

# MOTHER INDIA

## MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

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No. 1

*“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”*

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## **JUGAL-DA**

Jugal Kishore Mukherjee, sadhak, professor, regular contributor to *Mother India* breathed his last on 15 December 2009. He was born in 1925 and joined the Ashram in 1949.

## LIGHT

[Published 1883.

Asked in 1939, “When did you begin to write poetry?”, Sri Aurobindo replied: “When my two brothers and I were staying at Manchester. I wrote for the Fox family magazine. It was an awful imitation of somebody I don’t remember.”

The only English journal having a name resembling “the Fox family magazine” is Fox’s Weekly, which first appeared on 11 January 1883 and was suspended the following November. Published from Leeds, it catered to the middle and working classes of that industrial town. A total of nine poems appeared in Fox’s Weekly during its brief existence. All but one of them are coarse adult satires. The exception is “Light”, published in the issue of 11 January 1883.

Like all other poems in Fox’s Weekly, “Light” is unsigned, but there can be no doubt that it was the poem to which Sri Aurobindo referred when he said that his first verses were published in “the Fox family magazine”.

The poem’s stanza is an imitation of the one used by P. B. Shelley in the well-known lyric “The Cloud”.

Sri Aurobindo remarked in 1926 that as a child in Manchester, he went through the works of Shelley again and again. He also wrote that he read the Bible “assiduously” while living in the house of his guardian, William H. Drewett, a Congregationalist clergyman.

— Editorial note in CWSA]

From the quickened womb of the primal gloom,  
The sun rolled, black and bare,  
Till I wove him a vest for his Ethiop breast,  
Of the threads of my golden hair;  
And when the broad tent of the firmament  
Arose on its airy spars,  
I pencilled the hue of its matchless blue,  
And spangled it around with stars.

I painted the flowers of the Eden bowers,  
And their leaves of living green,  
And mine were the dyes in the sinless eyes

Of Eden's Virgin queen;  
And when the fiend's art in the truthful heart  
Had fastened its mortal spell,  
In the silvery sphere of the first-born tear  
To the trembling earth I fell.

When the waves that burst o'er a world accurst  
Their work of wrath had sped,  
And the Ark's lone few, tried and true,  
Came forth among the dead,  
With the wondrous gleams of the bridal beams,  
I bade their terrors cease,  
As I wrote on the roll of the storm's dark scroll  
God's covenant of peace.

Like a pall at rest on the senseless breast,  
Night's funeral shadow slept —  
Where shepherd swains on Bethlehem's plains,  
Their lonely vigils kept,  
When I flashed on their sight, the heralds bright,  
Of Heaven's redeeming plan,  
As they chanted the morn, the Saviour born —  
Joy, joy, to the outcast man!

Equal favour I show to the lofty and low,  
On the just and the unjust I descend:  
E'en the blind, whose vain spheres, roll in darkness and tears,  
Feel my smile — the blest smile of a friend.  
Nay, the flower of the waste by my love is embraced,  
As the rose in the garden of kings:  
At the chrysalis bier of the morn I appear,  
And lo! the gay butterfly wings.

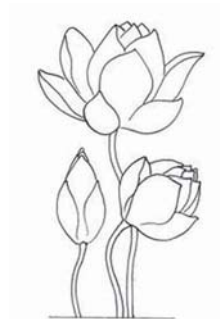
The desolate morn, like the mourner forlorn,  
Conceals all the pride of her charms,  
Till I bid the bright hours, chase the night from her flowers,  
And lead the young day to her arms.  
And when the gay rover seeks Eve for her lover,  
And sinks to her balmy repose,  
I wrap the soft rest by the zephyr-fanned west,  
In curtains of amber and rose.

From my sentinel steep by the night-brooded deep  
I gaze with unslumbering eye,  
When the cynosure star of the mariner  
Is blotted out from the sky:  
And guided by me through the merciless sea,  
Though sped by the hurricane's wings,  
His companionless, dark, lone, weltering bark,  
To the haven home safely he brings.

I waken the flowers in the dew-spangled bowers,  
The birds in their chambers of green,  
And mountain and plain glow with beauty again,  
As they bask in their matinal sheen.  
O, if such the glad worth of my presence on earth,  
Though fitful and fleeting the while,  
What glories must rest on the home of the blessed,  
Ever bright with the Deity's smile.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Collected Poems*, CWSA, Vol. 2, pp. 5-6)



## THE MASTER OF THE WORK

THE Master and Mover of our works is the One, the Universal and Supreme, the Eternal and Infinite. He is the transcendent unknown or unknowable Absolute, the unexpressed and unmanifested Ineffable above us; but he is also the Self of all beings, the Master of all worlds, transcending all worlds, the Light and the Guide, the All-Beautiful and All-Blissful, the Beloved and the Lover. He is the Cosmic Spirit and all-creating Energy around us; he is the Immanent within us. All that is is he, and he is the More than all that is, and we ourselves, though we know it not, are being of his being, force of his force, conscious with a consciousness derived from his; even our mortal existence is made out of his substance and there is an immortal within us that is a spark of the Light and Bliss that are for ever. No matter whether by knowledge, works, love or any other means, to become aware of this truth of our being, to realise it, to make it effective here or elsewhere is the object of all Yoga.

\*

But the passage is long and the labour arduous before we can look on him with eyes that see true, and still longer and more arduous must be our endeavour if we would rebuild ourselves in his true image. The Master of the work does not reveal himself at once to the seeker. Always it is his Power that acts behind the veil, but it is manifest only when we renounce the egoism of the worker, and its direct movement increases in proportion as that renunciation becomes more and more complete. Only when our surrender to his Divine Shakti is absolute, shall we have the right to live in his absolute presence. And only then can we see our work throw itself naturally, completely and simply into the mould of the Divine Will.

There must, therefore, be stages and gradations in our approach to this perfection, as there are in the progress towards all other perfection on any plane of Nature. The vision of the full glory may come to us before, suddenly or slowly, once or often, but until the foundation is complete, it is a summary and concentrated, not a durable and all-enveloping experience, not a lasting presence. The amplitudes, the infinite contents of the Divine Revelation come afterwards and unroll gradually their power and their significance. Or, even, the steady vision can be there on the summits of our nature, but the perfect response of the lower members comes only by degrees. In all Yoga the first requisites are faith and patience. The ardours of the heart and the violences of the eager will that seek to take the kingdom of heaven by storm can have miserable reactions if they disdain to support their vehemence on these humbler and quieter auxiliaries. And in the long and difficult integral Yoga there must be an integral faith and an unshakable patience.

It is difficult to acquire or to practise this faith and steadfastness on the rough and narrow path of Yoga because of the impatience of both heart and mind and the eager but soon faltering will of our rajasic nature. The vital nature of man hungers always for the fruit of its labour and, if the fruit appears to be denied or long delayed, he loses faith in the ideal and in the guidance. For his mind judges always by the appearance of things, since that is the first ingrained habit of the intellectual reason in which he so inordinately trusts. Nothing is easier for us than to accuse God in our hearts when we suffer long or stumble in the darkness or to abjure the ideal that we have set before us. For we say, "I have trusted to the Highest and I am betrayed into suffering and sin and error." Or else, "I have staked my whole life on an idea which the stern facts of experience contradict and discourage. It would have been better to be as other men are who accept their limitations and walk on the firm ground of normal experience." In such moments — and they are sometimes frequent and long — all the higher experience is forgotten and the heart concentrates itself in its own bitterness. It is in these dark passages that it is possible to fall for good or to turn back from the divine labour.

If one has walked long and steadily in the path, the faith of the heart will remain under the fiercest adverse pressure; even if it is concealed or apparently overborne, it will take the first opportunity to re-emerge. For something higher than either heart or intellect upholds it in spite of the worst stumblings and through the most prolonged failure. But even to the experienced sadhaka such falterings or overcloudings bring a retardation of his progress and they are exceedingly dangerous to the novice. It is therefore necessary from the beginning to understand and accept the arduous difficulty of the path and to feel the need of a faith which to the intellect may seem blind, but yet is wiser than our reasoning intelligence. For this faith is a support from above; it is the brilliant shadow thrown by a secret light that exceeds the intellect and its data; it is the heart of a hidden knowledge that is not at the mercy of immediate appearances. Our faith, persevering, will be justified in its works and will be lifted and transfigured at last into the self-revelation of a divine knowledge. Always we must adhere to the injunction of the Gita, "Yoga must be continually applied with a heart free from despondent sinking." Always we must repeat to the doubting intellect the promise of the Master, "I will surely deliver thee from all sin and evil; do not grieve." At the end, the flickerings of faith will cease; for we shall see his face and feel always the Divine Presence.

\*

The Master of our works respects our nature even when he is transforming it; he works always through the nature and not by any arbitrary caprice. This imperfect nature of ours contains the materials of our perfection, but inchoate, distorted, misplaced, thrown together in disorder or a poor imperfect order. All this material

has to be patiently perfected, purified, reorganised, new-moulded and transformed, not hacked and hewn and slain or mutilated, not obliterated by simple coercion and denial. This world and we who live in it are his creation and manifestation, and he deals with it and us in a way our narrow and ignorant mind cannot understand unless it falls silent and opens to a divine knowledge. In our errors is the substance of a truth which labours to reveal its meaning to our groping intelligence. The human intellect cuts out the error and the truth with it and replaces it by another half-truth half-error; but the Divine Wisdom suffers our mistakes to continue until we are able to arrive at the truth hidden and protected under every false cover. Our sins are the misdirected steps of a seeking Power that aims, not at sin, but at perfection, at something that we might call a divine virtue. Often they are the veils of a quality that has to be transformed and delivered out of this ugly disguise: otherwise, in the perfect providence of things, they would not have been suffered to exist or to continue. The Master of our works is neither a blunderer nor an indifferent witness nor a dallier with the luxury of unneeded evils. He is wiser than our reason and wiser than our virtue.

Our nature is not only mistaken in will and ignorant in knowledge but weak in power; but the Divine Force is there and will lead us if we trust in it and it will use our deficiencies and our powers for the divine purpose. If we fail in our immediate aim, it is because he has intended the failure; often our failure or ill-result is the right road to a truer issue than an immediate and complete success would have put in our reach. If we suffer, it is because something in us has to be prepared for a rarer possibility of delight. If we stumble, it is to learn in the end the secret of a more perfect walking. Let us not be in too furious a haste to acquire even peace, purity and perfection. Peace must be ours, but not the peace of an empty or devastated nature or of slain or mutilated capacities incapable of unrest because we have made them incapable of intensity and fire and force. Purity must be our aim, but not the purity of a void or of a bleak and rigid coldness. Perfection is demanded of us, but not the perfection that can exist only by confining its scope within narrow limits or putting an arbitrary full stop to the ever self-extending scroll of the Infinite. Our object is to change into the divine nature, but the divine nature is not a mental or moral but a spiritual condition, difficult to achieve, difficult even to conceive by our intelligence. The Master of our work and our Yoga knows the thing to be done, and we must allow him to do it in us by his own means and in his own manner.

The movement of the Ignorance is egoistic at its core and nothing is more difficult for us than to get rid of egoism while yet we admit personality and adhere to action in the half-light and half-force of our unfinished nature. It is easier to starve the ego by renouncing the impulse to act or to kill it by cutting away from us all movement of personality. It is easier to exalt it into self-forgetfulness immersed in a trance of peace or an ecstasy of divine Love. But our more difficult problem is to liberate the true Person and attain to a divine manhood which shall be the pure

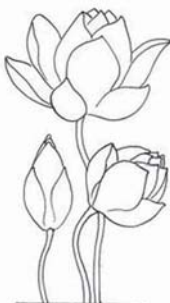


vessel of a divine force and the perfect instrument of a divine action. Step after step has to be firmly taken; difficulty after difficulty has to be entirely experienced and entirely mastered. Only the Divine Wisdom and Power can do this for us and it will do all if we yield to it in an entire faith and follow and assent to its workings with a constant courage and patience.

The first step on this long path is to consecrate all our works as a sacrifice to the Divine in us and in the world; this is an attitude of the mind and heart, not too difficult to initiate, but very difficult to make absolutely sincere and all-pervasive. The second step is to renounce attachment to the fruit of our works; for the only true, inevitable and utterly desirable fruit of sacrifice — the one thing needful — is the Divine Presence and the Divine Consciousness and Power in us, and if that is gained, all else will be added. This is a transformation of the egoistic will in our vital being, our desire-soul and desire-nature, and it is far more difficult than the other. The third step is to get rid of the central egoism and even the ego-sense of the worker. That is the most difficult transformation of all and it cannot be perfectly done if the first two steps have not been taken; but these first steps too cannot be completed unless the third comes in to crown the movement and, by the extinction of egoism, eradicates the very origin of desire. Only when the small ego-sense is rooted out from the nature can the seeker know his true person that stands above as a portion and power of the Divine and renounce all motive-force other than the will of the Divine Shakti.

SRI AUROBINDO

*(The Synthesis of Yoga, CWSA, Vol. 23, pp. 243-48)*



## ‘OH, TO BECOME THY DIVINE LOVE . . .’

**February 19, 1914**

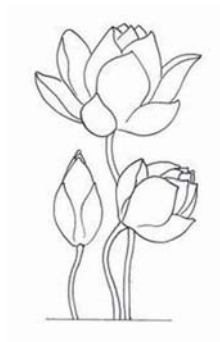
O LORD, be ever present in my thought! Not that I ask this of Thee, for I know that Thy Presence is constant and sovereign, I know that all we see and all that escapes our sight is just what it is only through Thy marvellous intervention, because of Thy divine law of love; but I say this and repeat it, I implore, in order to escape from forgetfulness and negligence.

Oh! to become Thy living love so powerfully as to transfigure and illumine all things, so completely as to awaken peace and benevolent satisfaction in all.

Oh, to become Thy divine love, pure and clear-sighted, to be that always and everywhere! . . .

THE MOTHER

*(Prayers and Meditations, CWM 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. 1, p. 78)*



## SEEKING AFTER THE IMPERSONAL

Mother reads from *Lights on Yoga*, “Surrender and Opening”.

*What does “to seek after the Impersonal” mean?*

OH! It’s very much in fashion in the West, my child. All those who are tired or disgusted with the God taught by the Chaldean religions, and especially by the Christian religion — a single God, jealous, severe, despotic and so much in the image of man that one wonders if it is not a demiurge as Anatole France said — these people when they want to lead a spiritual life no longer want the personal God, because they are too frightened lest the personal God resemble the one they have been taught about; they want an impersonal Godhead, something that doesn’t *at all* resemble — or as little as possible — the human being; that’s what they want.

But Sri Aurobindo says — something he has always said — that there are the godheads of the Overmind who indeed are very similar — we have said this several times — very similar to human beings, infinitely greater and more powerful but with resemblances which are a little too striking. Beyond these there is the impersonal Godhead, the impersonal Divine; but beyond the impersonal Divine there is the Divine who is the Person himself; and we must go through the Impersonal to reach the Supreme Divine who is beyond.

Only it is good, as I said, for those who have been put by education into contact with too individual, too personal a God, to seek the impersonal Divine, because this liberates them from many superstitions. After that if they are capable they will go farther and have once again a personal contact with a Divine who indeed is beyond all these other godheads.

So that’s it.

...

