The guru once found, many relations are possible between the guru and the disciple, as with the Divine. In effect, for the disciple, the guru is the representative of the Divine on the earth: the relation can be that of father and son, master and servant, lover and beloved, etc. This relation is indissoluble and can cease only with death or with the guru’s permission. The guru takes entire charge of the disciple; he loves him, guides him, protects him like a mother. His only reward is the accomplishment of his sacred trust. Also, not to discuss the master’s directions but to obey him to the letter was an absolute rule to be followed by the disciple.

To illustrate the responsibility of the guru Sri Aurobindo recounted to us an anecdote. A disciple, wanting to be a guru, sought his own guru’s advice in the matter. He got the reply: "To your already heavy burden you are going to add another one; for you have to take upon your shoulders all your disciple’s faults, his faults and his sins." Such was in particular the case of Sri Ramakrishna.

Sri Aurobindo has given to the hoary but still continuing tradition of the mystic tie between guru and disciple a new character. The practice of yoga, while losing nothing of its essential spirituality, has become much more supple. Sri Aurobindo’s yoga being new, the methods and means too must be adapted to the modern spirit. Thus, first of all, Sri Aurobindo allows each disciple a great liberty. He should himself find out his own path, that which suits his own nature. Sri Aurobindo believed that without liberty the soul cannot attain its full development. "You truly give us a long rope!" I told him. "Even if we make grave errors, you simply observe silently, expecting us to approach you for advice." To which Sri Aurobindo replied, "A long rope is necessary!" And the Mother spoke to the young people in these terms: "All of you, my children, live here in exceptional freedom: no social constraints, no moral constraints, no intellectual constraints, no principles. Only a Light is there." Rabelais also gave this freedom in his Abbaye, but there was no Light.

At the same time Sri Aurobindo accorded to us the privilege to ask him questions, to have intellectual, literary and yogic discussions with him and follow

* This article forms the first section of a projected book on Sri Aurobindo by the author.

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Ramakrishna’s advice to Vivekananda not to accept anything blindly. The mind has its need to be satisfied. Sri Aurobindo understood the modern mind, its doubts, its intellectual curiosities, because he himself was agnostic for a certain time and suffered from doubt. He never imposed his ideas, but considered everything with largeness, tolerance and sympathy. When somebody behaved badly, we would suggest that he should be either sent away or put in quarantine. Sri Aurobindo would answer with a smile, “Yes, it is a simple remedy, no doubt, and in the outside world it would be fitting. But here we can’t apply it.” On another occasion a sadhak was asked why he did not listen to the Mother, he said, “That is my weakness.” The same sadhak dared to write to Sri Aurobindo a letter of sixty pages—on a different subject! Sri Aurobindo never lost his temper. “Anger is foreign to my nature,” he said. His relation with each individual varied in tone, accent and style according to the nature and each felt the Master near to him. It can be said in passing that when the Mother accepts a disciple, she accepts him as he is, and cannot abandon him for his weakness, because he also has left the world for the sake of sadhana.

It was my great good fortune to have Sri Aurobindo as my guru. In my exploration of spiritual history I have not come across any other guru who can be compared to him. He was not only guru, but also the Divine in a human body, the last Avatar, the supramental Avatar according to the Mother. A synthesis of two cultures, oriental and occidental—poet, philosopher, politician, linguist, literary critic—he was also the yogi who might well say: “I have drunk the Infinite like a giant’s wine.”

My relation with him seemed exceptional to other disciples. None could imagine he would behave with a young novice like an intimate friend.

A medical man, materialist by education, I cared very little for God and had no faith. I started the sadhana without having any idea about it, as Stendhal’s Fabrice joined the army in utter ignorance of what war was like. And out of this raw and sceptic fellow Sri Aurobindo has made a fighter for the Divine. I am going to tell how it was done and, if possible, give at the same time a glimpse of Sri Aurobindo’s life as I have come to know it.

I came to the Ashram at a period when the sadhana was going on in the subconscient, as Sri Aurobindo said to me. The subconscient is like a dense virgin forest; we find a superb description of it in his God’s Labour. From his retreat he was corresponding with all disciples, writing every night for about five to six hours. This period which I have called the correspondence-period lasted about twelve years. Each one related his inner and outer life, asked very often quite ordinary questions, and to all our human follies Sri Aurobindo replied with the patience and solicitude of a god. One day he wrote, “An avalanche of correspondence has fallen on my head.” Another day when I asked back my “hibernating” typescript of a poem, he replied, “My dear Sir, if you saw me nowadays with my nose to paper from afternoon to morning, deciphering, deciphering, writing, writing, writing, even the rocky heart of a disciple would be touched and you would not talk about typescripts and hibernation. I have given up (for the present at least) the attempt to minimise the
cataract of correspondence; I accept my fate like Raman Maharshi with the plague of prasads and admirers, but at least don’t add anguish to annihilation by talking about typescripts.”

All were surprised to find that Sri Aurobindo took up this familiar and humorous tone with a fresher, and were even shocked, for was not Sri Aurobindo the incarnate godhead, majestic and grave and serene, and should he not therefore be without any taint of humour? During the Darshan his ‘immobility’ inspired an august fear. This was the prevailing conception of a god.

I did not fail to grasp my good fortune with both hands. When the Divine gives himself, one has only to accept Him to the full. I asked him all sorts of questions from the most profane to the sublime, and he satisfied them in a simple, familiar style, always with an incomparable indulgence as if I was a prodigal son, though most of these questions had already been answered in his works. Thus our correspondence swelled up, striking many notes, sometimes sounding like a trumpet, sometimes murmuring sweetly like a stream, often bursting with a divine laughter. When I had a headache, I wrote:

Guru,
My head, my head,
And this devil of a fever!
I am half dead!

Sri Aurobindo replied: “Cheer up! Things might have been so much worse. Just think if you had been a Spaniard in Madrid, or a German communist in a concentration camp. Imagine that, and then you will be quite cheerful with only a cold and headache. So

Throw off the cold,
Damn the fever,
Be sprightly and bold
And live for ever.”

Another time I asked him what Brahmic consciousness was. In a light vein he explained to me a profound truth:

“Eternal Jehovah! you don’t even know what Brahman is! You will next be asking me what Yoga is, or what life is, or what body is or what mind is, or what sadhana is!...

“Brahman, Sir, is the name given by Indian philosophy since the beginning of Time to the one Reality, eternal and infinite which is the Self, the Divine, the All, the more than All, which would remain even if you and everybody and everything else in existence or imagining itself to be in existence vanished into blazes—even if the whole
universe disappeared, Brahman would be safely there, and nothing whatever lost. In fact, Sir, you are Brahman, and you are pretending to be Nírod; when Nishikanta is translating Amal's poetry into Bengali, it is really Brahman translating Brahman's Brahman into Brahman. When Amal asks me what consciousness is, it is really Brahman asking Brahman what Brahman is. There, Sir, I hope you are satisfied now.

"To be less drastic and refrain from making your head reel till it goes off your shoulders, I may say that realisation of the Self is the beginning of Brahman realisation—the Brahman consciousness—the Self in all and all in the Self etc. It is the basis of the spiritual realisation, and therefore of the spiritual transformation, but one has to see it in all sorts of aspects and applications first..."

Thus from these letters were born two small volumes of Correspondence, containing side by side literary, medical, spiritual and even political questions. Audaciously, following Vivekananda's example, I tried to argue with him and even dared to differ on points about which my knowledge was as much as that of a village schoolmaster. But he suffered all my foolishness, my impertinence and never uttered a hard word or showed bad temper, only a sun-like magnanimity. I wanted to have with him the father-relationship—as particularly the lady-disciples did. But he refused sharply, saying, "Let the ladies father me as much as they like. The 'father' has a Jewish and Hebrew odour, that I don't like much." Later on when I asked him why I was exceptionally favoured, he said, "Find out for yourself."

It seemed he wanted to "intellectualise" me, but alas, he must have found that my grey matter was no better developed than a rabbit's. But he did succeed, thanks to this special relation, in drawing me out of the chronic pessimism and doubt from which I suffered quite a lot. I wrote to him, "Your grandeur, your Himalayan austerity frightens us." To which came the vibrant reply: "O rubbish! I am austere and grand, grim and stern! every blasted thing I never was! I groan in an un-Aurobindonian despair when I hear such things. What has happened to the commonsense of all you people? In order to reach the Overmind it is not at all necessary to take leave of this simple but useful quality. Commonsense by the way is not logic (which is the least commonsense-like thing in the world), it is simply looking at things as they are without inflation or deflation. Not imagining wild imaginations—or for that matter despairing 'I know-not-why' despairs."

This magnanimity, this sunny humour at last chased away the Man of Sorrows who had taken shelter, like the Panis of the Vedas, in my subconscious. The force was of course there working constantly, but what I felt was the joy, the rasa of life engendered by the inimitable humour. I was tempted one day to ask how two incompatibles, humour and yoga, could so unnaturally combine in him. His reply was the Upanishadic: "He is indeed the veritable rasa."

This relation, however, did not mean that I was dearer to him than the others. He would not be divine in such a case, for the Divine is samam Brahman, equal and impartial to all, He gives himself entirely to all, only the relation differs according to each one's need, like the relation of the mother with her own children.
My intellectual preparation glided insensibly into creative activity. I wanted to be a poet. I had started writing in Bengali, then in English. There too my talent was green as a cucumber. But this didn’t matter, for Sri Aurobindo said that in the Ashram atmosphere a creative force was in action that could serve anyone’s aspiration to be a poet or artist. Every day he not only sent me inspiration but corrected my poems, gave concrete suggestions, explained the meaning of the poems which I composed without understanding what they meant. Strangely enough in both Bengali and English I wrote, medium-like, many such poems, some of which Sri Aurobindo called surrealist-mystic. Many times I was on the point of throwing up the sponge since the inspiration got blocked or the result was not to my taste! But always his letters, persuasive like the wind, pushed me on till one day he cried out, “The poet is born. What about the yogi?” And he wrote to me this letter:

“As there are several lamentations today besieging me, I have very little time to deal with each separate Jeremiad. Do I understand rightly that your contention is this, ‘I can’t believe in the Divine doing everything for me because it is by my own mighty and often fruitless efforts that I write or do not write poetry and have made myself into a poet?’ Well, that itself is ‘patent, magnificent, unheard of’. It has always been supposed since the infancy of the human race that while a verse-maker can be made or self-made, a poet cannot. ‘Poeta nascitur non fit,’ ‘a poet is born, not made’ is the dictum that has come down through the centuries and was thundered into my ears by the first pages of my Latin grammar. The facts of literary history seem to justify this stern saying. But in Pondicherry we have tried not to manufacture poets but to give them birth, a spiritual, not a physical birth into the body. In a number of cases we are supposed to have succeeded—one of these is your noble self—or if I am to believe the man of sorrows in you, your abject, miserable, hopeless, ineffectual self. But how was it done? There are two theories, it seems—one that it was by the Force, the other that it was by your own splashing, kicking, groaning, Herculean efforts. Now, Sir, if it is the latter, if you have done that unprecedented thing, made yourself by your own laborious strength into a poet (for your earlier efforts were only very decent literary exercises) then, Sir, why the deuce are you so abject, self-depreciatory, miserable?”

