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“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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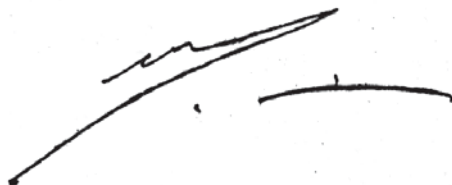
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August 15

A Significant Date

Sri Aurobindo is
an emanation of the
Supreme who came on
earth to announce the
manifestation of the New
race and a new world: the
Supramental

Let us prepare
for it in all sincerity
and eagerness.



1894

A Letter of Sri Aurobindo to His Sister

Baroda Camp
25th August, 1894

My dear Saro,

I got your letter the day before yesterday. I have been trying hard to write to you for the last three weeks, but have hitherto failed. Today I am making a huge effort and hope to put the letter in the post before nightfall. As I am now invigorated by three days' leave, I almost think I shall succeed.

It will be, I fear, quite impossible to come to you again so early as the Puja, though if I only could, I should start tomorrow. Neither my affairs, nor my finances will admit of it. Indeed it was a great mistake for me to go at all; for it has made Baroda quite intolerable to me. There is an old story about Judas Iscariot, which suits me down to the ground. Judas, after betraying Christ, hanged himself and went to Hell where he was honoured with the hottest oven in the whole establishment. Here he must burn for ever and ever; but in his life he had done one kind act and for this they permitted him by special mercy of God to cool himself for an hour every Christmas on an iceberg in the North Pole. Now this has always seemed to me not mercy, but a peculiar refinement of cruelty. For how could Hell fail to be ten times more Hell to the poor wretch after the delicious coolness of his iceberg? I do not know for what enormous crime I have been condemned to Baroda, but my case is just parallel. Since my pleasant sojourn with you at Baidyanath, Baroda seems a hundred times more Baroda.

I dare say Beno may write to you three or four days before he leaves England. But you must think yourself lucky if he does as much as that. Most likely the first you hear of him will be a telegram from Calcutta. Certainly he has not written to me. I never expected and should be afraid to get a letter. It would be such a shocking surprise that I should certainly be able to do nothing but roll on the floor and gasp for breath for the next two or three hours. No, the favours of the Gods are too awful to be coveted. I dare say he will have energy enough to hand over your letter to Mano as they must be seeing each other almost daily. You must give Mano a little time before he answers you. He too is Beno's brother. Please let me have Beno's address as I don't know where to send a letter I have ready for him. Will you also let me have the name of Bari's English Composition Book and its compiler? I want such a book badly, as this will be useful for me not only in Bengalee but in Gujerati. There are no convenient books like that here.

You say in your letter "all here are quite well"; yet in the very next sentence I

read “Bari has an attack of fever”. Do you mean then that Bari is nobody? Poor Bari! That he should be excluded from the list of human beings is only right and proper, but it is a little hard that he should be denied existence altogether. I hope it is only a slight attack. I am quite well. I have brought a fund of health with me from Bengal, which, I hope it will take me some time to exhaust; but I have just passed my twenty-second milestone, August 15 last, since my birthday and am beginning to get dreadfully old.

I infer from your letter that you are making great progress in English. I hope you will learn very quickly; I can then write to you quite what I want to say and just in the way I want to say it. I feel some difficulty in doing that now and I don’t know whether you will understand it.

With love,

Your affectionate brother,
Auro

P. S. If you want to understand the new orthography of my name, ask uncle.

(SABCL, Vol. 27, pp. 420-21)

Sri Aurobindo’s work is a unique earth-transformation.

*

Sri Aurobindo incarnated in a human body the supramental consciousness and has not only revealed to us the nature of the path to follow and the method of following it so as to arrive at the goal, but has also by his own personal realisation given us the example; he has provided us with the proof that the thing can be done and the time is now to do it.

(CWM: 13, p. 21)

1902

A Letter of Sri Aurobindo to His Uncle

c/o Rao Bahadur K.B. Jadhava
Near Municipal Office
Baroda
15th August 1902

My dear Boromama,¹

I am sorry to hear from Sarojini² that Mejdada³ has stopped sending mother's allowance and threatens to make the stoppage permanent unless you can improvise a companion to the Goddess of Purulia. This is very characteristic of Mejdada; it may even be described in one word as Manomaniac. Of course he thinks he is stopping your pension and that this will either bring you to reason or effectually punish you. But the main question is, "What is to be done now?" Of course I can send Rs 40 now and so long as I am alone it does not matter very much, but it will be rather a pull when Mrinalini⁴ comes back to Baroda. However even that could be managed well enough with some self-denial and an effective household management. But there is a tale of woe behind.

...But there comes the tale of woe I have spoken of. We have now had three years of scarcity, the first of them being a severe famine. The treasury of the State is well nigh exhausted—a miserable 30 or 40 lakhs is all that remains, and in spite of considerable severity and even cruelty in collection the revenues of the last year amount simply to the tail of the dog without the dog himself. This year there was no rain in Baroda till the first crop withered; after July 5th about 9 inches fell, just sufficient to encourage the cultivators to sow again. Now for want of more rain the second crop is withering away into nothingness. The high wind which has prevented rain still continues, and though there is a vague hope of a downpour after the 15th, one cannot set much store by it. Now in case there should be a severe famine this year, what may happen is something like this; either we shall all be put on half-pay for the next twelve months,—in other words I who can only just manage to live on Rs 360 will have to do it on Rs 180—or the pay will be cut down permanently (or at least for some years) by 25 per cent, in which case I shall rejoice upon Rs 270; or thirdly (and this may Heaven forbid) we shall get our full pay till December and after that live on the munificent amount of nothing a month. In any case it will be impossible to bring mother or even Mrinalini to Baroda. And there is worse behind. The Ajwa reservoir after four years of drought is nearly exhausted. The just-drinkable-if-boiled water in it will last for about a month; the nondrinkable for still two months more. This means that if there is no rain, there will be a furious epidemic of cholera before two months are out and after three months this city, to say nothing of other parts of

the Raj, will be depopulated by a water famine. Of course the old disused wells may be filled up, but that again means cholera *in excelsis*. The only resource will be for the whole State to go and camp out on the banks of the Narmada and the Mahi.

Of course if I get half-pay I shall send Rs 80 to Bengal, hand over Rs 90 as my contribution to the expenses to Khaserao⁵ and keep the remaining 10 for emergencies; but supposing the third course suggested should be pursued? I shall then have to take a third class ticket to Calcutta and solicit an 150 Rs place in Girish Bose's⁶ or Mesho's⁷ College—if Lord Curzon has not abolished both of them by that time. Of course I could sponge upon my father-in-law in Assam, becoming a *ghorjāmāi*⁸ for the time being, but then who would send money to Deoghur and Benares? To such a pass have an all-wise Providence and the blessings of British rule brought us! However let us all hope that it will rain.

Please let me know whether Mejdada has sent any money by the time this reaches you. If he has not, I suppose I must put my shoulder to the burden. And by the way if you have found my MS of verse translations from Sanskrit,⁹ you might send it to me “by return of post”. *The Seeker*¹⁰ had better remain with you instead of casting itself on the perilous waters of the Post-Office.

My health has not been very good recently; that is to say, although I have no recognised doctor's illness, I have developed a new disease of my own, or rather a variation of Madhavrao's¹¹ special brand of nervous debility. I shall patent mine as A.G.'s private and particular. Its chief symptom is a ghastly inability to do any serious work; two hours' work induces a feverish exhaustion and a burning sensation all over the body as well as a pain in the back. I am then useless for the rest of the day. So for some time past I have had to break up the little work I have done into half an hour here, half an hour there and half an hour nowhere. The funny thing is that I keep up a very decent appetite and am equal to any amount of physical exercise that may be demanded of me. In fact if I take care to do nothing but *kasrat*¹² and croquet and walking and rushing about, I keep in a grand state of health,—but an hour's work turns me again into an invalid. This is an extremely awkward state of things and if you know any homoeopathic drug which will remove it, I will shut my eyes and swallow it.

Of course under such circumstances I find it difficult to write letters. I do not know how many letters to Sarojini and my wife I have begun, written two lines and left. The other day, however, there was a promising sign. I began to write a letter to you and actually managed to finish one side and a half. This has encouraged me to try again and I do believe I shall finish this letter today—the second day of writing.¹³ The improvement, which is part of a general abatement of my symptoms, I attribute to a fortnight's determined and cynical laziness. During this time I have been to Ahmedabad—with our cricket eleven and watched them get a jolly good beating; which happy result we celebrated by a gorgeous dinner at the refreshment room. I believe the waiters must have thought us a party of famine-stricken labourers, dressed

up in stolen clothes, perhaps the spoils of massacred famine officers. There were six of us and they brought us a dozen plentiful courses; we ate them all and asked for more. As for the bread we consumed—well, they brought us at first a huge toast-rack with about 20 large pieces of toast. After three minutes there was nothing left except the rack itself; they repeated the allowance with a similar result. Then they gave up the toast as a bad job, and brought in two great plates each with a mountain of bread on it as large as Nandanpahad. After a short while we were howling for more. This time there was a wild-eyed consultation of waiters and after some minutes they reappeared with large trays of bread carried in both hands. This time they conquered. They do charge high prices at the refreshment rooms but I don't think they got much profit out of us that time. Since then I have been once on a picnic to Ajwa with the District Magistrate and Collector of Baroda, the second Judge of the High Court and a still more important and solemn personage whom you may have met under the name of Mr. Anandrao Jadhav.¹⁴ A second picnic was afterwards organized in which some dozen rowdies, not to say Hooligans, of our club—the worst among them, I regret to say, was the father of a large family and a trusted officer of H.H. the Maharajah Gaekwar,—went down to Ajwa and behaved in such a manner that it is a wonder we were not arrested and locked up. On the way my horse broke down and so four of us had to get down and walk three miles in the heat. At the first village we met a cart coming back from Ajwa and in spite of the carters' protests, seized it, turned the bullocks round and started them back—of course with ourselves in the cart. The bullocks at first thought they were going to do the journey at their usual comfortable two miles an hour, but we convinced them of their error with the ends of our umbrellas and they ran. I don't believe bullocks have ever run so fast since the world began. The way the cart jolted, was a wonder; I know the internal arrangements of my stomach were turned upside down at least 300 times a minute. When we got to Ajwa we had to wait an hour for dinner; as a result I was again able to eat ten times my usual allowance. As for the behaviour of those trusted pillars of the Baroda Raj at Ajwa, a veil had better be drawn over it; I believe I was the only quiet and decent person in the company. On the way home the carriage in which my part of the company installed itself, was the scene of a remarkable tussle in which three of the occupants and an attendant cavalier attempted to bind the driver, (the father of a large family aforesaid) with a horse-rope. As we had been ordered to do this by the Collector of Baroda, I thought I might join in the attempt with a safe conscience. *Paterfamilias*¹⁵ threw the reins to Providence and fought—I will say it to his credit—like a Trojan. He scratched me, he bit one of my coadjutors, in both cases drawing blood, he whipped furiously the horse of the assistant cavalier, and when Madhavrao came to his assistance, he rewarded the benevolent intention by whipping at Madhavrao's camel! It was not till we reached the village, after a six-miles conflict, and got him out of the carriage that he submitted to the operation. The wonder was that our carriage did not get upset; indeed the mare stopped several times in order to express her entire disgust at the

improper and turbulent character of these proceedings. For the greater part of the way home she was brooding indignantly over the memory of it and once her feelings so much overcame her that she tried to upset us over the edge of the road, which would have given us a comfortable little fall of three feet. Fortunately she was relieved by this little demonstration and her temper improved wonderfully after it. Finally last night I helped to kidnap Dr. Cooper, the Health Officer of the State, and make him give us a big dinner at the Station with a bottle and a half of sherry to wash it down. The Doctor got so merry over the sherry of which he drank at least two thirds himself, that he ordered a *special-class* dinner for the whole company next Saturday. I don't know what Mrs. Cooper said to him when he got home. All this has had a most beneficial effect upon my health, as the writing of so long a letter shows.

I suppose you have got Anandrao's letter; you ought to value it, for the time he took to write it is, I believe, unequalled in the history of epistolary creation. The writing of it occupied three weeks, fair-copying it another fortnight, writing the address seven days and posting it three days more. You will see from it that there is no need to be anxious about his stomach: it righted itself the moment he got into the train at Deoghur Station. In fact he was quite lively and warlike on the way home. At Jabalpur we were unwise enough not to spread out our bedding on the seats and when we got in again, some upcountry scoundrels had boned Anandrao's berth. After some heated discussion I occupied half of it and put Anandrao on mine. Some Mahomedans, quite inoffensive people, sat at the edge of this, but Anandrao chose to confound them with the intruders and declared war on them. The style of war he adopted was a most characteristically Maratha style. He pretended to go to sleep and began kicking the Mahomedans, in his "sleep" of course, having specially gone to bed with his boots on for the purpose. I had at last to call him off and put him on my half-berth. Here, his legs being the other way, he could not kick; so he spent the night butting the upcountryman with his head; next day he boasted triumphantly to me that he had conquered a foot and half of territory from the intruder by his brilliant plan of campaign. When the Boers rise once more against England, I think we shall have to send them Anandrao as an useful assistant to Generals Botha and Delarcy.

No rain as yet, and it is the 15th of August. My thirtieth birthday, by English computation! How old we are all getting!

Your affectionate nephew
Aurobind Ghose

P.S. There is a wonderful story travelling about Baroda, a story straight out of Fairyland, that I have received Rs 90 promotion. Everybody seems to know all about it except myself. The story goes that a certain officer rejoicing in the name of Damn-you-bhai¹⁶ wanted promotion, so the Maharaja gave him Rs 50. He then pro-

ceeded to remark that as this would give Damn-you-bhai an undue seniority over Mr. Would-you-ah! and Mr. Manoeu(vre)bhai,¹⁷ the said Would-you-ah and Manoeu(vre)bhai must also get Rs 50 each, and “as Mr. Ghose has done good work for me, I give him, Rs 90.” The beautiful logical connection of the last bit with what goes before, dragging Mr. Ghose in from nowhere and everywhere, is so like the Maharaja that the story may possibly be true. If so, it is very satisfactory, as my pay will now be—Famine permitting—Rs 450 a month. It is not quite so good as Mejdada’s job, but it will serve. Rs 250 promotion after ten years’ service does not look very much, but it is better than nothing. At that rate I shall get Rs 700 in 1912 and be drawing about Rs 1000 when I am ready to retire from Baroda either to Bengal or a better world. Glory Halleluja!

Give my love to Sarojini and tell her I shall write to her—if I can. Don’t forget to send the MS of translations. I want to typewrite and send to England.

(*Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research*, April 1977, pp. 68-74)

Notes and References

1. Eldest maternal uncle.
2. Sri Aurobindo’s sister.
3. Second brother, viz. Manmohan.
4. Sri Aurobindo’s wife.
5. A friend of Sri Aurobindo, with whom he was staying in Baroda.
6. A friend of Sri Aurobindo’s father-in-law.
7. Uncle.
8. [A son-in-law living in his father-in-law’s house.]
9. The reference is probably to Sri Aurobindo’s translation from Bhartrihari.
10. A long poem by Sri Aurobindo which has been lost.
11. Khaserao’s brother, a very close friend of Sri Aurobindo.
12. Physical exercise. Sri Aurobindo has written that he used to do such exercises as *baithak* (deep knee-bends) and *dand* (a sort of push-up) at Baroda.
13. I didn’t after all. [Sri Aurobindo’s note]
14. A friend of Sri Aurobindo.
15. In ancient Rome, the father or male head of a household.
16. Perhaps Mr. Dayabhai.
17. Mr. Manubhai.

1906

Two Notes on the Bengal National College

...The Bengal National College and School started on 15 August 1906 on Bowbazar Street, with Aurobindo Ghosh as its principal and Satischandra Mukherji as superintendent.

SUMIT SARKAR

(The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal 1903-08)

*

A full report of the inaugural ceremony of the Bengal National College and School was published in the *Bengalee* on the 15th August, 1906.

The Bengal National College and School started its working career from August 15 at a rented home at 191/1, Bowbazar Street, with Aurobindo Ghose as its first Principal...

...the Bengal National College and School started its work from August 15, 1906, in three broad channels: Literary, Scientific and Technical.

HARIDAS AND UMA MUKHERJEE

(The Origins of the National Education Movement, 1905-1910 [1957 ed.], pp. 83, 85)

Never for an instant vacillate in the belief that the mighty work of change taken up by Sri Aurobindo is going to culminate in success. For that indeed is a fact: there is not a shadow of doubt as to the issue of the work we have in hand.... The transformation is going to be: nothing will ever stop it, nothing will frustrate the decree of the Omnipotent. Cast away all diffidence and weakness and resolve to endure bravely awhile before the great day arrives when the long battle turns into an everlasting victory.

(CWM: 13, p. 21)

1908

An Interview with Sri Aurobindo

(Sri Aurobindo gave this informal interview to a newspaper correspondent in the Alipore Magistrate's Court on 15 August 1908. At that time he and a number of others were being tried in the Alipore Magistrate's Court in what came to be known as the Alipore Bomb Trial.)

ARABINDO GHOSE.
A REMARKABLE INTERVIEW.
BIRTHDAYS AND COINCIDENCES.
DID HE EDIT "BANDE MATARAM"?

("Empire Special")

Great jubilation prevailed among the army of terrorists before and after the trial on Saturday. Notwithstanding the new turn the case has taken with regard to the threatened connection of Birendro Kumar Ghose and the Mozufferpore outrage this elation developed into a hilarious pandemonium after the Court had risen for the day. In consequence of this a regular frequenter at the Court had a unique experience. Shortly after His Honour had left the Bench the person in question made an attempt to get past the long queue of rollicking desperadoes who, as usual, thronged the passage alongside the pleaders' table. To do this successfully on the most ordinary occasions requires the agility of an acrobat, inasmuch as the temporary prisoners' "dock" is only wide enough to hold 2 abreast, and the "boys" are never so happy as when slumbering full length on the floor. Saturday, however, was a field day, and in their ecstasy they frustrated the free passage of the "frequenter" in a most remarkable manner. He had no sooner got amongst the "crowd" than several of the accused clasped him round the neck, while the others absolutely refused to allow him to pass. "What's the trouble?" queried the unfortunate one. "Ask Arabindo," came the rejoinder.

Thus held up Arabindo was accordingly spoken to.

Ever since the commencement of the trial until Saturday Arabindo has preserved a stolid lethargic demeanour.

From the first day's hearing to the thirty-sixth, he has occupied one bench, his eyes immovably fixed on the floor, totally indifferent to the unfolding issues of the case.

The Arabindo of Saturday was, however, quite another being. His personality, hitherto grave and prepossessed, had been metamorphosised into one of sprightliness and sunniness. The cause of all this jollification, as Arabindo explained, was to a

certain extent remarkable. “In the first place,” he explained, “to-day is my birthday; and we are celebrating it as best we can under the circumstances. I was born on the 15th August 1872, and on that anniversary in 1906 the National College opened its doors to teach among other things, the principles of Swadeshism. It was either the day before or the day after my birthday, 1907,” he continued waxing warm with the subject “that I was arrested in connection with the first ‘Bande Mataram’ sedition case. And more remarkable still my birthday is round again to-day and the Magistrate has given a definite assurance that he will commit on the evidence given in this, a case not of sedition but revolution.

“Besides all this my brother Birendro is threatened on my birthday to be charged with abetment of murder in the Mozufferpore affair, besides having to stand his trial for conspiracy. These are what I call a remarkable string of coincidences,” he added with a smile.

“Are we getting tired of this protracted trial you ask? Well, to be candid we are, although we don’t mind it in the least. As a matter of fact it is useless pumping witnesses about my supposed editorship of the ‘Bande Mataram,’ I certainly have edited the ‘Bande Mataram,’ but this I only did on different occasions when Bepin Babu first edited it, and I will state now once and for all I never, never did occupy its editorial chair. I must also deny that I fathered the many brilliant leaders that have appeared in that paper. I certainly did write some of them, but I cannot claim the authorship of the best of them. I wish I could,” he added with a twinkle.

Arabindo’s facetious parting shot to the “frequenter” was: “You can add to those coincidences the fact that I shall be very probably coming back from the Andamans on my birthday next year.”

The “frequenter” left Arabindo squatting on the floor surrounded by his jolly conferees.