*What exactly is meant by “the impersonal Divine”?*

It’s what is called in some philosophies and religions the Formless; something that’s beyond all form, even the forms of thought, you see, not necessarily physical forms: forms of thought, forms of movement. It is the conception of something which is beyond not only what can be thought or conceived or seen even with the most subtle eyes, but all that has any kind of perceptible form whatever, even vibrations more subtle than those which infinitely overpass all human perceptions, even in the highest states of being, something which is beyond all manifestation of any order

whatever — usually that's how we define the impersonal God. He has nothing, none of the qualities we can conceive of, He is beyond all qualification. It is obviously the quest of something which is the opposite of the creation, and that is why some religions have introduced the idea of what they call Nirvana, that is, of something which is nothing; it is the same quest, the same attempt to find something which would be the opposite of all that we can conceive. So finally we define It, because how can we speak of It? But in experience one tries to go beyond all that belongs to the manifested world, and that is what we call the impersonal Divine.

Well, it happens — and this is very interesting — that there is a region like that, a region which . . . how to put it? . . . which is the negation of all that exists. Behind all the planes of being, even behind the physical, there is a Nirvana. We use the word Nirvana because it is easier, but we can say, "There is an impersonal Divine behind the physical, behind the mind, behind the vital, behind all the regions of being; behind, beyond." (We are obliged to express ourselves in some sort of way.) It is not necessarily more subtle, it's something else, something absolutely different; that is, in a meditation, for example, if you meditate on Nirvana you can remain in a region of your mind and by a certain concentration produce a kind of reversal of your consciousness and find yourself suddenly in something which is Nirvana, non-existence; and yet in the ascent of your consciousness you have not gone beyond the mind.

One can have a little understanding of these things if one knows the multiplicity of dimensions, if one has understood this principle. First of all you are taught the fourth dimension. If you have understood that principle, of the dimensions, you can understand this. For example, as I said, you don't need to exteriorise yourself to go from one plane to another, when going to the most subtle planes to pass from the last most subtle plane to what we call Nirvana — to express it somehow. It is not necessary. You can, through a kind of interiorisation and by passing into another dimension or other dimensions . . . you can find in any domain whatever of your being this non-existence. And truly, one can understand a little bit of this without experiencing it. It is very difficult, but still, even without the experience one can understand just a little, if one understands this, this principle of the inner dimensions.

*(Silence)*

It can be put like this (you see, it's one way of saying it) that you carry within yourself both existence and non-existence at the same time, the personal and the impersonal, and . . . yes . . . the manifest and unmanifest . . . the finite and the infinite . . . time and eternity. And all that is in this tiny little body. There are people who go beyond — even mentally, you see . . . their mental atmosphere goes beyond their body, even their vital atmosphere goes beyond their body — there are people whose consciousness is vast enough to extend over continents and even over other

earths and other worlds, but this is a spatial concept. Yet by an interiorisation in other dimensions, the fourth and more, you can find all this in yourself, in one point . . . the infinite.

*Then Mother, isn't the infinite an extension of space?*

Oh, no! That's the indefinite, not the infinite.

The infinite is the opposite of the finite. One can contain in himself the most finite finite and the most infinite infinite; in fact one does contain them, perhaps even in each one of the cells of the brain.

*(Silence)*

*Mother, is there any difference in the experience when one attains the Impersonal by his own effort and when he attains it by surrendering to the Mother?*

*(Long silence)*

Yes, there is a difference.

*(Silence)*

There would not be a difference, perhaps, if the goal to be reached was the impersonal Divine and if one wanted to be identified and united with the impersonal Divine and dissolve in that. I think that in this case there wouldn't be any difference. But if the aspiration is to realise what is beyond, we said, what Sri Aurobindo has called the supramental Reality, then here there's a difference, not only a difference in the path, for that's quite evident (it depends on different temperaments, besides), but if someone can truly know what surrender is and total trust, then it is *infinitely* easier, three-fourths of the worry and difficulties are over.

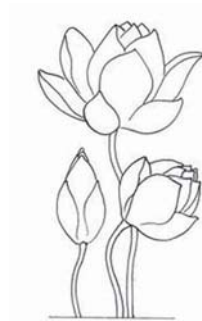
Now it is true that it can be said that one may find a very special difficulty in this surrender. This is true, that's why I said that it depends absolutely on the temperament. But it's not only that. If you like it may be compared to the difference between something linear which terminates in a point and a spherical path which terminates in a totality; a totality, that is, nothing would be excluded from the totality. Each one, individually, can reach the Origin and the utmost of his being; the origin and the utmost of his being are one with the Eternal, Infinite and Supreme. Therefore, if you reach this origin, you reach the Supreme. But you reach there by a line (don't take my words for an adequate description, you know, it's only to make myself understood). It is a linear realisation which ends in a point, and this point is united

with the Supreme — your utmost possibility. By the other path it is a realisation which may be called spherical, because that gives best the idea of something containing all, and the realisation is no longer a point but a totality from which nothing is excluded.

I can't speak of the "whole" and the "part", because there's no division any longer. It's not like that, it's not that. But it is the quality of the approach, so to say, which is different. It is like saying that a perfect identification with one drop of water would make you know what the ocean is and what a perfect identification not only with the ocean but with all possible oceans. And yet with a perfect identification with one drop of water one could know the ocean in its essence, and in the other way one could know the ocean not only in its essence but in its totality. Something like that . . . I am trying to express it . . . It is very difficult but it's like that, there is something, there is a difference . . . It could be said that all that was individualised preserves at once the virtue of individuality and what might be called in a certain sense the limitations necessary to this individuality, when one relies only on his personal strength. In the other case one can benefit by the virtues of individuality without being under its limitations. This is almost philosophy, so it's no longer very clear. But (*laughing*) that's all I can say.

THE MOTHER

(*Questions and Answers 1955, CWM 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. 7, pp. 240-47*)



## “A POET’S STAMMER” — CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

Sri Aurobindo —

### A POET’S STAMMER

My dream is spoken  
As if by sound  
Were tremulously broken  
*vow*  
Some oath profound. [1]

A timeless hush  
~~Calls~~ [2]  
Draws ever back

~~My~~ [3]  
The winging music-rush  
Upon thought’s track.

Though syllables sweep  
Like golden birds,  
Far lonelihoods of sleep  
Dwindle my words.

Beyond life’s clamour,  
A mystery mars  
Speech-light to a myriad stammer  
Of ~~quivering~~ stars. [4]  
flickering

Is it all mere ingenuity without any depth and original inspiration? By the way, should the title rather be “A Poet Who Stammered”? [5]

[*Amal’s question written in the left margin*]

[4] Would either “fugitive” or “unknown” be better?

Sri Aurobindo's comment:

[1] [*Sri Aurobindo wrote "vow" above "oath"*] "oath" is a little bit external in sense, it seems to me, for the meaning here

[2] [*Sri Aurobindo crossed out "Calls"*]

[3] [*Sri Aurobindo crossed out "My"*]

[4] No, "flickering" is the right word. [*Sri Aurobindo crossed out "quivering"*]

[5] No.

[*Sri Aurobindo marked stanzas 2, 3 and 3 lines of stanza 4*]

It is a very true and beautiful poem.

13 May 1937

\* \* \*

[*From The Secret Splendour — Collected Poems of K. D. Sethna (Amal Kiran), pp. 153-54. Amal's question:*]

*(What exactly is the intuitive mind you have spoken of, and how does it differ from what you have called 'inner mind' and 'mystic mind'?)*

[*Sri Aurobindo's answer:*]

The intuitive mind, strictly speaking, stretches from the Intuition proper down to the intuitivised inner mind — it is therefore at once an overhead power and a mental intelligence power. All depends on the amount, intensity, quality of the intuition and how far it is mixed with mind or pure. The inner mind is not necessarily intuitive, though it can easily become so. The mystic mind is turned towards the occult and spiritual, but the inner mind can act without direct reference to the occult and spiritual, it can act in the same field and in the same material as the ordinary mind, only with a larger and deeper power, range and light and in greater unison with the Universal Mind; it can open also more easily to what is within and what is above. Intuitive intelligence, mystic mind, inner mind intelligence are all part of the inner mind operation. In today's poem, for instance —



## A POET’S STAMMER

My dream is spoken,  
As if by sound  
Were tremulously broken  
Some vow profound.

A timeless hush  
Draws ever back  
The winging music-rush  
Upon thought’s track.

Though syllables sweep  
Like golden birds,  
Far lonelihoods of sleep  
Dwindle my words.

Beyond life’s clamour,  
A mystery mars  
Speech-light to a myriad stammer  
Of flickering stars. —

it is certainly the inner mind that has transformed the idea of stammering into a symbol of inner phenomena and into that operation a certain strain of mystic mind enters, but what is prominent is the intuitive inspiration throughout. It blends with the intuitive poetic intelligence in the first stanza, gets touched by the overhead intuition in the second, gets full of it in the third and again rises rapidly to that in the two last lines of the fourth stanza. This is what I call poetry of the intuitive mind.

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## ADDENDUM

[*Excerpt from a letter in which Amal replies to a commentary on “A Poet’s Stammer”*:<sup>1</sup>]

... This brings me round very naturally to your “explication” of *A Poet’s Stammer*. Your first two pages are unexceptionable. When we come to the third I find your point about “urge to communicate” a little difficult to accept. You say: “The urge to communicate is so powerful that the pattern of the dream is threatening to break

1. “A Poet, a Poem and a Commentator” published in *Inspiration and Effort — Studies in Literary Attitude and Expression*, Amal Kiran (K. D. Sethna), 1995, The Integral Life Foundation, USA, pp. 191-97.

(‘tremulous’ having the suggestion of shaking and being shaken). The temptation to speak (when one has taken the vow of silence) is irresistible.” I smiled when I read the last sentence. No doubt, every poet has something of the feminine in him but surely not so much as to make him incapable of containing a secret and to render the forbidden fruit the most tempting for him? The poet is not impelled to speak just because he has taken a vow to the contrary. Rather, when he is impelled to speak, it is as if he were breaking a sacred silence to which his soul is pledged. The impulsion does not threaten to break the pattern of the dream; perhaps the reverse would be the true thing to say. The pattern of the dream has the power to break the impulsion — it constantly works to absorb the poet’s inner consciousness and that is why he feels a “tension” in the act of speech and the breaking of some vow to remain plunged in the profundities of the Beyond. The tremulousness is not in the dream-pattern as the result of the poet’s urge to communicate: it is in the poet’s own communicating movement as an effect of the pull which that pattern has on him. This word prepares the final metaphor of the “flickering stars”. In fact all the stanzas prepare it in one way or another. What “tremulously” does here is done in the second stanza by “draws ever back” and in the third by “dwindles”. And there is a concrete reason for it. But before I give the reason let me make a remark on the puzzling “dwindles”.

At present this verb is used in the intransitive. But I am reviving an old transitive form of the late seventeenth century, a form which is more rare than obsolete: it means “to cause to shrink, to make less, or to bring low”. The first and second senses apply here.

To return to my point. In the days when this poem was written, inspiration used to come mostly with the last lines of a poem flashing first into mind. A poem would be felt as pressing for birth when suddenly, while reading or looking at things or reflecting or aspiring, a small shock would be felt in the core of the being (which would be something midway between mind and heart). It was like a shining seed, a packed pulsation, an intuitive thrill, without yet any clear knowledge of what had been intuited. As soon as I had this experience I was sure that a poem was on the way. But what would emerge first was the climax of the thing that was piercing through the inner into the outer. The culminating revelation would crystallise and the job then would be to trace the process leading to the crystallisation. To put it another way: I would find myself standing on the peak of the poetic moment and I had to discover the way by which I got there without my knowing how. And the success of the writing lay in disclosing correctly the process and the passage. It was as if the whole poem had already been waiting behind, showing me its grand finale of a tail or, if one likes, its ultimate crown of a head. As in a super-detective story, my job was: “find the body.” It could very well happen that a poet would tag on to the part in his hand a body not quite belonging to it. The work might be compared to a modern palaeontologist’s, the reconstruction of a prehistoric animal from one

bone-fossil. Or one may think of the Latin saying: *Ex pede Herculeum* — “From a foot, Hercules”. Anyway, with a hushed inner receptivity I would try to get slowly the entire poem whose crest or conclusion I had chanced upon. Here also there would not always be a proper order of emergence. Not always did the first stanza spring out first. Even middle portions would appear. And I had finally to recognise what should stand where. *A Poet’s Stammer* was born in this fashion — the two ending lines forming the actual historical beginning. I suppose such paradoxes are to be expected when it is Mystery that becomes History.

Another feature of my poetry in the old days was that a certain basic image would be variously worked out — facet after facet but in spite of different reflections the same central vision. Here “a myriad stammer/Of flickering stars” is the heart of the imaginative insight. And everything preceding this expression would in diverse modes and manners anticipate it so that when it did come it would bring the sense of a flaming all-fusing fulfilment, the white inevitable seal in which all the visionary colours would come to rest.

Perhaps this feature of the inspiration is what determined the *hysteron-proteron* fashion in which the poem took birth. The central image broke forth at the end of the poem and gave the clue to the remainder of the piece to be drawn out. It set the poetic consciousness along a certain track, it provided a guiding light by which I might be prevented from drifting along false paths of seeing and feeling. Here I had to ask myself whether the new stanzas answered in their vision to the fundamental flickering-stars image — an image in which there was the sense at the same time of a far light, a tiny light, a tremulous light, a vast scatter of such lights against an infinite background of fathomless secrecy. If you keep this image steadily in your mind you will find a key to the whole creative movement of the poem’s symbolism, thought-scheme and sound-design.

Yes, even the sound-design. For the peculiar stanza form adopted is also expressive of the basic vision. And this brings me to your question: “I shall be happy if you can explain to me the significance of the inversion in the first stanza.”

There are several points here to be marked. The inversion makes for suspense and a final focus on “Some vow profound” which in the inner imaginative experience serves to balance the speaking of the words and to explain why this speaking should be such as it is pictured in the poem. The inversion also induces a feel of the breaking that is mentioned: the regular order of the phrases would not correspond to the shape of the significance, the posture of the meaning, the gesture of the semantic action. Again, the natural non-inverted sequence of the language —

My words are spoken  
As if some vow profound  
Were tremulously broken  
By sound —

would make the second line a trimeter and the fourth a unimeter in contradiction of the metrical lengths disposed in the rest of the poem's stanzas, and create an initial dissonance in the spelled harmony intended. It would thus spoil something of the mysterious atmosphere and suggestion which are the true life of this kind of utterance from what Sri Aurobindo calls "intuitive mind". There would, further, be a marring of the musical mysticism which lies in the stanza-structure. For, two trimeter lines — the second and the third — would stand together and make a somewhat heavy mass and not be so effective rhythmically as the present form in which there is a pattern of jet-jet-gush-jet, a sort of subtly stammering movement.

As for the symbolism and the thought-scheme, you must have now got an answer to your query. The golden birds (with vibrant wings) prefigure the star-image, while themselves symbolising truth-gleams, song-awakening, ethereal elevation. The speech-light is of course the manifesting power, but this power gets worked upon by the tremendous Ineffable of ultimate Reality and what gets manifested is not the full infinity of this Divine Darkness but a boundless wealth of intense pin-points, between which the mute Mystery still holds sway. The speech-light is at once let loose and held back: hence the dwindling of the revelatory words. The lonelihoods of sleep are the depths of God-trance which are behind all creation. The true poet is, as it were, in touch with them in the profundities of his being and is constantly being pulled into them in the very act of expressing their locked light, their truth-secrets. The visual correlate of these lonelihoods is, as I have already hinted earlier, the night-sky.