We see then that Sri Aurobindo was not only a poet but a creator of poets as well.

We were at this stage of our collaboration when, in 1938, a grave accident happened to him and we were brought face to face. In the small hours of the morning we found him lying on the floor of his room. He seemed to have been in that condition for about an hour without having called any one. He had tried all sorts of manipulations with the leg, but all in vain. The Mother felt in her sleep the vibration, and came up to find Sri Aurobindo in this state of immobility. She perceived at once what had gone wrong and sent for the doctors. After a series of examinations it was decided that the right femur had got badly fractured and that Sri Aurobindo should be kept in bed for some months. One can understand how the news shocked the whole Ashram. What struck me most was that while the Mother was discussing with the doctors all about
the accident and its treatment, Sri Aurobindo listened in silence and accepted meekly like a child all the necessary medical prescriptions approved by the Mother. That was a lesson in submission to all of us. The doctors had observed that Sri Aurobindo was an ideal patient.

The accident compelled him to abandon his solitude and accept the help of his disciples for medical reasons. Even after his cure, our services were retained.

Truly speaking, I had nourished in my secret heart a desire to see him from near at hand, hear his voice, talk with him and, if possible, serve him. Perhaps our correspondence pushed me to this utopian reverie. But when we actually met, no sign of recognition on his face! It was as if we had been unknown to each other—or too well known? His attitude towards all of us was most impersonal to start with.

During the two or three months of his illness, he kept his unperturbed calmness and good humour. Neither the gravity of the accident nor its inconveniences affected him in any manner. He told us later on that before the accident he could change pain into joy, but the suddenness of the accident and the intensity of the pain made him powerless for the moment...He did succeed afterwards. He said also that the accident, the illness etc. were for him only a phase of the inner battle.

We heard very little complaint during the long months of hospitalisation. Not only did he obey all the medical restrictions and physical discomforts with equanimity but lightened our own burden by cheerful talks. The Mother used often to ask, “Are they making you talk?” And his smiling reply was, “Oh, that’s nothing!” For over a year he had only a sponge bath; hunger did not seem to gnaw him; nor did heat unnerve him; he did not seem to live in the body. But he was far from being dry or austere, he was not an ascetic. He enjoyed good food, witty words and slept like all of us. He was not a “puritan god who had made of pleasure a poisoned fruit”; he read newspapers (but not books, for—in Mallarmé’s words—he ‘had read all books’). He was not lost in meditation, eyes closed and legs crossed. In short, no external evidence would proclaim to us, “Here is the yogi who has reached the Supermind.” People were surprised to hear that his external life differed in no way from that of a common man, simple, natural and healthy. “To be transformed radically within, remaining apparently human without,” such is in effect the principle of his yoga.

And this was amply illustrated by the calm and serenity he maintained even in moments of great disturbance. He taught us that one must be able to keep a perfect equanimity even in the midst of massive destruction. We saw how, during the troubled period of war, he went on with his usual daily activity, never changing the normal rhythm of his life. He attended to his intellectual work. He started rewriting a good deal of The Life Divine soon after his convalescence and finished it in two years. We used to see him sitting on his bed with his pen, papers on the table, but no books. He had forgotten the world with its devastating war-thunder; the words came ‘flowing direct to his pen, as from a hidden silence. Now and then he would stop, look in front and dive again. The Mother would come with a glass of coconut water, and wait till
he would look up. He needed no books, no thinking. He had stopped thinking long ago—after his Nirvanic experience in 1907 and since then all that he wrote or said or did had come from the higher silence. "To be free from the responsibility of thinking is a great relief," he used to tell us.

About the second or third volume of The Life Divine, when it came out, he remarked, "It is a huge elephant." All the three volumes, neatly bound in polished white cloth, were sent to him to be blessed with his autograph. On each one he would write the name of the purchaser, add his blessings and his own signature. More than three hundred such copies have conserved his autograph as an act of Divine Grace.

The Life Divine over, Sri Aurobindo took up his epic Savitri. I had the unique opportunity to follow its growth and development from a tiny seed into an ashwatha tree. With an infinite care, exacting at each step a flawless perfection, he worked and worked, slowly, silently like a god in labour. One would gape with wonder to see how many versions he had made of some cantos! At the end when his vision was affected he had to dictate the verses like Milton. I remember that he dictated in successive sittings near about four hundred lines of The Book of Eternal Day. He had made about twelve revisions of the first Book. And he would certainly have done the same for the entire Savitri had he had sufficient time. Many other incidental tasks like correspondence with sadhaks, answering letters from outside, reading of theses, essays, poems and other miscellaneous intellectual tasks took up much of his time till one day he had to speak out: "I find no time for my important work!" Then he began systematically the work on Savitri and we were proceeding finely when again all of a sudden I heard him utter, "I want to finish Savitri soon." That struck my ear like a sharp slap! It was in 1950, a few months before his passing away. Such an accent was most foreign to his nature. In everything that he did, his talk, his walk, his eating, his dictation, there was not the least haste; he would give the impression as if "all eternity was before him." "Well then," I asked myself, "what imperious need could make him impatient, he who was an example of patience and equanimity?" The work was, however, finished somewhat hurriedly and even so some parts were not revised. Afterwards of course we could see in a clear light what had pressed him inordinately.

One can imagine then that his seclusion was neither that of an ascetic’s refusal of the world nor an absorption in samadhi away from life. One might, on the contrary, reasonably ask, "Where in the midst of so much activity was the yogi? In what way was he different from other great men?" Here some understanding of the principle of Sri Aurobindo’s yoga is necessary. It is a radical departure from most of the traditional yogas. For Sri Aurobindo all action depends on the consciousness from which it is done. Firmly seated in the divine consciousness one can do any kind of work which will be the reflection or translation of that divine consciousness. So whether in work or in inactivity, one is always united with the higher consciousness. And
Sri Aurobindo’s integral yoga demands that there should be no division between the external and the internal life. All life is yoga. “Do you imagine that when I write to you these letters, I lose the divine consciousness?” he wrote to me. He has also said that so long as one cannot undertake any work with a perfect equality, one is not a yogi. The Mother too says that so long as this division remains in the mind, transformation of life is impossible. Similarly when Sri Aurobindo used to give us inspiration for writing poetry, it was not to make us poets but that it might help us in our sadhana.

Even so, Sri Aurobindo reserved a big part of his daily life for what he called his personal work of concentration. Generally, the whole morning till the time of breakfast, which was gradually pushed to three or four o’clock in the afternoon, he passed in complete silence. None but the Mother was supposed to ‘disturb’ him except for exceptional reasons. We kept ourselves ready behind his bed, talking merrily or reading, while he was seated at ease in the bed, with eyes wide open, absorbed or concentrated God knows on what! His consciousness was “voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone.”

During this period, he was quite a different person, far remote from that of the Correspondence or of Evening Talks.

This period was perhaps the most mysterious part of his life. Nobody except the Mother had any idea of what he was occupied with. Was he drawing down the supramental Force or concentrating on cosmic problems or even some individual cases needing some special attention? At these moments we were strangers to him: we might be crossing his presence many times, but we had no apparent identity. If he needed something, it was an impersonal voice calling somebody impersonal, as it were, for he would call by any name, and the voice would come from afar, the tone grave, the look elsewhere; the noise, our chatter fell into a vacancy. Even the explosion of a bomb would have left him serene and silent.

On this point the Mother has told us a story. One day when a storm was raging outside, she entered Sri Aurobindo’s room to find that a complete silence was reigning inside. This side of Sri Aurobindo I called the impersonal aspect of his person. People believed that we were all the time talking with him and that his radiant humour was pouring in a cascade and bathing us in its exultant flow. What a surprise to hear that such moments were numbered when he descended from his inaccessible heights to become ‘human’. And thus short time was our divine moment. Like bees to the flower we would gather round him. The supramental cloak would slip down from his shoulders to reveal a friend who talked with us without any conventional constraint. Philosophy, literature, politics, yoga, even the most common jokes about snoring or the Sunday-Times trivialities were our fare. No ethical distinction between high and low, right or wrong ostracised any topic, only it must have some rasa in it. On one side his vast knowledge, his prajña was at our doors, on the other many small incidents, hitherto guarded secrets came to us in the form of reminiscences seasoned with light humour. One day he said,
“All that I see in this room, these walls, these tables, the books etc., etc. and yourself, Dr. Manilal, I see all as the Divine. No, it is not an imaginary vision, it is a concrete realisation.” Another day, Dr Manilal having stopped his own meditation from fear, Sri Aurobindo scolded him mildly and said, “Oh, this fear! Even if you had died at that moment, it would have been a glorious death!” To another who had come out of his meditation he remarked with a smile, “I see your face beaming with a supramental ananda!” Such humour, sweet, refined and restrained, put us on a footing of equality.

But there too, as in all other things, he kept his tranquil spirit, his impersonal way. He never raised his voice, looked down or in front when he talked, and he talked very slowly, did not insist on his point, while a benign sweetness softened his countenance. When he criticised men or countries, there was no contempt or malice in his expression. He saw the Forces of which men are nothing but poor puppets. His divine compassion was over all. The impersonal again saw all with an equal eye.

I have often asked myself how such a division was possible. How could he be both personal and impersonal at the same time? Did he not lose his universality when he became an individual with us in his talks? It appears that one can be the transcendent, the universal and the individual simultaneously. Similarly he could keep an absolute silence in the midst of full activity. His luminous verse, “Force one with unimaginable rest,” gives a glimpse of what was a baffling mystery to me. All his activities, political, literary or otherwise, emerged from this Nirvanic silence and none knew it. All the volumes of the Arya had their source in this sovereign silence. And it was this force of silence that caused Hitler’s downfall and India’s independence. “There are two great forces in the universe, silence and speech.... Infinite is the power of this calm and silence, in which the great forces prepare for action.” Let us remember Buddha whose prodigious activity welled out from the ineffable silence of Nirvana!