The Empire
August 18, 1908

(Sri Aurobindo: *Archives and Research*, April 1991, pp. 114-15 &
CWSA, Vol. 7, pp. 1145-46, 1181)

In the Courtroom on 15 August 1908

...15 August 1908. This day was doubly significant: first it was Sri Aurobindo's thirty-sixth birthday, secondly it was the last day on which evidence was admitted in the magistrate's enquiry that preceded the Alipore Bomb Trial. Sri Aurobindo once remarked in a letter: "15th August is usually a turning point or a notable day for me personally either in sadhana or life." (*Supplement*, p. 433) In the *Empire* interview he made the same point, mentioning important events that had taken place on his two previous birthdays as well as a significant happening in the courtroom that day. This was the announcement by the magistrate, Mr. Leonard Birley, that he intended to commit the accused on a charge of "waging war against the King" and in addition would charge Sri Aurobindo's brother Barindra Kumar Ghose for abetment of murder as well. Birley's announcement was doubtless important, but the really significant event of the day escaped the notice of everyone in court. On the 14th pleaders for Sailendranath and Dindayal Bose had applied to cross-examine some of the witnesses, including the approver Narendra Nath Goswami. After some consideration Birley rejected the petition, saying that he did not wish to hold the accused before trial any longer. (*Bande Mataram* 15 August 1908) On the 15th the two defense pleaders renewed their application. It was at this point that Birley passed his order saying that he already had a *prima facie* case against the accused and intended to commit them: there was therefore no reason for the witnesses to be cross-examined before him, as they would be cross-examined in the Sessions Court. This may have seemed a reasonable ruling, but it was, as a government file (IOR J&R 4494/1908) makes clear, contrary to the law. Birley's apparently trivial mistake took on enormous significance when the approver was assassinated two weeks later. Had no application to cross-examine been made it is likely that Goswami's deposition would have been used against the accused. It was Birley's refusal to permit cross-examination that made this testimony inadmissible as evidence. The outcome of the trial, Sri Aurobindo's verdict of not guilty included, might have been different if the magistrate had been more careful on 15 August 1908.

(*Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research*, April 1991, p. 128)

1909

A Birthday Talk

(Delivered at Sri Aurobindo's residence in Calcutta on 15 August 1909, his thirty-seventh birthday. Text in Bengali published in Bharat Mitra on 21 August; subsequently translated into English and published in a police intelligence report.)

In my childhood before the full development of my faculties, I became conscious of a strong impulse in me. I did not realise what it was then, but it grew stronger and stronger as I gained in years till all the weakness of my childhood, fear, selfishness, etc., vanished from my mind. From the day of my return to the mother country, the impulse is surging forth in great force, and my set purpose and devotion are becoming more confirmed with the trials and oppressions to which I am subjected. When some divine power by the grace of God manifests itself in a human being any efforts to develop it give a new force to the national life. You will have to sacrifice yourself at the feet of your Mother. You should, therefore, devote yourself with firm faith and whole heart to her service. Service of our motherland is our highest duty at this moment. This must be our duty in this iron age. It is now the time for us to conserve our energy. Do not be impatient, do not despair. Do not lose faith. The present fatigue and inactivity are natural; you will find instances of them in the history of every nation. Everyone must store up energy. Be prepared with fresh hope and vigour for the worship of the Mother. Divine power has infused this nation with a new power. This power will exalt the nation one day.

(CWSA, Vol. 8, p. 178)

Sri Aurobindo has come on earth not to bring a teaching or a creed in competition with previous creeds or teachings, but to show the way to overpass the past and to open concretely the route towards an imminent and inevitable future.

*

Sri Aurobindo has brought to the world the assurance of a divine future.

(CWM: 13, p. 4)

1912

15 August Celebration 1912

On 15 August Sri Aurobindo's birthday was celebrated. Some local people—Sada, David and four others—besides the members of the household, took part in the celebration. Sri Aurobindo sat in a chair in the outer verandah of the new house and all those who had come passed one by one in front of him. Some sweets were distributed.

A. B. PURANI

(Life of Sri Aurobindo, p.152)

*

1913

15 August Celebration 1913

15 August was celebrated in the Mission Street house. Sri Aurobindo was not well on that day, he had fever. But he came out and sat in the verandah and all those who had come passed before him. Moni had composed a Bengali poem which he read. Sri Aurobindo liked it and gave him a garland.

A. B. PURANI

(Life of Sri Aurobindo, pp.152-53)

Amrita's Reminiscence

In the Matakcoil Street, called Mission Street, Sri Aurobindo lived for six months in a house with a tiled roof. That house has at present undergone a radical change; the very spot is unrecognisable. It was in this house that I had Sri Aurobindo's Darshan. There I had the first opportunity of seeing him but from a distance.

During his stay in this house I had the habit of meeting Ramaswami Iyengar every evening on the beach, as I have already said. His heart started melting in my favour little by little even as ants slowly and persistently leave a trail on granite. The result was: he began to welcome me to his room. The school remained closed two days in the week, Sundays and Thursdays. Those days I could meet Iyengar in Sri Aurobindo's house at about 4 p.m. From 4 to 5 p.m. we would be alone conversing with each other. Our relation thus began to ripen. After 5 we would go straight to the beach and join other friends.

Because of my friendship with Iyengar, Sri Aurobindo's house appeared to me as my own. That is why I felt no timidity or shyness to go to Iyengar's room; whether he was at home or not, I would go there. But I never took courage to go farther than his room; to do so seemed improper.

As I got more and more familiar with Iyengar, the names of the inmates of Sri Aurobindo's house came to be known to me. Only one of them is still here. His name is Nolini Kanta Gupta. Of those who are no more, Bejoy Kumar Nag was one—his name became Vijayakantan in Tamil. In order to escape from the clutches of the British Government he had assumed the pseudonym Bankim Chandra Basak. Likewise, Suresh Chandra Chakravarti was known to the people of Pondicherry by one name alone: "Sakra". Sourindranath Bose went by his own name. Nagendranath Nag and Biren Roy came later to stay in Sri Aurobindo's house.

Among the inmates Nagendranath was laid up with tuberculosis. Some evenings when engaged in conversation with Iyengar on the verandah outside his room I would see Sri Aurobindo come out from the back portion of the house to the hall in front, take his seat on the same mat with the sick man, put to him some questions and return to his room. I was lucky to have Sri Aurobindo's Darshan in this manner several times without going near him. At that time I could not speak English well. On his way to the front part of the house and back from there, Sri Aurobindo's preoccupation seemed to be wholly with what he had come for. He would pay little attention, as it were, to any other thing around him. And yet, I was told, nothing could escape his notice.

During this period I requested Iyengar once or twice to introduce me to Sri Aurobindo. But my requests seemed to carry no weight with him.

Sri Aurobindo's birthday was drawing near—August 15, 1913. I requested Iyengar once more. I appealed to him to take me to Sri Aurobindo on his birthday. He replied, wonderful to say, in a consenting tone. I felt an immense joy.

On the 15th August Iyengar asked me to come at about 4.30 p.m. I reached there slightly earlier. All the invitees started coming one by one from all sides. By about 5 or 5.15 all of them had arrived. It was probably one hour before sunset. This I surmised by the dimness of the light inside the house.

In the hall of the front portion of the house some twenty or twenty-five banana leaves were laid out on three sides just as it is done during a marriage feast.

As far as I can remember, no sooner was the main gate bolted from within than Sri Aurobindo came into the hall and stood on one side; someone garlanded him with a rose garland; all present clapped their hands and Sri Aurobindo spoke something in English. All this I can recollect but vaguely. This vagueness of memory is due, I suppose, to an overwhelming joy and palpitation in me on that occasion.

All of us sat down before the banana leaves as we do at a collective dinner. I was one of the guests; with eyes full of delight I saw Sri Aurobindo as he stood before each banana leaf, looked at the person seated there, gently passed on to the next and thus to the last person—meanwhile someone walking by his side served various kinds of sweets and other preparations.

In the courtyard a big jar full of water was kept and by its side a small tumbler. We took some refreshments and after washing our hands we gathered together and kept chatting for a short while. In the meantime Sri Aurobindo had gone to the verandah of the middle portion of the house and sat there in a chair kept for him before a table covered with a cloth. Evidently he was waiting for some other item in the programme. By then it had become dark. In each section of the house one or two lighted hurricane-lamps were put up. The guests took leave one by one or by twos and threes and went home.

I kept on waiting, not knowing what to do. As soon as the guests left, Iyengar came and told me that three big persons, namely, Bharati, Srinivasachari, V. V. S. Ayer, would see Sri Aurobindo to pay their respects to him. If I could wait till they left, there would only be the inmates of the house, five or six, alone with Sri Aurobindo. He had a mind to take me then to Sri Aurobindo. But for that Sri Aurobindo's permission was required, he said finally. I nodded assent immediately. It might have already struck seven or gone on to seven-fifteen. A fear lurked in me that I would be questioned at home, "Why this delay?" But still I ventured to give my consent.

Iyengar once again asked me, "Do you intend to see Sri Aurobindo with Bharati and others? Or with the inmates?" I could not make out what answer to give. Whether in the midst of Bharati and others or in the midst of the inmates of the house Sri Aurobindo would be the same Sri Aurobindo. I began to revolve in my mind how there could be any difference. A little while, it might be less than a minute, I wavered in mind and replied, "When the inmates are there." "If so, you must wait for some

time,” said Iyengar and left.

I had to wait till 8 p.m. Bharati, Srinivasachari and Ayer at the time of going out of Sri Aurobindo’s house looked closely at me with a view to recognise me. They did not expect me there so late. They at once doubted and wondered if I had become an inmate of Sri Aurobindo’s house. Their faces betrayed this mixed feeling.

At about 8.15 p.m. Iyengar came to me and said: “You may get Sri Aurobindo’s Darshan as you pass before his table. Go with folded hands. But no permission to speak with him. While passing by his right just stand in front, stop awhile, join your hands, silently take leave of him and go home.” Iyengar’s words were imprinted upon my mind.

I was soon called in. I got up and approached Sri Aurobindo’s table. From the ceiling hung a hurricane-lamp that served to dispel the darkness only partially. Going round Sri Aurobindo by way of *pradakṣiṇa* I stood in his presence with joined palms and made my obeisance to him. Sri Aurobindo’s eyes, it seemed, burned brighter than the lamplight for me; as he looked at me, in a trice all gloom vanished from within me, and his image was as it were installed in the *sanctum sanctorum* of my being. Nothing was very clear to me. I went behind him, stood again in front, offered my homage to him and not knowing whether to stay or go I staggered perplexed. Sri Aurobindo made a gesture with his heavenly hands to one of those who stood there. A sweet was given me once again. I felt within that he had accepted me though I did not quite know it. I left Sri Aurobindo’s house and proceeded towards my own.

AMRITA

(*Reminiscences* by Nolini Kanta Gupta and K. Amrita, pp. 156-59)

We have faith in Sri Aurobindo.

He represents for us something we formulate to ourselves with words which seem to us the most exact for expressing our experience. These words are evidently the best according to us for formulating our experience.

But if, in our enthusiasm, we were convinced that they are the only appropriate words to express correctly what Sri Aurobindo is and the experience he has given us, we would become dogmatic and be on the point of founding a religion.

He who has a spiritual experience and a faith, formulates it in the most appropriate words for himself.

But if he is convinced that this expression is the only correct and true one for this experience and faith, he becomes dogmatic and tends to create a religion.

(CWM: 13, p. 21)

1913?

Sri Aurobindo's Letter to Motilal Roy

[1913?]

Dear M.

...15th August is usually a turning point or a notable day for me personally either in Sadhana or life,—indirectly only for others. This time it has been very important for me. My subjective Sadhana may be said to have received its final seal and something like its consummation by a prolonged realisation and dwelling in Parabrahman for many hours. Since then, egoism is dead for all in me except the Annamaya Atma,—the physical self which awaits one farther realisation before it is entirely liberated from occasional visitings or external touches of the old separated existence.

My future Sadhan is for life, practical knowledge and Shakti, not the essential knowledge or Shakti in itself which I have got already, but knowledge and Shakti established in the same physical self and directed to my work in life. I am now getting a clearer idea of that work and I may as well impart something of that idea to you; since you look to me as the centre, you should know what is likely to radiate out of that centre.

1. To re-explain the Sanatana Dharma to the human intellect in all its parts, from a new standpoint. This work is already beginning, and three parts of it are being clearly worked out. Sri Krishna has shown me the true meaning of the Vedas, not only so, but he has shown me a new Science of Philology showing the Process and origins of human speech so that a new Nirukta can be formed and the new interpretation of the Veda based upon it. He has also shown me the meaning in the Upanishads that is not understood either by Indians or Europeans. I have therefore to re-explain the whole Vedanta and Veda in such a way that it will be seen how all religion arises out of it and is one everywhere. In this way it will be proved that India is the centre of the religious life of the world and its destined saviour through the Sanatana Dharma.

2. On the basis of Vedic knowledge, to establish a Yogic Sadhana which will not only liberate the soul, but prepare a perfect humanity and help in the restoration of the Satya Yuga. That work has to begin now but it will not be complete till the end of the Kali.

3. India being the centre, to work for her restoration to her proper place in the world; but this restoration must be effected as a part of the above work and by means of Yoga applied to human means and instruments, not otherwise.

4. A perfect humanity being intended, society will have to be remodelled so as to be fit to contain that perfection.

You must remember that I have not given you the whole Yogic Sadhana. What I have given you is only the beginning. You have to get rid of Ahamkara and desire and surrender yourself to God in order that the rest may come. You speak of printing *Yoga and its Objects*. But remember that what I have sent you is only the first part which gives the path, not the objects or the circumstances. If you print it, print it as the first of a series, with the subtitle, *The Path*. I am now busy with an explanation of the Isha Upanishad in twelve chapters. I am at the eleventh now and will finish in a few days. Afterwards I shall begin the second part of the series and send it to you when finished.

I have also begun but on a very small scale the second part of my work which will consist in making men for the new age by imparting whatever Siddhi I get to those who are chosen. From this point of view our little colony here is a sort of seed plot, a laboratory. The things I work out in it, are then extended outside. Here the work is progressing at last on definite lines and with a certain steadiness, not very rapid, but still definite results are forming. I should be glad to have from you clearer knowledge of the results you speak of over there; for my Drishti is not yet sufficiently free from obstructions for me to know all that I need to know at this stage.

What you say about the Ramakrishna Mission is, I dare say, true to a certain extent. Do not oppose that movement or enter into any conflict with it.... Remember also that we derive from Ramakrishna. For myself it was Ramakrishna who personally came and first turned me to this Yoga. Vivekananda in the Alipore Jail gave me the foundations of that knowledge which is the basis of our Sadhana. The error of the Mission is to keep too much to the forms of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda and not keep themselves open for new outpourings of their spirit,—the error of all “Churches” and organised religious bodies.

As to other work (Tantric), I am not yet in possession of knowledge. The Shakti is only preparing to pour herself out there, but I don’t know what course she will take. You must remember I never plan or fix anything for myself. She must choose her own (“Paddhati”) or rather follow the line Krishna fixes for her.

KALI

(SABCL, Vol. 27, pp. 433-35)

What Sri Aurobindo represents in the world’s history is not a teaching, not even a revelation; it is a decisive action direct from the Supreme.

(CWM: 13, p. 4)

1914

Sri Aurobindo's Letter to Motilal Roy

[June, 1914?]

Dear M.

...a new philosophical Review with Richard and myself as Editors—the *Arya*, which is to be brought out in French and English, two separate editions,—one for France, one for India, England and America. In this Review my new theory of the Veda will appear as also translation and explanation of the Upanishads, a series of essays giving my system of Yoga and a book of Vedantic philosophy (not Shankara's but Vedic Vedanta) giving the Upanishadic foundations of my theory of the ideal life towards which humanity must move. You will see so far as my share is concerned, it will be the intellectual side of my work for the world. The Review will be of 64 pages to start with and the subscription Rs. 6 annually. Of the French edition 600 copies will be issued, and it will cost about Rs. 750 a year minus postage. Richard reckoned 200 subscribers in France at the start, i.e. Rs. 1200 in the year. For the English edition we are thinking of an issue of 1000 copies, at the cost of about Rs. 1200 annually. We shall need therefore at least 200 subscribers to meet this expense and some more so that the English edition may pay all its own expenses. Let us try 250 subscribers to start with, with the ideal of having 800 to 1000 in the first year. If these subscribers can be got before the Review starts, we shall have a sound financial foundation to start with. The question is, can they be got? We are printing a prospectus with specimens of the writings from my translation and commentary on a Vedic hymn, and an extract from Richard's collections of the central sayings of great sages of all times called the Eternal Wisdom to show the nature of the Review. This is supposed to come out in the middle of this month, and the Review on the 15th August, so there will be nearly two months for collecting subscribers. How far can you help us in this work?

A. G.

(SABCL, Vol. 27, pp. 455-56)

1914

Publication of the Arya

August 15th

Life has been preparing all this time. Today it begins with the publication of the Review and the continued stream of subscribers.

(CWSA, Vol. 10, p. 600)

1920

Starting of the Standard Bearer

15 August 1920

On 15 August the *Standard Bearer*, a weekly journal, was started by the Prabartak Sangha of Chandennagore. It was discontinued after a few years of somewhat irregular publication.

A. B. PURANI

(*Life of Sri Aurobindo*, p. 174)

1923

6 August 1923

When asked about celebrating the fifteenth August Sri Aurobindo said: “What is the significance of the fifteenth? I want to make it as ordinary as any day. What has it to do with the stomach? It has an inner significance, and if there is a way of celebrating it in a fitting manner I have no objection. I do not want any sort of vital manifestation on that day, especially after I have taken a new turn in yoga.”

A. B. PURANI

(*Life of Sri Aurobindo*, p. 187)

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15 August 1923

Barada Charan, a yogi of Bengal, had an experience involving Sri Aurobindo. Talk about celebrating the fifteenth August. The food was as usual. Remarks on the difficulty of the supramental descent into the physical. Evening talk on the Supermind.

A. B. PURANI

(*Life of Sri Aurobindo*, p. 188)

1923

15 August 1923

Sri Aurobindo spoke on the 15th of August.

Formerly we used to celebrate the event of my physical birth in a “vital” manner. There was the seed of the inner Truth in it, but the manifestation was vital. Now, I wish that if the day is observed it should be in keeping with the Truth it symbolises.

You all know of the Supramental Truth that has to descend into our life. This day that Truth is symbolised. But there are several obstacles in the way of its coming down. There is the Mind and the mental ideas that grasp at the Truth coming from Above and try to utilise the Truth for their own aims. There is, for instance, the Vital, or the Life-force, which seizes upon the Higher Force and wants to throw itself out into impure actions. The Truth that is coming down is not mental, it is Supramental. In order that it may be able to work properly, all the lower instruments must be Supramentalised. The lower forces want to utilise this Higher Truth for the satisfaction of their ordinary movements. Whenever a man enjoys the pleasures of life, or spends his life in pursuit of his selfish ends it is, really speaking, these universal forces that take enjoyment through and in him.

In order that this Higher Truth may be able to work in its purity, one has to open oneself to the greater Power above, to give oneself up to it and remove all that stands in the way of the Higher Truth. The capacity to surrender consists in these three things.

I have been working all these years to meet the obstacles and remove them and prepare and clear the path so that the task may not be very difficult for you. As for my helping you in that task it all depends upon your capacity to receive the help. I can give any amount that you can take. There is an idea that to-day every Sadhaka gets a new experience. That depends upon your capacity to receive the Truth in yourself. Real spiritual surrender is of course, quite another matter; but if any of you have experienced even a degree of it, even some faint reflection, then the purpose of the 15th will have been served.

(Sri Aurobindo came out at 6 o'clock in the evening.)

Disciple: May we know something about the present state of your Sadhana?

Sri Aurobindo: *(in a clear but low voice)* I cannot call it a state, or a condition. It is, rather, a complex movement. I am at present engaged in bringing the Supermind into the physical consciousness, down even to the sub-material. The physical is by nature inert and does not want to be rendered conscient. It offers much greater resistance as it is unwilling to change.

One feels as if “digging the earth”, as the Veda says. It is literally digging from Supermind above to Supermind below. The being has become conscious and there is constant movement up and down. The Veda calls it “the two ends”—the head and the tail of the dragon completing and compassing the consciousness. I find that so long as Matter is not Supramentalised the mental and the vital also cannot be fully Supramentalised. The physical is therefore to be accepted and transformed. It is this birth after birth on every plane that makes the process complex. I am trying to bring the highest layer of the Supermind into the physical consciousness.

There are three layers of the Supermind corresponding to the three activities of the Intuitive mind. First is what I call the Interpretative Supermind. I call it interpretative because what is a possibility on the mental plane becomes a potentiality on the Supramental plane. The Interpretative Supermind puts all the potentialities before you. It shows the root cause of events that may come true on the physical plane. When intuition is changed into its Supramental value, it becomes Interpretative Supermind.

Next comes what I call the Representative Supermind. It represents the actual movements of the potentialities and shows what is in operation. When inspiration is changed into its Supramental value then it becomes this Representative Supermind. This is the highest Supermind. You know certain potentialities working and in many cases you can say what would happen, or how a certain thing happened or can happen. But there may be no certainty. Finally there is the Imperative Supermind which corresponds to Revelation. It is always true as nothing can stand against it. It is Knowledge fulfilling itself by its own inherent power.

I have to distinguish between all these and try to bring down the Imperative Supermind into the physical. Thus, there is a constant movement up and down. The whole being is now made conscious but what is required is that no force should be able to attack the physical. Then the second thing is to apply the Imperative Supermind to things within and, thirdly, to apply it to things outside. At present, by the Supramental Power any force that attacks the body can be thrown aside. But when the process is complete no conscious hostile force would be able to attack the body at all. In all this I am following a certain programme that was laid down for me when I came down to Pondicherry.

Disciple: The question, then, is of physical immortality.

Sri Aurobindo: Yes, in case the physical is rendered immune the casting away or retaining of the body would be voluntary. One would be free to throw it away; it would be, really, dull and monotonous to be forced to keep the same body through all eternity.

Disciple: Is it possible to illustrate the difference between what one attains in the Mind and what is attained in the Supermind?