Your whole last page of interpretation is original. I had no conscious notion of all this series you set up: (1) sound, (2) winging music-rush, (3) syllables sweeping, (4) words, (5) flickering stars. Your exposition here is ingenious but brings out, I think, some genuine complexity of implication. It is a fine piece of reading between the lines or, more appropriately, behind the scenes. . . .

P.S. Soon after writing this letter I fell to turning the pages of *Literary Criticism in America*, edited with an Introduction by Albert D. Van Nostrand. Opening in the midst of Emerson's essay on the Poet I struck on the following passage which has an interesting general relation both to what I have said and to what you have.

"Doubt not, O poet, but persist. Say 'It's in me, and shall out.' Stand there, balked and dumb, stuttering and stammering, hissed and hooted, stand and strive, until at last rage draw out of thee that dream-power which every night shows thee is thine own; a power transcending all limit and privacy, and by virtue of which a man is the conductor of the whole river of electricity. . . ." (p. 72)

AMAL KIRAN  
(K. D. SETHNA)

## A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

It was the darkest year, a period without hope, without relief from the oppressive British rule — a rule that had grown all the more oppressive to quell the rising spirit of India now in revolt against it, to crush an uprising whose aim was to bring freedom to a country that had for long been subjected to British rule.

When Sri Aurobindo came out of jail on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1909, after a year of imprisonment, he saw a country fallen back into inertia, lifeless, devoid of all enthusiasm. There was no one to lead or show the path as most of the leaders were in prison or had been deported. The rulers had become more ruthless and oppressive after the 1905 uprising against the partition of Bengal.

Sri Aurobindo saw the condition and decided to carry on the struggle taking up the work of leading his countrymen.

First, he wrote a letter to the editor of *The Bengalee* on 14<sup>th</sup> May:

Will you kindly allow me to express through your columns my deep sense of gratitude to all who have helped me in my hour of trial? . . . I attribute my escape to no human agency, but first of all to the protection of the Mother of us all who has never been absent from me but always held me in Her arms and shielded me from grief and disaster, and secondarily to the prayers of thousands which have been going up to Her on my behalf ever since I was arrested. If it is the love of my country which led me into danger, it is also the love of my countrymen which has brought me safe through it.

(CWSA, Vol. 36, p. 263)

It was on 30<sup>th</sup> May in Uttarpara that he delivered his first speech at the invitation of the Dharma Rakshini Samiti. His countrymen, enchanted, overwhelmed, saw in front of them not the learned poet, scholar, patriot, but Sri Aurobindo the visionary, the Rishi of a bygone era, an emissary of God leading them. His speech was suffused with the vision of India rising to bring back the Sanatana Dharma of the Vedic Rishis long unused and almost forgotten by the masses — a Dharma for mankind, not a religion. His long cherished wish to see God face to face if God existed was granted and Sri Aurobindo saw him in Alipore jail. It was not the high walls of the jail surrounding him that he saw but Sri Krishna. It was not the tree that gave him shade but Sri Krishna. The Sarathi of Arjuna in the battle of Kurukshetra became the ‘*Sathi*’ of Sri Aurobindo in Alipore jail. Here he received two Adeshs to carry out when he would be released, for it was never God’s intention that Sri Aurobindo should remain in prison for long. Thus he came out of jail a free man as no charges could be proved against him whereas a few others imprisoned along with him were

deported to Andaman. And what were those two messages?

I have given you a work and it is to help to uplift this nation. Before long the time will come when you will have to go out of jail; for it is not my will that this time either you should be convicted or that you should pass the time as others have to do, in suffering for their country. I have called you to work, and that is the *adesh* for which you have asked. I give you the *adesh* to go forth and do my work.

(CWSA, Vol. 8, p. 10)

The second message sounded clearly within him:

Something has been shown to you in this year of seclusion, something about which you had your doubts and it is the truth of the Hindu religion. It is this religion that I am raising up before the world, it is this that I have perfected and developed through the *rishis*, saints and *avatars*, and now it is going forth to do my work among the nations. I am raising up this nation to send forth my word. This is the Sanatana Dharma, this is the eternal religion which you did not really know before, but which I have now revealed to you. . . . When you go forth, speak to your nation always this word, that it is for the Sanatana Dharma that they arise, it is for the world and not for themselves that they arise. I am giving them freedom for the service of the world. When therefore it is said that India shall rise it is the Sanatana Dharma that shall rise. When it is said that India shall be great, it is the Sanatana Dharma that shall be great. When it is said that India shall expand and extend herself, it is the Sanatana Dharma that shall expand and extend itself over the world. It is for the *dharma* and by the *dharma* that India exists.

(*ibid.*)

Sri Aurobindo spoke next at Beadon Square, Calcutta, along with other speakers on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1909. He said that he was surprised that the people had been demoralised because of the repression by the Government, as some of the leaders were imprisoned, some deported, the freedom of the press restricted, house searches launched.

This was nothing compared with the price other nations had paid for their liberty. They also would have to suffer much more than this before they could make any appreciable advance towards their goal. This was God's law; . . . It was his law that a fallen nation should not be allowed to rise without infinite suffering and mighty effort. That was the price it had to pay for its previous lapses from national duty.

(*ibid.*, pp. 13-14)

The country was satisfied with a few reforms introduced by the British and thus slackened the struggle. But these reforms were an eyewash, a sham. They would only sow discord among various communities and thus the nation would tend to lose and the British gain. It is the spirit, the determination, the strength and faith in the purpose and the feeling of God within that would show the nation the channels and the paths.

The trend was upward and the time of decline was over. The morning was at hand and once the light had shown itself, it could never be night again. The dawn would soon be complete and the sun rise over the horizon. The sun of India's destiny would rise and fill all India with its light and overflow India and overflow Asia and overflow the world. Every hour, every moment could only bring them nearer to the brightness of the day that God had decreed.

(*ibid.*, p. 17)

A tumultuous welcome greeted him on 19<sup>th</sup> June in Jhalakati, Barisal, now in Bangladesh. People came from remote villages, but why? The villagers would not understand the language he spoke, with a perfect Cambridge accent! Why then did they take so much trouble, walking all the way or coming in bullock carts or by boats, a hundred years ago, when there were no facilities of transport? Yet they poured into the meeting place. They came to see him because they loved him, this frail, thin, darkish complexioned man. They came to see his eyes, the eyes that were not human; he looked beyond, beyond the crowd, beyond the country, beyond the universe — at infinity. These eyes saw the future and his speech revealed to them the vision he saw. What did it matter if they did not understand the language? There was only one way to understand what he spoke. He was not an orator like Bipin Chandra Pal but the heart has its own way of understanding. His dulcet soft voice carrying the power and strength and conviction of his belief penetrated their hearts and they understood what he wanted India to do. His love for the Motherland, his love for his countrymen, these they felt deeply, and they in return gave their love and their life to his service. Each word that he spoke came from his heart where there was no deception or doubt. He spoke the words that he was convinced of and such was the power of his speech and writings that the whole nation rose to carry out his command. The British considered him to be the most dangerous man in India and thus threatened the people of Barisal: they should not attend the meeting for there would be reprisal from the authorities. And what did the people of Barisal do? Stay at home for fear of reprisal? They turned up in thousands, saying, 'Let the authorities do their duty, we will do ours.'

Sri Aurobindo said that the birthplace and the working place of Ashwini Kumar Dutta, a selfless and disinterested worker, was sacred to him. Three years ago they had both spoken here. But now Ashwini Kumar Dutta was in prison and he himself



had come out of jail after one year of imprisonment. What crime had they committed? The British did not have the answer.

If to aspire to independence and preach freedom is a crime you may cast me into jail and there bind me with chains. If to preach freedom is a crime then I am a criminal and let me be punished. But freedom does not mean the use of violence — it does not mean bombs; it is the fulfilment of our separate national existence. . . . The judge in the Alipore case said that the aspiration after independence and the preaching of the ideal of independence was a thing no Englishman could condemn.

(*ibid.*, pp. 40-41)

Why then this imprisonment and deportation? The British had no answer.

In this very town of Jhalakati you had to pay a punitive police tax. It was a punitive tax, punitive not of any offence of which you have been guilty, — for you have been guilty of none. . . . What you have been punished for was your patriotism — you were punished for your Swadeshism — you were punished for your successful organisation of boycott.

(*ibid.*, p. 34)

It was for this successful, systematic organised protest that Ashwini Kumar Dutta was deported. And the law under which he was exiled was already expunged by the Parliament but still it was used as Lord Morley thought it was a good law. When it was felt that the very existence of a man was inconvenient, the British did not need any evidence, the person was put in jail for life. Under the British crown there was no safety for any person, and one could truly say, “What an amount of folly and ignorance rules at the present moment in this unhappy country.” One had to remember that God wants this country to rise, any amount of coercion or reprisal is only the hammer of God to mould the country as his instrument in the world. The British may by the strength of their law impose more punishment on this nation but Indians should not forget that they possessed another form of strength — the spiritual strength inherited from the Vedic times by the Tapasya and austerities of the Rishis. As the obstacles come, the spiritual strength grows.

Swaraj is not the Colonial form of Government nor any form of Government. It means the fulfilment of our national life. That is what we seek, that is why God has sent us into the world to fulfil Him by fulfilling ourselves in our individual life, in the family, in the community, in the nation, in humanity. That is why He has sent us into the world and it is this fulfilment that we demand; for this fulfilment is life and to depart from it is to perish.

(*ibid.*, p. 40)



He said that we could achieve this goal by the power of our courage, devotion, commitment, suffering and sacrifice. If these are repressed, the country will then fall into anarchism.

This is what He demands of us. — “I have sent my storms upon you, so that you may feel and train your strength. If you have suffered by them, if something has been broken, it does not matter, so long as you learn the lesson that it is for strength I make you suffer and always for strength.” . . . The storm may come down on us again and with greater violence. Then remember this, brave its fury, feel your strength, train your strength in the struggle with the violence of the wind, and by that strength hold down the roof over the temple of the Mother.

(*ibid.*, pp. 41-42)

His next speech was on 23<sup>rd</sup> June at Bakarganj, now in Bangladesh. Here he spoke about the ‘two voices’ of the British Government. In one voice it announced some concession in the legislative council, in another it spoke of preserving the absolute Government in India for all time.

. . . Lord Morley presents himself to us with a *khadga* in one hand and the *varabhaya* in another. . .

This system which Lord Morley has given us is marred by two very serious defects. One of them is this very fact that the elected members will be in the minority, the nominated non-officials and the officials being in the majority; and the second is that an entirely non-democratic principle has been adopted in this elective system, the principle of one community being specially represented.

(*ibid.*, pp. 43-44)

The British could not overlook the popular awakening and they also observed that the lead came from the educated classes, mostly Hindus, whereas the Mohamedan awakening was not so strong. They framed a policy wherein they suppressed the superior awakening forces and raised up the weaker one, thus setting up the one against the other — dividing the populace so that the British reign would be safe from any unified uprising of the Hindus and the Muslims. But the uprising once awakened could not be stopped by such a policy. To avoid violent conflict and denouncement of law and order the weapons used were passive resistance, non-cooperation and boycott. These had to continue even if some concession, on the face of it, were made by the British. God in His infinite compassion had unmasked the carrot and stick policy of the rulers by which they tried to isolate the educated class — the backbone of India. God had shown the danger, the weakness and the

strength also. It was for the Indians to solve the problem and cross the hurdle:

God has put the question to us, and with us entirely it lies to answer.

(*ibid.*, p. 47)

On 25<sup>th</sup> June, in Khulna, now in Bangladesh, he did not speak on any political situation or repression or the sham concession given by the British Government. He spoke on the Gita, perhaps to remind the nation that a situation similar to Kurukshetra now faced India. And as Sri Krishna expounded the Gita to Arjuna on the battlefield, Sri Aurobindo expressed the message of the Gita to an audience in Khulna in English because he was still not fluent in spoken Bengali. It was not from a translation that he knew the teachings of the Gita but by studying it in the original Sanskrit. Sri Aurobindo who had the darshan of Sri Krishna in Alipore jail expounded the teachings:

The Gita says that the man who has knowledge has to do exactly what other men do. He has to live as a man in his family, race and nation. But there is a difference which is internal and not external. By the internal difference he acts in communion with God; others act in pursuance of their desires. He knows by experience how a man can act when he is free from desire. This force of action is the force of God Himself. He is not troubled by the result of action; he gets eternal bliss.

This is the whole teaching of the Gita. It is *yoga* which gives utter perfection in action. The man who works for God is not shaken by doubts.

The teaching of the Gita is a teaching for life, and not a teaching for the life of a closet. It is a teaching which means perfection of action. It makes man great. It gives him the utter strength, the utter bliss which is the goal of life in the world.

(*ibid.*, p. 53)

On 27<sup>th</sup> June 1909, Sri Aurobindo was in Howrah Town Hall at the invitation of his friend, Pandit Gispati Kavyatirtha who was to deliver a speech. Instead he requested Sri Aurobindo to address the gathering. Sri Aurobindo informed the audience that he would like to depart from the subject chosen for the programme, though not unconnected with it, and instead spoke on 'The Right of Association'. He said that free nations cherish three ideologies: the right of a free Press, the right of free public meeting and the right of association.

The right of free speech is inherent in Indian philosophy as it is the idea that builds up the world.

It is a power which by the very fact of being impalpable assumes all the greater potency and produces all the more stupendous results. Therefore the right of free speech is cherished because it gives the idea free movement, it gives the nation that power which ensures its future development, which ensures success in any struggle for national life, however stripped it may be of means and instruments. . . .

This right of free speech takes the form first of a free Press.

(*ibid.*, p. 68)

The right to public meetings gives the people a common ground to get together

. . . and as they stand or sit together in their thousands, the force of the idea within moves them by the magnetism of crowds. It moves from one to another till the hidden shakti, the mighty force within, stirred by the words thrown out from the platform travels from heart to heart and masses of men are not only moved by a common feeling and common aspiration, but by the force of that magnetism prepared to act and fulfil the idea.

(*ibid.*)

The right of association binds together men with a common idea, a common aspiration, and prepares the ground for achieving their common objective.

. . . the bonds of brotherhood grow, energy increases, the idea begins to materialise itself to work in practical affairs and that which was yesterday merely an idea, merely a word thrown out by the eloquence of the orator, becomes a question of practical politics. It becomes work for it begins to work and fulfil itself. . . .

Association is the mightiest thing in humanity; it is the instrument by which humanity moves, it is the means by which it grows, it is the power by which it progresses towards its final development. There are three ideas which are of supreme moment to human life and have become the watchwords of humanity. Three words have the power of remoulding nations and Governments, liberty, equality and fraternity.

(*ibid.*, p. 69)

Our religion teaches that by this liberty we progress towards liberation from the state of bondage, this is *mukti* or *moksha*.

We in India have found a mighty freedom within ourselves, our brother-men in Europe have worked towards freedom without. We have been moving on

parallel lines towards the same end. They have found out the way to external freedom. We have found out the way to internal freedom. We meet and give to each other what we have gained. We have learned from them to aspire after external as they will learn from us to aspire after internal freedom.