In this modern age of feverish excitement and dizzy speed, Sri Aurobindo was never in a hurry, he remained calm and unperturbed even in the face of darkest calamities. He had an unshakable faith. His room was, as it were, packed with a concrete silence, but the force, the peace, the joy, the light were also there for anybody to feel and breathe them. During the first years of our stay with him, we were working almost twenty hours a day and yet there was no fatigue! Whence came all that joy and energy, I used to ask myself. I understood only after I had read Kalidasa’s epic Kumarsambhava, “The Birth of the War-God.” There the poet describes how Shiva’s two servants were filled with an inexhaustible energy that streamed from Shiva’s third eye. Very often we had the feeling that Sri Aurobindo was himself Shiva, or rather Shiva was an aspect of his personality. His total abnegation, his non-attachment to material things, his liberality, universal compassion, childlike attitude, distaste for physical work, his complete surrender to the Mother who looked after him, all these are features that we associate with Shiva. His very body had a likeness.
One can say then that impersonality was the essence of his nature. All that he did, all that came from him, his ease, reserve, calm, slowness, even certain aspects of humour gave me that impression. We know that in his political activities he preferred always to remain in the background: one day he said, "The confounded British Government spoiled my play." He was not even calling us by names when he needed something!

Though impersonal, he was a person and his personal body was so sweet, so tender! A perfume like that of a child's body emanated from it. His small feet supporting a massive frame were warm like the down of a bird, and his palms were soft and velvety like those of a woman. When he lay down on the bed, his body covered the entire bed, and the trunk, lightly powdered after bath, hair plaited or loose falling down the neck reminded us again of Shiva. Sometimes the body was radiant with a white light. At other times when, seated on the edge of the bed, he waited for the Mother's coming, his majestic posture evoked the figure of Moses. The portrait of his last days is nothing but a travesty of this supreme grandeur. Sri Aurobindo has said that the Supreme is both personal and impersonal at the same time. His own life is a luminous example of this truth and has given me a small insight into the working of the Divine in the world. We had the unique opportunity of seeing two personalities together, the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, the Shakti full of energy, dynamism, Shiva impassive, immobile; the Prakriti, the Purusha, two-in-one.

This impassivity was, to my shocked surprise, one day suddenly snapped when he uttered, "I want to finish Savitri soon." It is true that during the last phase of his life he became very grave and withdrawn. One of us dared to ask him the reason. He gave an enigmatic reply: "Things are getting very serious!" The meaning was clear only after he had left his body and this he did in a normal manner. An extraordinary phenomenon was observed the next day: the entire body was suffused with a golden light. The Mother said that if the Light remained the body would be preserved in a glass case. But, alas, after five days the Light vanished, which is quite in conformity with Sri Aurobindo's mode of life, for he never wanted to capture the world's imagination by miracles; he was not a thaumaturgic magician.

One can imagine the enormous void created in the Ashram by his unexpected departure. It was a thunderstroke. And if the Mother had not absorbed the shock I do not know what a formidable chaos would have reigned in our world! She filled the void by her Grace, her power, by her very person. Sri Aurobindo's absence has brought into the world-gaze the greatness, the supreme power of the Mother. She has, by her love and care, rebuilt the nest badly shaken by the storm. Before his passing, Sri Aurobindo had written in Savitri, "She alone can save the world and save herself," which clearly pointed to the Mother's future role.

If Sri Aurobindo is physically absent, his subtle presence is yet very near us, alive and active, and as before it is continuously working on to establish the supra-
mental kingdom on earth, "In Death to repatriate Immortality."

Such was the Master's life, and such it abides even now, always silent and impersonal, a total self-effacement. We lived the last twelve years of his life following him like a shadow. We saw how much the Divine in the form of Guru, the Avatar, works, suffers for our 'confounded humanity.' He has said, ‘My yoga is not for myself, I need nothing, neither salvation nor anything else, but precisely for the earth-consciousness, to open a way for the transformation of the earth-consciousness.’

We have also watched the tragedy of his passing away in a normal tranquil manner like a common man, not like some yogis who give up the body in meditation. Like Sri Ramakrishna, he took up the disease, allowed its natural course and reached the natural end. His whole life was an extraordinary phenomenon, but its external form so simple, natural and human, so to say, concealed the inner miracle. What we have seen are nothing but a few waves, small and big, on the surface, while his true life was 'never on the surface'. The depth of that life will always remain unfathomable. The Mother alone knows what he was and what he has done for the world. One day the world will wake up to a recognition and accept him as the Avatar, the World-Teacher.

NIRODBARAN
You say that it is not in the mind alone that endless contradiction can happen. I concur with you. It is not only philosophers who keep disagreeing. Yogis also take up positions poles apart from one another on the basis of their actual spiritual experiences. This is possible because reality can be spiritually experienced, no less than intellectually reconstructed, in various aspects. But we are naturally led to inquire what should be considered the ultimate truth of which so many aspects are possible. You suggest that to ascertain that truth we require a new faculty which you call “insight”—a faculty “which, if its possession is gained, will function in precisely the same manner in all persons.” And you add the important remark: “Such a faculty was, I believe, used by sages like Krishna and Buddha.”

Two implications I read in your belief. One is indirect—namely, that reality has been “insighted” in past ages and that all we can do is to repeat their performance: the new faculty is in fact old and is new only for those who have not developed it. The other and direct implication is that Sri Krishna and Buddha had the same insight into reality. I hope you will excuse me if to neither implication I can give a fervent Yea. I don’t think that except on very general grounds we can speak of Buddha’s insight and Sri Krishna’s as the same. Immediately we probe into the matter we come upon a big difference. And the difference serves to indicate the line of progress which, despite my acknowledging the grandeur of past spirituality, I consider to be beckoning us beyond everything the past has grandly achieved.

Buddha made an ultimate dichotomy between the world and reality. The world he regarded as an illusion to be discarded at last for a formless and featureless and impersonal beatific a-cosmism which he named Nirvana. Before the final dropping of the world there goes on a strange concomitance of reality and illusion, Nirvana and embodied nature. During that prelude Nirvana throws a luminous quiescence on our mind, vitality and body. Rather, since it is itself actionless, we should say our mind, vitality and body reflect the luminous quiescence of Nirvana. This quiescence means a lot of wonderful change in our nature—a change dynamic as well as
static since our nature or Prakriti is a dynamism and unavoidably puts whatever light it catches to active uses. But the change due to Nirvana is not all that is involved in the Gita nor is Nirvana there the *summum bonum*. Though Sri Krishna in the Gita speaks of Nirvana—Brahma-Nirvana he terms it to distinguish it from the utterly negative spiritual shade given it by Buddha—it is for him one aspect of Brahman, an aspect we cannot do without, yet not all-fulfilling. Brahman is Purushottama, the Transcendental Being who is not limited by His own static eternity and who dynamically manifests our universe and acts as its Lord. And Purushottama manifests our universe through His Para-Prakriti or Super-Nature. Super-Nature is marked out from Nature here which is a derivation or veiled play of it: it is that which is divine and has the power of divinising all that is below. Its dynamism is the perfect original of the lower one which is the sole dynamism Buddha deals with and Nirvana illuminates. Towards the Supreme Being who is both impersonal and personal and towards His divinising Super-Nature we with our instruments of mind, vitality and body have to move by the Krishnaesque insight: in our experience in the cosmos we have to manifest them. The ideal of divinising the person in us and our embodied existence is involved in Sri Krishna's pronouncements as it certainly is not in Buddha's, for it is clear that in Nirvana there can be no divine counterpart of the varied complexity that is active in Nature.

In the works of Sri Aurobindo the ideal is brought out in its clearest fullness. His Yoga is founded on his experience of a Consciousness which, over and above combining all that Yogis in the past have known, holds the secret of satisfying and fulfilling on earth our whole embodied existence. Such a Consciousness seems to me, because of its integral character, the ultimate Reality—and "insight", therefore, is in my opinion developable with utter completeness only through the Aurobindonian Yoga.

The conditions mentioned by you for developing it are very good indeed, but, as formulated by you, are they not liable to appear somewhat one-sided, since they are, in your words, "a ruthless self-pruning"? "Only by this ruthless self-pruning," you write, "can we respond utterly impersonally to reality and not falsify it." One may suggest that self-pruning is necessary and impersonality is necessary, yet there is the fact of a diverse personality in us. By self-pruning and impersonality we rise above personality's defects, but, if carried to an exclusive extreme, they might throw personality entirely into the shade and move finally to submerge it in some Beyond which takes us for good out of the manifested universe. Personality is an important fact of our existence and for manifestation it is indispensable. It wants fulfilment in the Divine and not just to be transcended until it can be annulled. Reality must answer to its impassioned many-toned appeal. So, except at the risk of one-sidedness, "insight" cannot be developed by paying scarce heed to the essence of personality and to personality's complex richness. We must not grow bare in growing pure.

I don't think you actually mean "bareness" by your "purity". Manifestation to the utmost is not outside your path. Yet, I may say, your utmost does not reach far
enough because you believe we can do nothing save ring appropriate changes of application on the spiritual possibilities revealed in the past. I do not wish to sound cocky. I have a deep reverence for the rishis and masters and prophets whose souls shine from the past like everlasting torches along our troubled ways and I see that we cannot throw aside the core of their realisations. But I can’t help seeing too that the evolution Sri Aurobindo is bent on accomplishing has no exact precedent.

Taking up the synthesis Sri Krishna made of the Yogas of Knowledge, Works and Devotion, he goes forward to a spiritual integrality exceeding even that splendid synthesis. He says that liberation is not enough; nor is it enough to let our embodied nature be influenced by the light of the Divine, not even the dynamic light that was displayed by the synthesis à la Sri Krishna. If everything came originally from the Divine, there must be in the Divine the archetypal truth of everything, a truth not lying idle in the Transcendental but ever pressing for manifestation. And the manifestation of it would be a divine person with a divinised mind, vitality and body. So Sri Aurobindo speaks of a descent into us of what he designates as Gnosis or Supermind as well as of an ascent to it. The descent will mean an embodied existence of a divine order in every respect and no longer of an order that is flawed by the human and the mortal. Yes, in every respect there must be Godhead and immortality; even our physical stuff must be entirely transformed! A new apocalypse is here beyond the visions of the past—divinisation has, in Sri Aurobindo’s vocabulary, a novel significance—and yet we feel that the unprecedented is most logical. Anything short of the Aurobindonian divinising leaves Nature without sufficient justification of her being: as an emanation of the Divine she must be capable of divinisation in every inch of her when her whole principle is a progressive evolution.

Because she is capable we have the thirst for perfection. The thirst has been recognised since the dawn of history, but up to now the integral logic of it has not been grasped. Until it is grasped we shall never be satisfied: always a clash will take place in our psychology and under various guises we shall have “the refusal of the ascetic” and “the denial of the materialist.” No compromise will be lasting: every apparent equilibrium will collapse. For, there is an imperative in man’s constitution driving him towards the spiritual integrality insisted on by Sri Aurobindo. Without our openly feeling that imperative, there will never be a common “insight” for all persons. How can we reach in the sphere of spiritual experience a common insight unless we envisage with unblurred eyes our total constitution’s bedrock need? The bedrock need shows itself in our thirst for perfection—and the common origin, in God, of everything denotes the integral range of the need and the integral range of its satisfaction. You say you believe with me that the thirst for perfection is a pointer to its eventual slaking in the Spirit. But you erect a certain barrier: “there is,” you write, “no necessary implication that this will be attained whilst we are here in the

1 The novelty, of course, is not restricted to body-transforming. The latter is a sign of the utter integrality of the divinising process and the integrality extends also a transforming to mind and vitality beyond anything done before.
flesh and on a level of existence where everything is doomed, as Buddha points out, to
decay and death. It is more likely to be done on a higher level where such limitations
could not exist.” If you attend closely to the words “thirst for perfection” you will
seize Sri Aurobindo’s view. Can our thirst be for perfection if the cry of the physical
being is left without an answer from God? Our physical being has its innate demand
for joy, for luminous effectivity, for healthy perpetuation. These demands are summed
up in the age-long quest for the elixir vitae. Can you ignore the intensity of such a
quest?