Sri Aurobindo: I can give one instance: The mental *samatā*—equality—I

attained was not disturbed for months by anything. It was the *samatā* of the Shankarite outlook. But true spiritual *samatā* comes when the Imperative Supermind descends; the self-certainty of the Power brings the true divine *samatā*.

Formerly there was some difficulty in differentiating between will of knowledge and knowledge-will—say between force and knowledge. Now it is not there.

Disciple: When will this work be finished?

Sri Aurobindo: There can be no definite time-limit.

Disciple: What was the nature of the attack you got last?

Sri Aurobindo: Whenever I am about to finish a definite stage in Sadhana the conscious hostile forces come and first raise up anything in the being and show it to me: “Look here, this you have not conquered.” They can also attack.

Disciple: Is this idea of the Supermind present in the Veda?

Sri Aurobindo: Yes, it is very clear, though the emphasis of the Vedic Rishis is more on going above—ascending—than on the return movement of conquering and transforming the lower nature.

Disciple: Can one say that the idea of conquest of the physical is also there?

Sri Aurobindo: Yes, the idea is definite.

Disciple: Do you know of any man who has brought down the Supermind to the physical plane?

Sri Aurobindo: No, I don’t.

Disciple: Is there any stress in the Gita on bringing the Supermind down?

Sri Aurobindo: No. Its insistence is on Karma, on action, not so much on the Supermind. Besides, many other things are there in the Gita.

A. B. PURANI

(*Evening Talks*, pp. 483-86)

[*This Note to the Reader was placed right in the beginning of
Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo*]

To the Reader

The reader is requested to note that Sri Aurobindo is not responsible for these records as he had no opportunity to see them. So, it is not as if Sri Aurobindo said exactly these things but that I remember him to have said them. All I can say is that I have tried to be as faithful in recording as I was humanly capable. That does not minimise my personal responsibility which I fully accept.

A. B. Purani

1924

15 August 1924

Who can describe this day? Nothing can be added by the colours of imagination, poetic similes, and loaded epithets. It is enough to say, “It was the 15th of August.” No other day can come up to it in the depth and intensity of spiritual action, the ascending movement of the flood of emotions, and the way in which each individual here was bathing in the atmosphere.

It is the supreme sign of the Master to assume all possible relations with his disciples, make them real, and concrete. Each disciple knows him as his own, and each the Master accepts as his. Each believes the Master loves him most and it is true that he loves each the most. This feeling is not an illusion or delusive self-hypnotism, but is quite real. The spontaneous dynamic law of the Supreme Truth which he embodies is love—divine love.

In all the inmates the delight of surrender is overflowing—the bliss of surrender, its sparkle pervades all. All is given up, everything is surrendered. How free you feel! How light and unburdened you feel! There is someone to take up the whole of your burden—there is a power of Supreme Love. Him you can trust implicitly. You need only to give up your little self, the rest is his work, you have no worry, no anxiety! No effort—only the way of loving surrender! How easy!

Every face is beaming with the joy of surrender, every one is happy and overflowing with joy. And yet there is no external reason, no outer materials for this intense joy. From where is flowing this unlimited Delight? They say the Master was not in such a happy mood these two or three years.

From early morning the Ashram is humming with various activities: decoration, flowers, garlands, food, bath, etc. All are eager to go up to the Master for his Darshan. As the time passes there is a tide in the flood of rising emotion. It is “Darshan”—we see him every day, but to-day it is “Darshan”! To-day each sees him individually, one after another. In the midst of these multiple activities the consciousness gets concentrated. To-day is “Darshan”—not of a human being but of some Supreme Divinity. To-day is the rare chance of seeing the Divine.

There he sits—in the royal chair in the verandah—royal and majestic. In the very posture there is divine self-confidence. In the heart of the Supreme Master, the great Yogin—a sea of emotions is heaving—is it a flood that mounts from or a flood that is coming down on humanity? Those alone who have experienced it can know something of its divinity. Those who have bathed in it once can never come out of that ocean. He sits there—with pink and white lotus garlands. It is the small flower-token of the offerings by the disciples. Hearts throb, prayers, requests, emotions pour forth and a flood of blessings pours down carrying all of them away in its speed.

Lack of faith, doubts get assurance. All human needs the Divine fulfils and, after fulfilling, his grace overflows. Love and grace flow on undiminished. The look!—the enrapturing and captivating eyes! Who can ever forget?—pouring love and grace and ineffable divinity. If some transcendent Divinity is not here where else can he be?

He is usually an embodiment of Knowledge. But to-day he is different. He is all love. Here is the Great Poet and the Supreme Lover incarnate! It is inquiring, loving and blessing in a glance! Man does wonders with his eyes and looks, but to do so much divinity is needed.

The question is what to ask? love or blessings! or, should one pray for love and blessings both and in addition for the acceptance of unworthy persons like us? Standing on the brink of Eternity when the soul saw his dreamy and loving eyes, then was it captured for ever. The inexplicable mystery of divine love was here a tangible experience! Who can explain a fact? A fact is a fact and an experience an experience. There is no explanation possible.

“What should I give him?” is the question of the mind. “What should I ask?” is the question of the heart. Both refuse to answer and both are unanswered. The mind feels the insignificance of its offering, and remains mute. The heart is ashamed because of its beggar’s attitude, it even feels its pride wounded. How to solve this pleasant embarrassment? The beggar heart carries the day. There is even a kind of curiosity to find out how one is accepted, what happens to oneself.

But all this was before Darshan. As one actually stands in front all curiosity, all pride, all thoughts, all questions, all resolutions are swept away in some terrific divine Niagara. Thou embodiment of love Supreme! What transparency! In the heart of the Supreme Master also, an ocean of emotion is heaving. The heart melts and falls at his feet without knowing, it surrenders itself! Where is here a place for speech! There is only one speech—the language of the body and its flexion, that of the prostration of the body in the act of surrender, throbbing of the heart and that of the flow of tears from the eyes! What a peace pregnant with divinity! What a beauty of this experience!

Everyone is trying to maintain *samatā*—equality. Everyone is quiet and is trying hard to remain calm. But to-day all the barriers of humanity are swept away by the flood of Divine Love. The soul has its *samatā*—its equality—but the whole nature is in agitation as unknown waters have rushed into it. Knowledge is laid on the shelf—and it is all a flood of love. To-day the soul has received the certitude of the Divine’s victory as it had never done before.

In the dining room all are gathered, bathing and bathed in delight. Everyone is happy—supremely happy—in perfect ecstasy. To-day there is an empire of Delight! O Artist! what a marvellous art! So much of delight—for every one of them!—delight that fills each and overflows.

At four o’clock all gather at the usual place of sitting—the verandah. All sit there full of hope in silence; one or two whisper to each other. The mind of the

company is silently repeating, “When will he come? May he come.” It is four-fifteen;—the old familiar and yet new “tick” behind the door! Slowly a door opens. The Master steps out first, behind him the Mother with white creamy sari with broad red border. He sits in his usual broad Japanese chair. The Mother sits on the right side on a small stool. For a short time—about five minutes there is complete silence!

Then he glances at each one separately. The minutes are melting into the silence. There is again a wave of emotion in all, all bathe again into an ocean of some divine emotion. How wonderful if the whole Eternity would flow in this experience! Time, poor Time and its flow is blamed by men. But where is the fault in the flow of Time? If so much Love and such Divine Delight can have its play—let poor Time flow and have its Eternity! And let the world become Divine! Another powerful aspiration that comes to the surface is: “Expression is not needed—let the whole of eternity flow away in this silence!”

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When the Master came for the evening sitting emanating joy he asked with a smile, “What do you want to-day?—Silence or speech?” As if he had come to confer whatever boon we asked. For a time it was silence that reigned. Then from that silence a flow appeared to start. The hearts of the disciples were on tiptoe with expectation, for to-day they were hearing not human speech but words from the Divine. To hear with human ears the Lord speak! What a fulfilment!

The substance of what Sri Aurobindo spoke on the 15th August 1924

(This year Sri Aurobindo came out at 9-15 in the morning and again at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. He spoke for about 30 or 35 minutes, 10 or 15 minutes he remained silent in the beginning.)

It has become customary to expect some speech from me on this day. I prefer to communicate through the Silent Consciousness, because speech addresses itself to the mind while through the Silent Consciousness one can reach something deeper. We are practising together a Yoga which is quite different in certain essentials from other methods which go by the same name. According to the old method we have to select the intellect, the emotion or the will or to differentiate between Purusha and Prakriti, the conscious Soul and Nature. By that we arrive at an Infinite of Knowledge, an all-Loving and all-Beautiful Supreme or an Infinite Impersonal Will, or the Silent Brahman beyond, our mind, emotional being or will, or our individual Purusha.

Our Yoga does not aim at an impersonal Infinite of Knowledge, Will or Ananda but at the realisation of a Supreme Being, an Infinite Knowledge which is beyond the limited infinity of the human knowledge, an Infinite Power which is the source of

our personal will and an Ananda which cannot be seized by surface movements of emotion.

This Supreme Being that we want to realise is not an impersonal Infinite but a Divine Personality; and in order to realise Him we have to grow conscious of our own true personality. You must know your own inner being. This Personality is not the inner mental, the inner vital and the inner physical being and its consciousness as is many times wrongly described, but it is your true Being which is in direct communication with the Highest. Man grows by gradual growth in Nature and each has to realise his own Divine Person which is in the Supermind. Each is one with the Divine in essence but in nature each is a partial manifestation of the Supreme Being.

Such being the aim of our Yoga we want to return upon life and transform it. The old yogas failed to transform life because they did not go beyond mind. They used to catch at mental experiences but when they came to apply them to life they reduced it to a mental formula. For example, the mental experience of the Infinite or the application of the principle of universal Love.

We have, therefore, to grow conscious on all the planes of our being, and to bring down the Higher Light, Power and Ananda to govern even the most external details of life. We must detach ourselves and observe all that is going on in the nature, not even the smallest movement, the most external act must remain unnoticed. This process is comparatively easy in the mental and vital planes. But in the physico-vital and the physical plane the powers of ignorance hold their sway and reign in full force, persisting in what they believe to be the eternal laws. They obstruct the passage of the Higher Light and hold up their flag. It is there that the powers of darkness, again and again, cover the being and even when the physico-vital is opened the elements of ignorance come up from the lower levels of the physical being. To deal with them is a work of great patience. The physico-vital and the physical being do not accept the Higher Law and persist. They justify their persistence and their play by intellectual and other justifications and thus they try to deceive the Sadhaka under various guises.

Generally, the vital being is very impatient and wants to get things done quickly on the physico-vital and physical planes. But this has very violent reactions and therefore the mental and the vital being, instead of seizing upon the Higher Light and Power, should surrender themselves to the Higher Power. We have not to rest satisfied with partial transformation. We have to bring down the Higher Power to the physical plane and govern the most external detail of life by it. Mind cannot govern them. We have to call down the Higher Light, Power and Ananda to transform our present nature. This requires an essential utter sincerity in every part of the being, which can see clearly all that is going on in the Being and which wants only the Truth and nothing but the Truth.

The second condition of the Light coming down and governing even the smallest

detail of life is that one must grow conscious of his Divine personality which is in the Supermind.

There is sometimes a tendency in the Sadhaka to be satisfied with experiences. One should not rest content with mere experiences.

Another thing is that here, as we are all of us together given to the pursuit of the same Truth the whole time, we have arrived at some kind of solidarity so that we can mutually help or retard our progress.

The conditions of transformation of the being are the opening of ourselves to the Higher Light and an absolute surrender. This brings about the transformation, so that if there is the entire essential sincerity, opening to the Light and surrender and a gradual growth of consciousness on all the planes, you can become an ideal Sadhaka of this Yoga.

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Sri Aurobindo came out and anticipating the question about his own Sadhana, asked X: “Do you want me to keep the tradition?”

Disciple: I was thinking of asking about your Sadhana but I was afraid of being referred to the “Silent Consciousness”.

Sri Aurobindo: Do you then want me to speak about the Silent Consciousness like Carlyle who preached his doctrine of silence in 40 volumes?

Disciple: The difficulty is that by Silent Consciousness we can’t find where you are.

Disciple: We want to know about your own Sadhana.

Sri Aurobindo: All I can say is I am doing the same thing over and over again; only I am doing it each time better.

Disciple: That is a very encouraging discovery.

Disciple: That is known to us.

Sri Aurobindo: Is it? I thought it is quite fresh. The physical layer is a very obstinate thing and it requires to be worked out in detail. You work out one thing then think it is done; something else arises and you have again to go over the same ground. It is not like the mind or the vital where it is easier for the Higher Power to work. Besides there—in the mind and in the vital—you can establish a general law leaving out the details; the physical is not so; it requires constant patience and minutia (detail).

Disciple: In the vital you feel you are galloping like a horse.

Sri Aurobindo: Yes, there is a sense of movement and success in the vital but the physical always denies your achievements and repeats the same thing over again, so there is hardly much that can be spoken about it.

Disciple: What are the signs by which one can know that the higher calm has

settled in the physical?

Sri Aurobindo: In part or in the whole?

Disciple: In the entire range of the physical.

Sri Aurobindo: But before the higher calm can settle there, you must grow conscious of the physical.

Disciple: How?

Sri Aurobindo: As you have got the consciousness of the mind, of the vital being, so the body must get its own consciousness. When that consciousness is present, you feel the calm like something solid (substantial) settled like an immovable block which cannot be shaken even by the most material shock (less so by the mental or vital shocks).

Disciple: In your present stage of Sadhana where do you stand with regard to the question of Death?

Sri Aurobindo: In my own case?

Disciple: Yes.

Sri Aurobindo: There are three things that can bring it about:

1. Violent surprise and accident.
2. Action of age.
3. My own choice, finding it not possible to do it this time, or by some thing shown to me which would prove it is not possible this time.

Disciple: Sometimes I have a suggestion that if the body can retain the higher calm, power and ananda, then the body would be free from death.

Sri Aurobindo: That is only the general principle. But that won't do on the physical plane. You must work out all the details. It is just like the political movements of India where to establish a general rule (or maxim) is regarded as quite sufficient; the details are never worked out.

Disciple: When the vital being has got the calm and power and ananda then sometimes there is an idea that the body is also immortal.

Sri Aurobindo: That is due to the vital casting its own glow upon the physical. The vital Purusha is immortal and that creates a sense of immortality in the body but that is not the real conquest. In the case of Swami Brahmananda (of Chandod) he lived up to 300 years so that he was practically immune from the action of age but one day a rusty nail pricked him and he died of that slight wound. On the physical plane something you have not worked out turns up and shows that your conquest is not complete. That is why the process takes such a long time. You must establish the higher Consciousness in every atom of the body, otherwise what happens is that something escapes your view in the hidden depth of the lower physical being which is known to the hostile forces and then they can attack through that weak point. They can create a combination of circumstances which would give rise to the thing not worked out and before you can control them they are already beyond control. In that case they can destroy you.

Disciple: Why is the physical so very obstinate and obscure?

Sri Aurobindo: Well, it is the nature. That is the arrangement. If the physical were not like that then the thing would have been done much more easily and long ago instead of taking *Kalpās* and *Manvantaras*. The Sadhana would have been very easy. God does not want it to be easily done.

Disciple: Some time back you told us that this attempt was done several times in the past but on account of various reasons it was not successful. Will it be successful this time or not?

Sri Aurobindo: I can't say.

Disciple: But you said that this can be done and this time something will be done.

Sri Aurobindo: But “this can be done” is not the same as “this will be done this time”.

Disciple: No. What he wants to know is whether you want to improve upon that statement.

Sri Aurobindo: All I can say is “ask me next August”, this time I am more hopeful than I was last year. It is more possible now than it was last year. Last year was a very hard year in my Sadhana. There was an attack from the darkest physical forces on me. This year they are all gone.

Disciple: When will it be finished?

Sri Aurobindo: You want me to prophesy? It does not depend totally upon me; time is about the last thing one knows. And fixing the limit is more likely to prolong it like “Swaraj in one year”. Besides, a Yogin who is to take part in action is not shown all the things by the Supreme. Only when the universal conditions are ready then all things are shown to him; while one who is detached sees many things more. Also, the Supreme does not decide every detail before the universal conditions are ready when it comes down with an imperative decision. In between, it is all a working of universal forces. For example, take the case of physical disease to which you are prone by nature. When you have worked it out you find the same thing comes up in other forms. You cannot leave it off without working out all details and in each detail you can see only possibilities and moral certainties. Not that the Supreme does not know it all the time; only, it does not interfere till the universal conditions are ready. The decision which the universal forces work out is also the decision of the Supreme.

Disciple: Are the universal conditions fulfilled so far as the physical is concerned?

Sri Aurobindo: The general conditions have been fulfilled in the case of the physical consciousness; but now the most material level remains and that is the most dangerous.

Disciple: Why is it most dangerous?

Sri Aurobindo: Because it is solid, compact, and can refuse or give up its own stuff completely. It is the least open to reasoning and in dealing with it you require the highest divine Power. Besides, the whole *saṁskāra*—established impression—

of the whole universe is against your effort. Something from Above has to descend and remove the obstacle.

Disciple: I have an idea that those who go by the gradual way would also, at one time, come to the same conquest of the physical as those who work in the concentrated way.

Sri Aurobindo: Yes. But those who go by the gradual way may have each time to fight out the whole thing and even then the difficulty comes up again and again, while in the involved process (which I am following) the work is rendered easy and quick. One blow from the Supreme Force and the thing is done!

A. B. PURANI

(*Evening Talks*, pp. 486-95)

The best homage we can pay to Sri Aurobindo is to prepare for the advent of the Supramental race.

(CWM: 13, p. 15)

1925

15 August 1925 (4.30 p.m.)

Our Yoga aims at the discovery of the Supramental being, the Supramental world, and the Supramental nature, and their manifestations in life. But we must guard ourselves against certain general mistakes which are likely to arise. People think that certain powers such as Anima, Garima, or the control of the physical functions, and the capacity to cure diseases, constitute the Supramentalised physical. In many cases, these powers are acquired by persons who happen to open themselves consciously, or unconsciously, to the subliminal being, where these powers lie. There are plenty of cases where such powers are seen in persons who have no idea of the Supermind or Yoga.

There is an idea that this Yoga has been attempted times without number in the past, that the Light descended and has withdrawn again and again. This does not seem to be correct. I find that the Supramental physical body has not been brought down; otherwise it would have been there. We must not therefore belittle our effort and throw obstacles in the way of its accomplishment.

The time has not yet come to say what would be the nature of the ultimate transformation. What the old yogins manifested in their life was largely due to the control of the vital being over physical functions. Our aim is not this attainment of the vital Siddhi,—the control of the physical substance and functions through vital force. What we are attempting to achieve is a complete transformation of our entire being in all its planes of manifestation. In the old disciplines the goal was not transformation or victory over the physical being. They did not lay any direct hold on it.

Then there is an idea that since everything is One, what we have to do is to realise the One Consciousness and have some experience of it on various planes of our being. This is a mistake due to obsession by Vedantic ideas. It is true that there is the One Consciousness and we have to realise it, but we have not to stop short with that realisation. We have, as I said just now, to transform our entire being.

There is an idea that our Yoga is an attempt at conscious evolution. The Spirit is here involved in Matter and appears subject to it. By the process of evolution the vital and the mental being have come into manifest existence here. Our effort is to evolve to the Supermind from mind.

The Taittiriya Upanishad speaks of the physical being taken up into the vital, and that into the mental and that again into the Supramental and Ananda Consciousness. Another Upanishad says that the man who attains the Supermind escapes through “the door of the Sun”. There is no idea of a conscious descent upon life after ascending to the Supermind.

But it is possible to regard the process as an involution,—involution of the manifested being into the Truth-Consciousness of the Supermind which descends with the perfection of the same into the mind, into the vital and into the physical being.

We also notice in our Sadhana that there is a movement of ascent. But that is not the whole thing, we have not to rest content merely with the ascent. We have also to descend again and consciously bring down the Supramental Light, Truth and Harmony to govern and transform our nature,—that is, our mind, life and body. There is thus an evolution of the lower powers upward into the Truth from which the Spirit descends into Matter and then a manifestation of that Truth in all the nature.

It is not all who can do this. There is an idea that everybody can do this Yoga, but that is only partly true. All are not called to do this Yoga. It may be said that all men have got a latent capacity for this Yoga. But that only helps them up to the point of a certain preparation for the Yoga. The vast mental expansion, the difficult, long and arduous task of rejecting the lower movements of the vital nature and the still harder task of bringing about a change in the physical being, all this cannot be attempted by all. We want first to transform all our being into the Supramental nature. But that is not all, we have to call down and throw that Power upon the external life and establish the Truth and harmony there also. I have already told you that the time has not yet come to say what would be the nature of the ultimate transformation. When the time comes it will reveal itself. What is demanded of you is to open yourself more and more to the Truth. As to all the rest, it will work itself out according to the will of the Supreme Ishwara.

Evening conversation (*Sri Aurobindo came out at 7 o'clock.*)

Sri Aurobindo: Anybody going to keep up the tradition?

Disciple: We are only waiting for the signal.

Sri Aurobindo: The whistle is given, you can start.

Disciple: We want to know something about your Sadhana.

Sri Aurobindo: (*in Bengali*) *Amār sādhanā! Ami ki sādhanā korchī?* My Sadhana!—am I doing Sadhana? Ask some other question.