(*ibid.*, pp. 69-70)

From inequality one moves towards equality — the second term of the gospel. All religions, though the forms differ, give us the same message that we are all equal in God's eye.

The equality which Europe has got is external political equality. . . . They have not either the liberty within or the full equality or the fraternity. So they are turning a little from what they have and they say increasingly, "Let us have equality, let us have the second term of the gospel towards which we strive." Therefore socialism is growing in Europe.

(*ibid.*, p. 70)

In India equality is an essential condition for emancipation. India has learnt from Europe to strive after political equality and in return India will show them the way to equality within.

The last and the most difficult term to achieve the gospel is fraternity. Though difficult it is the ultimate goal of all religions and human aspiration — the yearning of mankind for peace and love.

This is the essence of humanitarianism, the modern gospel of love for mankind.

(*ibid.*, p. 71)

In India the gospel of fraternity or brotherhood or association was an age-old principle. Since ancient times it was reflected in the forms of the *varṇa* system, the village community, the joint family system or the founding of a common life based on some common goal, feeling, tenderness and moral discipline. But with the onrush of European culture this association or brotherhood is losing ground. It is being replaced by a new type of association.

How did this new kind of association grow and to what objects did it address itself? The movement was not planned by any human brain, it was not foreseen by any human foresight. It came of itself, it came as a flood comes, as a storm comes. There had been slow preparations which we did not institute or understand. These preparations were mainly among the young men, the rising

generation, the hope of India. There the spirit first awoke. . . . They called themselves volunteers. . . . They volunteered for service to the representatives of the nation who came together to deliberate for the good of the people. This is how it first came, as an idea of service, the idea of service to those who worked for the motherland. Out of that grew the idea of service to the Mother. That was the first stage and the root from which it grew into our political life.

(*ibid.*, p. 73)

But the British scoffed at these weaklings doomed to perpetual slavery. So the Samitis and Akharas sprang up everywhere teaching physical exercise and self-defence.

We said, "In spite of our physical weakness we have a strength within us which will remove our defects. We will be a race of brave and strong men. And that we may be so, we will establish everywhere these associations for physical exercise."

(*ibid.*, p. 74)

Another type of association grew, that of service and self-sacrifice to help the poor and the sick. But the British, incapable of understanding this Nishkamakarma, condemned these associations labelling them as associations of dacoity and rebellion. They suffered from association phobia. The Swadesh Bandhab Samiti of Ashwini K. Dutta — a humanitarian organisation — was crushed out of existence and he was deported because the British found him inconvenient.

The association that we shall have will be the association of brothers who are united heart to heart, of fellow-workers joined hand-in-hand in a common labour, the association of those who have a common motherland. It is the association of the whole country, to which every son of India and every son of Bengal ought by the duty of his birth to belong, an association which no force can break up, the association of a unity which grows closer day by day, of an impulse that comes from on high and has drawn us together in order that we might realise brotherhood, in order that the Indian nation may be united and united not merely in the European way, not merely by the common self-interest, but united by love for the common country, united by the ideal of brotherhood, united by the feeling that we are all sons of one common Mother who is also the manifestation of God in a united humanity. . . . It awakens God within us and says, "You are all one, you are all brothers. There is one place in which you all meet and that is your common Mother. That is not merely the soil. That is not merely a division of land but it is a living thing. It is the Mother in whom

you move and have your being. Realise God in the nation, realise God in your brother, realise God in a wide human association.”

(*ibid.*, pp. 81-82)

And Sri Aurobindo concluded with these words,

For the fiat of God has gone out to the Indian nation, “Unite, be free, be one, be great.”

(*ibid.*, p. 83)

(*To be continued*)

KRISHNA CHAKRAVARTY



### **The Mother’s Message for the New Year 1955**

No human will can finally prevail against the Divine’s Will. Let us put ourselves deliberately and exclusively on the side of the Divine, and the Victory is ultimately certain.

(*Words of the Mother – III*, CWM 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. 15, p. 171)



## A NOTE

*The November issue carried Sri Aurobindo's observations in The Future Poetry on the poet, Edward Carpenter.*

*In this issue we present extracts from James Cousins' article in New Ways in English Literature on Carpenter.*

*This is followed by a selection of verses by Carpenter and a few remarks by the poet on his work.*

## A PROPHET OF DEMOCRACY: EDWARD CARPENTER

LITERATURE and the arts are the handmaids of the soul, and being so, cannot be too worthy; but they are not the soul itself. The Kingdom of Heaven within must first be sought, and all things else will fall into their natural place. That was why, as we climbed the steep road back from Milthorpe to Holmesfield, when the tall, limber, handsome old gentleman in knickerbockers, with the slight professorial air, carried my bag, there was nothing of pose or condescension in the act, but just the natural sharing of burdens between an elder brother and a younger.

Edward Carpenter is perhaps most widely known through his writings on sociological subjects and through certain frank and illuminating books on human relationship. His “Adam’s Peak to Elephanta” is a treasure-trove to those who love the philosophy of India, and would fain see something of her life through sympathetic eyes. But it is in his monumental poem, “Towards Democracy”, that the quintessence of the poet’s revelation is contained.

Here Edward Carpenter will be found as radically different from other exponents of the doctrine of human freedom, which is the aim of his life-work; different from passionate claimants for a burning necessity, like Shelley, or patient, almost cold-blooded, trackers of the footsteps of Freedom along the chill hilltops of logic, like John Stuart Mill; different even from Whitman with whom he shares much in common. He is not a man in search of freedom: he is a man who has *found* freedom, or, to be accurate, the maximum of freedom that can be conceived as possible in a relative world of interdependent beings.

In his young manhood he felt the pinch of enforced obligation on the material and intellectual degrees of a sensitive and unusually honest nature. He made a bid for freedom by renouncing a career in one of the freest of the churches, and by taking up market gardening as a contribution to the productivity that he saw to be essential to truly prosperous national life. The rest of his life has been a consolidation of his position in front of the Capitalist Spirit which he regards as the arch-enemy to human Freedom.

It is this latter conviction that has led to a somewhat narrow interpretation of his great life-work, *Towards Democracy*, on the part of those who have never undertaken the spiritual discipline of reading it. Their idea of democracy is restricted to economics, whereas Carpenter’s Democracy is a spiritual comradeship that includes economics, as it also includes the arts. Moreover, there is a notion that an interest in economics connotes a somewhat arid and sharp propagandism; whereas to Carpenter, there is only one form of propaganda, that is, life — but it may include, as a legitimate function, not as an obsession, some indulgence in missionary enthusiasm. That is



the note of his life and work; and it adds immensely to their value to know that his utterances on the subject of Freedom are not echoes from other minds, or questionable conclusions from partial premises, but the free expression of his own soul.

The veil between the man and his work is of the thinnest material.

. . .

Out of the wealth of idea, reference, pictures of nature, unflinching details of life, one central theme emerges, the theme of Liberty: not a little transient expansion of permission to sate the senses on things forbidden, or gaze timidly on Kings and Queens; but the stripping away ruthlessly of all fripperies that smother the free play of soul or body, and hide the vision of the Eternal that follows full self-realisation. Edward Carpenter is no mere ethical thinker: he is a spiritual seer. He is not a mere improver of human conditions: he is a preparer of the Way of the Lord . . .

. . .

Thus Edward Carpenter in his life, as in his deepest expression of it in "Towards Democracy", comes before us not as the critic of contemporary error and abuse or as the polite essayist on music and art, but as the prophet of democracy.

But why *prophet*? Is not this the age of representative institutions, at least in "civilised" countries, and notwithstanding their temporary suspension in war time? The question touches the very pith and marrow of Carpenter's message. His democracy can be no little economic formula, no method of "one man one vote", or "pool and divide", for his vision is *towards*, and that means infinity: the foot of the imagination is set lightly on the present, but is springing always towards the future. To such a mind there can be no halting-places in systems or creeds. Humanly speaking his thought is without objective; for with every phase of advance there is, in his conception, a spiritualising of form into higher and purer degrees; the human consciousness is exalted until "the voice of the people is the voice of God", not in the lower democratic sense of binding Divinity to the human limitation, but in the sense of the Higher Democracy of Carpenter which is inspired *by* the vision of a humanity so purged of self by love that in its units and groups it expresses the abstract beauty and truth, justice and freedom of the spiritual whole.

Such vision could never be the vaporous imagining of a mind out of touch with life. Carpenter has lived, laboured, and travelled. He has touched "reality", but he has had the good fortune to possess a centre of calm in which to perform the balancing and distilling process that distinguishes the judgment of the thoughtful from the shiftier findings of those who are mainly under the domination of the automatic mind. The artist, to get a true perspective, must step back out of the range of the detail of his picture; the thinker must get beyond reach of the things that

provoke his thoughts if he would comprehend their full significance. This is the process through which Carpenter's genius has expressed itself. It oscillates between detail and generalisation. It dips down into the evidence of the senses: it withdraws and transmutes the sense of the evidence into vision.

His vision is, therefore, related to life. It is, in the best meaning of the term, modern, for it sees with the evolutionary eye the stupendous process of development along the surface of life; and it sees also with the inner eye the accumulation of faculty and consciousness that lifts thought from degree to degree towards a divine culmination. Carpenter's vision is not over the head of to-day, but through it. His revolt is only against civilisation in so far as its elements of selfishness and ugliness are barriers to the expression of the ideal harmony which is somewhere concealed in the totality of things, and involved potentially in every atom of diversity.

In short, the democracy of Edward Carpenter is no other than the spiritual goal of every mystic from Siddhartha and his precursors to James Macbeth Bain and his contemporaries, not excluding Mirabai and Teresa, Catherine and their sisters; union of outer and inner: but the mysticism of Carpenter is of a more integral and less remote order, and the more dangerous to things as they are because its altar light is no shaded glimmer, but a naked flame among the wood, hay, stubble of the world.

JAMES COUSINS

(Extracts from *New Ways in English Literature* by James Cousins,  
published by Ganesh & Co., Madras, pp. 77-92)



### **The Mother's Message for the New Year 1956**

The greatest victories are the least noisy.  
The manifestation of a new world is not proclaimed by beat of drum.

(*Words of the Mother – III*, CWM 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. 15, p. 171)



## A SELECTION OF VERSE

Cradled in flame,

Or like a tiny charm-figure within an agate reclining, from that which encloses  
it inseparate, indivisible —

So, deep in my heart, through all that chances,  
Thy form, thy form, indelible remains.

(Cradled in Flame, p. 226)

\* \* \*

At night in each other's arms,

Content, overjoyed, resting deep deep down in the darkness,  
Lo! the heavens opened and He appeared —

Whom no mortal eye may see,

Whom no eye clouded with Care,

Whom none who seeks after this or that, whom none who has not escaped  
from self.

There — in the region of Equality, in the world of Freedom no longer limited,  
Standing as a lofty peak in heaven above the clouds,  
From below hidden, yet to all who pass into that region most clearly visible —  
He the Eternal appeared.

(Love's Vision, pp. 227-28)

\* \* \*

All night by the shore.

The obscure water, the long white lines of advancing foam, the rustle and  
thud, the panting sea-breaths, the pungent sea-smell,

The great slow air moving from the distant horizon, the immense mystery  
of space, and the soft canopy of the clouds!

The swooning thuds go on — the drowse of ocean goes on:

The long inbreaths — the short sharp outbreaths — the silence between.

I am a bit of the shore: the waves feed upon me, they come pasturing over me;  
I am glad, O waves, that you come pasturing over me.

I am a little arm of the sea: the same tumbling swooning dream goes on —

I feel the waves all around me, I spread myself through them.

How delicious! I spread and spread. The waves tumble through and over me — they dash through my face and hair.

The night is dark overhead: I do not see them, but I touch them and hear their gurgling laughter.

The play goes on!

The strange expanding indraughts go on!

Suddenly I am the Ocean itself: the great soft wind creeps over my face.

I am in love with the wind — I reach my lips to its kisses.

How delicious! all night and ages and ages long to spread myself to the gliding wind!

But now (and ever) it maddens me with its touch: I arise and whirl in my bed, and sweep my arms madly along the shores.

I am not sure any more which my own particular bit of shore is;

All the bays and inlets know me: I glide along in and out under the sun by the beautiful coast-line;

My hair floats leagues behind me; millions together my children dash against my face;

I hear what they say and am marvelously content.



All night by the shore;

And the sea is a sea of faces.

The long white lines come up — face after face comes and falls past me —

Thud after thud. Is it pain or joy?

Face after face — endless!

I do not know; my sense numbs; a trance is on me — I am becoming detached!

I am a bit of the shore:

The waves feed upon me, they pasture all over me, my feeling is strangely concentrated at every point where they touch me;

I am glad O waves that you come pasturing over me.

I am detached, I disentangle myself from the shore; I have become free — I float out and mingle with the rest.

The pain, the acute clinging desire, is over — I feel beings like myself all around me, I spread myself through and through them, I am merged in a sea of contact.

Freedom and equality are a fact. Life and joy seem to have begun for me.

The play goes on!  
Suddenly I am the great living Ocean itself — the awful Spirit of Immensity  
creeps over my face.

I am in love with it. All night and ages and ages long and for ever I pour  
my soul out to it in love.

I spread myself out broader and broader for ever, that I may touch it and  
be with it everywhere.

There is no end. But ever and anon it maddens me with its touch. I arise  
and sweep away my bounds.

I know but I do not care any longer which my own particular body is —  
all conditions and fortunes are mine.

By the ever-beautiful coast-line of human life, by all shores, in all climates  
and countries, by every secluded nook and inlet.

Under the eye of my beloved Spirit I glide:  
O joy! for ever, ever, joy!  
I am not hurried — the whole of eternity is mine;  
With each one I delay, with each one I dwell — with you I dwell.  
The warm breath of each life ascends past me;  
I take the thread from the fingers that are weary and go on with the work;  
The secretest thoughts of all are mine, and mine are the secretest thoughts  
of all.

---

All night by the shore;  
And the fresh air comes blowing with the dawn.  
The mystic night fades — but my joy fades not.  
I arise and cast a stone into the water (O sea of faces I cast this poem  
among you) — and turn landward over the rustling beach.

(By the Shore, pp. 160-62)

\* \* \*

### Who will learn Freedom?

Lo! as the air blows wafting the clinging aromatic scent of the balsam poplar,  
dear to me,

Or the sun-warm fragrance of wallflowers, tarrying here for a moment, then  
floating far down the road and away;

Or as the early light edging the hills, so calm, unprejudiced, open to all;

So shall you find what you seek in men and women — your passage and swift  
deliverance.

As when one opens a door after long confinement in the house — so out of  
your own plans and purposes escaping,

Out of the many mirror-lined chambers of self (grand though they be, but O  
how dreary!) in which you have hitherto spent your life —

In these behold once more the incommunicable freedom of the sky, the green  
hills, the woods and the waters,

To pass in and out for ever, having abandoned your own objects, looking  
calmly upon them, as though they did not exist.

—

Now who so despised and lost, but what shall be my Savior?

Is there one yet sick and suffering in the whole world? or deformed, condemned,  
degraded?

Thither hastening I am at rest — for this one can absolve me.

O I am greedy of love — all all are beautiful to me!

You my deliverers every one — from death, from sin, from evil —

I float, I dissolve in you!

O bars of self you cannot shut me now.

O frailest child, O blackest criminal,

Whoe'er you are I never can repay you — though the world despise you, you  
are glorious to me;

For you have saved me from myself,

You delivered me when I was in prison —

I passed through you into heaven,

You were my Christ to me.