The misery of an imperfectly constituted body open to attack on every side and
gravitating towards dissolution is not due simply to our attachment to material things:
it is due also to our innate sense of a great lack—a lack of what our body is hungering
after. We try and try to appease its hunger. Blind alleys meet us everywhere because
we do not turn to “the secret path” of mysticism for the body’s fulfilment. Our failure
leaves us frustrated: we may detach our attention from the failure but deep in our
subconscious there lurks a brooding dangerous sadness packed with resistance to
spirituality if spirituality finds no means to justify earth in terms of earth itself. Not
to see in bodily life the thirst for perfection is to close our eyes to a mighty fact. To
seek its appeasement outside the Divine is to keep groping for ever. To hold that it
will never be slaked in the Divine is to keep aimless for ever. To hold that it
will never be slaked in the Divine is to give up aiming at integral realisation of Him,
for that realisation must consist in His descent on all the levels of our nature as well as
in our ascent to Him in the Gnosis. If we admit that matter has come originally from
God and if we admit that matter cries out for fulfilment, there can be no getting away
from the conclusion that our body can be divinised and should be divinised. Perfection
would not be perfect without fulfilment on our level of flesh no less than on
every other level.

By acquiescing in Buddha’s doctrine of the doom of the body we erroneously
take a present condition for an everlasting one. It is quite obvious that the body as
at present inhabited by us decays and dies. But Sri Aurobindo discerns no inevitability
of decay and death. What is the doom Buddha speaks of? Who or what has fixed
the doom? The doom, to Buddha, is consequent on the body’s being compounded
of parts. The compounded must fall asunder: that is his logic. It is, however,
conceivable that a force counteracting the tendency of a compound to break up can hold
together the parts indefinitely. It is all an affair of balance. The mere compounding
need bring no decomposition and disintegration. So the real cause must lie deeper.
The real cause is that no force in Nature is able to maintain the body for good, much
less to keep it up at a pitch of perfect health. Must we accept this inability in Nature
as final? We must if our attitude is, like Buddha’s, illusionist. Buddha’s logic is
binding only if our attitude argues no support or archetype of the body in the Spirit.
Give up illusionism and the logic crumbles down. Declare that it is the Spirit that
has become all things and immediately we unchain ourselves from Buddha’s dictum.
For then there must be, unknown to us, a connection between the incorruptible sub­
stance of Spirit and matter’s corruptible substance. Not only this, but, as the Spirit
must be one-yet-multiple to manifest a multiple universe, there is a spiritual formation connected with the material formation that is our body. A spiritual body, whose substance and form are in absolute tune with the light and perpetuity that are proper to the Spirit, is all the time behind our unstable aggregate of elements and waits to manifest itself in it. Indian Yogas have often spoken of a causal body—

kāraṇa śarīra—governing the gross and the subtle ones from its occult station above in the Spirit’s ether. No complete descent, emergence and organisation of the causal in both the gross and the subtle were taught or methodised. Sri Aurobindo is the first to proclaim the necessity and practicableness of making the kāraṇa śarīra totally active in the open. When the substance, form, law and force of that body are brought into play within our present material being, there is no reason why our components, freed from their imperfections, should not perpetually hold together in unmarred health. We are mortal simply because we have not yet discovered how to make our body share in the Spirit’s perfect and immortal consciousness. There is no radical gulf between that consciousness and our body, there is only an apparent and pragmatic gulf.

Everything depends on what power of being is in charge. The vital or mental power is unable to bring about a divinisation. Buddha’s spirituality, though gigantic in itself, also misses the superb secret. Buddha looked for liberation from the cycle of births, not for divinisation of all that birth involves. The Vedic attempt to establish the Gods in our nature-parts, the Vaishnava attempt to incarnate the personal deity through the love-surge of the central person in us, the soul or psyche round which our personal nature is organised, and the Tantric attempt to render the Shakti, the Mother-power, of the Supreme effective in all our chakras come near to it. There has, however, been a general falling short both in idea and practice because the particular dynamism of the Divine which Sri Aurobindo names Supermind or Gnosis was never completely possessed—or, if possessed, it was mostly in the tranced consciousness and seldom in the wide-awake one. In Sri Krishna the wide-awake possession may have been there, but it was not directly operative: the directly operative dynamism was a secondary power of the Supermind—the Overmind. The Overmind is a global and not an integral truth-consciousness: there is in it a well-rounded harmony, on the whole, of the one-yet-multiple Spirit but in detail a penchant for multiplicity and hence for division, while in the Supermind a precise all-balancing and hence all-filling harmony subsists both on the whole and in detail. Under the Overmind’s rule we can grow divinised on earth to a considerable extent without being able to preserve ourselves from that outermost dividing-up which is the body’s death. Under the sway of the Supermind there can be entire divinisation and no compulsive dragging away from it: we are free to cast aside what we have done, we are not bound to it but we are also able to manifest perfection and preserve it here and now. This capacity and that freedom are the goal of earth: they are the Supermind’s prerogatives which Sri Aurobindo wants exercised. Sri Krishna in the Gita heads towards them without overtly disclosing them: while the Supermind seems to be his background
the Overmind is his forefront. If his forefront had been supramental he would have
done what Sri Aurobindo is doing today.

But the reason why, where dynamic operation was concerned, the Supermind
stayed in the background is not just some individual defect in Sri Krishna. Buddha's
a-cosmic extremism is also not traceable to merely a lacuna in him. There are universal
factors no less than individual: the stage of world-evolution, the Zeitgeist and the
urgent need of the hour combine to colour the spirituality of leaders like Buddha and
Sri Krishna. To deem them altogether myopic and incapable is a mistake, as it is
also a mistake to deem them the ne plus ultra and forget new conditions and the new
spirituality those conditions must demand. Sri Krishna used the Overmind dynamism
and could not help doing so because the time was not ripe for the work of the Gnosis,
especially on the body. Many ups and downs, many divergent zigzags had to occur
before the time could ripen for the Aurobindonian Yoga. It appears that, among
several factors, an age of Science had to emerge for such a work to be taken in hand.
Nothing save a stress on the physical as blindly strong as at the beginning was
Science's could help the psychological moment of an unusual task like laying the
Spirit's touch on its old enemy and despised impediment, the body, for integral
divinisation. Then there is the subconscious effect of Science's brilliant endeavour
to see in the body the cause, function and aim of everything that we are: by its
advances towards proving all spiritual states to be material it also paved the way for a
vision of matter as no utterly incommensurate contrary of spiritual states. Further,
the development of the radio has in a very impressive manner given the human
mind a sense of effective wideness and of practical simultaneity of presence everywhere
through a sort of physical translation of the Spirit's consciousness. As impressive
in diminishing the incubus of unconquerable inertia and grossness associated with
matter in opposition to Spirit is the dissolving of matter into pure energy by the
break-up of the atom into electrons. Lastly, we have the admission that so far as the
science of physics is concerned we do not require to know the nature of the entities
we discuss but only their mathematical structure, the way they affect our measuring
instruments; physics, indeed, reflects the fluctuations of world-qualities but our
exact knowledge is of their "pointer-readings", not of the qualities and as a result
it leaves us open-minded as to what reality is. Developing out of this open-mindedness
there are the celebrated Jeans-Eddington trends: what began as a tremendous
stress on the physical has, in an important domain of Science, ended in a doubt in
the mind of one scientific school whether the physical universe is its own explanation.
The doubt does not remove the stress on the physical which is now an inalienable
portion of whatever life-programme we may adopt, but it has robbed of trenchant
finality the line once drawn between the actual spatio-temporal phenomena and
the hypothetical mystery of God. In addition, it has suggested a change in our
idea of Nature's laws. Both in Jeans and Eddington you will observe the disposition
to consider the nineteenth century's "laws of iron" statistical and nothing more.
So the obsession about decay and death is weakened and Buddha's "doom" for
the body is found likely to be a statistical law, a generalisation from a large number of past and present cases rather than an absolute inevitability. Thus Science has by many routes co-operated obliquely or straightforwardly with Sri Aurobindo’s mission. Apart from the scientific milieu the integral Yoga would be an anchronism. Apart from the integral Yoga the scientific milieu would lose its deepest rationale.

Living in that milieu and wanting to do Yoga, a man is bound to be restless and discontented until he embraces Sri Aurobindo’s integrality.

(To be continued)

K. D. Sethna
THE NOVEL ALCHEMY

I

ACCORDING to the Bible, God said, “Let there be Creation”, and the Creation came. God was pleased, not only because the Creation came but also because the Creation was all-perfect, with nothing to change: it was like an edifice firm and solid and flawless, it would endure eternally firm and unchanging, fixed in every detail and exactly as it was on the first day.

The Rishis of the Upanishads give us a slightly different version. God was not at all pleased with the first sketch and with the forms of animal kind created. He tried a second time, and again it failed to please. After several essays of this nature, He was at last pleased with His work when man came into being. Now it was truly well done, sukrtam etat.

In fact, Creation is a continuous process, a progressive movement. The earth is moving forward every moment, it is assuming constantly an ever-new garb. This story of evolution has been one of the supreme discoveries of modern man in the field of knowledge. It has opened the door to many hidden mysteries, provided a solution to a number of problems.

The deepest of all mysteries, the most complex and recondite of all problems of Creation is the origin and presence of suffering. Man’s first and everlasting query has been prompted by this; he has been subjected to the attacks of the three kinds of suffering, hence he wants to know, duhkhatraya-bhīghatāt jijñāsā.

The question is: if there is God, if He is all-merciful, if the Power or Being in charge of the created universe is a benign and not a malign Power, śiva and not aśīva, then why is our earth afflicted with disease and suffering and sorrow and pain? Why are mortals in fear of the death that overhangs all? Not God but Satan then is the creator and supreme controller?