Disciple: From experience of the physical plane till now, do you think that it is possible to bring down the Supermind into the physical plane?

Sri Aurobindo: Why not? I would not attempt it if it were not possible. If you mean, by that question, “whether it is possible this time and now”, then that is quite another matter.

Disciple: That is what I mean.

Sri Aurobindo: It all depends upon things outside myself. It is to be seen whether the physical plane is ready to receive the Light, for it is not always that the physical plane is ready when the Light descends.

Disciple: Can you not give any certainty about it?

Sri Aurobindo: I never said it was certain.

Disciple: Last year when this question was put to you...

Sri Aurobindo: What did I say?

Disciple: You said, "Ask me next August."

Disciple: When the question was put to you, you said, "It is more possible this year than it was last year."

Sri Aurobindo: That is quite another matter. I could not have used the other expression. I can say now, "It is more possible this year than it was last year." (*All burst into laughter as he evaded the answer*)

Sri Aurobindo: I am not joking. There have been manifestations of it now that were not there before. The Power is working more directly on the physical plane.

Disciple: Then can you not give the certainty?

Sri Aurobindo: *You* can give the certainty, instead of me, I can't. You can see for yourself.

Disciple: If I could see I would not have asked you.

Sri Aurobindo: Then, you want to throw the whole burden on me and evade your responsibility?

Disciple: If you push me like that into a corner then I can't say anything.

Sri Aurobindo: Well, you want the truth from me and not a pleasant falsehood, I suppose. I have been feeling this very strongly for the last two days, that is why I say this. It is not a personal question, I am speaking of the general atmosphere. I find that the more the Light and Power are coming down the greater is the resistance. You yourself can see that there is something pressing down. You can also see that there is the tremendous resistance.

Disciple: This is quite a new thing this time.

Disciple: It is not at all new. It is only expressed this time.

Sri Aurobindo: Now that we have all come to the lower vital and the physical planes where the struggle is most acute I am speaking from there and not from any higher standpoint. (*Pause; then to a disciple:*) No, K—you can't evade your responsibility. (*Laughter*)

I am not doing an isolated Yoga. When I wrote that much-abused sentence about humanity in *The Yoga and its Objects* there was a truth behind it though I was not conscious of it. It is true that my Yoga is not for humanity; but it is not for myself either; of course, attaining to the Siddhi is the preliminary condition to others being able to attain it. If I were seeking my own liberation and perfection my Yoga would have been finished long ago.

Disciple: You said in your speech in the afternoon that the physical plane had not been worked upon by anyone before.

Sri Aurobindo: I did not say that no attempt had been made in the past. Attempts were made but nothing stable was attained on the physical level; nothing fundamental

was established. If it were established, the thing would be there, however partial the achievement.

You see, however imperfect the achievement, it is there in the Mind and you find it, so also in the Vital. But you find nothing like that in the physical plane.

Disciple: It means that the necessary atmosphere for bringing down the Supermind on the physical plane is to be created?

Sri Aurobindo: That is the whole attempt. You ought to help in it by creating the necessary condition, if you want it to be done this time.

(Pointing to himself) There is the centre. You can take from it. But we must be all on one side if we want to succeed. If you give room to hostile suggestions you retard your own progress and also the general advancement.

Disciple: What should be done to reduce the resistance of the physical nature?

Sri Aurobindo: You must have an integral aspiration for the truth. It is true, of course, that there come times in the Sadhana when the mind gets depressed, and the higher Presence is veiled, the knowledge obscured. At that time it is the aspiration and the faith—what Ramakrishna calls “blind faith”—that supports one. That faith is not really speaking “blind”. It is the memory of the soul. If faith is necessary to Coué out a disease, much more is it necessary to bring down the Supermind. If I had lost faith I would have given up the effort long ago.

Disciple: Anybody else would have given it up long ago. *(Laughter)*

Disciple: Is the transition from the Mind to the Supermind more radical in its nature than that from the Supermind to the planes above it?

Sri Aurobindo: What do you mean by that? Do you mean is it as decisive a step as from Ignorance to Knowledge?

Disciple: Yes.

Sri Aurobindo: You see, the Mind works on the basis of division. It always takes the truth piece-meal,—one aspect at a time and acts as if a part were the whole. Now this very basis is false.

The Supermind is unity and on the basis of that unity it knows the division. It is the stage nearest to us towards the Divine. Of course, it is also working in the Mind. But in the Mind you seek and find truth partially. Mind is an effort at knowing, but not knowledge. Mind only represents, it cannot attain. It cannot fully express the truth.

On the vital plane also the Supermind works. There its working is Instinct, a precise but covert working which is nearest to the Supermind. But the Supermind is something quite different. You may say it is something automatic though not in the mechanical sense. You can say it is “self-active” Truth. Once you attain to the Supermind you can escape through “the doors of the Sun”, if you want. If you go higher still you come to a plane where no Sun is needed. But all that becomes more possible and easy if you can bring down the Supermind into the physical plane. After that, it is all a flowering up of the being, a natural and easy growth. But it is all a struggle

here in mind, life and body.

The sign that you have attained to the Supermind is that you dispense with the need of thought, or thinking as we understand it. In the Supermind you do not need to think. It does not mean that there is no thought and that all is a mere blank. There is something self-existent that works.

Disciple: How?

Sri Aurobindo: “How” you can’t understand.

Disciple: But how does the Mind work when there is no thought?

Sri Aurobindo: In the Mind you think from one point to another point and then to another and so on. Then you gather them all up and connect them in the relation of cause and effect. Now suppose all these hundred thoughts arise simultaneously, showing up all the details and all that in less than one second. Can you imagine that? That is the Supramental thought.

Disciple: I can imagine that.

Sri Aurobindo: Yes, you can imagine but you can’t have an idea of the thing unless you experience it.

Disciple: Will you give us some other aspect of the Supermind?

Sri Aurobindo: Some other aspect? It is not a thing to be understood mentally like that.

Disciple: All the same it may be of some help to us.

Sri Aurobindo: For instance, absolute rest and absolute activity at the same time. Can you imagine that?

Disciple: Is it true that all the mental faculties have their corresponding counterparts in the Supermind?

Sri Aurobindo: Well, that is what I have said in the *Arya*. I wrote the *Arya* when I was on the borderland. I should not say the same thing now. Everybody has to go through that stage. It is true that corresponding to Reason there is what may be called the Divine Reason; and you can say that what works as the Divine Reason is derived from the activity of the Supermind. But it is something which is quite different. I am putting the thing in terms of the mind. I can only give you images. But there it is not exactly the same thing. For instance, Reason finds out the cause and effect and connects them together—while the Divine Reason puts them all in the right relation.

There are other things which cannot be expressed in terms of the mind.

Disciple: For example?

Sri Aurobindo: Reconciliation between opposites—for example, absolute silence and absolute expression, can you express it in terms of the mind?

Disciple: When the Supermind will descend it will evolve its own language.

Sri Aurobindo: There is no need of language there; suppose you have got the Supermind and I have got it, we need not use any language.

Disciple: Then we will be sitting quiet all along?

Sri Aurobindo: A terrible thing to you, I suppose?

Disciple: In Bernard Shaw's *Back to Methuselah* there are "ancients" who come and stay with those whom he calls "children", ordinary men, and if they stay too long the children get frightened.

Disciple: K is probably afraid that there would be no more questions to ask.

Disciple: In the Upanishad Yajnavalkya says to Gargi when she put too many questions, "Don't ask too many questions, otherwise your head will fall off."

Disciple: It would be a blessing if the head fell off.

Disciple: If this conquest of the physical plane is once achieved, would it mean the defeat of the hostile forces in cases where there might be no opening to the Yoga?

Sri Aurobindo: You come back to the same question of humanity in another form. That is to say, you want to know whether this victory would mean universal victory. Well, let us wait and establish the thing on the physical plane first, then we shall see.

Disciple: (*On behalf of X*) How are the universal conditions more ready now for the coming down of the Supermind than they were before?

Sri Aurobindo: Firstly, the knowledge of the physical world has increased so much that it is on the verge of breaking its own bounds.

Secondly, there is an attempt all over the world towards breaking the veil between the outer and the inner mental, the outer and the inner vital and even the outer and the inner physical. Men are becoming more "psychic".

Thirdly, the vital is trying to lay its hold on the physical as it never did before. It is always the sign that whenever the higher Truth is coming down, it throws up the hostile vital world on the surface, and you see all sorts of abnormal vital manifestations, such as increase in the number of persons who go mad, earth-quakes, etc. Also, the world is becoming more united on account of the discoveries of modern science,—the aeroplane, the railways, the wireless telegraph etc. Such a union is the condition for the Highest Truth coming down and it is also our difficulty. Fourthly, the rise of persons who wield tremendous vital influence over large numbers of men.

These are some of the signs to show that the universal condition may be more ready now. Of course we do not know anything about the conditions of past attempts. But in so far as we can see now there are conditions to warrant the attempt.

Disciple: Do you consider the knowledge of the world forces a necessary part of the Yoga?

Sri Aurobindo: Yes! You have to deal with world-forces because they make themselves felt, especially the hostile ones; and so also you have to know the forces that make for help. Even when one is doing individual Sadhana, these universal forces make themselves felt. Of course, as you develop, their aspect changes completely. The movement of world-forces does not begin on the lower planes. It begins high above. All decisions are made high above, it is true, but they are not allowed to be known on the planes which they concern. A veil is interposed, and each plane is left free to make its own decision. The struggle is left to be decided over again by the

contending forces. It is only when the decisive turn has been taken that the highest decision is made known. You can help the greater knowledge to grow in you by trying to get the lesser knowledge.

Disciple: What is our place in this Yoga?

Sri Aurobindo: Your place? What do you mean by the question?

Disciple: I can't explain it, I think.

Sri Aurobindo: You must put precise questions if you want precise answers.

Disciple: Probably he wants to know what is the responsibility of the Sadhakas?

Disciple: Yes, I mean that.

Sri Aurobindo: But I simply said that as a joke, because K wanted to back out.

Disciple: But I took it seriously.

Sri Aurobindo: Well, I did not say it seriously, though there was something behind which was serious. (*All laughed*)

Disciple: This is the Supramental reconciliation of the opposites. (*Laughter again*)

Sri Aurobindo: Well, you can help the attempt by one-pointed aspiration. You should reject everything that stands in the way of fulfilling this ideal. But, if instead of doing that, you go on accepting the suggestions of the hostile forces and repeat their *mantrams* which would give you or give others the idea that it is not possible then you help them.

Disciple: I will put one question.

Sri Aurobindo: It is time now, put it some other day.

A. B. PURANI

(*Evening Talks*, pp. 496-504)

Sri Aurobindo came to tell us how to find Thee and how to serve Thee.

Grant that in this year of his centenary we may truly understand what he has taught us and in all sincerity put it into practice.

(CWM: 13, p. 15)

15 August 1926

Sri Aurobindo's speech:

I shall say a few words to-day about the 15th of August. The question was one that was recently put to me and I gave a negative answer in order to remove certain mental and conventional notions on the matter.

I shall now speak about the positive side of the matter. There is another side to it and if there were not that other side there would be no use in this celebration. I shall not refer to the personal aspect for very obvious reasons, but I shall say something in general with regard to what it can and ought to mean in regard to the Yoga, the common object we all have in view.

What that object—that Yoga—is, you know in principle. It is the bringing down of a Consciousness, a Power, a Light, a Reality that is other than the consciousness which satisfies the ordinary man upon earth: a Consciousness, a Power and Light of Truth, a Divine Reality which is destined to raise the earth-consciousness and transform everything here.

That cannot take place unless there is a decision from Above. But, also, it cannot be unless the earth-consciousness itself is in some part of it, in some of those who dwell here upon these lower planes, ready to receive. Once this Consciousness, the Power, descends it is there for all times and every day for those who are willing and fit to receive it.

But we have attached a special importance to this day and it is justified if we live in the light of the Truth it symbolises. For this day we can fix a mark in the stage of the individual and general progress. It is a day which ought to be a day of consecration, of self-examination and a preparation for future advance, if possible, for the reception of a special Power which would carry on the work of advance.

This can only be done in each individually if he takes up the true attitude and lives on that day under the right conditions.

That was what I meant when I spoke the other day. It is we who can make it a decisive day in this sense, and it is we who can help to fulfil it.

There must be a consecration from beforehand, and a looking inward on the past to see how far we have reached, what in us is ready; what in us has not yet changed and has yet to be changed, what stands behind waiting for a complete transformation; what still resists and what is still obscure. There must be the aspiration, a calling down of the Power to effect the change which we see to be necessary.

All this we cannot do if we throw ourselves out on this day, but only by an intense concentration so that the internal being is ready, and turned upwards to receive the Light. In proportion as we admit an externalising movement we disturb the higher

working and waste the energy needed for the work of inner change. Whatever is done other than on ordinary days should be done either as a part of the movement itself, or as something which is held on the outskirts of the being and cannot disturb the inner movement. And all the customary circumstances of the day must be used for advance.

And if you came to me in the morning, it should have been in fulfilment of a customary ceremony but with your souls and minds prepared to receive. If you listen to me now and if it is merely something that touches your mental interest and satisfies a mental interest I would rather remain silent. But if it touches somewhere the inner being, the soul, then only this day has a utility, or a purpose. And the meditation too ought to be done under such conditions that even if nothing decisive descends there would be a certain infiltration the results of which would come afterwards.

That is the one meaning of the 15th of August from the point of view of our Yoga.

As to taking stock of the work, where you are and the work, how far it is done, etc., certain things ought to be remembered. You know them with the mind.

First, remember that what are the objects of other yogas are for us only the first stages, or first conditions. In the former ways of yoga men were satisfied if they could feel the Brahmic Consciousness or the cosmic consciousness or some descent of Light and Power, some intimation of the Infinite.

It was thought sufficient if the mind got certain spiritual experiences and underwent partial transformation and the vital being was in contact with it.

They sought for a static condition and considered release as the final goal, and final aim.

To realise all this, to be open to the Infinite and Universal Power, to receive its intimations and to have experiences, to completely go beyond the ego, to realise the Universal Mind, Universal Soul, the Universal Spirit, that is only the first condition.

We have to call down this greater Consciousness directly into the vital being and into the physical being, so that the supreme calm and universality will be there in all its fullness from top to bottom.

If this cannot be done then the first condition of transformation is not fulfilled.

The second thing we have to know and remember is that nothing is perfectly done unless all is perfectly done. It is not sufficient to open the mind and the vital being and leave the physical being to its obscurity.

So in the transformation also, mind cannot be transformed unless the vital being is transformed. And if the vital being is not transformed nothing can be realised; because it is the vital being that realises. So if the mind is only partially changed and if the vital being is open and also partially changed it is not sufficient for our purpose. Because the whole range of the vital being cannot be changed unless the physical being also is opened and changed, for the divine vital cannot realise itself in an unfitting environmental life.

And it is not enough for the inner physical being to be changed if the external man is not transformed. In this process of Yoga there is a whole totality and each depends upon the other. Therefore to stop short may be a preparation for another life but it is not the victory. All has to be changed before anything permanently can be changed. The third thing to remember is that if all is to be changed and done then there must be complete surrender.

It means there must be no reservation in any part of the being, no compromise with old customary thoughts and human ways of doing things. Wherever anything is reserved, it means the Truth is not accepted and we shall commit, again, the old mistake of partial achievement and transformation. We should leave no field for the indulgence of ignorance.

For us there can be no such theories, no such compromise between falsehood and Truth, between the Supreme and the Lower Nature. It is by remembering these things that we have to take stock of our work. To see how much is to be done, not in any spirit of pessimism because the way is long and hard and cannot be done by a miracle. It can only be accomplished by a large and thorough movement. Each step you have to take as a mark, as an encouragement, for a step towards the Beyond: on one side no lack of resolution and zeal for the victory to be won, on the other no hasty impatience or depression, but the calm certainty for the Divine Will, the calm will that "it shall be done in us" and the aspiration that "it may be done for us so that it may be done for the world."

Conversation with Sri Aurobindo on the 15th August 1926

Disciple: What would you say this time about the success of our efforts? Last time you said that you were certain about it.

Sri Aurobindo: I did not say that I was certain. Let us ask X for information.

Disciple (*to the first one*): Why do you put a question in that way? You can put the question anew on your own account without referring to the past.

Disciple: From the general conditions prevailing now, can you not say whether you are sure or not?

Sri Aurobindo: I am sure and I am not sure.

Disciple: How?

Sri Aurobindo: I can say that I am morally sure but practically not sure. I am not sure practically because the material world is unrepentant. The chief obstacle which may prove to be insurmountable is the resistance of the material world.

Disciple: What do you mean by "unrepentant"?

Sri Aurobindo: I mean that the material world does not care a jot for the Divine or the Divine Life.

Disciple: What do you mean by the resistance of the material world?

Sri Aurobindo: Its impossibility of opening to something high, of conceiving

something different from what it is accustomed to. I am referring to the obscurity and stupidity of the human being, if I may say so. When I speak of the resistance of the material world, I do not mean the external material but the subtle material. There is the subtle and the external material and when I say that Matter is impenetrable, I mean that the subtle material has not accepted the Truth, the material mind has not accepted the Higher Truth. The cells of the material body have a consciousness of their own and that consciousness has to open itself to the Truth. But the material mind does not believe in the Divine possibility of transformation. And as I already said, for us nothing is done unless all is done.

Disciple: How are you morally sure?

Sri Aurobindo: Because I see more and more power coming down into the physical and the physical being is showing signs of awakening.

Disciple: But we know that once the Truth is accepted by the mind, then it presses upon the vital being and opens it to the Higher Truth. And when the vital has opened, it presses upon the physical being. So now as you say that the power is coming down on the physical plane, does it not follow that it will overcome the resistance of the material plane in course of time and the rest will follow naturally?

Sri Aurobindo: It does not necessarily follow.

Disciple: Suppose the material being does not change?

Sri Aurobindo: If it does not, then it would become an insuperable obstacle.

Disciple: Is there no other obstacle to the success except the resistance of Matter?

Sri Aurobindo: No, practically none else.

Disciple: Does it mean that no obstacle will arise from the Asuric forces? I do not mean the Asuric vital world itself but the obstacles from the physical world backed by the Asuric.

Sri Aurobindo: Yes. All this resistance of Matter is backed by the Asuric forces. But if Matter itself yields, then those forces do not count. I do not mean there would be no difficulty from them, but what I mean is that it would have only a secondary importance.

Disciple: What are the conditions to be fulfilled before the resistance can be overcome and have we any responsibilities in fulfilling them?

Sri Aurobindo: Conditions! It is more than I can say. (*Pause*) You would not understand it even if I were to say it.

Disciple: Let us hear it. We shall try to understand it.

Sri Aurobindo: Well, the condition is that if man could open a direct connection with the world of the Gods, then only it would be possible.

Disciple: I do not understand unless you explain every word of it.

Sri Aurobindo: So I said.

Disciple: Do you mean the lower or the higher gods?

Sri Aurobindo: I mean *the Gods*, and not the vital gods nor the mental gods.

Disciple: But if the subtle physical accepts the Higher Truth?

Sri Aurobindo: It may have accepted in my case but that proves nothing. It does not mean that it is established in the Universal or that it is fundamentally and radically changed.

Disciple: Will not the whole physical yield to it?

Sri Aurobindo: Of course, it is logically but not practically certain.

Disciple: But then is there no sign of its changing its attitude?

Sri Aurobindo: No, as yet there is no decisive sign of any change; but as more and more Power is descending into the physical, I may say that I am morally sure that the material will yield.

Disciple: If the laws of Matter change, will not Matter cease to be Matter?

Sri Aurobindo: Why?

Disciple: Because certain laws define the nature of Matter.

Sri Aurobindo: What do you mean by laws? What you call laws are mere habits. If you change your habits you still remain yourself.

Disciple: Can a few persons by their Sadhana change the laws of the material world?

Sri Aurobindo: We do not intend to change the external material being. Only, in certain cases where the man is open to the Higher Power, this change would take place and not in everybody's case. Its success would not mean success for all and equally for all.

Disciple: Is the attitude of humanity as a whole a factor for success or failure in the effort?

Sri Aurobindo: Of course, it does count for something, but it does not radically affect the issue.

Disciple: What is the difference between the physical mind and the material mind?

Sri Aurobindo: The material mind is a part of the physical.

Disciple: What is the physical?

Sri Aurobindo: As I have not got the same inspiration of the subject, I shall ask X to explain it. (*Pause*)

I spoke about four things in the physical: (1) physical mind, (2) physical vital, (3) Matter proper and (4) the Supermind in the physical.

The "physical mind" is, so to say, that end of mental being which comes in contact with the physical world. It is mind limited by Matter, working without the help of ideas, looking only to the physical aspect of the world and taking things as they are. It does not go beyond that view. It depends upon the evidence and knowledge of the physical plane or the knowledge of the external world, it depends upon the evidence of the senses.

The "physical vital" is life limited by the material body—the life-force bound up in Matter. It is life moving in the nervous system. It cannot exist apart from the material body. It is quite different from the vital being proper with its relative freedom.