(Who Will Learn Freedom?, pp. 235-36)

\* \* \*

Thus as I yearned for love,  
 At length the clouds parted,  
 And I knew the old old vision:  
 Him with the sorrowful eyes (pain, unrelenting pain),  
 With the distant piercing unapproachable eyes, I knew, —  
 The face from the murky clouds disclosed, and withdrawn  
 again.

O night, fold upon fold, impenetrable, with silent tears in the darkness falling —  
 mute night, remover of all evidence!

O dawn, with early rising almost before it is light, and preparations for a long  
 journey!

O day, with children playing by the roadside, and greetings exchanged, and  
 cheery demeanor!

And somewhere, unseen, over all, the same unapproachable eyes looking as  
 ever down.

(Thus as I Yearned for Love, p. 134)

\* \* \*

O mighty Mother — in silence receive thy child.

Weary, fainting, having travelled far and forsaken thee, having undertaken  
 burdens too great to be borne —

Atlas of griefs and sorrows, well nigh borne down beneath the load —

Thy foolish child, wandering afar from thee, yet led by what divine madness? —

O mighty Mother receive.

Never again to stray.

Having circled the globe, having completed the many-thousand-year-long  
 round which thou secretly appointedst for me —

Through what mystifications troubles delays, what returning on old tracks,  
 what torments and inward suffering (thou knowest best) —

What entanglements and illusions—

O mighty Mother receive!

Outcast and friendless (for that was my necessary doom) and homeless on the  
 verge of creation I first knew myself — sorrow was the wall which divided me from  
 thee.

I beheld thee afar and knew thee not; I was a prisoner and guessed not that I  
 was in prison.

But now at thy feet — thanks, thanks!

Pouring out my soul in gratitude to thee — thy child so foolish, to Thee, dear mother:

Whilst thou one by one disentanglest the loaded heavy chains which I have dragged so far —

(One by one, for not all at once will they come off, and fast and eating into my flesh are they riveted) —

At thy feet I sit and sing, knowing thou hast sworn to give me Freedom.

Ages shall my song last, for not all at once can I disburden myself;

Ages will I sing for joy — warbling in thy presence — as the birds to the risen sun;

Then at last arising Thou mother shalt take me by the hand: we will leave the earth, and thou shalt learn me to fly through heaven.

(O Mighty Mother, pp. 177-78)

\* \* \*

...

The word which waited so long to be spoken, behold it is gone forth.

Lo! shooting of swift auroral gleams,

Thoughts hither and thither spreading, coherent,

Words, hark! babbling multitudinous,

Waves to and fro in the sunlight flowing,

Louder and louder lisping — into one consent waking.

O hearts, not in vain!

Joy, joy — so long a stranger upon earth —

Joy is come up! see the great laughing Ocean!

The deep floor paved with flowers!

Joy is come up. Its waves flow over the world!

To and fro, to and fro, tossing, tumultuously dancing,

The sunlight-smitten waves flow over the world!

How is the great deep changed! Joy is come up.

Wealth the great gloom, the last worst tyranny,

Sinks — is gone down for ever. Arise! arise!

The gardens and the beautiful terraces,

The palaces and theatres and halls

Of our fair cities await your smiles, O Man:

Your solemn love which is their dignity,



Your earnest solemn love, their sacrament,  
 With outstretched arms they wait.  
 Arise, O Man!  
 The long inheritance of the ages waits:  
 Lo! the fair earth is thine — at length is thine.  
 Joy! Joy!  
 The light air and the nimble winds, the blue  
 Cloud-islanded seas of heaven, the great glad fields  
 Waving with golden grain, green orchards dusk  
 With pensive shadows — all the round earth is thine.

Child that shalt bless thy mother,  
 Joy, joy! The earth is thine.

(I Come Forth From The Darkness, pp. 117-18)

\* \* \*

...

Have you doubted? — It is well. But now you shall forget your doubts.  
 Have you suffered? — It is good to suffer; but soon you shall suffer no longer.  
 Have you looked at the sky and the earth and the long busy streets and thought  
 them dead of all poetry and beauty? — It is you have been ill, nigh to death; but be  
 at peace; life shall surely return to you.

I have seen your struggles, your long wakeful nights; I have sat by you. I have  
 heard the voice which calls you. Come with me. Here is Rest, here is Peace I give  
 you. A little while by the edge of this wood sitting, I with You; then to depart; yet  
 never to depart again.

Words unspoken, yet wafted over all lands, through all times, eternal; no more  
 mine than yours — I give them again to the wide embracing Air.

Haply a little breath for you to breathe — to enter, scarcely perceived, into  
 your body — a little time to dwell, transforming, within you.

Haply mementos, indications, broken halves of ancient changeless Symbols,  
 eternal possessions, treasures incorruptible.

Of Love which changes not — to be duly presented again — the broken halves  
 to be joined.

(Towards Democracy LIX, pp. 83-84)

\* \* \*

Who understands?

Who draws close as a little child?

Ah! who is he who stands closest? And has heard the word, himself, uttered out of the ground from between the clods?

Who is the wise statesman who walks hand in hand with his people, guiding and guided?

Who is the child of the people, moving joyous, liquid, free, among his equals, touching nearest the serene untampered facts of earth and sky?

Who is the poet whom love has made strong strong strong with all strength?

Ah! who is he who says to the great good Mother: *Cling fast, O Mother, and hold me; clasp thy fingers over my face and draw me to thee for ever!*

(Towards Democracy X, p. 23)

\* \* \*

...

I arise out of the dewy night and shake my wings.

Tears and lamentations are no more. Life and death lie stretched below me. I breathe the sweet aether blowing of the breath of God.

Deep as the universe is my life — and I know it; nothing can dislodge the knowledge of it; nothing can destroy, nothing can harm me.

Joy, joy arises — I arise. The sun darts overpowering piercing rays of joy through me, the night radiates it from me.

I take wings through the night and pass through all the wildernesses of the worlds, and the old dark holds of tears and death — and return with laughter, laughter, laughter:

Sailing through the starlit spaces on outspread wings, we two — O laughter! laughter! laughter!

(Towards Democracy II, p. 14)

\* \* \*

In the first soft winds of spring, while snow yet lay on the ground —

Forth from the city into the great woods wandering,

Into the great silent white woods where they waited in their beauty and majesty

For man their companion to come:

There, in vision, out of the wreck of cities and civilisations,

I saw a new life arise.

...

Out of the litter and muck of a decaying world,  
Lo! even so  
I saw a new life arise.

...

Slowly, building lifting itself up atom by atom,  
Gathering itself together round a new centre — or rather round the world-old  
centre once more revealed —  
I saw a new life, a new society, arise.  
Man I saw arising once more to dwell with Nature; . . .

(After Civilisation, pp. 215-16)

\* \* \*

Underneath all now comes this Word, turning the edges of the other words where  
they meet it.

Politics, art, science, commerce, religion, customs and methods of daily life,  
the very outer shows and semblances of ordinary objects —

The rose in the garden, the axe hanging behind the door in the outhouse —

Their meanings must all now be absorbed and recast in this word, or else fall  
off like dry husks before its disclosure.

...

The old structures can no longer stand — their very foundations are shifted —  
And men run forth in terror from the old before they can yet find firm ground  
for the new.

In all directions gulfs and yawning abysses,

The ground of society cracking, the fire showing through,

The old ties giving way beneath the strain, and the great pent heart heaving as  
though it would break —

At the sound of the new word spoken —

At the sound of the word Democracy.

(The Word Democracy, pp. 217-19)

\* \* \*

...

O for a breath of the sea and the great mountains!

A bronzed hardy live man walking his way through it all;

Thousands of men companioning the waves and the storms, splendid in health,  
naked-breasted, catching the lion with their hands;

A thousand women swift-footed and free — owners of themselves, forgetful  
of themselves, in all their actions — full of joy and laughter and action;

Garbed not so differently from the men, joining with them in their games and  
sports, sharing also their labors;

Free to hold their own, to grant or withhold their love, the same as the men;

Strong, well-equipped in muscle and skill, clear of finesse and affection —

(The men, too, clear of much brutality and conceit) —

Comrades together, equal in intelligence and adventure,

Trusting without concealment, loving without shame but with discrimination  
and continence towards a perfect passion.

O for a breath of the sea!

The necessity and directness of the great elements themselves!

Swimming the rivers, braving the sun, the cold, taming the animals and the  
earth, conquering the air with wings, and each other with love —

The true the human society!

(These Populations, pp. 220-21)

\* \* \*

...

Him who is not detained by mortal adhesions, who walks in this world yet not  
of it,

Taking part in everything with equal mind, with free limbs and senses unentangled —

Giving all, accepting all, using all, enjoying all, asking nothing, shocked at  
nothing —

Whom love follows everywhere, but he follows not it —

Him all creatures worship, all men and women bless . . . .

(Underneath and After All, p. 281)

\* \* \*

You, who un-united to yourself roam about the world,

Seeking some person or some thing to which to be united —

Seeking to ease that way the pain at your heart —  
Deceive not yourself, deceive not others.

For united to that which you really are you are indeed beautiful, united to Yourself you are strong, united to yourself you are already in the hearts of those you love;

But disunited you are none of these things,

And how shall men desire a mere shell, or how will you offer them a husk saying, There is fruit within, when there is no fruit — but only vacancy?

And these are the Gods that seek ever to come in the forms of men — the ageless immortal Gods — to make of earth that Paradise by their presence;

But while you bar the way and weave your own little plans and purposes like a tangle of cobwebs across the inner door,

How shall they make their entrance and habitation with you?

How shall you indeed know what it is to be Yourself?

(The Wandering Psyche, pp. 304-05)

\* \* \*

I hear thy call, Mysterious Being;

In the dead of night, when the stars float grey overhead, and the Northern lights flicker faintly,

In the blazing noon when the sunlight rims with a luminous ring the wide horizon,

Flooding, enfolding all —

I hear thy call.

In the hollow depths below — I hear thee, Mysterious Being.

...

Take me, great Life — O take me, long-delaying,

Unloose these chains, unbind these clogs and fetters;

I hear thy call — so strange — Mysterious Being,

I hear thy call — I come.

(I Hear Thy Call, Mysterious Being, pp. 305-06)

EDWARD CARPENTER

(From *Towards Democracy* by Edward Carpenter,  
published by George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1949.)

## ON *TOWARDS DEMOCRACY*

My physical health was every day becoming better. There was a new beauty over the world. Everywhere I paused, in the lanes or the fields, or on my way to or from the station, to catch some magic of sound, some intimation of a perpetual freedom and gladness such as earth and its habitants (it seemed to me) had hardly yet dreamed of. I remember that, all that time, I was haunted by an image, a vision within me, of something like a bulb and bud, with short green blades, of a huge hyacinth just appearing above the ground. I knew that it represented vigour and abounding life. But now I seem to see that, in the strange emblematic way in which the soul sometimes speaks, this image may have been a sign of the fact that my life had really at last taken root, and was beginning to grow.

Another thing happened about this time. On the 25<sup>th</sup> January 1881, my mother died. Her death affected me profoundly. Though there had been . . . so little in the way of spoken confidences between us, we were united by a strong invisible tie. For months, even years, after her death, I seemed to feel her, even see her, close to me — always figuring as a semi-luminous presence, very real, but faint in outline, larger than mortal. It was an inexpressibly tender and consoling relation. Gradually, in the course of years, the presence, or the sense of it, faded away, becoming less and less objective, into the background of my mind, where it remains now, more as it were an actual part of myself than it was then.

Her death at this moment exercised perhaps a great etherealizing influence on my mind, exhaling the great mass of feelings, intuitions, conceptions, and views of life and the world which had formed within me into another sphere. The *Bhagavat Gita* about the same time falling into my hands gave me a keynote. And all at once I found myself in touch with a mood of exaltation and inspiration — a kind of super-consciousness — which passed all that I had experienced before, and which immediately harmonized all these other feelings, giving to them their place, their meaning and their outlet in expression.

And so it was that *Towards Democracy* came to birth. I was in fact completely taken captive by this new growth in me, and could hardly finish my course of lectures for the preoccupation. Already I was speculating how I could cut myself free. No sooner were the lectures over . . . that I began writing *Towards Democracy*. It seemed All ready there. I never hesitated for a moment. Day by day it came along from point to point. I did not hurry; I expressed everything with slow care and to my best; I utilized former material which I had by me; but the one illuminating mood remained and everything fell into place under it; and rarely did I find it necessary to remodel, or rearrange to any great extent, anything that I had once written.

...

There was a sense to me of inevitableness in it all, and of being borne along, which gave me good courage, notwithstanding occasional doubts; and a sense too of unspeakable relief and deliverance, after all those long years of gestation, as of a woman with her child.

(*My Days and Dreams*, pp. 105-08)

\* \* \*

... *Towards Democracy*, of course, has been the startpoint and kernel of all my later work, the centre from which the other books radiated. Whatever obvious weakness and defects it may present, I have still always been aware that it was written from a different *plane* from the other works, from some predominant mood or consciousness superseding the purely intellectual. Indeed, so strong has been this feeling that, though tempted once or twice to make alterations from the latter point of view, I have never really ventured to do so; and now, after more than thirty years since the inception of the book, I am entirely glad to think that I have not.

It is a curious question — and one which literary criticism has never yet tackled — why it is that certain books, or certain passages in books, will bear reading over and over again without becoming stale; that you can return to them after months or years and find entirely new meanings in them which had escaped you on the first occasion; and that this can go on happening time after time, while other books and passages are exhausted at the first reading and need never be looked at again. How is it possible that the same phrase or concatenation of words should bear within itself meaning behind meaning, horizon after horizon of significance and suggestion? Portions of the poetic and religious literature of most countries, and large portions of books like *Leaves of Grass*, the *Bhagavat Gita*, Plato's *Banquet*, Dante's *Divina Commedia*, have this inexhaustible germinative quality. One returns to them again and again, and continually finds fresh interpretations lurking beneath the old and familiar words.

I imagine that the explanation is somewhat on this view: That in the case of passages that are exhausted at a first reading ...we are simply being presented with an intellectual 'view' of some fact; but that in the other cases in some mysterious way the words succeed in conveying the fact itself. It is like the difference between the actual solid shape of the mountain and the different views of the mountain obtainable from different sides. They are two things of a different order and dimension. It almost seems as if some mountain-facts of our experience *can* be imaged forth by words in such a way that the phrases themselves retain this quality of solidity, and consequently their outlines of meaning vary according to the angle at which the reader approaches them and the variation of the reader's mind. None of

the outlines are final, and the solid content of the phrase remains behind and eludes them all. Anyhow the matter is a most mysterious one; but as a fact it remains, and demands explanation.

I have felt somehow with regard to *Towards Democracy* that — while my other books were merely subsidiary and mainly represented ‘views’ and ‘aspects’ — this one (with all its imperfections) had that central quality and kind of other-dimensional solidity to which I have been alluding. And my experiences in writing it have corroborated that feeling.

(*Ibid.*, pp. 190-92)

EDWARD CARPENTER

(Extracts from *My Days and Dreams* by Edward Carpenter,  
published by George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1921)

### **Some comments on *Towards Democracy***

1. “. . . If the world — it seems to me — should ever seize the central fact of such books as *Leaves of Grass* and *Towards Democracy*, it must inevitably formulate new views of life on almost every conceivable subject: the aspects of all life will be changed.”