A well-known modern Western thinker and sage has propounded a novel theory of his own on this problem. He too has suggested that the world is not something that is static with all things fixed and settled for good. The world is in movement, and the movement is ever forward, towards a higher consciousness that progressively unfolds its riches. As first results of this urge towards the heights there have appeared all sorts of cracks and rifts, acute pulls and strains; these are translated into sorrow and suffering, deprivation and death. The earth or human society is not like a well-trimmed garden, all has not been selected and arranged and put in its proper place according to a pattern and given a permanent shape. It is on the contrary like a wild bush with its innumerable shrubs and trees which have been continuously growing. So many of the dead leaves and branches have been shed, so many flowers have dried up. But new twigs are constantly forming
on top and radiating their beauty of green leaves and flowers in bloom. Sorrow and suffering, pain and misery are like those dried-up and discarded flowers and leaves and twigs. These are concomitant results of the original total movement, perhaps even an inevitable necessity. But even from the individual's point of view this seeming waste and destruction is no sign of any futility, for through each individual there has been flowing that upward stream of consciousness, each individual has within himself an impulse and an endeavour to move along that stream and as an aid to it, no matter what outer form it might take. Or else the thing may be compared to the work of soldiers in a war. The common aim of war is victory. Every soldier has an equal self-devotion, energy and steadfastness to secure this victory. Nevertheless, all do not survive till the end, many have to give up their lives, and on this immolation of the many is founded the ultimate victory. So, in the evolution of man on earth, the first step is represented by sorrow and suffering, misery and pain; these are the signs and symbols of the upward urge. Those who put up with suffering and sorrow, misery and pain, to the extent these can be borne, do not do so wholly under a sense of unwilling submission. The inner core of this suffering is a keen desire and urge and capacity to act as an instrument and support of the upward urge. Even from the point of view of the individual what appears in a sense a simple negation is in truth a thing of deep import. Teilhard de Chardin has thus seen a spiritual meaning in the Christian's bearing of the cross; the cross brings in the end a realisation of eternal life.

Sri Aurobindo too has given us a full theory and history of suffering. In one place, however, he has said this about earthly suffering and sin: those who are the worst sinners, the thieves and murderers too are deserving of our salute, for the reason that they are the ones who have drawn upon themselves the load of sin, it is these unfortunate ones who have swallowed up most of the poison that has come out of the churning of the ocean of life.

These words of Sri Aurobindo seem to lend support to the view of the western thinker. Both echo an almost identical feeling. But what Sri Aurobindo says here is only a fraction of all he has to say on the subject, it is not his final word, whereas in the view of the western sage, sorrow and suffering, misery and pain appear as ultimate truths at least for the individual, and for the ordinary life of the common multitude; this manner of complete self-immolation of the individual serves a collective end, like the self-sacrifice of an army or a multitude of soldiers in a war. But in Sri Aurobindo's view, even for the individual, for any individual, this consummation in self-sacrifice is not the final end; for the individual too this is merely an episode in one or more of his lives. Through this self-sacrifice, every individual goes on developing himself along with the development of the collectivity, and this is done not by losing or abolishing oneself. No one is rejected or lost, like the dried-up leaves or flowers. For the individual too there are levels of progression. There is not merely one class of fortunate people who pass into the highest realisation as suggested by the Christian thinker and have won a seat alongside of God in a heavenly
consciousness. All are coming up gradually in their footsteps and will participate in an identical realisation. It cannot be regarded as ordained of God that the upward movement and supreme attainment of one small section should be founded involuntarily or however willingly on the self-immolation of another bigger group. If evolution has to proceed through the rejection and sacrifice of the many, then does it not imply in the end the survival of the few? Whatever the size or the integrality of those few, it still remains only a portion of the whole.

It is true that sorrow and suffering, old age and death are facts of an earlier part, that is to say, the first stage of the evolutionary process. When in the beginning of things darkness was enveloped in darkness, *tamo āsit tamasā gūḍham agrē,* when all was inconscient ocean, *apraketam salilam,* when the dense unconsciousness of matter ruled at the beginning of creation, the first stirrings of the life-force that burst through this solid darkness took form as a pressure of deep and acute pain. It is this forceful impact of pain that shakes and breaks the dark foundations. It is through the many forms of suffering that inconscience and ignorance gradually become consciousness and knowledge. Finally, in man there awakens the spiritual urge under the blows of suffering, and it is in the transformation of suffering that the spiritual consciousness finds its growth. Not merely to escape from suffering but to transform it is the real problem and the greater achievement. What the poet calls “an escape from suffering in the midst of suffering” is the self-satisfaction of the martyr and patriot and soldier in annihilating self. This may be described as the way of the heroic seeker, *vīra-bhāva,* but of a different nature is the work of the more godly seeker, *deva-bhāva.* The latter no doubt has to pass through suffering, but he does not lose himself there, nor does he find his sole satisfaction in ending it. He crosses beyond suffering to another shore, through a tunnel as it were, and emerges into a laughter of light, a satisfaction of delight. The final end or significance lies not in the suffering itself nor even in the virtues of courage, ability, aspiration and steadfastness which are gained through or at the cost of suffering. Suffering is in reality a form of delight, although a distorted form of delight. A delight which is so keen as to become unbearable appears in the form of suffering. Again, enter into the inner unfathomable core of suffering and you will see and feel that it is not suffering but delight, the supreme form of delight, just as on piercing through the veil of the cosmic illusion one finds standing behind only the sole eternal *brahman.* Death too is not the annihilation of the individual, not an end, but a change of form and outward appearance. This change has been an inescapable necessity for further progress. At the final end, suffering ceases to exist, it too is transformed into delight. Death too ceases to be, it too finds its death; what remains is only immortality, an immortal life.

Chardin has been speaking of the gradual unfolding and realisation of a spiritual
consciousness. It is a constant one-pointed upward movement, the being and consciousness of earth gradually moving higher and higher as a collective entity through a new creation that is growing more and more pure and integral. In this way this consciousness has been overpassing the limits of earth and the material universe and moves into a different kind of world, creates or becomes a different kind of world. It is as if a ball of fire throwing its tongues of flame as it breaks through the barrier of matter and soars up on high, and the more it grows immense and clear and attains its true form, the more it burns gradually to ashes with its massive concentration of heat whatever remains of the old creation. It seems that in the view of Chardin, the manifestation and establishment of an integral spirituality will one day set aflame the whole earth and the material body with its physical base. It is as if another world, but once it manifests here in full, its fiery energies will turn the old earth to ashes, perhaps reduce it to its primordial form. A school of scientists too hold the view that at the beginning of creation there was an infinite expanse of ether charged with intensely hot particles. The universe had neither cohesion nor a settled form, it was a gaseous nebula. And in its final end too it will have to go back to that formless state. The material world is simply a mould for the spirit. This mould or basis will be gradually rent asunder and broken and scattered before the reign of spirit manifests and establishes itself. Will it then be somewhat like the eruption of a volcano? The upward urge and movement of evolution is as if a volcanic peak slowly raising its head; as it grows in energy and heat within, the peak gets detached and is thrown into a liquid flood of lava which proclaims its flaming glory by sweeping aside and drowning and destroying all else. Will the old give place to the new and the unmanifest along these lines?

What is this world that is to be the fruit of the new spiritual realisation? Where will it be? It would appear to be a supraphysical and transcendent realisation. Chardin has clearly suggested that the new earth will not be anything like a planet renovated into a "sidereal" body illumined by its own light and not that of another. It will not be a thing of the gross material world at all. It would rather come into being as if by rending through the old earth and destroying it, almost as a result of a universal catastrophe, pralaya. Would it then be something non-material? If it were to be made up of pure consciousness, then it might be termed the realisation of brahman, the Brahmic status. Is then evolution of the manifested universe moving towards this final destruction or dissolution? Or else is the new world to be conceived as something belonging to the subtle-physical? But the subtle-physical world too has its planes, and this new world may be the field of a spiritual realisation somewhere among these planes beyond life, mind and the above-mind. The Vedantins speak of the world of brahman, they aim at realising the grand status of brahman, brahma-loke mahiyyate. But theirs is something outside the created universe, beyond manifestation. The Vaishnavas have spoken of a highest spiritual world, go-loka, which is within the manifestation. The Christians too speak of their Heaven. We also hear of the world of Shiva, the world of Vishnu; these too
are not entirely outside the manifestation or created universe. Does then Chardin aim at something overmental, utterly beyond and above the mind?

In the vision of Sri Aurobindo, the process of creation is not merely an ascent and upward movement, it has a movement of descent too. There is not merely a crossing of levels upon levels, not merely a progressive purification, enlargement, deepening, intensification and sharpening of the consciousness and status; the aim is to transfigure all in the image of the divine being. This process involves a going upward and a descent with a view to reshape the lower reaches anew in the mould of the heights, not a final extinction, *nirvāṇa*, in the world of *brahman* by a rejection of all individuality and collectivity. No level of the created universe has to be bypassed or abolished, not even the lowest material plane. On the contrary, the aim is to take one's stand on this material plane itself and transmute it into a new matter, even as the secret aim of the old alchemists had been to transmute the base metal into gold.

And we know how, thanks to modern science, gross solid matter now appears before our eyes in its true form of electricity and light; but it remains matter all the same in spite of its possessing the properties of light and electricity. If we will probe a little deeper into its secrets, matter acquires the attributes of consciousness, but even then it may still remain matter. Materiality need not abolish itself in order to become consciousness. The spiritual world too need not transcend matter; the establishment of the spirit will not mean the extinction of the material world in a final dissolution.

This twofold movement, this dual line of ascent and descent, carries forward the entire realisation, including in it man on earth as a collectivity as well as all the parts of creation, through an integrated harmony, not through any inescapable and huge conflict and destruction and dissolution.

As the Vedic Rishis would say, Agni the Mystic Fire aspires to the heights, its flames continue to rise upwards. It purifies and brightens and adds keenness and strength to the consciousness and bears it upward through level after higher level until it reaches a proximity to and even an identity with the Supreme, in the very home of the gods. But Agni has an assistant and counterpart in Parjanya, the Rain-god. The work of this godhead is to help in the descent, the bringing down of the waters of heaven, as in a downpour of rain. To establish here on this earth what has risen to the heights and exists there is the supreme and integral achievement.

The spiritualised body of man will not be simply a spiritual consciousness. It will be all-conscious no doubt, and yet its substance will still be matter. To prepare this new earth-matter will be the novel alchemy of the new age.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

*(Translated by Sanat K. Banerji from the original Bengali)*
LIFE IN SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM—OUR WAY OF SADHANA

(We are publishing a series of chapters which will be added to the second edition of the author’s Life in Sri Aurobindo Ashram, which has had a very appreciative reception both in India and in foreign countries.)

“Nameless austere ascetics without home,
Abandoning speech and motion and desire,
Aloof from creatures sat absorbed alone”.

This is not our way.

“We have set out to conquer all ourselves and the world for God, ...here, in life, on earth, in the body,—ihaiva, as the Upanishad insists—we have to unveil the Godhead; here we must make its transcendent greatness, light and sweetness real to our consciousness, here possess and, as far as may be, express it.”