It is life subject to the laws of Matter. There is a tremendous power in Matter also, but that is not life-force. Life-force is quite apart from the material world. It exists by itself and for itself and does not limit itself down to the material conditions. To the vital being, nothing, however fanciful and even idiotic, seems impossible. That is the grandeur of the vital being. When Napoleon said, “Nothing is impossible, erase the word ‘impossible’ from the dictionary,” it was the vital being that was speaking through him. And it is true that the vital plane does not admit anything as impossible. It does not reject the higher possibilities as the material plane does.

Then comes the material (world) proper. It is what the Europeans call the “Inconscient”. But this Matter which they say is “Inconscient” has a tremendous force behind it. In fact it would be the decisive factor in this effort. If it can’t be done this time, it has to be done some day—at some other time.

Disciple: It is apparent that there is great energy in Matter.

Disciple: Matter and energy are one.

Sri Aurobindo: That is only an aspect of it which the scientist knows.

Disciple: If an atom were broken up, so much energy would be liberated that some scientists say it can blow up the whole world. And merely changing the position of the atoms in a substance, the properties of the substance entirely change. Is this energy you speak of in Matter a form of the same that the scientists speak of?

Sri Aurobindo: Yes. What they know is only one aspect of it. For it is not merely force but has a consciousness of its own, also it can accept and reject things.

The material is dull, inconscient. It does not want to change. It does not want to establish anything. It is the same under all the material conditions, obeying the laws of Matter. Even up till now in the process of evolution Nature has taken thousands and thousands of years to effect this little change in Matter. And even then it has been effected always by some pressure from above, i.e. from the mental or the vital planes, but not by Matter’s own inherent power or strength or consent.

When the vital began to press on the physical (material) it could not carry out its ideas of possibilities and impossibilities there. It established a kind of understanding (compromise) with Matter and it had to accept the limitations of material life.

Disciple: You said that to overcome the resistance of the material plane is possible if one can open a direct connection with the plane of the Gods. Is there a method of attaining to that plane or does it come of its own accord or is it done for one by the Higher Power?

Sri Aurobindo: You have to get rid of the European mentality in you for that. All of you are semi-demi Europeans in your mentality. It requires a definite decision to go beyond the mind and giving up human ways of looking at things. You must avoid the two opposite mistakes of accepting the vital powers as true gods and of being bound by the materialistic attitude.

Disciple: But you said that all decisions are taken Above already before they are accomplished here in this world.

Sri Aurobindo: Long before they occur here.

Disciple: Then the decision as to whether the Truth is going to succeed on the material plane or not must have already been made?

Sri Aurobindo: It may be. But it may not be made known to you. Even if you know it, you have to work in the plane of ignorance. Who can say? We do not know.

Disciple: It will lose all the interest if the decision were known beforehand.

Sri Aurobindo: Ignorance is bliss.

Disciple: The first person plural may not know, but I am asking about the first person singular.

Disciple: If the decision is there, then it is also decided whether it will succeed this time or not.

Sri Aurobindo: Decision where?

Disciple: There (*above*).

Sri Aurobindo: I can say because I know the decision there, and there is not the slightest shadow of doubt that it will one day succeed: but the question is whether it will succeed through us and our endeavours.

Disciple: If it does not succeed this time, will the Light retire?

Sri Aurobindo: It may retire or it may wait. The question is whether the physical plane is ready to accept the Light. Each time up till now it has not accepted the Truth when it came.

Disciple: What do you mean by saying that the European mind is materialistic?

Sri Aurobindo: We mean by the European materialism the attitude that takes matter as the fundamental basis of evolution and the impossibility of accepting what it is not accustomed to.

I am not running down the European mind. It is fine in its own way, but we are trying to effect a decisive change in the physical being. The opposite mistake is also made by those Europeans, who have left the materialistic formula binding down the mind to the acceptance of the laws of the physical being as final, the mistake of accepting the vital powers as the true gods. For example, the people who do psychic research, mediumistic experiments, automatic writing, spirit-communication etc. are the people.

Disciple: Do you mean to say that the physical laws also will be changed?

Sri Aurobindo: What do you mean by a law? What are called laws are mere habits of the physical being, as I have already told you.

Disciple: Will the human body be obliged to change?

Sri Aurobindo: It is not necessary that it should change. It would involve a change in the possibilities and capacities of functions of the physical being. It would not mean a change in the universal physical. It would take place only in the case of persons who are open to the Higher Power. Of course, it would be a miracle if the impenetrable were penetrated.

Disciple: Discoveries of science are not less miraculous to-day.

Sri Aurobindo: It is the material mind that requires the miracles. It believes in the miracles of the past but not in those of the future. It is satisfied when the miracle has become habitual.

A. B. Purani

(*Evening Talks*, pp. 504-14)

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29-7-1926 (*Evening*)

Disciple: What is the use and significance of celebrating the birth of Krishna, Radha, etc.?

Sri Aurobindo: The same significance as any other religious festival.

Disciple: Is there any special spiritual possibility on such birthdays?

Sri Aurobindo: No; in the first place, these birthdays are quite conventional; nobody knows on what day or at what time they were actually born, if born at all. Thus the Christians settled by a conference in the 13th century the day on which they should celebrate the birth of Christ. Secondly, these religious festivals generally give occasion to a great play of the dark vital forces which are not at all helpful to spirituality.

Disciple: Are not these festivals in any way useful to the spiritual life of a people?

Sri Aurobindo: They are useful to the religious life (they develop a certain kind of Bhakti), not to the spiritual.

Disciple: What is the distinction?

Sri Aurobindo: There is a great distinction between the two—thus animals are sacrificed and the heart offered to the gods and many other similar ceremonies. What have they to do with the manifestation of the spirit or the higher power?

Disciple: Those are mere forms and ceremonies.

Sri Aurobindo: Do they not belong to religion?

Disciple: They are not the whole of it.

Sri Aurobindo: What else is there?

Disciple: Some sort of a relation with a higher being is sought to be established.

Sri Aurobindo: There is no relation to anything spiritual—generally the vital devils are worshipped in these festivals.

Disciple: But this is only when religion degenerates.

Sri Aurobindo: It degenerates everywhere. Take the forms of the Roman Catholic religion. What is there but obscurantism and oppression? It is only a play of dark vital forces. Of course there are those who are able to perceive the truth behind these festivals.

Disciple: As the Gita says, people worship demons or gods according to their *śraddhā*.

Sri Aurobindo: Yes.

Disciple: Thus the religious festivals are nothing more than so many national holidays. What is the *national* value of festivals?

Sri Aurobindo: Yes, these are occasions for vital enjoyment.

Disciple: What is the significance of the birthday celebration of a man?

Sri Aurobindo: It is little more than the other celebrations.

Disciple: Is not the birthday of any man of special importance to him?

Sri Aurobindo: Why should it be so?

Disciple: Because, on that day the *jñā* takes the body and renews the process of his evolution.

Sri Aurobindo: From that standpoint, not the birthday, but the moment of conception should be of importance. But as that cannot be ascertained, the people have made a sort of convention to celebrate the day on which a person is born. There would be some meaning if the day on which the man gets the higher consciousness is celebrated.

Disciple: You say that on your birthdays you see a huge change in your consciousness.

Sri Aurobindo: I have never said that. As a matter of fact, the first great change in my consciousness occurred in Baroda in the month of January.

Disciple: Then what is the significance of celebrating the 15th August as your birthday?

Sri Aurobindo: That is little more than a convention—a mode of commemorating things. We concentrate on a certain day and thus a condition is created for some higher possibilities. As a matter of fact, I several times got some light on or near about the 15th August.

Disciple: We expect to get some illumination on the 15th.

Sri Aurobindo: That depends on the conditions to be created by those who are here. If they can have a widespread calm and a receptive attitude, then higher things may descend. But it does not depend on any particular day, it may occur any day when the proper conditions are created.

For the last two years, I found only dark vital forces playing on the 15th August—there was no spiritual illumination. There was a great disturbance due, firstly to the attention that is given to formalities and the kitchen affair and secondly to the fact that all sorts of men try to come here on that day—they cannot harmonise themselves with the atmosphere and create disturbance for others. I should like that the day should be passed calmly and instead of subjecting myself to giving answers to intellectual questions, I should communicate with you in supramental silence.

Disciple: You have no objection to garlanding?

Sri Aurobindo: Very much.

Disciple: Then give us a plan for the 15th August.

Sri Aurobindo: I do not make plans.

Recorded by Anilbaran

(*Sri Aurobindo Circle*, 35th Number, 1979, pp. 22-23)

15-8-1926

Today is Sri Aurobindo's birthday. He completes his fifty-fourth year, having been born in 1872. It has been a long custom to celebrate this event of his physical birth. Formerly the celebration was in a vital manner. From 1923 it is being observed as it should be in keeping with the truth it symbolises.

The whole house was thoroughly cleaned and whitewashed; today it is bedecked with fresh leaves and flowers. All the attached houses have been cleaned and washed and everybody puts up a smart appearance. There have been some new-comers. A special attempt—a joint attempt—is to be made today to bring down the Truth. Individually this day is for stock-taking in sadhana, laying out a programme for the future. This day is to be a landmark, a turning-point as Sri Aurobindo fully explained in the afternoon.

Sri Aurobindo came out at about 11 a.m. and one by one the sadhaks went up (there were only two pairs—husband and wife), and offered their pranams and asked his blessing. When I went up I saw Sri Aurobindo—an embodiment of the Truth he is trying to bring down for us. To me it seemed that his appearance was that of *barābhaya*¹. I worshipped his feet with a few roses and placed a small sum of money (Rs. 5) at his feet. He touched my head. I sat down at his feet, meditated for a minute and then said, “Many kinds of hostile forces are trying to distract me. May I be able to surrender myself completely to you.”² He blessed me with a nod of his head, then with the palm of his hand pressed on my head; I felt as if I had got the truth, my whole being became filled with hope and faith, with force and light. I came down after touching his feet and getting his touch again.

Then I went up to Mirra³ and for the first time entered into Sri Aurobindo's room, his place of sadhana and rest. I went through the same ceremony before Mirra—but sitting at her feet I meditated for a longer time, about 5 minutes.

From the morning a great calm has descended on me. I can easily surrender myself and open myself to the Higher Truth. This has been a day of consecration for me. I have got my programme of sadhana. Henceforth, I am to give up the ordinary

1. Bestower of boon and protection.

2. These two sentences are written mostly in Bengali in the text. They are reproduced here in English translation.

3. The Mother.

human standpoint and live from the standpoint of the higher light.

The vital forces are trying to seduce me—they seem to say, “Follow us and we give you intense enjoyment.” With the help of the blessings of Gurudev, I expect to know their tricks and withdraw my consent from their play.

At 5 p.m. Sri Aurobindo again came out and sat on his chair; Mirra also came with him and sat by his left, ...[beside] the chair. We were altogether 20 sadhaks present including several ladies. Sri Aurobindo spoke for half an hour about the significance of the 15th August; the speech has been fully recorded by Purani. Then there was group meditation for about half an hour after which Sri Aurobindo and Mirra went inside.

During the course of the meditation, I felt a fundamental calm—the mechanical and habitual thoughts, which disturb me at other times, could not enter into my mind and I intimately felt the light above and a flaming aspiration towards it. It was such a delightful experience that I felt shocked when the group was dissolved abruptly.

Sitting silently in my place, I drew up the following programme for my future sadhana.

The fundamental principle to be followed in life is to give up the ordinary way of living from the standpoint of the ordinary human being. I have to take my stand on the Higher Truth and shape my life according to the light received from above.

As to the mind: The mechanical and habitual thoughts are to be discarded or thrown outside. The action of the Buddhi to go on—to receive and interpret the light from above and regulate the acts of life accordingly.

As to the vital: Give up all acts which involve a violent interchange with the vital forces. Observe the play of the vital impulses and the vital forces. See that the lower movement “is coming from below and then withdraw your consent from it and wait keeping yourself open to the higher power to work. It knows better than you what is your need and how to eliminate and transform your nature.”

Cease to act from desire. See your needs with the help of the higher light and exert your will to fulfil them, always depending on, and leaving the consequences to, the higher power.

As to the physical: Try to keep the body in health and fit to carry out any work that may be required of it.

Establish the higher calm throughout the *ādhāra* and for this stand on the Purusha-Prakriti attitude of the Gita.

Take Sri Aurobindo as the representative of the Higher Truth, the higher power and surrender yourself wholly to him as to the Higher Truth.

Have a constant aspiration towards the Higher Truth.

Go on with zeal and resolution but be not impatient or hasty.

Recorded by Anilbaran
(*Sri Aurobindo Circle*, 38th Number, 1982, pp. 39-41)

15-8-1926 (*Evening*)

(In the evening Sri Aurobindo came out at 7.45 p.m. The following is the substance of [a portion of the conversation].

X raised the question whether this year Sri Aurobindo was more sure than before about the success of the attempt at divine life.)

Sri Aurobindo: I am both sure and not sure. I am sure morally, I am not sure practically. Morally sure because the Truth is coming more and more. Practically not sure because the material world is still unrepentant.

Disciple: What do you mean by “unrepentant”?

Sri Aurobindo: The material world does not believe in the possibility of divine life. The European mentality is a great obstacle, though there are other obstacles.

Disciple: Is that obstacle insuperable?

Sri Aurobindo: If it does not change but continues to remain as it is, it will be an insuperable obstacle.

Disciple: How can the change be brought about?

Sri Aurobindo: You will not understand if I say.

Disciple: We shall try — let us hear the answer.

Sri Aurobindo: It will begin to change when it has open connection with the world of Gods.

Disciple: We do not understand unless you explain every word.

Sri Aurobindo: So I said.

In Europe those who have not the European mentality, go to the opposite extreme; instead of opening themselves to the Gods, they resort to the vital forces.

Disciple: What is exactly meant by saying that European science is materialistic?

Sri Aurobindo: That is what I have been so long explaining. They regard matter as wholly inconscient or without consciousness of any kind and they do not believe that matter can be made to become conscious. They do not believe that the laws of matter can be changed. They accept the miracles that have been accomplished but they do not believe that miracles may happen in the future. Matter by itself could never have changed. It is the vital and the mental principle pressing from above which has made possible life and mind in the material world. Now, it is the turn of the supramental pressing from above and transforming the very nature of matter.

Disciple: If the laws of matter are changed, will not matter cease to be matter?

Sri Aurobindo: Why?

Disciple: Because the laws define the nature of matter.

Sri Aurobindo: The laws are only statements of the habits of things, and a thing may change its habits without ceasing to be itself. If you change your habits, you will still be X.

Disciple: Can a few persons by their sadhana change the laws of the material world?

Sri Aurobindo: We do not mean that the whole universe is going to be changed. Only the capacities of matter can be proved in certain cases.

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When I speak of the resistance of the material world, I do not mean the external material world, but the subtle material world. The cells of the material body possess a consciousness. That consciousness has to open itself to the Higher Truth before the real transformation can take place. It is the material mind which does not believe in divine possibilities and does not care for it.

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Disciple: What is the difference between the physical and the material?

Sri Aurobindo: As I explained before, in the physical plane there is the mental, the vital and the material. (*To Y*) Do you remember what I said about the physical mind?

Disciple: It is the mind which presses upon the material plane and organises it.

Sri Aurobindo: No, it is not that. It is the end which comes into contact with the physical world and sees only the physical aspects of things and nothing beyond it; it takes matter as being simply matter and nothing more—it does not see the consciousness inherent in matter. It depends on the material structure of the body and is confined to it, to the material brain.

Similarly, the vital in the physical plane is the life which is bound with matter, with the nervous system; it cannot exist apart from a material body. But the vital proper is quite independent of matter, it is a universal force. There is force in matter, but that force is not life-force. The real life-force is something quite apart from the material world, it exists for its own sake and its possibilities are not bound down by material conditions. When Napoleon said that there was nothing impossible, the term “impossible” was to be erased from the dictionary, it was the vital which was speaking through Napoleon; to the vital nothing seems impossible.

Then the material in the physical is the pure material part of it which is the basis of the rest.

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Disciple: The vital plane, the vital being, the vital Prakriti—these are the three things and they all have to open themselves to the higher power?

Sri Aurobindo: What do you mean by the vital being? If by it you mean the

vital Purusha—it is there supporting the universal vital Prakriti. Apart from the Purusha, there is a vital personality—which may be the combination of many personalities—and this personality is to be changed. This personality is under the influence of the various forces coming from the universal vital Prakriti; it has to be opened to the higher power and thus transformed.

Recorded by Anilbaran

(*Sri Aurobindo Circle*, 38th Number, 1982, pp. 41-43)

30-8-1926 (*Evening*)

Disciple: To-night Sri Krishna will be born.

Sri Aurobindo: He was born long ago.

Disciple: One year Janmastami¹ fell on the 15th August.

Sri Aurobindo: 15th August is specially significant; that is the day of the ascension of the Virgin Mary—that implies that the physical nature is raised to divine nature.

Virgin Mary refers to Nature—Jesus is the divine soul born in man; thus he is both the son of God as well as the son of man. The Catholic priests know this inner significance but they do not express that.

Disciple: Do they not believe in the external Christ and his life?

Sri Aurobindo: Some believe, some do not.

There is a similar description in the Vedas.

(Sri Aurobindo compared some Homeric hymns with Vedic hymns—how cows were stolen by hostile forces and imprisoned in a mountain cave and how Indra with the help of other Gods released the cows who went up. The cows represent light—radiations from the supramental. *Saramā* is intuition. Mind takes the light and breaks it into parts and so forth.)

Recorded by Anilbaran

(*Sri Aurobindo Circle*, 41st Number, 1985, p. 63)

1. Birthday of Sri Krishna.

1926

The Mother takes Charge of the Ashram

Q: On what date in 1926 did Mother take up the full charge of the Ashram?

A: Mother does not at all remember the correct date. It may have been a few days after 15th August. She took up the work completely when I retired.

16-5-1936

(SABCL, Vol. 26, p. 479)

Sri Aurobindo is an emanation of the Supreme who came on earth to announce the manifestation of a new race and a new world: the Supramental.

Let us prepare for it in all sincerity and eagerness.

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Sri Aurobindo has given us the spiritual teaching which teaches us to come in direct contact with the Divine.

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Sri Aurobindo shows us the way towards a glorious future.

(CWM: 13, p. 19)

1934

Darshan

Q: X told me that only ten days were left for the August 15th Darshan. I replied that every day should be considered as the 15th.

A: That is the right attitude. Every day should be regarded as a day when a descent may take place or a contact established with the higher consciousness. Then the 15th itself would be more successful.

4-8-1934

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Q: During this Darshan, instead of Ananda, Force or Light I felt a great dryness.

A: It depends upon your condition whether the Ananda or Force or Light descends or whether the resistance rises. It is the resistance of the ordinary physical consciousness ignorant and obscure that seems to have risen in you. The period of 15th is a period of great descents but also of great resistances. This 15th was no exception.

(SABCL, Vol. 26, p. 195)

*

A Psychic Experience

Q: On the Darshan Day (the 15th August) and the day before it, I felt an intense love for you and for the Mother. It possessed my whole being for some time. And then a high and profound reverence for both of you—and “a happiness that no worldly pleasure can give us”.

A: That is obviously psychic.

25-8-1934

(SABCL, Vol. 26, p. 499)

1935

A Sadhak's Experience during the Darshan of 15 August 1935

(Note: The text is unedited: what the sadhak wrote and the Master read.)

27-8-35

Mother! Since 25th July the darshan day wind began to blow. The unprogressed period that I was feeling throughout was changing into new rhythm and atmosphere.

I had to change my belief also to some extent when I was looking to the past time, I was feeling that I have trod some way into peace and now I was feeling it concretely.

When the darshan-day approached, the movement of the breaking and meeting of the consciousness above¹ was the order of the day. The 14th night excelled.

Mother! I have marked that before my first darshan day there was cleaning of the physical body as I had vomit and purgative without any reason during one night. And then generally uptill last darshan day there was always vomit in the very morning. There was no sensation before and after some time of it. This time I took precaution that when I go for decoration, during previous night I take the tea with others and so I doubt there was vomit. So this time I did not take tea, for which I had a doubt but during 5 & 6 a.m. the same sensation began though this time I did not look to it and it did not come out. Is there any spiritual significance in it, Mother?

Sri Aurobindo: The attack of vomiting was probably a pressure put by the hostile forces to disturb the Darshan. Of course such things can work as a kind of vital-physical purification, but it is better to purify by an inner action and conquer the attack.

Then the most auspicious, peaceful and Anandamaya day followed. Before darshan time in staircase I was trying to concentrate and arranging myself how to surrender the entire being, to remain open, calm and collected and receive whatever was going to bless.

But as soon as I entered the darshan room I forgot myself and did not know when the prearranged palace had fallen down like a pack of cards! I bowed down and as I put my head in Mother's lap I experienced a flow of true Divine love. I saw that the dense white light was going to press into me from above. Then I turned to Sri Aurobindo, did sashtanga Pranam as my own.

1. Refers to the sadhak's previous experience which Sri Aurobindo called the breaking of the crust of the outer physical being & its merging with the inner & higher consciousness.