Edward Carpenter

2. “. . . the phrases are suggestive of a lunatic Ollendorf, with stage directions. . . the book is truly mystic, wonderful — like nothing so much as a nightmare after too earnest a study of the Koran!”

*The Graphic*, August 11, 1883

3. “A haphazard collection of fallacies, to which the semblance of a basis is given by half a dozen truisms, flavoured by a little Carlylese, or by diluted extracts of Walt Whitman . . . . This sort of thing goes on through two hundred and fifty pages, the blank monotony of which is only relieved here and there by a few passages which it would be undesirable to quote, and which it is not wholesome to read.”

*The Saturday Review*, March 27, 1886

4. “The volume of poems by which he is best known and of which he was most proud . . . . It was the first expression in verse of the essential Carpenter . . . the ‘startpoint and kernel’ of all his later work.”

*The Times Literary Supplement*



5. “. . . sometimes descriptive, sometimes intimate records of what Carpenter had felt. This is their drift: life beneath the surface is ever good: find your true self, and then you will be aware of this — even now . . . Like Whitman, Edward Carpenter was confident that his readers would recognise themselves in what he wrote. . . . He believed that the reader would see his own face and his own hopes reflected in this book. Not a few, among them some of those actively working for a new social order, did so.”

Desmond MacCarthy in *The Listener*

(Comment 1 occurs in Carpenter’s Autobiography *My Days and Dreams*, p. 201.

Comments 2 and 3 are quoted by Carpenter in the same book, p. 192.

Comments 4 and 5 are used as blurbs in the 1949 edition of *Towards Democracy*.)



### **The Mother’s Message for the New Year 1957**

A Power greater than that of Evil can alone win the victory.  
It is not a crucified but a glorified body that will save the world.

(*Words of the Mother – III*, CWM 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. 15, p. 172)



## SOME GLIMPSES OF KOBİ NISHİKANTO

*(Continued from the issue of December 2009)*

### 2

KOBİ had just arrived in the Ashram at that time. One day he saw the Mother with Gautam Buddha standing just behind her, inside the Ashram-building. “I could see Lord Buddha,” Kobi exclaimed, “but those who were in the Ashram at that time couldn’t see him. Buddha, the supremely poised avatar of compassion, wide-eyed, calm, his whole being exuding love. Mesmerised, I could not take my eyes off him. Then suddenly he disappeared and in that same spot there now stood Shankaracharya wearing the sacred thread, the avatar of knowledge, immobile like a great yogi. Before I could recover from my astonishment, I now saw in place of Shankaracharya, Swami Vivekananda, the incarnation of the synthesis of knowledge, love and action, radiant, intense, dressed in his customary ochre robe, peerless sannyasi and world-conqueror.”

He told Sri Aurobindo about his vision and asked him, “Was my vision true? What does it mean?”

Sri Aurobindo replied, “Yes, your vision was indeed true. Gautam Buddha, the Shankaracharya, Swami Vivekananda, they are all Shiva’s avatars.”

“I saw the Buddha on another occasion also,” Kobi continued; “I was living in Bodhgaya at that time. There is a very old mango-grove on the bank of the Niranjana river and Buddha is said to have spent a long time meditating at that spot.

“One early morning I went there to paint. I was totally immersed in my painting. Suddenly I see Gautam Buddha standing in front of me. He said, ‘You’ve done well to come here instead of going to the temple.’

“Gautam Buddha always meditated in solitary surroundings far from the temples where noise and confusion, theft and corruption reigned.”

I asked Kobi, “This means that Lord Buddha has not left the earth — he is still here upon the earth?”

“Whenever the avatars descended upon the earth, they never abandoned it. They always remain with their true devotees. Look at Sri Ramchandra, he came such a long time ago and the poet Tulsidas wrote the Ramayana so much later. Could he have done this had Ram not been there with him?”

“Do they appear to us in their subtle body? When you see them, how do they appear to you?” I asked again.

“I see them exactly as I see you now. However, those divine bodies are luminous, they radiate light from their bodies. At that moment I don’t feel I’m seeing a vision.”

Once Kobi was wandering in the Santhal villages around Santiniketan. There he saw a Santhal woman sitting in front of her hut, weeping inconsolably. So he went up to her to find out why she was crying. The woman replied between sobs that she had just lost both her husband and son but for some reason nobody wanted to give them a decent burial.

At once Kobi picked up a spade and began digging. On seeing Kobi doing this some Santhals joined him to prepare the burial site. After burying the woman's husband and little son Kobi continued on his way. Suddenly he noticed that the little boy he had just buried along with his father was clutching his hand and walking along with him.

Kobi exclaimed, "What are you doing here? Go away."

The boy replied in his Santhal dialect, "I want to go with you!"

Kobi was perplexed. The boy just refused to leave him. Finally after much difficulty (probably after praying to God) Kobi managed to free himself from the boy's grip and returned home.

\*

Kobi talked to me one day about the celebrated chemist-scientist, Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray. Kobi thought that he was a truly selfless human being.

"He was once raising funds for the flood-affected people. The king of Hitampur donated five hundred rupees. The Acharya had expected someone of his stature to donate much more for the flood victims. Quite pained, he remarked, 'O king of our poor country, you can spend so much money on the nautch-girls of your court in a single night, but five hundred rupees is all you could give to help your countrymen suffering from the flood?' "

Kobi continued, "This seeker of knowledge was the very image of selflessness. He wore clothes until they were reduced to tatters and beyond mending. He felt that buying a new dress for himself was far too extravagant. Such was his selflessness. He left everything he possessed to his country."

\*

When he was a young boy, Kobi went to his uncle's house in Barisal. His '*didima*' (maternal grandmother) used to recount to him all sorts of stories. She would tell him stories of the *gandharvas* in the local dialect which he enjoyed immensely. When he arrived in Santiniketan a show of dances and plays was going on there. Gurudev, dressed in a silk *kurta*, was watching the show. He was so struck with his splendid appearance that he thought he must certainly be the '*samrat*' (king) of the *gandharvas*.

When Kobi was a young man, Gurudev made a rule that nobody was to write

anything for outside magazines without his knowledge. Kobi had never written for a magazine outside before that. As soon as this rule was announced, Kobi sent his writings to a magazine outside under the pen name of Gaganbihari. These writings were published and Gurudev happened to read them. He called Nishikanto and said, “Whether you live in Gagan or in Kanan, these writings are yours. You can’t cheat me! Why did you send this without informing me?” “Bado-ma (Hemalata-Devi, editor of *Bangalakshmi* magazine) fed me half a dozen *roshogollas* and half a dozen samosas and the poetry just flowed out from me!”

“If that is the reason, I’ll give you double the quantity of *roshogollas*! But next time don’t send any poems without my knowledge,” Rabindranath said laughing.

Gurudev was familiar with Kobi Nishikanto’s poetic creations and knew that his inspiration came from a higher plane. He tolerated his pranks with a lot of affectionate indulgence. When Gurudev saw that Nishikanto was making experiments in different poetic metres and rhythms, he nurtured and protected him with great attentive care so that his poetic work did not suffer in any way. That is why he had asked him to show his work before submitting it to any publisher.

\*

Kobi began one day, “Look at Rabindranath Tagore, at his understanding. He was once asked to give his opinion about Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay’s writings. He took one of his books and read three pages, one from the beginning, one from the middle and one from the end. He then wrote a critical essay on Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay of such quality that everyone acclaimed it unanimously. Everyone thought he must have read all his books very closely to write such an excellent criticism.”

“I (Nishikanto) asked, ‘How could you do this? How could you write a critical essay after reading merely three pages?’ ”

Rabindranath replied with a laugh, “See, when you cook rice, isn’t it enough to test just one grain to know if the rice is cooked? Do you need to squeeze each and every grain in the pot? Similarly, by reading three pages at the beginning, middle and end of the book, I could understand the whole book.”

\*

Kobi narrated to me this incident about Rabindranath Tagore.

There was once a great commotion in Santiniketan because Gurudev was nowhere to be seen! People started looking for him everywhere. Where could he have disappeared? Unable to trace him people were nonplussed. Just then a carter arrived and dispelled everybody’s perplexity, “I took Gurudev to the Siuri fair (Bolpur) on my bullock-cart; and he’s asked me to collect my charges from you here in Santiniketan.”

Everyone felt relieved. Some of them at once left for Siuri to bring the poet back.

Why had Rabindranath gone to Siuri? After the brutal massacre of the innocent at Jallianwalabagh in Punjab, Gurudev returned the knighthood the British had conferred on him. Angered, the British government decided not to invite him for this annual fair and invited instead Maharaja Manindrachandra Nandi as the chief guest.

Without informing anyone, quietly Gurudev left on a bullock-cart to attend the fair unofficially. When the people saw Rabindranath arrive they were thrilled. First, because he was a poet of international renown, and second, because he was physically very attractive as well. People started running after him. On seeing the crowd milling around him, the government authorities were in a fix. Nobody was paying any attention to the chief guest they had invited. Just then the people from Santiniketan arrived and persuaded him with much difficulty to return with them.

### 3

Talking about his book of poems titled *Aloukik Attālikā*, Kobi remembered, “One day I went to see the Mother on my birthday. She said, ‘Come, let’s meditate today with my hand on your head.’ She kept her hand on my head like that for a long time. I asked her, ‘Mother, what’s this I’ve seen? First I saw Sri Aurobindo seated like a king on a throne. His attendants, Nirodbaran, Champaklal, and others were sitting around him. After that I couldn’t see Sri Aurobindo anymore but it was you sitting on the throne like a queen surrounded by your attendants. I too was one of them. What does it mean? Why didn’t I see both of you together? I don’t feel very happy about this.’

“The Mother replied, ‘Well, it just means that Sri Aurobindo and I are one and not separate. When you see one, you inevitably see the other.’

“A few days after this vision, Sri Aurobindo left his body,” Kobi added.

I used to enjoy listening to Kobi as he recounted his visions. My heart fills up with joy even today as I recollect one of them. One day Kobi told me, “I saw a great Void (Mahashunya). There was absolutely nothing anywhere. At that moment there appeared a star like a triangle. Then in the bosom of the sky, there rose a marvellous, beautiful green moon. The rays of this green moon showered upon the earth. And from the earth, from the branches of a green tree on it, there blossomed innumerable flowers. In the sky, all kinds of birds were flying in flocks. Then again nothing. Once more that great Void. And once more the star-like triangle appeared. Then a blue moon came up in a blue sky. Blue rays from the blue moon showered upon the earth. The green tree was now covered with flowers and birds of marvellous hues

perched on its branches. After some time it all vanished. Again that great Void. And once more the triangle emerged from that great Void. This time a golden full moon rose in the sky and a shower of golden rays fell on the earth. Again that green tree and flowers of different colours and innumerable birds filled its branches.

“When I described my vision to Sri Aurobindo, he answered, ‘All that you have seen is true. The triangle or the star is the symbol of the Mother’s power of creation. The green moon is symbolic of the incarnation of Rama, the blue moon that of Krishna. The birds represent the soul and the tree is a symbol of life.’ ”

Kobi asked, “What avatar is the golden moon? You?”

With a gentle smile, Sri Aurobindo replied, “The coming Avatar.”

Whenever I told Kobi, “You are so fortunate, you can see so many different visions, you can see gods and goddesses. I can’t see anything at all,” he would always answer. “What do you get from seeing visions? Transforming oneself is the real thing. A hundred visions are worth nothing if you can’t transform yourself. You’ve seen the Divine Mother herself. Who says you haven’t seen God?”

“But, I can’t see visions as you do,” I replied.

Kobi observed, “Seeing visions is fine; when one sees Sri Aurobindo and the Mother or gods and goddesses, it makes one feel good. But how would you feel if all through the night you saw a ghost dancing in front of the window?”

I understood on that day that those who have visions are open to both good and bad things. “Thank god! I don’t see visions,” I exclaimed, “I’m much better off without them, really!”

Then Kobi began telling me, “Quite some time ago, every morning I used to walk quite a distance to get flowers for the Mother. On one such morning I saw at a distance something rather big jumping about. On approaching I saw that some people had caught a gorilla and covered it with such a lot of leaves and branches that you could hardly make out it was a gorilla. It seemed more like a big tree covered with leaves and branches.”

“On not finding any flowers I thought of taking the gorilla and offering it at the feet of the Mother. I asked the people around to give me the gorilla. They agreed and they brought the gorilla all tightly tied up to the Ashram. People in the Ashram began wondering what this strange thing was, all tied up and covered with leaves and branches.”

“I went up to the Mother and offered it at her feet. She accepted the offering. It was decided to keep him on one side of the Ashram terrace. But someone objected saying that the gorilla would spoil the terrace. Just then I heard Nirodbaran’s voice and realised that I had been seeing a vision all this while. I requested Nirodbaran to speak to Sri Aurobindo about this vision.”

“Kobi, you’re impossible!” Nirodbaran replied, “You keep having these visions all the time and Sri Aurobindo must be kept informed about them! Is this always possible?”

“For a long time I had no way of verifying if Nirodbaran had indeed informed Sri Aurobindo about this vision. Quite some time later, Dilip Kumar Roy invited me to a beautiful cottage on the river Krishna to spend some time with him absorbed in music and sadhana. I wrote to Sri Aurobindo requesting for his permission to go.”

“Sri Aurobindo answered, ‘Nishikanto wants to go out? Has he forgotten that he has offered a gorilla at the Mother’s feet?’”

The gorilla is symbolic of man’s vital power.

#### 4

One day we were talking about music, so I asked Kobi, “Have you ever heard the gandharvas or kinnaras sing? It is said that they are extremely knowledgeable in music and they have marvellous voices.”

“I have heard them indeed. Their song is quite enchanting. Their men and women are both unbelievably beautiful. However the kinnar men and women have horse-like faces.”

Quite taken aback I retorted, “What? Horse-like faces? And didn’t you just say they were unbelievably beautiful?”

“Good heavens, no! Not horse-like in that sense! but a face that is long like a horse’s. For instance when we say that Sri Aurobindo’s face is lion-like, it doesn’t mean that he has a face like a lion’s but the feeling you get from looking at his face makes you think of a lion.”

About Kobi’s vision of the gandharvas, Sri Aurobindo observed, “What you saw are not gods but gandharvas. The gandharvas do not radiate light from their body like the gods.”

On seeing Sri Aurobindo’s photo in my hand one day (the one you see in the Meditation hall) Kobi remarked, “Ah, isn’t he extraordinary! When you see that forehead of his, you feel the moon is rising on the summit of a mountain.”

After Sri Aurobindo left his body and the Mother began appearing for Darshan in the morning, Kobi would see the same scene everyday. “On top of the balcony where the Mother appeared I would see a green moon in the sky and a little boy standing beside laughing. Then there would be nothing. This was followed by a blue moon and the same little boy laughing. Then again this moon was replaced by a golden moon along with the laughing boy. All the three boys looked somewhat alike.”

Atal-da who worked in one of the Ashram gardens also had this capacity of seeing visions. When Kobi asked him about the Balcony Darshan, he replied that he too had seen the green, blue and golden boys.

One day I noticed a photo of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa in Kobi’s room that was torn, so I asked him about it. He explained. “I had been in hospital for

several days once and on my return home I saw this torn picture of Thakur and felt terrible about it. I wanted to get rid of the photo. But then suddenly I noticed a ray of light emanating from this photograph. After this, how could I remove the photo?"