Sri Aurobindo

To fulfil this aim, difficult beyond conception, has been chosen by Sri Aurobindo as the ultimate goal of his Yoga and of his Ashram. To work out this ideal is our Sadhana.

My attempt is to show how the ideal is taking shape in the Ashram.

It is necessary to point out at the very outset that no one here is keen on personal salvation or mukti. The whole stress is upon service to the Divine, upon being an instrument in the hands of the Mother and ushering in an era of Divine Rule on earth. This cannot be done with life as we live it, life must be transformed.

For that purpose Sadhana must come down into the lower level of the being. There must be a change of the “lower personality”. Meditation alone cannot make for transformation. It cannot bring about a change of the external consciousness. To do that, Sadhana through works, though very difficult, is a “must”.

Hundreds of commentaries are there on the gospel of Karmayoga. Still there is no end to troubles in applying even a single couplet of the Gita to daily life. In doing Yoga through works one must, at every step, be prepared to face a failure which gives rise to the question whether all that is said in the Gita is a mere dream.

I do not claim to give anything new save what I have gleaned from the Mother’s and the Master’s writings. I shall touch in my own way and in the dim light of my knowledge on the points and facts that have come my way.

1 Savitri, Book IV Canto 4.
One thing perhaps needs special mention. It is very difficult to judge from outside how one is faring in the inner battle with his own nature. Who can say from a surface reading how the Mother is helping one's evolution in Sadhana?

Furthermore, my purpose is not to raise anybody in the estimation of others, far less cry anybody down but simply show him, as can be seen from the surface, as a unit in the collectivity. Only those names have been disclosed here and there that could form part of the history.

A German Professor who was in the Ashram in 1959 and stayed with us for four months said, “Well, I am not new to the Ashram. I have been a Sadhak, as you are, for the last 16 years though away from here. I have come here to know how the Supermind is working and how things are taking shape. I want to learn much more than I have learnt from books.”

To a query about his impression of the Ashram he said, “The Ashram is a comprehensive institution. It is very difficult to form an idea about it in a day. Every day a new vista opens before the eyes. The more you move about, meet with people, know about the Ashram’s manifold activities, the more you see that the opinion you had formed was quite different from what you think now.”

In the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo the one essential is self-surrender. But its expression differs from person to person. Sri Aurobindo did not wish to cast everyone in the same mould. He used to direct each sadhak according to his individual inner capacities and tendencies.

That is why we find here no indoctrination, no vows, no initiation, no element of compulsion, no item of a programme, be it Pranam, meditation or anything else, where attendance is demanded. For, in the words of the Master, “We are not a party or a church or religion seeking adherents or proselytes.”

There is a freedom even to make mistakes. Even if the Mother and the Master have come to know of our taking a false step, they have very rarely interfered, unless it affected the discipline of the Ashram or the matter was referred to them. In this respect their patience is inexhaustible. We are expected to learn by experience and be conscious of our shortcomings.

In the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo, opening, surrender, consciousness are the key words. Let us begin with the first two. Consciousness is such a vast subject and Sri Aurobindo’s conception is so different from that of other Yogas and philosophies that the reader is advised to go to the original exposition in Sri Aurobindo’s works.

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1 “No child of mine can be a zero; in fact, each one of my children has his or her place and special mission to fulfil. I love them all equally and do for each what is truly needed for his or her welfare and progress, without any preference or partiality.” The Mother (White Roses, p 2).

2 Letters of Sri Aurobindo, Second Series, p. 479.
To enter into the Integral Yoga the first need is opening—"opening to the Divine Influence," to the inner working of the Mother. Without this one may spend years in Sadhana, work twenty hours a day, yet not catch a glimpse of the glory of spirituality.

We do not say this in a vainglorious spirit. Those into whom the Mother has infused something of her consciousness will testify as to how her daily acts of Grace reveal themselves in their lives. But to open a door one must turn the key in the right way. Wrong turning will be sheer waste of time and energy.

There are two grades of the Mother's disciples. Those who have dedicated their all to the service of the Divine and are trying to live the ideals set forth by the Master. These are the people who have made the Ashram the home of their souls.

The others are those who, though living outside, keep themselves in touch with the Mother and try to do Sadhana according to their capacity. Many of these are ardent followers of Sri Aurobindo. They are in no way less devoted to the cause for which the Ashram stands and no less important in the eyes of the Mother. All depends upon the opening and the readiness of the ādār. Far and near do not count in the least. The following may help to form an idea:

N, a businessman, felt at the very first Darshan something emanating from Sri Aurobindo and passing into him. Slowly his connection with the Mother grew so intimate that his devotion to the cause of the Ashram became an example for others to follow. His life became a joyous service to the Divine. He had probably developed a vision of working which helped him to look ahead and act at the right moment.

When someone dies in the Ashram, generally a halt is made in front of Sri Aurobindo's room by the vehicle carrying the body to the cremation grounds. After N's death, when his body reached the place, a sadhak saw Sri Aurobindo in a vision extending his gracious hand and blessing his body.

A visitor in Government service, but leading a very simple and celibate life, explained in clear terms how at every crucial moment the Grace came to his help and saved him from dangerous pitfalls.

X's connection with the Ashram began in 1947. Slowly his relation with the Mother grew so close that one could see in his life a free play of the Mother's Grace almost with open eyes. When an offer of the headship of an Association was made to him, he hesitated very much to accept it. Then he was told, "Don't fear, I shall be with you."

He had the frankness to admit that he neither deserved the honour, nor had the ability or resources to compete with far more noted persons in the field and yet the post was given to him.

His whole being radiated with gratitude to the one who gave him everything—name, fame, money, honour and happiness.
He said: "In business also I have not to labour much. Time and again I have seen things arrange themselves as if some secret hand were doing everything long before I became conscious of it. I become aware of it when it takes a physical form. That's why I run to the Mother like a child whenever there's a push from within. I make no programme, seek no permission, simply rush to the One who has brought so much Light to the Earth!

"What joy in sitting at her feet! What sweetness her smiles infuse into the being! Can it be described, tell me, can it be conveyed through words?"

Here is an instance of one whose heart speaks, not his mind. He only can feel the Grace whom the Grace chooses. How and why the Grace chooses nobody can say. It has a law of its own.

"...There are conditions to fulfil; a great purity must be there and a great intensity in self-giving, and that absolute trust in the supreme wisdom of the Divine Grace which knows better than us what is truly good for ourselves. If the aspiration is offered to that and the offering is made truly with enough intensity, the result will be marvellous."

"Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh." He went on:

"Y, through whom I came, says, 'You have free access to the Mother, because you are rich; you have money. Only a fool can say so. Who gave the money to me? What was I? And how far can my money go to help her whose work is so immense and daily grows and grows? Who but she has the might to bear the Himalayan burden of the Ashram? Our money—our offering—what small things they must always be!"

"It is a pity that staying here for a number of years, Y could yet not understand the Mother in the least and had to leave the Ashram after being hit by a trifle.' For years he has been trying in vain for permission to return.

"Experience has now taught him what Power is there in the Mother and he has been worshipping that Power, installing it in a temple at a centre in Benaras."

There runs a feeling among the members of his Association that X is a man of noble character, honest in his dealings, sincere at heart and of a sweet temperament. No wonder he was chosen for the second term.

Is this not an example of an ordinary life blooming by the very touch of spirituality into something unimagined? High or low, all are equal to the Divine. Success or failure depends largely on our degree of receptivity. The sky showers its blessings on all alike; but if the mouth of the pitcher is kept closed, can even a drop enter it?

Another contrast:

S, connected with the Ashram for more than two decades, has been instrumental in bringing several people into touch with the Mother's Light. Only God knows why he could never succeed in life. Yet nothing could shake his devotion.

T, a man of scanty means, is the member of a Centre started by S. T says, "A

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1 The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo, Part IX, p 33
call from the heart and the response is there. This has been my repeated experience.”

Asked what had earned for him this faith, he gave the pointed answer, “Success.” He added, “The greater the success, the greater grew my faith.” Now what brought him success? The answer can only be “Opening”.

The Mother hardly knows him by name. When something about him was referred to her, she inquired, “Who is he?” Only once in a year or two he pays a casual visit to the Ashram. No doubt, the Divine’s gift of wealth is not the ultimate blessing. It can only aid some on the way. All will have to do Yoga for liberation, even “it takes 10,000 years.”

The following may help one to gather some hint about the Mother and the Master’s workings:

“The Mother or myself send a force. If there is no opening, the force may be thrown back or returned (unless we put a great force which is not always advisable to do) as from an obstruction or resistance. If there is some openness, the result may be partial or slow; if there is some openness or receptivity, the result may be immediate. Of course there are things that cannot be removed all at once, being an old part of the nature, but with receptivity these also can be more effectively and rapidly dealt with. Some people are so open that even by writing they get free before the note-book or letter reaches us.”

A roving hermit had been practising yoga for years in the mountainous regions of Tibet, living on what came of itself to him, strictly sticking to his resolve not to ask anyone anything. One day a Tibetan brought him something wrapped in a piece torn out of a periodical—The Illustrated Weekly of India. His eyes fell on an article on Sri Aurobindo. On reading it his inner being got stirred to such an extent that he secured some of Sri Aurobindo’s books by post with the help of someone.

Going through them, he felt: “Such a great Yogi was here on earth and I was born at this time yet I could not happen to see him even once. How unfortunate was I! I remained roaming in the ranges of the Himalayas in search of a Guru—while such a great Guru—Truth personified—was there in this world of hate and horror.”

Then something dawned on him from above and he felt: “He has not gone, he has not left us, the Mother tells us he has not left the earth.”

This kindled in him an intense desire to visit Pondicherry and he came down to the plains. But how to reach there?

“If it is the will of God that I should touch the sacred soil of Pondicherry, He will do everything for me,” he said to himself.

And his heart’s call did not fail to reach the ears of the One whom he yearned to see.

At Hazaribag a Behari gentleman asked him “Where do you intend to go, Swamiji?”

“To Pondicherry.”

And he bought him a ticket.

This was in 1961.
The Divine again provided for his visit to Pondicherry in 1966. 
In order to know whether he was a Telugu, a Tamil or a Behari, I asked him what his native place was.

"India," pat came his answer.
To elicit from him something more I inquired what his mother tongue was.

"Why mother-tongue? Ask my national language and I say, 'Hindi.'"

How happy it would be for India if all her children had such a broad outlook. It would be easy to wipe out her tears then.

After a month's stay in the Ashram he felt that in order to get into the inner sadhana of the Ashram he must take up some work. Accordingly some work was given to him which he took up with all his heart.

An ordinary man remembers God, say, for five minutes and feels that his day's debt to God is paid. He does not feel the need to spare even a day in a year for the Divine.

Almost similar is the case with men of religious tendencies. A priest in our family took a daily bath in the Ganges all his life but there was no change in his ways.