He blessed me so beautifully, Mother!, that my heart was going to open and emotion was almost on the point of breaking down. The prayer was there to remove my difficulties of physical consciousness which has so strongly surrounded me now and infuse into the Mother's Consciousness. I saw that three times Sri Aurobindo patted my head with His gracious hand and removed something each time. I felt that the exterior veils of mental-vital & physical consciousness were going to be removed at that time. At each time that pure, dense white light was pouring down. Then there was an exchange of smile, and at once I covered His lap completely. When I dashed and put my head into the lap I felt that I have jumped into an ocean of infinite peace and ananda. I forgot myself there. Again Sri Aurobindo caressed and patted my head thrice and specially this time partnered and broke the reserved right and monopoly of the Mother to pat Her children! It was the happy moment for all and not less I! I thought during this time my exterior veil must break and infuse into the inner life. Am I right in my conclusion Mother?

Sri Aurobindo: Yes that is what must now be done and the force was put for that.

Then I offered a flower of divine love and kissed His hand. I felt I was sucking the Divine honey and love. When I was parting after bowing down to the Mother finally, Sri Aurobindo was smiling and looking at me. I experienced a very happy and unexpectedly nice darshan.

When I went down I thought as if I lost something. I thought that I neither saw to the Mother or Sri Aurobindo after doing Pranam, but what was to be happened was happened. Any how I had the full satisfaction of the darshan. Then I sat for meditation for some time to assimilate silently what was already descended.

I saw that a descent of power in each cell was raining, peace and anand was overflowing. Even the current of coolness was passing into the most material physical body. I was feeling coolness too, in the abdomen.²

After darshan days I feel that the days of the previous period have passed. And I expect very happy and nice days that are to follow, by Thy Grace.

Sri Aurobindo: Let it be so.

28-8-35³

2. This is a repeat of another previous experience of the sadhak which Sri Aurobindo had said was the effect of purification in that part of being.

3. Sri Aurobindo's comment and this date are so situated in the manuscript.

1936

Crossing of a Border

The last Darshan [15th August 1936] was good on the whole. I am not now trying to bring anything sensational down on these days, but I am watching the progress in the action of the Force and Consciousness that are already there, the infiltration of a greater Light and Power from above, and there was a very satisfactory crossing of a difficult border which promises well for the near future. A thing has been done which had long failed to accomplish itself and which is of great importance. I don't explain now, because it forms part of an arranged whole which is explicable only when it is complete. But it gives a sort of strong practical assurance that the thing will be done.

26-8-1936

(SABCL, Vol. 26, p. 161)

***Sri Aurobindo does not belong to the past nor to history.
Sri Aurobindo is the Future advancing towards its realisation.
Thus we must shelter the eternal youth required for a speedy
advance, in order not to become laggards on the way.***

(CWM: 13, p. 5)

1940

During the War

May 20, 1940

Q: Hitler's declaration that before August 15 the War is to be finished and peace agreed upon seems significant.

Sri Aurobindo: That is the sign that he is the enemy of our work. And from the values involved in the conflict, it should be quite clear that what is behind him is the Asuric, the Titanic power....

Q: It is strange how he takes his decisions.

Sri Aurobindo: It is not he who takes the decisions. The Being behind him decided.... This Being comes here from time to time and sees what kind of work is going on.

Q: It knows that the work here is against its own interests?

Sri Aurobindo (*laughing*): Of course!... It is a very powerful Being. Paul Richard was in communion with this Being and the plans and methods he has written of in his book *Lord of the Nations*, are the same as carried out now. He has said there that the present civilisation is to be destroyed but really it is the destruction of the human values of civilisation that is aimed at and already in Germany Hitler had done it.... And he has destroyed these values wherever he has gone. Human beings by themselves are no match for the Asuras.... In Hitler's case it is not an influence but a possession, even perhaps an incarnation. The case of Stalin is similar. The vital world has descended upon the physical. That is why the intellectuals are getting perplexed at the destruction of their civilisation, of all the values they had cherished and stood for. They deny the existence of the world beyond the physical and so they are bound to be perplexed.

In another context, Sri Aurobindo observed, "It is a very simple thing to see that Hitler wants world-domination and his next move will be towards India."

On 29.5.40 the Mother gave us a message that the Asuras can't be victorious eternally against the Divine. The end of Hitler must come. Sri Aurobindo remarked: "That doesn't mean by the Allies.... If England goes down, there won't be any country left independent except Russia, Germany, Japan and Italy. I am talking of the old world. I think the next conflict will be between Russia and Germany. If Russia finds

that England is in a difficult position, then Stalin will put pressure on Turkey and Rumania for the control of the Black Sea as he has done with the Baltic States. Hitler is not likely to keep quiet about the trouble in the Balkans. With Italy's help he may settle the Asia Minor and Balkan problem or he may allow Stalin a free hand now, knowing that he can settle with him afterwards."

We can see here that Sri Aurobindo envisaged a war between Russia and Germany, when there was hardly any possibility of it.

August 15, 1940

On this day—Sri Aurobindo's birthday—the radio news at noon said that 144 German planes had been brought down over England in half a day, the biggest number so far. We commented that it was the result of the Darshan. Sri Aurobindo laughed and said: "The day of Hitler's triumphal entry into England!"

A month later, on the same date, 15.9.40, Sri Aurobindo said smiling, "England has destroyed 175 German planes, a very big number. Now invasion would be difficult. Hitler lost his chance after the fall of France. He had really missed the bus! If after the French collapse he had invaded England, by now he would have been in Asia. Now another force has been set up against him. Still the danger has not passed."

Apropos of this battle and its date, the editor of *Mother India* wrote, "...[Hitler] fixed in 1940 the 15th of August as the day on which he would complete his conquest of Western Europe by broadcasting from Buckingham Palace the collapse of Britain... and on that day the largest toll so far was taken of the Luftwaffe... We might indeed designate it as the turning-point in the Battle of Britain."

NIRODBARAN

(*Twelve Years with Sri Aurobindo*, pp. 136-38)

Sri Aurobindo came to tell the world of the beauty of the future that must be realised.

He came to give not a hope but a certitude of the splendour towards which the world moves. The world is not an unfortunate accident, it is a marvel which moves towards its expression.

The world needs the certitude of the beauty of the future. And Sri Aurobindo has given that assurance.

(CWM: 13, p. 15)

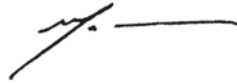
1945

The Victory

The 15th August 1945

*The Victory has come, Thy Victory, O Lord, for which
we render to Thee infinite thanks-giving*

*But now our ardent prayer rises towards Thee
It is with Thy force and by Thy force that the
victors have conquered. Grant that they do not forget
it in their success and that they keep the promises
which they have made to Thee in the hours of
danger and anguish. They have taken Thy name
to make war, may they not forget Thy grace when
they have to make the peace*



The Victory has come, Thy Victory, O Lord, for which we render to Thee infinite thanks-giving.

But now our ardent prayer rises towards Thee. It is with Thy force and by Thy force that the victors have conquered. Grant that they do not forget it in their success and that they keep the promises which they have made to Thee in the hours of danger and anguish. They have taken Thy name to make war, may they not forget Thy grace when they have to make the peace.

15 August 1945

(CWM, Vol. 15, p. 48)

1947

The Present Effort

If I had been standing on the Supermind level and acting on the world by the instrumentation of Supermind, that world would have changed or would be changing much more rapidly and in a different fashion from what is happening now. My present effort is not to stand up on a high and distant Supermind level and change the world from there, but to bring something of it down here and to stand on that and act by that; but at the present stage the progressive supramentalisation of the Overmind is the first immediate preoccupation and a second is the lightening of the heavy resistance of the Inconscient and the support it gives to human ignorance which is always the main obstacle in any attempt to change the world or even to change oneself. I have always said that the spiritual force I have been putting on human affairs such as the War is not the supramental but the Overmind force, and that when it acts in the material world is so inextricably mixed up in the tangle of the lower world forces that its results, however strong or however adequate to the immediate object, must necessarily be partial. That is why I am getting a birthday present of a free India on August 15, but complicated by its being presented in two packets as two free Indias: this is a generosity I could have done without, one free India would have been enough for me if offered as an unbroken whole.

7-7-1947

(SABCL, Vol. 26, pp. 170-71)

In what ways can those connected with Sri Aurobindo and the Mother best celebrate the Birth Centenary of Sri Aurobindo?

Aspire and be sincere and obstinate in your endeavour.

In what way can people in general best celebrate the Birth Centenary of Sri Aurobindo?

Make an effort to progress in understanding.

(CWM: 13, p. 14)

1947

*Sri Aurobindo's Message for the Fifteenth of August 1947**

I

August 15th is the birthday of free India. It marks for her the end of an old era, the beginning of a new age. But it has a significance not only for us, but for Asia and the whole world; for it signifies the entry into the comity of nations of a new power with untold potentialities which has a great part to play in determining the political, social, cultural and spiritual future of humanity. To me personally it must naturally be gratifying that this date which was notable only for me because it was my own birthday celebrated annually by those who have accepted my gospel of life, should have acquired this vast significance. As a mystic, I take this identification, not as fortuitous accident, but as a sanction and seal of the Divine Power which guides my steps on the work with which I began life. Indeed almost all the world movements which I hoped to see fulfilled in my lifetime, though at that time they looked like impossible dreams, I can observe on this day either approaching fruition or initiated and on the way to their achievement.

I have been asked for a message on this great occasion, but I am perhaps hardly in a position to give one. All I can do is to make a personal declaration of the aims and ideals conceived in my childhood and youth and now watched in their beginning of fulfilment, because they are relevant to the freedom of India, since they are a part of what I believe to be India's future work, something in which she cannot but take a leading position. For I have always held and said that India was arising, not to serve her own material interests only, to achieve expansion, greatness, power and prosperity, — though these too she must not neglect,—and certainly not like others to acquire domination of other peoples, but to live also for God and the world as a helper and leader of the whole human race. Those aims and ideals were in their natural order these: a revolution which would achieve India's freedom and her unity; the resurgence and liberation of Asia and her return to the great role which she had played in the progress of human civilisation; the rise of a new, a greater, brighter and nobler life for mankind which for its entire realisation would rest outwardly on an international unification of the separate existence of the peoples, preserving and securing their national life but drawing them together into an overriding and consummating oneness; the gift by India of her spiritual knowledge and her means for the spiritualisation of

* This message, given at the request of the All India Radio, Trichinopoly, for the 15th August 1947, is in two versions. The original version was found to be a little too long for the time allotted for the message; so in the second version it was slightly abridged and recast. It is this second version that was broadcast from the All India Radio on the 14th August 1947. Both the versions are published here consecutively.

life to the whole race; finally, a new step in the evolution which, by uplifting the consciousness to a higher level, would begin the solution of the many problems of existence which have perplexed and vexed humanity, since men began to think and to dream of individual perfection and a perfect society.

India is free but she has not achieved unity, only a fissured and broken freedom. At one time it almost seemed as if she might relapse into the chaos of separate States which preceded the British conquest. Fortunately there has now developed a strong possibility that this disastrous relapse will be avoided. The wisely drastic policy of the Constituent Assembly makes it possible that the problem of the depressed classes will be solved without schism or fissure. But the old communal division into Hindu and Muslim seems to have hardened into the figure of a permanent political division of the country. It is to be hoped that the Congress and the nation will not accept the settled fact as for ever settled or as anything more than a temporary expedient. For if it lasts, India may be seriously weakened, even crippled: civil strife may remain always possible, possible even a new invasion and foreign conquest. The partition of the country must go,—it is to be hoped by a slackening of tension, by a progressive understanding of the need of peace and concord, by the constant necessity of common and concerted action, even of an instrument of union for that purpose. In this way unity may come about under whatever form—the exact form may have a pragmatic but not a fundamental importance. But by whatever means, the division must and will go. For without it the destiny of India might be seriously impaired and even frustrated. But that must not be.

Asia has arisen and large parts of it have been liberated or are at this moment being liberated; its other still subject parts are moving through whatever struggles towards freedom. Only a little has to be done and that will be done today or tomorrow. There India has her part to play and has begun to play it with an energy and ability which already indicate the measure of her possibilities and the place she can take in the council of the nations.

The unification of mankind is under way, though only in an imperfect initiative, organised but struggling against tremendous difficulties. But the momentum is there and, if the experience of history can be taken as a guide, it must inevitably increase until it conquers. Here too India has begun to play a prominent part and, if she can develop that larger statesmanship which is not limited by the present facts and immediate possibilities but looks into the future and brings it nearer, her presence may make all the difference between a slow and timid and a bold and swift development. A catastrophe may intervene and interrupt or destroy what is being done, but even then the final result is sure. For in any case the unification is a necessity in the course of Nature, an inevitable movement and its achievement can be safely foretold. Its necessity for the nations also is clear, for without it the freedom of the small peoples can never be safe hereafter and even large and powerful nations cannot really be secure. India, if she remains divided, will not herself be sure of her safety. It is therefore

to the interest of all that union should take place. Only human imbecility and stupid selfishness could prevent it. Against that, it has been said, even the gods strive in vain; but it cannot stand for ever against the necessity of Nature and the Divine Will. Nationalism will then have fulfilled itself; an international spirit and outlook must grow up and international forms and institutions; even it may be such developments as dual or multilateral citizenship and a voluntary fusion of cultures may appear in the process of the change and the spirit of nationalism losing its militancy may find these things perfectly compatible with the integrity of its own outlook. A new spirit of oneness will take hold of the human race.

The spiritual gift of India to the world has already begun. India's spirituality is entering Europe and America in an ever increasing measure. That movement will grow; amid the disasters of the time more and more eyes are turning towards her with hope and there is even an increasing resort not only to her teachings, but to her psychic and spiritual practice.

The rest is still a personal hope and an idea and ideal which has begun to take hold both in India and in the West on forward-looking minds. The difficulties in the way are more formidable than in any other field of endeavour, but difficulties were made to be overcome and if the Supreme Will is there, they will be overcome. Here too, if this evolution is to take place, since it must come through a growth of the spirit and the inner consciousness, the initiative can come from India and although the scope must be universal, the central movement may be hers.

Such is the content which I put into this date of India's liberation; whether or how far or how soon this connection will be fulfilled, depends upon this new and free India.

II

August 15th, 1947 is the birthday of free India. It marks for her the end of an old era, the beginning of a new age. But we can also make it by our life and acts as a free nation an important date in a new age opening for the whole world, for the political, social, cultural and spiritual future of humanity.

August 15th is my own birthday and it is naturally gratifying to me that it should have assumed this vast significance. I take this coincidence, not as a fortuitous accident, but as the sanction and seal of the Divine Force that guides my steps on the work with which I began life, the beginning of its full fruition. Indeed, on this day I can watch almost all the world-movements which I hoped to see fulfilled in my lifetime, though then they looked like impracticable dreams, arriving at fruition or on their way to achievement. In all these movements free India may well play a large part and take a leading position.

The first of these dreams was a revolutionary movement which would create a

free and united India. India today is free but she has not achieved unity. At one moment it almost seemed as if in the very act of liberation she would fall back into the chaos of separate States which preceded the British conquest. But fortunately it now seems probable that this danger will be averted and a large and powerful, though not yet a complete union will be established. Also, the wisely drastic policy of the Constituent Assembly has made it probable that the problem of the depressed classes will be solved without schism or fissure. But the old communal division into Hindus and Muslims seems now to have hardened into a permanent political division of the country. It is to be hoped that this settled fact will not be accepted as settled for ever or as anything more than a temporary expedient. For if it lasts, India may be seriously weakened, even crippled: civil strife may remain always possible, possible even a new invasion and foreign conquest. India's internal development and prosperity may be impeded, her position among the nations weakened, her destiny impaired or even frustrated.

This must not be; the partition must go. Let us hope that that may come about naturally, by an increasing recognition of the necessity not only of peace and concord but of common action, by the practice of common action and the creation of means for that purpose. In this way unity may finally come about under whatever form—the exact form may have a pragmatic but not a fundamental importance. But by whatever means, in whatever way, the division must go; unity must and will be achieved, for it is necessary for the greatness of India's future.

Another dream was for the resurgence and liberation of the peoples of Asia and her return to her great role in the progress of human civilisation. Asia has arisen; large parts are now quite free or are at this moment being liberated: its other still subject or partly subject parts are moving through whatever struggles towards freedom. Only a little has to be done and that will be done today or tomorrow. There India has her part to play and has begun to play it with an energy and ability which already indicate the measure of her possibilities and the place she can take in the council of the nations.

The third dream was a world-union forming the outer basis of a fairer, brighter and nobler life for all mankind. That unification of the human world is under way; there is an imperfect initiation organised but struggling against tremendous difficulties. But the momentum is there and it must inevitably increase and conquer. Here too India has begun to play a prominent part and, if she can develop that larger statesmanship which is not limited by the present facts and immediate possibilities but looks into the future and brings it nearer, her presence may make all the difference between a slow and timid and a bold and swift development. A catastrophe may intervene and interrupt or destroy what is being done, but even then the final result is sure. For unification is a necessity of Nature, an inevitable movement. Its necessity for the nations is also clear, for without it the freedom of the small nations may be at any moment in peril and the life even of the large and powerful nations insecure. The

unification is therefore to the interests of all, and only human imbecility and stupid selfishness can prevent it; but these cannot stand for ever against the necessity of Nature and the Divine Will. But an outward basis is not enough; there must grow up an international spirit and outlook, international forms and institutions must appear, perhaps such developments as dual or multilateral citizenship, willed interchange or voluntary fusion of cultures. Nationalism will have fulfilled itself and lost its militancy and would no longer find these things incompatible with self-preservation and the integrality of its outlook. A new spirit of oneness will take hold of the human race.

Another dream, the spiritual gift of India to the world has already begun. India's spirituality is entering Europe and America in an ever increasing measure. That movement will grow; amid the disasters of the time more and more eyes are turning towards her with hope and there is even an increasing resort not only to her teachings, but to her psychic and spiritual practice.

The final dream was a step in evolution which would raise man to a higher and larger consciousness and begin the solution of the problems which have perplexed and vexed him since he first began to think and to dream of individual perfection and a perfect society. This is still a personal hope and an idea, an ideal which has begun to take hold both in India and in the West on forward-looking minds. The difficulties in the way are more formidable than in any other field of endeavour, but difficulties were made to be overcome and if the Supreme Will is there, they will be overcome. Here too, if this evolution is to take place, since it must proceed through a growth of the spirit and the inner consciousness, the initiative can come from India and, although the scope must be universal, the central movement may be hers.

Such is the content which I put into this date of India's liberation; whether or how far this hope will be justified depends upon the new and free India.

(SABCL, Vol. 26, pp. 400-06)

*Sri Aurobindo is always present.
Be sincere and faithful.
This is the first condition.
Blessings.*

(CWM: 13, p. 15)

1947

Invocation

15 August 1947

O our Mother, O Soul of India, Mother who hast never forsaken thy children even in the days of darkest depression, even when they turned away from thy voice, served other masters and denied thee, now when they have arisen and the light is on thy face in this dawn of thy liberation, in this great hour we salute thee. Guide us so that the horizon of freedom opening before us may be also a horizon of true greatness and of thy true life in the community of the nations. Guide us so that we may be always on the side of great ideals and show to men thy true visage, as a leader in the ways of the spirit and a friend and helper of all the peoples.

*

The Mother's Flag

(About the "Mother's flag", which contains her symbol in gold centred on a silver-blue background)

It is the flag of India's spiritual mission. And in the accomplishment of this mission will India's unity be accomplished.

15 August 1947

(CWM, Vol. 13, p. 36)

1947

Recording of the Message and the Broadcast

On a request from All India Radio, Trichinopoly, Sri Aurobindo gave a message that was broadcast on the eve of Sri Aurobindo's birthday and the Independence day.

This message was dictated to Nirodbaran, and when it was broadcast, Sri Aurobindo himself heard it on the radio.

The message was broadcast in the Mother's voice.

Here is an English translation of a note in French from a sadhak's diary.

Mritunjoy wrote:

9th August 1947

Technicians have come from Trichy and recorded Sri Aurobindo's message read by the Mother at 6 p.m. I helped them arrange the tables etc. and thus I had the good fortune of participating in this rare ceremony.

Infinite gratitude to Thee. I heard Thy voice—Unique and Sublime during the recording of Sri Aurobindo's message for the 15th of August and your "Invocation"—it was marvellous.

Unfortunately, we do not have these recordings with us.

(From the typescript of a programme for 15 August 2000, held at the Ashram School.)

Each one has his own idea and finds out suitable sentences from Sri Aurobindo's writings to support his views. Those who oppose such views can also find suitable sentences from his writings. That is the way mutual opposition works. Nothing can be truly done until Sri Aurobindo's total view of things is taken.

(CWM: 13, p. 22)

1947

Hoisting of the Flag

15 August 1947

It was on this occasion that for the first time the Mother hoisted her flag over the terrace of Sri Aurobindo's room. The Master called it the spiritual flag of India.

The Mother appeared on the... terrace of Dyuman's room when the members of the Ashram greeted her by the singing of *Bande Mataram* at the end of which the Mother called out "Jai Hind" with a look and a gesture the sight of which some of us still remember. The evening programme included illumination inside the Ashram.

The liberation of India coincided with the 75th anniversary of Sri Aurobindo's birth. Flags and festoons with the Mother's symbol printed on them decorated the Ashram premises for the first time.... The total number (of visitors) rose to two thousand. That was the largest gathering in the Ashram during the life-time of the Master. To provide for the extra accomodation... a big new tarpaulin had to be put up in the Playground.