"You must have seen Shiva, Kobi? He too has a crescent moon on his forehead, hasn't he?"

"I never saw a moon on Shiva's forehead as if it were set there. The moon was *part of* his forehead, like a tilak, you know."

"In the Ramayana, Mahabharata and Bhagvat," I continued, "there are so many descriptions of the Sun and the Moon-world. But these descriptions have nothing to do with the scientific view of the sun and the moon. Are all these merely imaginary stories then?"

"The sun and moon of the spiritual world are not the same in the physical world. They are quite different," Kobi replied.

\*

I remarked, "You can write poems, you can paint and you can also cook! You are blessed with many artistic skills. You can, I believe, sing as well! You are quite an all-rounder, I see!"

Kobi laughed, "I am no singer, really, but I do enjoy singing. I love listening to songs and I have written a number of songs."

One day I was afflicted with a severe headache. I met Kobi just in front of the Ashram. Hardly had I told him about my headache than he put his gentle hand on my head. My headache vanished almost at once! Kobi laughed and said, "So your headache's gone, hasn't it?"

"How did you do it? I see you can also heal people! But then why do you suffer from so many illnesses yourself? Why don't you heal yourself?"

Kobi became serious.

"You suffer so much pain. You can, if you wish, rid yourself of it. Why don't you do it?" I persisted.

Kobi quietly replied, "You see, yogis never remove their own illnesses."

\*

Dada told me one day, "I was having lunch with the Mother in her room upstairs. Just then news came that Kobi Nishikanto was very seriously ill. He felt he was going to leave his body very soon. The doctors had not given him any hope of living much longer. Nishikanto wished to see the Mother and wanted her to place her foot on his chest. This was his last wish and it would fill him with deep joy. So the Mother told me, 'Come, let's go down and see Nishikanto.'"

Interrupting her meal, she took me and a few others down to the meditation



hall. Nishikanto was lying there on a stretcher. The Mother looked at him for a while. Then holding my arm she placed one of her feet on Nishikanto's chest. She remained in this position for a couple of minutes. Then she removed her foot and went back upstairs."

As a result of the Mother's touch, Kobi Nishikanto was released from the grip of sure death and his health started improving! He lived on for a number of years after this experience of the Mother's Grace.

*(Concluded)*

KRISHNA CHAKRAVARTY

*(This instalment and the previous instalment — translated by Maurice Shukla from the original Bengali.)*



### **The Mother's Message for the New Year 1958**

O Nature, Material Mother, thou hast said that thou wilt collaborate and there can be no limit to the splendour of this collaboration.

*(Words of the Mother – III, CWM 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. 15, p. 173)*



# ITINERARY OF A CHILD OF THE CENTURY

## Pavitra's Correspondence with His Father

(Continued from the issue of December 2009)

### Chapter Six

#### Science and Mysticism

*Isolated among the monks whose language he did not speak, disappointed by the monotonous religious ceremonies, living in a harsh country with the barest amenities and surviving on a Lenten diet, Philippe remained in pursuit of his inner being, but he would have found the time long if he had not received some books on contemporary physics he had asked for. His father, refusing to buy and send him any Theosophical works, took, a contrario, the initiative of sending him a work on Christian mystics in which he had underlined the passages which would challenge his son and which were likely to persuade Philippe to return and pursue his spiritual quest in Europe.*

*Philippe immersed himself in the philosophy of science; he had, simultaneously, undertaken the exploration of the domain of mystic experience and ecstasy. He pursued the discussion with his father by including in his correspondence his reflections on these two themes. He drafted and sent him as well two handwritten notes entitled:*

“Modern Science and Occultism”

“Spiritualisation of Life”.

*These long notes are over twenty pages each, and their inclusion in this book would be, according to me, of little interest: the first has been overtaken by the scientific development while the second is a compilation of texts by esoteric authors, theosophical or Hindu. However, I shall, later in this chapter, deal briefly with them in a footnote.*

*The father-son relationship had been previously affected by some cruel observations by Philippe who did not fail to react in the same way to this brutal sentence of Paul: “in all conscience, I cannot send you [Theosophical books], no more than I would send you morphine or cocaine if I knew you to be addicted to them.” In order to justify his actions Philippe advanced the principle of the universality of mystical thought, the number of “those who seek the truth outside the beaten paths”; he reminded his father of the warning of the great philosophers of antiquity and of the modern thinkers. “His ideal, perfection of wisdom, of knowledge, of beauty, of love and of creative power [was it then] unreasonable or harmful?”*

*However painful this debate was for both of them, owing to the very fact of the suffering that it aroused, it brought to their communication more clarity and more mutual respect.*

*After nine months of an almost monastic life, Philippe decided to leave Mongolia, but he still did not know what direction to take: to return to France to join the administration which still remained open for him, to go to Madras to evaluate the Theosophical Society on spot, or to live in Pondicherry close to Sri Aurobindo? In any case his immediate route again passed through Japan!*

\* \* \*

Ling-Shi-Shien, February 1, 1925<sup>1</sup>

My Dear Papa and Maman,

Time passes in the midst of serious work and constant effort; here too the New Year has come and during the month of January, I have very often thought of you.

I wonder if my last two letters (December 1 and December 18) have reached you and what you think of them. I often think about what could fill the gap that has separated us during these four years and, frequently, I hold imaginary conversations with you. Alas, words, I fear, cannot do much; only a persistent contact could make you understand a little my ideal, my motives of action and the **constant** development of my being. Since we are for the moment separated, I must needs employ the imperfect instrument of the language. Moreover, sometimes I am a little afraid that when we meet again, if it is to be, whether you will not be alarmed by the turn that this inner development has taken. It is so different from what one considers as the ideal in the world. I do not at all seek to separate myself from the world, far from it; each step brings me closer to my fellowmen, often very close to their heart, but the human ideal is above all mental and is much concerned about acquisitions and realisations. The path that I follow cares very little for them; on the contrary, it demands an incessant relinquishing of all realisations and of all physical and mental possessions; it is the very condition of spiritual development. Then the passage from realisation to realisation becomes rapid. As it is impossible to stop at one of them, it often appears to the outer world, or at least to those who attach themselves only to the form, as destitution, even when the inner life is overflowing with wealth. Has it not been said: "The power that the disciple should desire is that which will make him look insignificant to the eyes of men", and it has not been said without reason.

Thinking over what I had written to you, I realise that regarding objectivity, I had not properly expressed my real thought. I seem to remember that I had said that

1. This letter will wait till February 17 for the post to leave; it will be completed the day before the dispatching.

I did not value objectivity. It was a mistake to put it like that; and the letter for *Le Temps* has doubtless shown it to you. I know that objectivity is indispensable, for observing, understanding, reasoning and acting, to do all that without the colouring of the personality, without emotion, without bias, without prejudice, in one word, with objectivity. I strongly feel that we must welcome all new experience by making, so to say, a clean slate of previous knowledge in order to be able to pluck from it all the possible fruit, subsequently comparing this fruit with that knowledge because everything must be utilised, the past and the present.

What I have in mind is quite different. I wanted to say that it was impossible for me to observe and to study the forms and the experiences with the sole purpose of classifying them, cataloguing them, comparing them and naming them. I have seen it being done constantly by people whose mind is very powerful and active, who are not at all concerned about looking for the life beneath the forms, that is to say, to link them metaphysically to the general development, to follow the spirit that works in them, in short, to **understand** them. The forms, from which the spirit has withdrawn, are of no interest to me, and these are in the majority. Certain forms of the past, certain works of art, certain books or monuments, are not dead though they are old, and often the spirit animates them; it is not a question of age. It is quite difficult to explain; how often in life do we not meet people, even very cultured ones, in whom we do not feel the animating spirit. There may be achievement, brilliance, but there is not the creative life that harmonises the spirit and the form. It is the same with customs, ceremonies, ideas and other works of art. An object in which the spirit corresponds exactly with the form, is beautiful, always beautiful, be it old or new. Sometimes among really simple people, even peasants, there is this harmony which makes one feel that they are beautiful, because their form is perfect in its own way; we feel that life has given to them what she must give with its qualities and defects. Do not for a moment think that my ideal is a dream with no contact with life. It is from life that I draw the experiences which teach me and the materials for my work; it is in contact with humanity that I aspire to work.

I feel and I already know a little by experience that when I return to the world I shall not be able to resume the worldly life, such as you expect from me. I love the simple and harmonious life; if I look neither for sensations nor emotions, I have a taste for the beautiful and of its living manifestations and a strong, inextinguishable interest in the expressions of the spirit and of the human heart, particularly those which are a little ahead of the general evolution, which strike the note of the humanity of tomorrow.

So much for my preferences. As for my work, unfortunately I cannot tell you anything because I myself am totally in the dark about the path the spirit will lead me on. I want to help humanity; since the ways of helping humanity are innumerable and I cannot choose by myself, I am waiting for the inner command; it is only by obeying it that I have peace, joy and the deep awareness of doing my duty. Nobody

is more impatient than I to go away from here; in spite of this desire, I know that it is necessary that I be here for the present, and I shall not remain here even a second longer than is useful. I am afraid that you will not understand all that very well, yet I must tell it to you frankly even at the risk of being misunderstood. I am not very happy here: no recreation, a bare minimum of comfort, a complete isolation, but the experiences I am passing through are indispensable to me. That is the *raison d'être* of my sojourn here. There is no other. Whatever it may be, I do not think, all the same, that I shall be here very long, it is a matter of a few months.

I have told you that I live in a small mud house; the inside fully plastered with paper, quite warm and clean although the floor is earthen which leads to a little dust. The bed is hard, in fact very hard because I sleep above one of these heating pipes which I have already described and the mattress is only two centimetres thick. I read, write and meditate — that is almost all — for I rarely go to the temple to watch the ceremonies which are always practically the same. I speak a little Mongolian; as I see very few people, I am not making any rapid progress. It is quite difficult to increase my vocabulary because there is no Anglo-Mongol, French-Mongol or German-Mongol dictionary. I have nothing but a Mongol-Chinese dictionary, and upon my word! Chinese I do not know. Also, I find it difficult to make headway even with the help of a Chinese-English dictionary!

My food consists almost exclusively of roasted millet, it is not what we would call roasted, rather cooked and dried out; when it is soaked in hot water for ten minutes it swells up and is ready to be eaten. With a little milk, sugar and butter, I have my three meals. I have completely given up the types of extremely indigestible noodles much appreciated by the Chinese and the Mongols. A cup of chocolate in the morning, tea all through the day, as extra a little jam, a few dry biscuits and some white cheese so hard that one cannot cut it with a knife but must use the hammer and soften it on the stove. It is very healthy food and suits me in the life I lead. Thus I do not get fat. Every morning twenty minutes of exercise following Papa's example, and I chop my wood; when the weather permits, a walk of two or three kilometres, these are my recreations. I am in good health and I have only to keep myself busy with my inner being; it gives me enough work. In fact, it is hard labour. I know that the soul does not shape itself except on the forge of suffering and I bear the pain, when it comes, to the best of my ability. It does not spare me and often stops only after it reaches the limit of its scope. It is cold; but the worst is over, I think. Besides, nine days out of ten, from morning till evening there is a glorious sun. The very dry air must be good for the diseases of the chest. Just the opposite of Japan; still, I prefer Japan from every point of view, in spite of her mud and humidity.

At last, a letter from Albert! I think he was waiting for your letter to know what to write to me! It would be marvellous if he could change over to wireless telegraphy, as he thinks it is so much to his taste; but will it not oblige him to stay on in Indochina?

I have also received Maman's letter, from La Minelle. At last she has given me some household details about the new organisation. I hope that the livestock farming will prosper. Here there is much livestock; as the winter is severe, at present there is very little milk and butter. The cows have long winter coats, the horses too, they are not really goodlooking beasts. I am happy that Papa has been relieved of the responsibilities and the worries, then evidently living in La Minelle will be more restful for him.

Maman thinks pityingly about the mistakes that we make, all of us who try to find the truth outside the beaten path! Alas, all of us have our illusions! What will she say about all the mistakes that I have made, much more serious than the ones she could have known? That is the process of growth — the more one advances, the more one falls, the more one suffers, the more one learns. It is wholly true and not a simple fiction when we say that the path is narrow and difficult to traverse, that there must be a limitless courage and an endurance of all ordeals. From error we move to the truth, constantly and constantly, through suffering — there is no other way. Do not condemn too hastily all those who err, especially if they are on the threshold of the spiritual life, because sooner or later they reach the light. And where they have passed, surely the others must pass too. I regret that, also through illusion, you have cut off all relations particularly with Madame Potel, a beautiful and pure soul, a heart noble and loving, a clear mind too.

I shall do my best regarding what Maman asks. Here there is nothing, neither fur nor stones (there are dogs here for sale, but they will not please her). If I go to Mukden, I shall see; however, I am afraid that everything will be as expensive as in France. Think that the firms like Revillon have their agents everywhere and it is they who fix the price, even here, and control the markets. In Peking, it is certainly very expensive. Perhaps on my return journey? It is difficult here to get money from Peking; also do not send anything; I can make no plans. Here there is nothing of interest for Maman. Besides, the rate of exchange is not favourable, a pound of butter comes to 7 or 8 francs<sup>2</sup> and there are cows! I shall keep my eyes open.

I end my idle chatter which I wanted to be intimate and I evoke your thought in my little cell. I embrace you most affectionately.

Your son,

*Signed:* Ph. B. Saint Hilaire

\*

2. About 10 euros.

Ling-Shi-Shien, February 16, 1925

This letter will go tomorrow. I have received today the three books: *Les Atomes*, *Le Radium* and that of Ossendowski, and also the six copies of the *Revue métapsychique* and one of the *Voile d'Isis*. They are all welcome and I thank you for them. The external world interests me as much, and everything that it does. My exile (!) is only temporary.

With regard to Ossendowski, Papa should now read *Mission of India in Europe* by Saint Yves d'Alveydre (published by Dorlon). I shall be curious to know his thoughts. Ossendowski is a serious man, at least his entire career seems to prove that, and he uses a quotation from Titus Livy at the beginning of his book, which seems to be a guarantee of integrity. Are these two books altogether unconnected? If I were not so far away, I think I would have written to Ossendowski if he could reply frankly to me. I suggest the idea to Papa.

Regarding the books, do not send me the three books of Flammarion, I have read them. Interesting collection of documents. However the *Revue métapsychique* seems more interesting to me. Has Papa read a book called, if I remember correctly, *Theosophism, History of a Pseudo-Religion*? Was it Papa who sent it to me or did I buy it in Tokyo? It contains a mass of interesting facts on the inside story of the movement; even though written against Theosophy, it has greatly interested me; it shows the connection Theosophy has with Freemasonry and the occult movements which exist throughout the world.

Today I have also received Papa's letter of December 7, it took two months to reach me. I am going to send this one via Siberia because I have just read in a newspaper that the service has been resumed; if it reaches you quickly, you could do the same.

Soon I shall send you a short letter for *Le Temps* about the New Year celebrations in Mongolia. The Mongolian New Year celebrations have just ended.

Ah! No, the Tibetan monks too are right to go to Europe for studies. You must not make me more stupid than I am! The Tibetans and the Mongols are not all brilliant, nor are all of them adepts, far from it. By and large their culture is even quite inferior. Perhaps they have the qualities which we have lost, and the defects also? It is the same with every nation. Do not think that I have sworn allegiance to the Mongols any more than to the Japanese or to the Americans. Each nation has something to give me. Well, there is much to be said on that subject. Let us not start on that.