Many of those who are real seekers of truth fail to progress for lack of proper guidance. An acquaintance of mine spent thirty years in sadhana, living on very restricted meals and reciting the whole of the Gita daily for years.

Destiny drew him here, but during his first visit for eighteen days he did not feel even a touch of the Spirit. Back home, he wondered why he returned empty.

"You had the egoistic feeling that you had been doing sadhana for thirty years. That is why you have come empty," answered a soft voice from within.

One day in his native place he had the vision that the Mother was walking in his heart. On his fourth visit he was allowed to stay on. On his next birthday, the Mother sent him word that she was pleased with his progress.

Thus all depends here upon opening and receptivity. If one has an opening and learns to scrutinise his own movements, one can perceive that what had not been possible a year earlier has come within the domain of possibility.

"The Divine gives the fruit not by the measure of the sadhana but by the measure of the soul's sincerity and its aspiration."

(To be continued)

NARAYAN PRASAD
TRANSLATIONS FROM IQBAL

(Continued from the issue of January, 1967)

III. From Bal-e-Jibreel (Contd.)

32. The ascetic who against bitter times complains
    The grain of the beggar in him yet retains!

33. No man has held the morrow or yesterday:
    Only today has come with thee to stay!

34. A corpse disgorged by some grave is the peasant we meet,
    Who has left underground his rotten winding-sheet!

35. Love veiled and Beauty too! wherefore are both concealed?
    Either unveil Thyself or let me be revealed.

36. From the garden of Paradise why was I bidden abroad?
    — World-work is a long-drawn affair, now wait for me, my God!

37. Dive only and realize Life's truth the deeps enshrine:
    Be thy own self if thou hast chosen not to be Mine.

38. Separation sweeter beats in the heart with pangs afire,
    For distance whets the seeking, but in union dies desire!

39. I will not trace with the learned where first was I launched into being—
    Nay, where it's finally rounded possesses all my seeing.

40. Lift higher and higher the self till it gains the pinnacle
    Where before each writ of Fate God seeks to know thy will!

41. What boldness informs this verse, on the mosque-arch oddly inscribed:
    'Prostrating, fools, they fell when the time for action arrived.'
42. When God in His judgement gave the Mulla paradise—

... ... ... ... ... ... ... 

I pleaded: ‘Mighty Lord, my impudence pardon please,
There fairies, wine, lush fields will find him ill at ease!’

43. To this creature dispute and debate as a holy dower was given—
But synagogue, church, or mosque—alas, there is none in heaven!

44. Behind this flux and grind lies, wise man, thy release—
For a world is there where Time moves not and all is peace!

45. Thousands of God-lovers you find in the forests roaming abroad,
I would be the devotee of one who loves the devotees of God!

46. The exploits of man here daze the stars and quite alarmed they brood:
Shall this fallen scion now mount to heaven in full-moon magnitude?

47. Philosopher, no sign of the goal didst thou reveal to me—
But thou hast neither trod nor watched the way, why question thee?

48. The mystic, saint and thinker all the manifest only adore:
Who really knows that the light of God is His concealment’s core?

49. In the solitudes of Thy wilderness in vain I sought to find
Such madness as could teach the skill of masterly work to the mind!

50. Neither this world nor the world beyond do Thy free lovers cherish,
For there one is doomed to live forever and here one has to perish!

51. What rare possession are my pangs of fiery aspiration!
Not even to gain God-glory I would lose this privilege of adoration!

(To be continued)

Naresh
HINDI TRANSLATION OF SRI AUROBINDO'S
SAVITRI

A LETTER FROM SWAMI ANIRVAN TO SRIMATI "KOKILA" VIDYAVATI

(Recently the well-known poetess "Kokila" Vidyavati brought out a translation of Savitri into Hindi verse. It was sent to qualified critics for a frank opinion. Swami Anirvan, with high literary and philosophical qualifications besides spiritual ones, has sent an appreciative letter which we are reproducing below. We may remember that he has made a Bengali translation of Sri Aurobindo's The Life Divine, which won a high compliment from the Master himself. Before reading the letter one may look at some words the poetess has sent to the Editor of Mother India:

"It was only my love for Savitri that impelled me to sing it endlessly to get the fullest joy of life in all its aspects. The same love inspired me to try translating it into my own language, Hindi. It was not my capacity but my great desire to offer my labour to the Master and the Mother, that made me dare such a task. I had wished that every year a book of about 100 pages be published on the August Darshan. Last year the first book came out. I felt hesitant to inform people of it. But by the Mother’s Grace it had a response beyond my expectations. Many letters poured in. Among them my eyes searched for some person of authority, adept in both English and Hindi poetry, who could gauge the difficulty of translating an Epic which reaches beyond our mind of thought to pure spiritual vision and experience. The letter of Swami Anirvan at once struck me as the best review I could hope for. I am sending it to you to do what you like with it. My work is only an attempt to build a bridge for a passage to the beauty and delight of the original. It is no more than a kachha (bamboo) structure, but I hope Hindi readers will be able to go over it to the other side and stand before the true Magnificence. I trust to the Divine Grace to help me always."

Haimavati
P.O. Narendrapur,
24 Pargana (W.B.)
16.12.66

My dear Vidyavati,

At last I have found some time to look through your book and give my opinion on it. I have carefully read the first few pages, comparing it with the original and then turned over some pages here and there. I can confidently say, your translation of the great epic has been a laudable achievement. You have done well by being literally faithful to the original. It will be a great incentive for the reader to plunge into
the original whose grandeur is unsurpassable. I am glad to notice that you have di-
ligently searched for what Sri Aurobindo used to call the 'inevitable word' in your
translation and in most cases you have been able to hit it. I have also marked that your
style has become plastic and spontaneous as you have progressed with your work. I
do hope you will be saturated with the Spirit of Savitri as you go on with your trans-
lation and lose yourself in her as you come to the end of it.

I have nothing but admiration for your tapasya.

With best wishes,

Ever yours

ANIRVAN
Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

NINTH SEMINAR

27th November 1966

The ninth Seminar of the New Age Association was held on the 27th November 1966. The subject approved by the Mother was:

*What is true love and how to find it?*

The following five members participated as speakers:

Baren Ghosh, Brajkishore, Romen, Rose and Shobha.

The Seminar was held in the New Hall of the Centre of Education from 8.30 to 10 a.m.

At the commencement a short piece of the Mother's recorded music was played. Then Kishor Gandhi, the Chairman of the Seminar, made the following introductory speech:

*Friends,*

*Love is one of the most perplexing problems of life with which everyone has to contend and find a solution. But that the solution is not easy to find is evident from the fact that there is hardly any sphere of human life in which there is greater blindness and folly than in that of love. No wonder therefore that the Mother says: “In the name of love the worst crimes have been perpetrated, the wildest follies committed.”*¹

*And yet, according to the Mother, love is a power of supreme value if its true form is discovered and made effective in life. What is that true form?*

*In our ordinary human experience love takes the form of physical passion or vital attachment or sentiment of the heart or affinity of the mind. But these are all deformations of true love because fundamentally they are egoistic and self-seeking in their character. But love in its true form is never an egoistic movement of self-satisfaction.*

¹ *Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education (Second Impression)*, p. 119

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Its intrinsic impulse is a self-giving, total and unreserved. True love is entirely motiveless; it loves for love's sake alone without any demand or expectation of a return. It does not bargain or claim anything; it simply gives itself with total abandon. That is why its effect is to liberate from the narrow confines of the ego, to widen and enlarge the consciousness, to bring a great surge of light and joy and elation in life.

For love in its origin is not an individual movement, but a universal and eternal force which manifests through the individual according to his receptivity and capacity. Love in its essence is the supreme power of Divine Oneness and Ananda which has created the universe and forever sustains and governs it. It is also the Power of Divine Unity which has plunged itself into the darkness and chaos of the Inconscience in order to bring the separated creation stage by stage back to its divine origin. Without that great holocaust of Divine Love this blind and sorrow-stricken creation in the ignorance would not have felt the impulsion to seek its divine origin and find its deliverance and fulfilment in the supreme Ananda of oneness with the Divine.

This secret impulsion of divine love is there in all creation, even in material objects and in plants and in animals. In human beings, when it is able to awaken in its purity, it takes the form of psychic love. But unfortunately it rarely gets an opportunity to emerge in its purity because the human heart is mostly governed by egoistic vital desire and passion which deform, corrupt and falsify the true movement of psychic love.

If then we have to find true love it can only be done by rejecting these wrong movements of vital egoistic desire and liberating the pure passion of psychic love which normally remains buried under them or is compelled to get mixed with their turbid contents.

This is not to say that vital love is always impure and false and therefore it has to be entirely rejected if true psychic love is to be found. Vital love in itself is not necessarily false and impure; it becomes so when it is usurped by the ego and acts as an instrument for its selfish ends. But it can as well become an instrument of the true psychic love and when it does so it becomes an intensely powerful means for manifesting the psychic and divine love in human life. It brings into psychic love a flaming ardour of pure passion and rich fullness of dynamic force which are indispensable elements for the integral manifestation of the Divine Love in life.

We must therefore not say that only the psychic love is true and the vital love is false but that there is also a true vital love (as there is a true physical love and a true mental love) which is a necessary part of the integral expression of love in life. We have therefore not to reject the vital love in itself but only the deformations and limitations imposed upon it when the ego makes it a means of satisfying its self-seeking propensities. Released from the grip of the ego and converted by the psychic urge it can be restored to its original nature and can play its proper role in the total expression of love.

But this can only happen if our human love is directly turned towards the Divine. For in any human relationship, however noble and pure, love cannot find the fulfilment of its inherent urge, its deepest longing. As the Mother says: "...however
beautiful and pure it [love between human beings] may be, it creates a kind of short

circuit and cuts the direct connection with the Divine.”

Therefore he who aspires to find true love must turn to the Divine alone, for it is only in the personal relation with
the Divine that love in its pristine purity could be found.

According to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, Love is the only power which can
ultimately cure all the pain and suffering of the world. All suffering and pain is at its
root due to separation from the Divine Therefore it can be decisively cured only
by union with the Divine. Love is the greatest power of union and so ultimately love
alone can end all pain and suffering by healing the gulf of separation from the Divine.
In the most poignant words of the Mother: “Love alone can put an end to the suffer­
ing of the world; the ineffable joys of love in its essence can alone sweep from the
universe the burning pain of separation For only in the ecstasy of supreme union
can creation find its reason of existence and its fulfilment.”

Therefore Love is the
Redeemer, the Saviour, the Victor.