NARAYAN PRASAD

(Life in Sri Aurobindo Ashram, p.153)

Sri Aurobindo has come on earth not to bring a teaching or a creed in competition with previous creeds or teachings, but to show the way to overpass the past and to open concretely the route towards an imminent and inevitable future.

(CWM: 13, p. 4)

1949

Request for a Message

Q: What has happened to my letter of request for a Message to grace the Special Number of “Mother India” of August 15? I have heard nothing from you.

A: I have been trying to get you informed without success about the impossibility of your getting your expected Message from me for the 15th August. I had and have no intention of writing a Message for my birthday this year. It is psychologically impossible for me to manufacture one to command; an inspiration would have to come and it is highly improbable that any will come in this short space of time; I myself have no impulse towards it. But how is it that you have clean forgotten my rule of not writing any article for an outside paper, magazine or journal—I mean other than those conducted from the Ashram by the Ashram—and even for these I write nothing new except for the *Bulletin* at the Mother’s request,—also my reasons for this fixed rule? If I started doing that kind of thing, my freedom would be gone; I would have to write at everybody’s command, not only articles but blessings, replies on public questions and all the rest of that kind of conventional rubbish. I would be like any ordinary politician publishing my views on all and sundry matters, discoursing on all sorts of subjects, a public man at the disposal of the public. That would make myself, my blessings, my views and my Messages exceedingly cheap; in fact, I would no longer be Sri Aurobindo. Already the *Hindusthan Standard*, the *Madras Mail* and I know not what other journals and societies are demanding at the pistol’s point special messages for themselves and I am supposed to stand and deliver. I won’t. I regret that I must disappoint you, but self-preservation is a first law of nature.

3-8-1949

(SABCL, Vol. 26, pp. 376-77)

Sri Aurobindo is constantly among us and reveals himself to those who are ready to see and hear him.

(CWM: 13, p. 11)

1949

*A Message to America**

I have been asked to send on this occasion of the fifteenth August a message to the West, but what I have to say might be delivered equally as a message to the East. It has been customary to dwell on the division and difference between these two sections of the human family and even oppose them to each other; but, for myself I would rather be disposed to dwell on oneness and unity than on division and difference. East and West have the same human nature, a common human destiny, the same aspiration after a greater perfection, the same seeking after something higher than itself, something towards which inwardly and even outwardly we move. There has been a tendency in some minds to dwell on the spirituality or mysticism of the East and the materialism of the West; but the West has had no less than the East its spiritual seekings and, though not in such profusion, its saints and sages and mystics, the East has had its materialistic tendencies, its material splendours, its similar or identical dealings with life and Matter and the world in which we live. East and West have always met and mixed more or less closely, they have powerfully influenced each other and at the present day are under an increasing compulsion of Nature and Fate to do so more than ever before.

There is a common hope, a common destiny, both spiritual and material, for which both are needed as co-workers. It is no longer towards division and difference that we should turn our minds, but on unity, union, even oneness necessary for the pursuit and realisation of a common ideal, the destined goal, the fulfilment towards which Nature in her beginning obscurely set out and must in an increasing light of knowledge replacing her first ignorance constantly persevere.

But what shall be that ideal and that goal? That depends on our conception of the realities of life and the supreme Reality.

Here we have to take into account that there has been, not any absolute difference but an increasing divergence between the tendencies of the East and the West. The highest truth is truth of the Spirit; a Spirit supreme above the world and yet immanent in the world and in all that exists, sustaining and leading all towards whatever is the aim and goal and the fulfilment of Nature since her obscure inconscient beginnings through the growth of consciousness is the one aspect of existence which gives a clue to the secret of our being and a meaning to the world. The East has always and increasingly put the highest emphasis on the supreme truth of the Spirit; it has, even in its extreme philosophies, put the world away as an illusion and regarded the Spirit

* Given in response to a request for a message on the occasion of Sri Aurobindo's birth anniversary celebrations in New York on the 15th August 1949.

as the sole reality. The West has concentrated more and more increasingly on the world, on the dealings of mind and life with our material existence, on our mastery over it, on the perfection of mind and life and some fulfilment of the human being here: latterly this has gone so far as the denial of the Spirit and even the enthronement of Matter as the sole reality. Spiritual perfection as the sole ideal on one side, on the other, the perfectibility of the race, the perfect society, a perfect development of the human mind and life and man's material existence have become the largest dream of the future. Yet both are truths and can be regarded as part of the intention of the Spirit in world-nature; they are not incompatible with each other: rather their divergence has to be healed and both have to be included and reconciled in our view of the future.

The Science of the West has discovered evolution as the secret of life and its process in this material world; but it has laid more stress on the growth of form and species than on the growth of consciousness: even, consciousness has been regarded as an incident and not the whole secret of the meaning of the evolution. An evolution has been admitted by certain minds in the East, certain philosophies and Scriptures, but there its sense has been the growth of the soul through developing or successive forms and many lives of the individual to its own highest reality. For if there is a conscious being in the form, that being can hardly be a temporary phenomenon of consciousness; it must be a soul fulfilling itself and this fulfilment can only take place if there is a return of the soul to earth in many successive lives, in many successive bodies.

The process of evolution has been the development from and in inconscient Matter of a subconscious and then a conscious Life, of conscious mind first in animal life and then fully in conscious and thinking man, the highest present achievement of evolutionary Nature. The achievement of mental being is at present her highest and tends to be regarded as her final work; but it is possible to conceive a still further step of the evolution: Nature may have in view beyond the imperfect mind of man a consciousness that passes out of the mind's ignorance and possesses truth as its inherent right and nature. There is a Truth-Consciousness as it is called in the Veda, a Supermind, as I have termed it, possessing Knowledge, not having to seek after it and constantly miss it. In one of the Upanishads, a being of knowledge is stated to be the next step above the mental being; into that the soul has to rise and through it to attain the perfect bliss of spiritual existence. If that could be achieved as the next evolutionary step of Nature here, then she would be fulfilled and we could conceive of the perfection of life even here, its attainment of a full spiritual living even in this body or it may be in a perfected body. We could even speak of a divine life on earth; our human dream of perfectibility would be accomplished and at the same time the aspiration to a heaven on earth common to several religions and spiritual seers and thinkers.

The ascent of the human soul to the supreme Spirit is that soul's highest aim

and necessity, for that is, the supreme reality; but there can be too the descent of the Spirit and its powers into the world and that would justify the existence of the material world also, give a meaning, a divine purpose to the creation and solve its riddle. East and West could be reconciled in the pursuit of the highest and largest ideal, Spirit embrace Matter and Matter find its own true reality and the hidden Reality in all things in the Spirit.

11-8-1949

(SABCL, Vol. 26, pp. 413-16)

Sri Aurobindo is in the subtle physical, you can meet him when you sleep, if you know how to go there.

*

Sri Aurobindo shows himself according to the need of each one and in the subtle physical the things are not as fixed as they are here.

Attach more importance to the feeling produced by the vision than to details of what you have seen.

(CWM: 13, p. 12)

1950

15 August 1950

Our sadhana has reached a stage in which we are mostly dealing with the subconscious and even the inconscient. As a consequence the physical determinism has taken a predominant position bringing an increase of difficulties on the way which have to be faced with an increase of courage and determination.

In any case, whatever happens and whatever you do, do not allow FEAR to invade you. At the slightest touch of it, react and call for help.

You must learn not to identify with your body and treat it as a young child who needs to be convinced that it must not fear.

FEAR is the greatest of all enemies and we must overcome it here, once for all.

(CWM, Vol. 15, pp. 196-97)

*

Lord, give me the strength of a total and perfect sincerity that I may be worthy of Thy Realisation.

15 August 1950

(CWM, Vol. 15, p. 226)

Since the beginning of earth history, Sri Aurobindo has always presided over the great earthly transformations, under one form or another, one name or another.

(CWM: 13, p. 10)

1954

A Declaration

I want to mark this day by the expression of a long cherished wish; that of becoming an Indian citizen. From the first time I came to India—in 1914—I felt that India is my true country, the country of my soul and spirit. I had decided to realise this wish as soon as India would be free. But I had to wait still longer because of my heavy responsibilities for the Ashram here in Pondicherry. Now the time has come when I can declare myself.

But, in accordance with Sri Aurobindo's ideal, my purpose is to show that truth lies in union rather than in division. To reject one nationality in order to obtain another is not an ideal solution. So I hope I shall be allowed to adopt a double nationality, that is to say, to remain French while I become an Indian.

I am French by birth and early education, I am Indian by choice and predilection. In my consciousness there is no antagonism between the two, on the contrary, they combine very well and complete one another. I know also that I can be of service to both equally, for my only aim in life is to give a concrete form to Sri Aurobindo's great teaching and in his teaching he reveals that all the nations are essentially one and meant to express the Divine Unity upon earth through an organised and harmonious diversity.

15 August 1954

(CWM, Vol. 13, p. 43)

It is said that Sri Aurobindo in a past life took an active part in the French Revolution. Is it true?

You can say that all through history Sri Aurobindo played an active part. Especially in the most important movements of history he was there—and playing the most important, the leading part. But he was not always visible.

(CWM: 13, p. 10)

1954-55

Three Messages

A steady hope helps much on the way.

15 August 1954

(CWM, Vol. 14, p. 186)

*

The closer you come to the Divine, the more you live under a shower of overwhelming evidence of His immeasurable Grace.

15 August 1955

(CWM, Vol. 14, p. 93)

*

Without self-giving there is no love; but self-giving is very rare in human love which is full of selfishness and demands.

15 August 1955

(CWM, Vol. 14, p. 127)

Open to Sri Aurobindo's consciousness and let it transform your life.

(CWM: 13, p. 14)

A Talk of the Mother

“It is here that the emergence of the secret psychic being in us as the leader of the sacrifice is of the utmost importance; for this inmost being alone can bring with it the full power of the spirit in the act, the soul in the symbol. It alone can assure, even while the spiritual consciousness is incomplete, the perennial freshness and sincerity and beauty of the symbol and prevent it from becoming a dead form or a corrupted and corrupting magic; it alone can preserve for the act its power with its significance. All the other members of our being, mind, life-force, physical or body consciousness are too much under the control of the Ignorance to be a sure instrumentation and much less can they be a guide or the source of an unerring impulse. Always the greater part of the motive and action of these powers clings to the old law, the deceiving tablets, the cherished inferior movements of Nature and they meet with reluctance, alarm or revolt or obstructing inertia the voices and the forces that call and impel us to exceed and transform ourselves into a greater being and a wider Nature. In their major part the response is either a resistance or a qualified or temporising acquiescence; for even if they follow the call, they yet tend—when not consciously, then by automatic habit—to bring into the spiritual action their own natural disabilities and errors. At every moment they are moved to take egoistic advantage of the psychic and spiritual influences and can be detected using the power, joy or light these bring into us for a lower life-motive. Afterwards too, even when the seeker has opened to the Divine Love transcendental, universal or immanent, yet if he tries to pour it into life, he meets the power of obscuration and perversion of these lower Nature-forces. Always they draw away towards pitfalls, pour into that higher intensity their diminishing elements, seek to capture the descend-ing Power for themselves and their interests and degrade it into an aggrandised mental, vital or physical instrumentation for desire and ego. Instead of a Divine Love creator of a new heaven and a new earth of Truth and Light, they would hold it here prisoner as a tremendous sanction and glorifying force of sublimation to gild the mud of the old earth and colour with its rose and sapphire the old turbid unreal skies of sentimentalising vital imagination and mental idealised chimera. If that falsification is permitted, the higher Light and Power and Bliss withdraw, there is a fall back to a lower status; or else the realisation remains tied to an insecure half-way and mixture or is covered and even submerged by an inferior exaltation that is not the true Ananda. It is for this reason that the Divine Love which is at the heart of all creation and the most powerful of all redeeming and creative forces has yet been the least frontally

present in earthly life, the least successfully redemptive, the least creative. Human nature has been unable to bear it in its purity for the very reason that it is the most powerful, pure, rare and intense of all the divine energies; what little could be seized has been corrupted at once into a vital pietistic ardour, a defenceless religious or ethical sentimentalism, a sensuous or even sensual erotic mysticism of the roseate coloured mind or passionately turbid life-impulse and with these simulations compensated its inability to house the Mystic Flame that could rebuild the world with its tongues of sacrifice. It is only the inmost psychic being unveiled and emerging in its full power that can lead the pilgrim sacrifice unscathed through these ambushes and pitfalls; at each moment it catches, exposes, repels the mind's and the life's falsehoods, seizes hold on the truth of the Divine Love and Ananda and separates it from the excitement of the mind's ardours and the blind enthusiasm of the misleading life-force. But all things that are true at their core in mind and life and the physical being it extricates and takes with it in the journey till they stand on the heights, new in spirit and sublime in figure."

Sri Aurobindo

(The Synthesis of Yoga, pp. 155-57)

This is the most powerful, the most complete and true answer to all the questions which so many people have in their heads but do not dare to ask.

So many people doubt the effectiveness of the Protection, the safety of the Path, because others go astray. And in their egoism they tremble with fear instead of telling themselves what I have just been reading to you this evening, what is the cause of all catastrophes, small or great, which threaten those who follow the path of yoga without having taken the necessary care to be sufficiently pure and sincere.

No protection, no Grace can save those who refuse the indispensable purification.

And I would add this: that fear is an impurity, one of the greatest impurities, one of those which come most directly from the anti-divine forces which want to destroy the divine action on earth; and the first duty of those who really want to do yoga is to eliminate from their consciousness, with all the might, all the sincerity, all the endurance of which they are capable, even the shadow of a fear. To walk on the path, one must be dauntless, and never indulge in that petty, small, feeble, nasty shrinking back upon oneself, which is fear.

An indomitable courage, a perfect sincerity and a sincere self-giving, so that one does not calculate or bargain, does not give with the idea of receiving, does not trust with the idea of being protected, does not have a faith which asks for proofs—it is this that is indispensable in order to walk on the path, and it is this alone which can truly shelter you from all dangers.

(Silence)

You have a question, yes?

*Sweet Mother, why does one feel a different atmosphere on Darshan days?**
What should one do on these days?

Different? You ask this question!... There is an invasion of more or less dark and foreign elements, who may come with goodwill, possibly, but who come with an almost total ignorance and throw it all out in the atmosphere; and so, naturally, if one is the least bit open to what is happening, one feels crushed under the weight of this increased ignorance.

I don't mean that there is no ignorance here! But still, the dose is different. Here, for all that, there is a sort of manipulation of the consciousness going on constantly, night and day, visibly, invisibly; and whether one wants it or not, in spite of everything one takes it in, and after some time it acts.

When a few people come, something changes, but it is not so much as to give a painful feeling; but when it is a rush like this, dashing in all at once, then the whole level comes down immediately, and unless one is able to withdraw into oneself and keep one's head above these submerging waters, this swamping flood of ignorance, if one can't raise one's head above it, well, one feels very uneasy.

No, Mother, it is an atmosphere of joy!

You find it an atmosphere of joy!

Yes, Mother.

Then it is personal, my child. It is something purely personal. And you ought to be able to keep it.

It comes because at this time there are memories awakening in you, a certain concentration. Or perhaps what you call joy is a vital pleasure, no? Isn't it a sort of excitement? When do you feel this joy?

Today, it was after Darshan.

I think it is the same thing that happens to people who are more receptive on their birthdays or who need to remember an event to awaken their receptivity.

In the days when Sri Aurobindo used to give Darshan, before he gave it there was always a concentration of certain forces or of a certain realisation which he

* On Darshan days, visitors and disciples were allowed to pass one by one in front of Mother (and formerly Sri Aurobindo) to receive directly their spiritual help. August 15, Sri Aurobindo's birthday, is one of the four Darshans of the year. This year (1956) there was a particularly large number of visitors.

wanted to give to people. And so each Darshan marked a stage forward; each time something was added. But that was at a time when the number of visitors was very limited. It was organised in another way, and it was part of the necessary preparation.

But this special concentration, now, occurs at other times, not particularly on Darshan days. And it occurs much more often, on other kinds of occasions, in other circumstances. The movement is much accelerated, the march forward, the stages succeed each other much more rapidly. And perhaps it is more difficult to follow; or in any case, if one doesn't take care to keep up, one is much more quickly out-distanced than before; one gets the feeling of being late or of being abandoned. Things change quickly.

And I ought to say that these Darshan times with all this rush of people serve not so much for an inner progress—that is to say, inside the Ashram—as for a diffusion outside. The use we make of these days is a little different; above all, it is to go farther, have a vaster field, reach more distant points. But the concentration is less and there is this inconvenience of a large crowd, which was always there but which has been much greater during these last years than at the beginning. At the beginning there was not such a crowd; and perhaps the quality of the crowd was also a little different.

So the joy you were speaking about would rather be a kind of excitement or the feeling of a more intense or more active life; but it is not actually a greater Presence. One puts oneself, perhaps, into a more receptive state in which one receives more, but there is no intensification of the Presence—not to my knowledge.

So it must be within you that you have to find the reason, and the remedy for keeping this joy.

*But Mother, what is the significance of the message you give every Darshan? For example, today you gave the picture of the flower that symbolises the supramental manifestation.**

Yes, as I have just told you, this is spread in thousands of copies all over the world. It is an externalisation of the thing, it is a way of spreading the influence, spreading the message, reaching farther. Everything that is said in a Darshan message has been studied, proved, tested, *beforehand*. And on Darshan day it is given. First the experiment is made, then it is declared publicly. The first movement is the individual development; at the Darshan time it is spread abroad.

Sri Aurobindo always spoke of two movements: the formation of the individual in order to be able to reach the goal individually, and the preparation of the world.... For the progress of the individual is, so to say, not exactly delayed or helped by the condition of the whole, but this brings about a certain balance between the two. The

* The *haemanthus* which is like a ball composed of hundreds of red and gold stamens.

individual movement is always much more rapid and more penetrating; it goes farther, more deeply and more quickly. The collective movement forms a sort of basis which both restrains and supports at the same time. And it is the balance between these two movements which is necessary. So, the more rapidly one goes individually, the more necessary it is to try to extend and strengthen the collective basis.

Mother, has this day, the fifteenth of August, an occult or a simple significance? For, in history, important events occurred on this day.

What exactly do you mean? The fifteenth of August is Sri Aurobindo's birthday. Therefore, it is a date which has a capital importance in the life of the earth, from the physical point of view. So?

On August fifteenth other important events took place?...

What, the liberation of India? Is it because the liberation of India came about on the fifteenth of August? And so, it is necessary to tell you why it happened, you can't find it out by yourself, can you? It needs to be said, does it? I think Sri Aurobindo has written it also, hasn't he, in the message he gave? Hasn't he said it?*

(Silence)

Yes, it is exactly that....

Today, there came into my hands one of those greeting cards which people send on puja days or for the new year or other such festivals; and on this card was written something like this—I don't recall the exact words—but anyway they were, "Greetings on the occasion of this memorable day of the birth of our nation." It is sent by someone who, I think, proclaimed himself a disciple of Sri Aurobindo quite a long time ago.... That seemed to me one of those enormities which human stupidity alone can commit. If he had said: "On this memorable day of the birth of Sri Aurobindo *and* its natural consequence, the birth of the nation", it would have been quite all right. But still, the important point was left out and the other mentioned, which is quite simply a consequence, a natural result; it *had* to be like that, it could not be otherwise.

But people always think like that, the wrong way up. Always. They take the effect for the cause, they glorify the effect and forget the cause.

And that is why the world walks on its head with its feet in the air. Quite simply, there is no other reason.

(Silence)

* Mother is referring to the message Sri Aurobindo gave on 15 August 1947.

I have a huge collection of questions here. I received yet one more today. This question raises perhaps the most difficult problem for the world; so I don't quite know if, precisely, in this Darshan atmosphere, it is very appropriate to touch upon such a problem. However, it is something infinitely interesting. One would like to find a fully satisfactory solution, for then at the same time one would have the key which opens the last door.

Man has always been faced with two possible attitudes when he has wanted to find a solution to the problem of the existence of the universe. It could be said from the practical point of view, that since the universe exists and exists as it does, the wisest thing is to take it as it is, and if one is not satisfied with it, well, to try to make it better. But even if one takes this very practical attitude, the problem remains: How to make it better? And once again one is facing the same fact which it seems impossible to resolve. Here you are, then:

The divine Will—and the Grace which manifests it—is all-powerful and nothing can exist which is not the expression of this divine Will and this Grace which manifests it.... The logical attitude—precisely the one described in the little book I read to you on Fridays now, *Wu Wei**—a perfect peace, total surrender, putting aside all effort and all personal will, giving oneself up to the divine Will and letting it act through oneself.

Mind you, this is not at all easy, it is not as simple as it looks. But still, if one sincerely takes up this attitude, it is certain that immediately there comes a perfect inner peace, an unmixed bliss, and whatever may be the events of your life, they leave you totally indifferent. This has always been recommended for individual salvation; and I may remark in passing that in this little book, which is also very beautiful and very well written, the sage compares the state of surrender of which he speaks to a sea which is calm, blue, peaceful, vast, moved by a deep force, swelling up at the right moment, subsiding at the right moment—indeed, it is an ideal description. But a practical and somewhat objective mind immediately tells you, “Well, yes, but there are also tempests at sea, there are also terrible storms, tidal waves, engulfed islands. And so that is perhaps another aspect of the Divine, but it does not bring peace, at least not in the way described by the sage. One would have to be in another state of consciousness to be at peace in such circumstances, one must not compare oneself with the sea!” So the problem presents itself again.

Sri Aurobindo has made a study of all this in *The Life Divine*, and he tells us that there are sure signs of a progressive evolution. An evolution naturally tends towards a goal, and if it is a progressive evolution one may continue to think that all is the expression of the divine Grace and Will, but that at the same time all is not as it ought to be. Everything is in accordance with the divine Will, but everything is not

* *Wu Wei*: a novel based upon the philosophy of Lao Tse, by Henri Borel (Librairie Fischbacher, 33 rue de Seine, Paris).

as it ought to be, otherwise things would not move.

And there we are faced with the problem once more.

The question I have been asked is this:

“Now that the Supermind has manifested on the earth, it must naturally follow that the divine Grace is all-powerful”, and I am asked: “Is this right?”

The divine Grace has always been all-powerful.

And yet, if we compare the world as it is with the more or less ideal world we can imagine when we come out of our ignorant consciousness and enter a consciousness which we call more divine, how is it that it is not always so good, if the Grace is all-powerful?

It would seem that the vision of what ought to be comes long before the execution—and this is what gives rise to the whole problem.... One sees ahead—or up above—the realisation, perhaps not of the next step, but still what will happen one day; and then as one sees it, one tells oneself, “But this conception is more divine than what is realised at present; therefore, if the Grace is all-powerful, it ought to be realised immediately.” I am now looking at the problem as the human mind, it seems to me, would put it or approximately so, in order to try and make myself understood.

But what does one call an all-powerful Grace? I don’t want to speak of the conceptions of an ordinary mind for which the all-powerful Grace is that which would instantaneously realise what it wants or believes to be the right thing; I am not speaking of that, we may eliminate this case, which is childish. But granting that somebody has a deeper, higher vision, a sort of inner perception of an ideal world where all the things which for us are very shocking would disappear; then one is truly faced with a problem which seems insoluble.

This translates itself in very ordinary minds into an over-simple and very childish form: either the divine Will is something unthinkable for us—which would not be surprising—unthinkable and almost monstrous if It allows things to be as they are, if It wants things as they are, or else... the Grace, is powerless.

That—I warn you to put you on your guard against the trap—that is the great argument of the Adversary. He uses it to cloud the mind and raise up revolt; but still, it is well thought out as a trap.

Then come those who say, “It is because you are in the Ignorance that you see like that; change your consciousness, enter into contact with the divine Consciousness and you will see differently.” This is perfectly correct. I was just telling you, and I repeat, that if you can manage to get out of the Ignorance and enter ever so little into union with the divine Reality, you live an ecstatic life in which everything is marvellous, sublime, and where the Grace manifests in all things. Therefore, you have solved the problem for yourself, on condition that you can remain in that state perpetually,

which is not very easy. But still it is possible. But it draws you out of the world, prevents you from participating in the life of the world, and above all, if everything had to be changed in that way, I think an eternity would not suffice for all the elements of the world to be transformed.

And the problem presents itself again. In whatever manner, by whatever way you approach it, it will always present itself again.

There is a solution.

Think about it, we shall speak about it again another time. There, I would like you to make an effort. For it is beneficial, because this is a sort of conflict in the human consciousness which comes up constantly; because it is a conflict which forms the basis of all oppositions to a concrete work; because this conflict makes people—I am speaking even of those who are the most enlightened in this field—always confuse spiritual life with an annihilation of the physical, material creation, as for them this is the sole means of escape: “Let us escape from the material reality and we escape the problem”, for, to be in the state where the problem doesn’t present itself any longer, one must get out of life—*according to them*.

There is a solution.

That will be for another time.

When back at the Ashram, after the class,
Mother made the following remark:

I gave the solution, this evening. I gave it twice in the class, without speaking.

Has this solution any connection with the date, August fifteenth? Is there any connection between the Feast of the Assumption in the Catholic Church and the date of Sri Aurobindo’s birth?

Yes. And he has also said it himself. The Assumption of the Virgin Mary is the divinisation of Matter. And this is the aim of the last Avatar.

(CWM, Vol. 8, pp. 259-70)

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A Message

An absolute faith and trust in the Grace is, in the last analysis, the Supreme Wisdom.

15 August 1956

(CWM, Vol. 14, p. 93)

1957

An Eternal Birth

14 August 1957

This evening, instead of answering questions, I would like us to meditate on the remembrance of Sri Aurobindo, on the way to keep it alive in us and on the gratitude we owe him for all that he has done and is still doing in his ever luminous, living and active consciousness for this great realisation which he came not only to announce to the Earth but also to realise, and which he continues to realise.

Tomorrow is the anniversary of his birth, an eternal birth in the history of the universe.

(CWM, Vol. 9, p. 171)

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An Eternal Birth: An Explanation

4 September 1957

Today I received a question about a phrase I used on the fourteenth of August, the eve of Sri Aurobindo's birthday. And this question seemed interesting to me because it was about one of those rather cryptic phrases, that are almost ambiguous through simplification, and which was intended to be like that, so that each one might understand it according to his own plane of consciousness. I have already spoken to you several times of this possibility of understanding the same words on different planes; and these words were intentionally expressed with a simplification, a deliberate vagueness, precisely so that they would serve as a vehicle for the complexity of meaning they had to express.

This meaning is a little different on the different planes, but it is complementary, and it is only really complete when one is able to understand it on all these planes at once. True understanding is a simultaneous understanding in which all the meanings are perceived, grasped, understood at the same time; but to express them, as we have

a very poor language at our disposal, we are obliged to say them one after another, with many words and many explanations.... That's what I am going to do now.

The question is about the phrase in which I spoke of the birth of Sri Aurobindo—it was on the eve of his birthday—and I called it an “eternal birth”. I am asked what I meant by “eternal”.

Of course, if the words are taken literally, an “eternal birth” doesn't signify much. But I am going to explain to you how there can be—and in fact is—a physical explanation or understanding, a mental understanding, a psychic understanding and a spiritual understanding.

Physically, it means that the consequences of this birth will last as long as the Earth. The consequences of Sri Aurobindo's birth will be felt throughout the entire existence of the Earth. And so I called it “eternal”, a little poetically.

Mentally, it is a birth the memory of which will last eternally. Through the ages Sri Aurobindo's birth will be remembered, with all the consequences it has had.

Psychically, it is a birth which will recur eternally, from age to age, in the history of the universe. This birth is a manifestation which takes place periodically, from age to age, in the history of the Earth. That is, the birth itself is renewed, repeated, reproduced, bringing every time perhaps something more—something more complete and more perfect—but it is the same movement of descent, of manifestation, of birth in an earthly body.

And finally, from the purely spiritual point of view, it could be said that it is the birth of the Eternal on Earth. For each time the Avatar takes a physical form it is the birth of the Eternal himself on Earth.

All that, contained in two words: “eternal birth”.

So, to conclude, I advise you, in future, before telling yourself: “Why! What does this mean? I don't understand it at all; perhaps it is not expressed properly,” you could say to yourself: “Perhaps I am not on the plane where I would be able to understand”, and try to find behind the words something more than mere words. There.

I think this will be a good subject for our meditation.

(Meditation)

(CWM, Vol. 9, pp. 177-78)

1957

Two Messages

A new world is born—all those who want to have a place in it must sincerely prepare themselves for it.

15 August 1957

(CWM, Vol. 15, p. 105)

Heralding the birth of a new world, we invite all those who want to have a place in it to prepare themselves sincerely for it.

15 August 1957

(CWM, Vol. 15, p. 105)

You spoke of Sri Aurobindo's birth as "eternal" in the history of the universe. What exactly was meant by "eternal"?

The sentence can be understood in four different ways on four ascending planes of consciousness:

- 1. Physically, the consequence of the birth will be of eternal importance to the world.**
- 2. Mentally, it is a birth that will be eternally remembered in the universal history.**
- 3. Psychically, a birth that recurs for ever from age to age upon earth.**
- 4. Spiritually, the birth of the Eternal upon earth.**

(CWM: 13, p. 10)

1958

‘A Prayer’

15 August 1958

This short talk was given on a Friday, the day on which the Dhammapada was usually read.

As today is Sri Aurobindo’s birthday I thought that instead of reading the Dhammapada I could read to you something which will both interest you and show you how Sri Aurobindo visualised our relation with the gods.

You know, don’t you, that in India especially, there are countless categories of gods, who are all on different planes, some very close to man, others very close to the Supreme, with many intermediaries.

You will understand better what I want to tell you if I mention the gods of the Puranas—like those we saw the other day in the film—who in many ways are, I must say, inferior to man (!) although they have infinitely more power.

There are gods of the Overmind who are the great creators of the earth—until now. There are the gods of the Vedas who are mentioned in everything that has come down from the Rishis. And there are the gods of the Supermind, those who are going to manifest on earth, although of course they exist from all eternity on their own plane.

Here Sri Aurobindo is speaking mostly about the Vedic gods, but not exclusively nor in a very definite way. At any rate these gods are higher than the gods of the Puranas.

Here is what Sri Aurobindo tells us.

In fact, it is a prayer:

Be wide in me, O Varuna;
be mighty in me, O Indra;
O Sun, be very bright and luminous;
O Moon, be full of charm and sweetness.
Be fierce and terrible, O Rudra;
be impetuous and swift, O Maruts;
be strong and bold, O Aryama;
be voluptuous and pleasurable, O Bhaga;
be tender and kind and loving and passionate, O Mitra.
Be bright and revealing, O Dawn;
O Night, be solemn and pregnant.

O Life, be full, ready and buoyant;
 O Death, lead my steps from mansion to mansion.
 Harmonise all these, O Brahmanaspati.
 Let me not be subject to these gods, O Kali.*

So Sri Aurobindo makes Kali the great liberating power who ardently impels you towards progress and leaves no ties within you which would hinder you from progressing.

I think this will be a good subject for meditation.

(Meditation)

(CWM, Vol. 9, pp. 376-77)

* SABCL, Vol. 17, p. 85.

The whole day, from very early in the morning, Sri Aurobindo has been ever so present, so alive; at times I found it difficult to be quiet, I was just bubbling over inside me. It was not quite correct to be so today, was it Mother? But Sri Aurobindo was so near and so alive.

On the contrary, it is quite correct, he has never been so alive as now!

(CWM: 13, pp. 12-13)

1959

Letter to a Sadhak

15 August 1959

(The Mother wrote to a sadhak)

...And now, today, I am writing you again because it is the day of great amnesties, the day when all past errors are effaced....

1961

A Message

15 August 1961

In the depths of the Inconscient there also shines the Divine Consciousness, resplendent and eternal.

(CWM, Vol. 15, p. 199)

The help of Sri Aurobindo is constant: it is for us to know how to receive it.

(CWM: 13, p. 13)

1962

A Sadhak's Experience

Ma douce Mère,

The meditation given on the 15th of August was very intense and deep. Just in the beginning I felt a deep silence as if someone was squeezing out thoughts. There was also a feeling as if at some great presence the whole Ashram became still and silent. I don't know what it was but it lasted only for a short while. After some time thoughts began again to disturb the mind.

I just inform The Mother what I had felt on that grand day.

*With pranams at Thy beloved Feet,
Prithwi Singh*

Sri Aurobindo immense and very concrete (in the subtle physical) was sitting over the whole compound during all the meditation.

Mother
28 August 1962

(Sri Aurobindo and Mother to Prithwi Singh, p.168)

Sri Aurobindo is constantly in the subtle physical, very active there. I see him almost daily, and last night I spent many hours with him.

If you become conscious in the subtle physical you will surely meet him, it is what he called the true physical—it has nothing to do with the psychic.

(CWM: 13, p. 13)

1962

During the Collective Meditation

*(...Mother speaks to a sadhak about the collective meditation held on
August 15, 1962 Sri Aurobindo's ninetieth birthday.)*

Mon petit, we had a meditation here on the 15th, at ten o'clock. At a quarter to ten, I was sitting here at the table in a total silence. And then... I can't say Sri Aurobindo came, for he is always here, but he manifested in a special way.... Concretely, in the subtle physical, he became so tall that, sitting cross-legged as they do here, he covered the whole compound—even extended a bit beyond it! He was literally sitting upon the compound; so to the extent that the people meditating were not closed, they were all inside him. He was sitting like that (not on their heads!), and I could feel (I was here, you see) the FRICTION of his presence in the subtle physical—an utterly physical friction! And I saw him (as you well know, I am not shut up in here [the body]), I saw him sitting there, very tall and perfectly proportioned; and then he started gently, gently descending—this descent is what caused the friction—gently, very gently, so as not to give people a shock. Then he settled there and stayed for a little more than half an hour, a few minutes more, like that, absolutely still, but fully concentrated on all the people—they were inside him.

I was sitting here smiling, almost... almost laughing, really; you could feel him like that everywhere (*Mother touches her whole body*), everywhere. And with such peace! Such peace, such force, such power.... And a sense of eternity, immensity, and absoluteness. A sense of absoluteness, as if all were fulfilled, so to speak, and one lived in Eternity.

It was *compelling*. One had to be just plain dense not to feel it.

I don't say there weren't plenty of dense people there. I have no idea (*laughing*), I haven't asked for their opinion!

And afterwards, it's not as though he suddenly went away: he went slowly, slowly, slowly, like something evaporating; then things went back to normal, with various concentrations here and there, various activities....

I think some people must have felt it—maybe they didn't fully understand, since they lack total vision, but they may have felt as if he were descending into them. Because in the afternoon, when everything had returned to normal (he is always here of course, but not that way! He is always here), there was a kind of wave of regret passing through the atmosphere, like something saying, "Oh, this beautiful thing has come to an end! Oh, now August 15 is over, this beautiful thing is over." But it was like I described, something so... more than concrete, I don't know how to express it, it was... there was a sense of absoluteness about it.

I have often seen him in his supramental light; he has come very often (he used to come when I went to the balcony; sometimes he was above the Samadhi; he came very often). But that... first of all, the proportions were enormous—sitting down, I tell you, he extended beyond the compound; and he materialised in a way that could be PHYSICALLY felt. And there was such confidence, such joy, such certainty; everything was so sure, so altogether certain, as though all had been accomplished. There was none of that anguish, that tension for things to get done.

It lasted about three quarters of an hour; afterwards things returned to normal.

(Silence)

It was the most beautiful August 15 we ever had.

It lasted three quarters of an hour.

(Silence)

One thing, though (he didn't inform me he was going to do it!)—when I was told that people would be gathering for a half hour of meditation, at once something in me took it quite seriously: "Very well." So I arranged everything for the meditation, and at about 9:45 I sat down at the table—then it began. It took about five minutes to take shape. Ah! Then I understood.

He has given us a beautiful gift.

All his sweetness and all his splendour and all his power and all his calm were there—and far stronger and clearer than when he was in his body!

I always had that same impression—it was always like that in his room; and I would always have that impression whenever I met him. And even when I was working, all the while I would feel him behind me, doing everything. But this was much stronger. Much stronger. It was... one was caught up and there was no way to get out of it. That's how it was—something ABSOLUTE.

Sri Aurobindo is always with us, enlightening, guiding, protecting. We must answer to his grace by a perfect faithfulness.

(CWM: 13, p. 13)

1964

Two Messages

(Message for broadcast by All India Radio, Tiruchirapalli)

What Sri Aurobindo represents in the history of the earth's spiritual progress is not a teaching, not even a revelation; it is a mighty action straight from the Supreme.

15 August 1964

(CWM, Vol. 13, p. 4)

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(Message for the issuance of a Sri Aurobindo commemorative stamp)

He has come to bid the earth to prepare for its luminous future.

15 August 1964

(CWM, Vol. 13, p. 4)

If one reads Sri Aurobindo carefully one finds the answers to all that one wants to know.

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By studying carefully what Sri Aurobindo has said on all subjects one can easily reach a complete knowledge of the things of this world.

(CWM: 13, p. 24)

1965

A Child's Perception

(Mother speaks to a sadhak about the balcony Darshan of the 15th August, 1965)

On the 15th, at the balcony, Sri Aurobindo was there. He had come and he went out on the balcony with me. I didn't say anything to anybody, not to anybody at all. And there is a little girl, about fifteen years old now, who is considered a bad pupil, erratic, *fanciful* (they had even talked of sending her away), but once I asked her to come for her birthday, and as for me, I found her a fine girl(!)... And she wrote to me two or three days ago that on the 15th, at the Darshan, she saw Sri Aurobindo on my right. And she asked (*laughing*), "Is it true?"

It quite amused me. I said to myself, "So much for their moral judgments on their pupils here! That's how it is."

But nowadays I don't see children anymore; formerly I used to see them everyday, or at any rate once a month regularly I would see them. When I went to the Playground, I saw them everyday. But now I no longer do except a few on their birthdays.

But I found this interesting. Maybe some others saw him too, but didn't tell me. But she wrote to me, "Well, I saw Sri Aurobindo standing beside you, is it true?"

21 August 1965

Sri Aurobindo came upon earth to announce the manifestation of the supramental world and not merely did he announce this manifestation but embodied also in part the supramental force and showed by example what one must do to prepare oneself for manifesting it. The best thing we can do is to study all that he has told us and endeavour to follow his example and prepare ourselves for the new manifestation.

This gives life its real sense and will help us to overcome all obstacles.

Let us live for the new creation and we shall grow stronger and stronger by remaining young and progressive.

(CWM: 13, p. 17)

*Sri Aurobindo's Day**15 August 1967*

I took my seat, it was almost time, perhaps half a minute before, and all of a sudden, without preparation, like that, like a hammer blow: a descent so powerful—completely immobile—of something... It was as though Sri Aurobindo spoke to me at the same time (because the definition came at the same time as the experience: it was a vision that was not a vision, it was wholly concrete) and the word was: *golden peace*. But so strong! And then it did not move. During the whole half-hour, it did not move. It is something new that I had never felt before. I cannot say... It was perceived, but not like an objective vision. And spontaneously, other persons told me that as soon as they were seated for meditation (*gesture of massive descent*), something came down with a tremendous power, completely immobile, and a feeling of peace that they had never felt in their life.

Golden peace. And it is true, it gave the impression of the golden supramental light. But it was... a peace! concrete, you know, not the negation of disorder and activity, no: concrete, concrete peace. I did not want to stop. The time was over, still I remained two minutes, three minutes. When I stopped, it was gone. And it has made a great difference for the body—the body itself—such a difference that when it had gone, I felt quite uneasy, I needed half a minute to regain my equilibrium.

It came and it went away. It came for the meditation and then it went away. For more than half an hour, thirty-five minutes.

And in the evening, at the balcony, there was a crowd. I believe it was the biggest crowd that we have ever had: it spread out into all the streets; as far as I could see, the streets were full of people. Then I came out, and as I came out there arose from this crowd like a... something between an imploring, a prayer and a protest about the condition the world is in, particularly this country. And that rose up in waves. I looked at it, and then (it was extremely insistent) I said to myself: "It is not my day, it is Sri Aurobindo's day." I went like this (*gesture of withdrawal*) and I put Sri Aurobindo in front. And when he was put in front, standing in front he simply said, simply: "The Lord knows best what he is doing." (*Mother laughs*) Immediately, I began to smile (I did not laugh, but I began to smile) and there came the same peace as in the morning.

There you are.

"The Lord knows best what he is doing", with his most perfect sense of humour. And immediately everything became calm.

1971

A Message

(Message for broadcast by All India Radio, Pondicherry)

Today is the first day of Sri Aurobindo's centenary year. Though he has left his body he is still with us, alive and active.

Sri Aurobindo belongs to the future; he is the messenger of the future. He still shows us the way to follow in order to hasten the realisation of a glorious future fashioned by the Divine Will.

All those who want to collaborate for the progress of humanity and for India's luminous destiny must unite in a clairvoyant aspiration and in an illumined work.

15 August 1971

(CWM, Vol. 13, p. 14)

In the eternity of becoming, each Avatar is only the announcer, the forerunner of a more perfect realisation.

And yet men have always the tendency to deify the Avatar of the past in opposition to the Avatar of the future.

Now again Sri Aurobindo has come announcing to the world the realisation of tomorrow; and again his message meets with the same opposition as of all those who preceded him.

But tomorrow will prove the truth of what he revealed and his work will be done.

(CWM: 13, p. 22)

1972

Centenary Messages

Sri Aurobindo's message is an immortal sunlight radiating over the future.

15 August 1972

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Sri Aurobindo came on earth from the Supreme to announce the manifestation of a new race and the new world, the Supramental.

Let us prepare for it in all sincerity and eagerness.

15 August 1972

*

Man is the creation of yesterday.

Sri Aurobindo came to announce the creation of tomorrow: the coming of the supramental being.

15 August 1972

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The best homage that we can render to Sri Aurobindo on his centenary is to have a thirst for progress and to open all our being to the Divine Influence of which he is the Messenger upon the earth.

15 August 1972

*

15-8-72

One more step towards Eternity.

*

*(Message for the Matrimandir workers on the first day of
Sri Aurobindo's birth centenary)*

Goodwill and peace to all.

15 August 1972

(CWM, Vol. 13, pp. 19, 20, 233)

The best homage that
we can pay to Sri Aurobindo
is to aspire for the Supramental
Transformation.