And it is something still more It is the ultimate object, the final perfection, the
absolute fulfilment of life which the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo seeks to achieve.
The establishment of the Supramental Truth upon earth is the necessary support and
foundation of the manifestation of the Divine Love, for without that support and
foundation even the Divine Love manifesting in the world cannot be secure against
being sullied and degraded by the unregenerate egoistic nature of man. The mani­
manifestation of the Supramental Truth is therefore the precursor of the advent of Divine
Love upon earth. We may say that it is the penultimate object of Sri Aurobindo’s
yoga. The ultimate, the supreme object is the reign of Divine Love and Ananda
upon earth. As He himself has said: “To bring the Divine Love and Beauty and
Ananda into the world is, indeed, the whole crown and essence of our yoga. But it
has always seemed to me impossible unless there comes as its support and foundation
Otherwise Love itself blinded by the confusions of this present consciousness may
stumble in its human receptacles and, even otherwise, may find itself unrecognised,
rejected or rapidly degenerating and lost in the frailty of man’s inferior nature.”

To sum up we may say that Love is not only the Origin and the Cause of the
universe, it is also the Redeemer and the Saviour, the Victor and the Transfigurer of
life and its ultimate goal and supreme perfection.

1 Ibid., p. 123

2 Ibid., p. 124.

3 On Yoga II, Tome One, p. 723
What I have said is only a brief introduction to this subject of perennial interest and boundless scope. The five speakers who will follow me will tell you more about it.

After they have finished, I shall read out to you the Mother's own answer which She has specially written on the subject. Then in conclusion I shall read a few short extracts from Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's works pertaining to the subject. The Mother herself has read them and said that they are very good.

After this the five speakers were called one by one to deliver their speeches. These speeches are given below.

WHAT IS TRUE LOVE AND HOW TO FIND IT?

I

"What is true love?" is the question put before us in this Seminar. Let me answer it with the Mother's own words: "One can love truly only by becoming divine." So long as we are in the human consciousness, limited by our ego and selfishness, we cannot love truly. True love is deep, intense, calm, bottomless like the nether ocean. It is all-powerful, self-existent, egoless and free. I imagine a true lover to be one who is a friend, a helper on the way. He is the saviour in our danger, a solace in our distress. He is the defender from all enemies, a fighter who risks his own life in order to save his beloved. He acts as an inspiration in the field of creation. He is like the vibrant chords of music that soothe the heart in sorrow and despair. A true lover is the charioteer who leads us with unaltering steps on the sunlit path. His compassionate hands are ever outstretched to embrace us whether we be a monarch or a ragged beggar. But who is capable of such a love except the Divine Himself whose infinite love can sacrifice even his godhead in order to uplift humanity from the cycle of death and birth? Where can we find such an incomparable example of true love except in these immortal lines of the Master:

My gaping wounds are a thousand and one
And the Titan kings assail,
But I cannot rest till my task is done
And wrought the eternal will.¹

Or again,

I have laboured and suffered in Matter's night
To bring the fire to man;

But the hate of hell and human spite
   Are my meed since the world began.¹

Here again is the example of the unfathomable depth of love, the ardent flawless self-giving of Radha, the personification of the absolute love for the Divine, whose each part and parcel cries out with this supreme anthem:

"Thine are all my thoughts, all my emotions, all the sentiments of my heart, all my sensations, all the movements of my life, each cell of my body, each drop of my blood. I am absolutely and altogether Thine, Thine without reserve. What thou wilt of me, that I shall be. Whether Thou choosest for me life or death, happiness or sorrow, pleasure or suffering, all that comes to me from Thee will be welcome."²

But how to find true love? How to realise it in our life? It is only by establishing a contact with the psychic and remaining in constant unison with it that we can dream of realising true love.

SHOBHA

¹ Sri Aurobindo, “A God’s Labour”, Poems Past and Present
² The Mother, “Radha’s Prayer”
1. Free Progress and Discipline

Talking to visiting educators, teachers and those interested in education over the past month gives one a definite impression that discipline is uppermost in their minds. It is, however, precisely at such a time that one should be careful not to be so engrossed in this most pertinent problem as to lose sight of the more important problem and need of educating. Should not schools be the last place in our cultural life in which to enforce discipline? Surely we have learnt by now that violence begets violence, and that any attempt to enforce discipline on today's students, rather than teach it to them, is only going to aggravate instead of alleviating the pressure of revolt. Is it not possible to try out in certain Experimental Centres of Education a complete volte face and release all pressures of domination, take away the compartments of learning and the traditional teaching by snippets so that the students might have a reasonable chance of finding the necessity for their own self-discipline? It is almost an academic superstition that to make a transition from one method of teaching to another can only end in the loss of both. This is the kind of over-simple syllogism which many quite learned people seem to fall for. It is true that the second law of thermodynamics states that "transition from one state to another always entails loss of energy"—but that is a law of thermodynamics not a law of human evolution.

Free Progress, such as that practised through the Dalton Plan in England and many other such efforts tried in almost all countries where education has been a primary concern of progressive communities, has taken many forms from one extreme to the other. But it has always been usually small isolated experiments where the courage of private enterprise has tried to transcend the rigid form of government-sponsored schools. Yet these isolated schools still persist in every country where freedom of expression is possible—because it is yet an aspiration in man that Free Progress alone will lead to true individual perfection? Free Progress—where the teacher is not a jug to fill up a mug, nor is he a potter to fashion a vase unto his own image, but is rather a gardener who feeds and waters, tends and cares for the plants of his garden with love and kindness and, where necessary, guides their eager branches towards the light. Free Progress means free progress to learn from within where time and liberty of action are the spontaneity of creativity. Where the child is free to search
and discover his own way of doing in his own time, not at the command of the bell or the
clock. Where the class is student-activated instead of teacher-dominated. Where
the child is given the opportunity to discover the joy of learning. Where the atmos-
phere stimulates the curiosity to know without fear or apprehension and the child
walks from one climate of learning to another with a growing sense of achievement
and inner fulfilment.

For such an ideal state of education the teacher has to have infinite patience
and a dedication to the ideal but it is a state of education where enforced discipline
is no longer necessary because the student is absorbed in and preoccupied with
the work and its perfection, his interest is so captured as to bring about a condition
of self-disciplined freedom of work.

2. The Time for Education

Many parents, as well as educationists in general at times, become so keen
that children should be "well educated" that they completely lose sight of one fact:
children also have to grow and they must be given the freedom in which to grow
—physically, emotionally and mentally. Robert M. Hutchins, who wrote Great
Books The Foundation of a Liberal Education, says: "Childhood and Youth are no
time to get education. They are the time to get ready to get an education." When one
fully appreciates that any truly great work is understood only when one has matured
into the consciousness of the work, its scope and depth of greatness, then one begins
to enter into a liberal education, an education which goes on to end only with
life itself. The most we can hope for in the growing physical, vital and mental cha­
tic periods of our childhood is that we shall find a love of learning and be guided
on to the right path, the path of realizing our human and spiritual possibilities
through the joy of discovery, whether it be physical endeavour, aesthetic appreciation
or intellectual accomplishment. It is the teacher’s job to establish the climate of
learning and the love for learning. The teacher, mainly through example, can promote
and communicate the satisfaction of industry, the freedom and delight of curiosity
and respect for individual effort in its own time. The great issues can be left for
grown minds to deal with, they should not encompass the freedom of youth and
childhood where to enforce them upon immature minds might endanger the love
and joy of learning so precious in later life. I suggest that since the last world war
children have been so pressurized into an adult’s idea of “better learning for our
modern needs” that we are now reaping the harvest of unnatural demand in the
shape of today’s student unrest, for this is no local revolt but a world-embracing
surge of feeling against the present inadequacies in education in a world which
is speeding at a rate much too fast for out-of-date policies, syllabi, administration
and methods of teaching. Such inadequacies of course stem from the so often
antiquated minds in government authority who have the control over most of the
country’s educational machinery. This unrealistic state of affairs plus the over­
emphasis on science has brought us to the position where we have come to lead lives
comparatively rich in material comforts and miserably poor in moral, intellectual and spiritual accomplishment.

3. Material Needs and Value in Education

In the developing countries it is doubtful whether the few material additions of modern life are to be counted as assets; in any case they can seldom be considered as an enrichment. One is reminded of the case of a certain Pacific Island being used for the filming of Mutiny on the Bounty. The natives were pressed into serving as extras in the film and they became so affluent overnight that they went on a buying spree, to the extent of all getting themselves motor-scooters. When the least thing went wrong with the machines or even when they ran out of petrol they were, quite happily, abandoned against a tree, their owners soon forgetting about them for other immediate pleasures. In consequence, months later, visiting tourists found the island to be festooned with rusty motor-scooters abandoned at intervals all round the coastal road of the island.

In India we could learn much from the psychology of such a lesson if applied to education. In most affluent countries and societies expensive educational aids are often in use at times and in situations where they cannot be appreciated by the students nor are they apposite to the needs of the educational level of intelligence. The fault often lies with the authority who sanctions the buying—the teacher is seldom consulted and, if he is, is expected to accept willy-nilly anything which adds to the 'prestige' of the school. If he refused, the administrators would cry: "There is so much money in the grant, surely we should be able to find a way of spending it!" They then proceed to go on a spending spree that has rarely anything to do with the needs of the students or the requirements of a more creative education.

4. Quo Vadis?

When the Arizona Prescott College opened its four-year liberal arts school at the end of last year it gave notice that there would be no education courses. The President Ronald C. Nairn explained that they would love to teach education if they could find anyone who knew anything about it. "Thus would be the greatest breakthrough since the time of the Greeks," he said.

5. Creative Work for the Gifted

With the tendency in most schools to idealise the average it so often happens that the gifted student is deliberately ignored as an embarrassment and when teachers do begin to provide for varying ability levels, they ordinarily start with those students who have had difficulty in maintaining the average learning rate. Administrative regroupings are of little avail unless they actually lead to more stimulating activities in the classroom. There are perhaps more opportunities in the language arts than in most other subjects. Such students who are naturally ahead of the average could quite well deal with a book review rather than an essay on ducks down on the farm.
A routine exercise in boredom can be transformed into an intellectually stimulating experience when we realise the gifted student's ability to think for himself and then challenge him to use those abilities. Perhaps the private reading of the students could very well be brought into the class work to great advantage. For example, when a class is reading for general comprehension, the gifted students may go beyond this stage to analysing the behaviour patterns of the leading characters. Or to enrich and build vocabulary students can make their own individual card files, noting their vocabulary contacts in a variety of language experiences.

Mathematics can be one of the most boring subjects to the gifted student. Elementary arithmetic can be easily stimulated if the teacher introduces the history of numbers into the lesson so as to capture the imaginative interest of the child. The last word to be said on this important aspect of teaching is always the same: the vitality of the programme, whether it be science, maths or language skills, depends on the initiative and creativity of the teacher. A gifted child is likely to read avidly but if we neglect to provide for him, he may waste his time on books of little worth.

6. Thought of the Month

A teaching can be profitable only if it is perfectly sincere, and that means if it is lived at the moment when it is given. Words often repeated, thoughts often expressed cannot be any longer sincere.

The Mother—Words of the Mother

Norman C. Dowsett