I am happy with Papa's letter, often I feel him very close to me in his effort to understand me. In spite of the appearances, I am not at all an ascetic; read Carpenter and you will understand my ideal.

I embrace you with all my heart,

your devoted son,

*Signed:* Ph. B. Saint Hilaire



*Draft of a letter from Paul to Philippe<sup>3</sup>*

February 6, 1925

My dear Philippe,

I have sent you yesterday the books on science which you had requested, except one which was not available. As for the books of Rudolf Steiner and other books of the Theosophical Society, I prefer that somebody other than me sends them to you; in all conscience, I cannot send them to you, no more than I would send you morphine or cocaine if I knew you to be addicted to them.

You seem to say: "Show me a hypothesis as plausible as the Theosophical hypothesis and I shall examine it." I do not contest that it appeals to our reason and I have always admitted it, but just because it pleases our reason, it does not make it true. Moreover, of the two of us, I am not the one who underestimates reason (it is you above all who hold reason to be of very poor value). I too consider it to be of value only when applied to the conduct of my life and to terrestrial things, and I recognise that higher or divine planes must be incomprehensible to it (at least at present), since all the systems which have been brought before it have, in the short span of a few generations, been declared either a delirium or a hoax. To be enduring, one must bring in faith, that is to say, the imagination. Is that desirable? How much energy has been wasted in this manner when it could have been deployed more gainfully for the forward march of humanity — a march towards happiness, assuredly, — the ideal is the same, but the means are different!

I even tend to think that from the moment that our reason understands, such a hypothesis has no value. It is something of an anthropomorphism and one always ends up with the sentence of Montaigne: "Doubt is a convenient pillow for intelligent heads to rest on." However, do not reproach me for wishing to eliminate the ideal from life. For some, life would hardly be bearable if there was no ideal, and each one makes his own. What you say in your letter is somewhat the same thing and in this I agree with you. I admit that I understand much better the ideal which consists in making humanity progress in its struggle against nature and in the mastery of the physical world. I believe, moreover, that it is by that that it can progress towards happiness. You judge the industrial and economic world of the last century very harshly, but these are but the first unsteady steps on the path. Till now the world was dominated by the religious idea. To settle the question whether

3. This document, although signed, has been heavily revised; a fair copy must have been made for despatch.



religion has helped or hindered the march of humanity, would require volumes. I do not deny that religions have had their beneficial role and have served as indispensable guide, especially in younger races. And yet there is so much to be said, and who can draw up their balance sheet? But among the individuals who are liberated, or almost so, from the obligation to work, from the necessity of earning their livelihood and that of their family and who have established their intellectual and moral independence, I think that religion is no longer a guide and no more than a consolation, certainly an important role, but useless. . . in the march of humanity.

Ideal for ideal, I prefer that of Prometheus to that of Buddha — I find it less selfish — because in the Theosophical hypothesis, I find that there is a darned egoism in the trouble one takes for the evolution of one's ego, and I do not intend any play of words.

I think that during your long stay in Japan, you must have been struck by the contradiction which exists between the cult of ancestor worship or respect for the parents, and the theosophical idea or at least that of your friends which consists in saying that your parents who have given you your physical body are nothing compared to spiritual affinities. I hope that you will not utter any more before us that frightening sentence with which you had bidden us farewell at the time of your departure. I have just read the book by Lafcadio Hearn, and I was surprised to see that all moral, all social and artistic life resulted from this cult of ancestor worship.

You must have received letters from Albert. You know that the little fellow has distinguished himself in wireless telegraphy. *Le Petit Parisien* has published a little note on this subject. The Government of Indochina has taken him 'on probation': he is now an engineer in the wireless service in Saigon, and most important, in a profession which he likes more than his service in the Public Works. This has made us very happy, but we shall not see him before January 1926.

You reproach me for not telling you things about La Minelle. Yet I seem to have told you that I have put it in a cooperative society for the manufacture of gruyère [Swiss cheese] for Corrèze, Ormoy, Ranzeville and Richecourt. The society runs the business on its own and pays me royalty of 5% of the sale of products and for the premises and the maintenance cost of the materials (charcoal, oil etc.). The farmers are delighted. Now they have proper containers and they make good gruyère, and I, on my side, am satisfied. In addition, I have turned all the hills of La Minelle into pasture-land. I have made the Fountain of the Devil a watering trough and I have a Swiss tenant farmer who is quite suitable. There are some twenty animals: cows and horses.

Often I get offers from those who want to buy La Minelle. I am hesitant, I would like to wait for your return.

Your mother is really quite well now. We embrace you very affectionately.

Your Father,

*Signed:* Paul St Hilaire

*(To be continued)*

PHILIPPE BARBIER SAINT HILAIRE

(Translated by Aniruddha Sircar from the original French *Itinéraire d'un enfant du siècle* by Philippe Barbier Saint Hilaire, published by Buchet/Chastel, Paris, 2001.  
Our thanks for their permission.)



### **The Mother's Message for the New Year 1959**

At the very bottom of the inconscience most hard and rigid and narrow  
and stifling I struck upon an almighty spring that cast me up forthwith  
into a formless limitless Vast vibrating with the seeds of a new world.

*(Words of the Mother – III, CWM 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. 15, p. 173)*



## GLIMPSES OF NIROD-DA

*Diary notes over the years*

### *Foreword*

THESE are excerpts related to Nirod-da over the years from my intermittently kept diary notes. Nirod-da has not seen them — they were written by me for myself based on my memory of the occasions usually within a day or two. Over a period of twenty years whenever I happened to be in Pondicherry, I would visit him almost every day at his dinner time. He (or rather, Sudha-di) would feed me at least half of his dinner — Ashram bread toasted on his small electric stove, dining room vegetable, fruit and sometimes sweets — and we would talk about everything under the sun. Compared to what he gave me, these notes are meagre. Yet I hope I have been able to catch something of value.

*18 July 2006*

Yesterday Nirod-da passed away. I was at home and we had just finished dinner when the call came informing us. I went straight to the Ashram on my mother's bicycle. He was placed on his bed. (I remembered putting him on his bed last year after our walk.) As I entered the room I folded my hands in a prayer to the Mother. There was some space on the side and I sat down in meditation. It was solemn and quiet and grand.

I could see a continuous stream of a white light rising up from his heart as a column and merging into an ocean of light above which was Mother-Sri Aurobindo. I could see other colours as well, deep lustrous blue and silver and gold, all being pulled up and flowing into that vast ocean of light.

After some time I went to the Samadhi. I sat quietly in pranam. There was no sadness but tears welled up and started flowing. They were tears of gratitude rising up deep from the psychic and of a memory of a moment in time. He gave so much.

I went to the seaside and watched the waves roll in.

When I came home, I talked with Lisa on Skype. We reminisced about all the times we met him. How we had tea and went for the stroll last year. How we would smuggle Jay into the Ashram for tea by the backdoor, while Deep (Patrick) went in the front door.

I slept for barely three hours. I woke up at about 3:30 a.m. and got ready. Lisa and the boys talked with me for a while. The boys remembered Nirod-da. I told them to read a few lines from the *Correspondence* books, from *Fifty Poems* and from *Savitri*.

I went again to the Ashram by 5:00 a.m. Once again I sat down quietly in

meditation. I had the sense of having Lisa and Patrick and Jay with me, and we offered our deepest gratitude.

I saw a stream of psychic orange force rising up from him into a Mother-shaped ocean of the same colour. As my concentration deepened, I saw the same psychic orange force streaming from my heart and merging into the Mother's vast form. Nirod-da connected my psychic to the Mother in this most concrete form.

At 9:00 a.m. I took Panji and Ajji (my grandmother and mother, or rather, my children's great-grandmother and grandmother) to the Ashram. I wheeled Panji in the chair from around the Ashram. Panji is ninety-six and her eyesight has dimmed this last year. First she went to the Samadhi. She has amazing confidence there — feeling the flower arrangements and not minding brushing into people.

A line had formed of people visiting Nirod-da. First it came towards Dyumanda's room. But then they guided it to the water tank. That opened the way for me to wheel Panji to his doorstep. Then, along with a student volunteer, I helped her into the room. They made space for her on one of the couches near him and she sat there peacefully.

Then, half an hour later I went in to ask her if she was ready to leave. She wanted to be taken close to the body. I asked head or foot, and she said both. So I first took her to the head. She put her hands on his face and thus 'saw' him. Dolly-di motioned to me to let her do it. Lovingly she caressed his face. She pressed his hands. Then I took her to the foot of the bed. She pressed and massaged his legs and feet. Then she was ready to leave.

When we got home this is what she said:

He liked *puran-poli* a lot. In the morning for breakfast I'd put ghee on it and give in a box. Once his class was in session so I made *karanjya* and gave him. Once Baal [my father, her son] was not there and he came (with Nityananda). So I made *shira*. He liked *shira*. And *murmure*. He liked *murmure* — oil, tomato, chilli powder, groundnuts, salt, cilantro if available. I made *puns*, *bhaje*, *karanjya*, *satorya*, *dashmya* of chilli powder and salt with curds. He liked our house preparations. Once Ameeta was there. Once he brought two boys and their mother from Kolkata. That lady helped me. Once I made stuffed bitter gourd. He liked it a lot. My time of returning from the Ashram and his time of arriving was the same. Always while returning the box he would give a fruit or flower or some prasad. Nirod-da did not like *satorya*.

Today darshan was good. I saw his face, saw his legs. I moved my hand on his face. Pressed his legs. His legs were tight. After death the body becomes rigid. But his nose, his eyes had not become rigid. Hands also were soft. Even so he went in the night. Ravindra went. Bansidhar went. Dyuman-bhai went. Pujalal went. Champaklal went. The lady serving him went.

Last two years he did not visit. During [Patrick's] *munja* he could not

come. I made a poem on Nirod-da. Attya [my aunt] has written it down. Nirod-da is a true sadhak.

At three in the afternoon I went back to his room and sat in meditation near his bed. The stream of psychic orange force from my heart was still constant. At a quarter to four Manoj-da asked everyone except family members and attendants to leave. I stood outside. Presently they brought him out in a golden-orange velvet-lined casket and carried him once round the Samadhi. The casket was placed in a van and driven once around the Ashram. Then the procession drove to Cazanove. My father, mother, aunt and myself also went by car. A pit had already been dug. Using ropes, the casket was lowered into it after the lid was affixed. The lid had Sri Aurobindo's symbol on it. Then, along with many others, I took a handful of earth and poured it in. Once filled with earth, the samadhi was layered with flowers and wreaths and hundreds of incense sticks. Quietly the gathered people dispersed. It was a deep and meaningful and respectful and loving closure.

### *23 August 2005*

Yesterday I told Nirod-da "I am leaving for America." A deep look, a nod, a smile, a gesture and a sound of "Yes" was his response. Sudha-di said "Bon voyage" on his behalf and he assented.

### *5 August 2005*

Yesterday the four of us went to Nirod-da's room at four o'clock. Nirod-da was sitting in his chair with an attendant on either side and Dolly-di was flitting about. Dolly-di made us all comfortable: she was especially sweet and considerate to the children. Then she took them to the back room where his bed is kept. Lisa and I also went there and looked at the many photographs and objects Nirod-da was given over the years.

Nirod-da was looking at a book brought out by the National Council on Education with quotations and extracts from the Mother. He had an inscrutable expression; we weren't sure if he could recognise us or was pleased to see us. Dolly-di served an elegant tea with eclectic snacks in fine china, and Nirod-da also ate a few crackers.

Finally I couldn't contain myself and told him about our long walks in JIPMER, almost fifteen or so years ago. How the trees were shady, flowers fragrant in bloom and the koyals singing. I told him every time I heard a koyal I thought of him and those walks (and his poignant message with deep, intent eyes — "You must do Yoga"). I told him how he would visit my father's house on a bicycle well into his eighties and insist on cycling back to the Ashram on busy streets by himself. I would follow on cycle behind him but without his knowledge just to make sure he was safe.

I was not sure he could hear me. He gave no sign of understanding or memory, but Dolly-di said he can hear and understand. Both she and Hemant translated a few sentences in Bengali for him.

Patrick and Jay told him some jokes. And Dolly-di told them many stories of David and Andrew, some American boys in the Ashram.

At about five o'clock I stood up to leave since his teatime was up. But Lisa couldn't bear to leave. Dolly-di and Hemant wanted to take Nirod-da out in his wheelchair. So, as she opened her matched parasol, she asked me to push his chair.

We walked for one and a half hours. First we set out for the beach road. Dolly-di draped a shawl around his shoulders and chest and a scarf over his head. But the breeze at the sea was too strong. So we turned in, went to the park in front of the Governor's mansion and then went to the kindergarten. Shilpa and Pragnya were sitting on the doorstep. Lisa and the boys went in and played in the courtyard. Then with the help of two watchmen from Society House, we carried his wheelchair into the KG. He beamed as he saw the lovely garden and classrooms and the children playing. After fifteen or twenty minutes we carefully carried him out and continued our walk by the Ashram Library, Playground and back to the Ashram. Again with help from two or three persons who were sitting in meditation or attending the Samadhi, we carried him in the wheelchair into his room. I put his feet on the ground and folded the footrests in. Then Dolly-di and I carried him to his bed and made him comfortable. During the walk Lisa and each of the boys got to push his chair. Each of us held his hands along the way.

Though he did not speak, his gestures increased and showed recognition and pleasure and satisfaction and blessings. Last time we met was four years ago, and due to circumstances and the presence of other persons he had bid a formal goodbye which had stayed with me as a gulf. Today that gulf was filled.

*27 March 1992*

Today again I took dinner to Nirod-da at JIPMER. During the evening there was a knock on the door. So I opened it and looked out in the corridor. Some passing person had knocked by mistake. I mentioned that to Nirod-da, and narrated the incident about the telephone repairman who unconsciously sharpened his pencil on the newly painted wall at home. When I stopped him in alarm, he proclaimed it was his pencil, without realising that it was not his wall. Nirod-da said that the nature of people in India needed to undergo a change. He marked how unhygienically people lived, lack of cleanliness, answering nature's call on the street and so on. He said education is imperative, and only Government can provide it. He said the Indian political and other institutions are aping the West, while the West also is trying to dump its failed systems on the third world. He said democracy in the West is corrupt, except maybe in England where some political sense and culture exists in people and politicians. In the US, he said, corruption and degeneracy has afflicted the

system. In France, he said, they are evolving some new systems and that France has managed to preserve culture and fine sense. But on the whole, he observed, moral values are collapsing in the West.

According to Sri Aurobindo, he said, democracy is not suitable to India. On the other hand Panchayat systems and other native Indian political institutions need to be revived.

I asked how I as an individual could act so that the greatness of India and generally a new way for the world could unfold. He said that unless there is a change within the individual, a change in nature, no external act is good enough. Inner change can only be brought about by Yoga. All work must be done for the Divine. For that, the individual must be pure, egoless and without ambition. He talked quite passionately and at length on this. Without changing oneself it is not possible to change others.

Later I told him that I had already started on the path of Yoga but that from time to time consciousness lapsed. He said it was quite natural initially. Further I told him about some difficulties arising from others' expectations. He said all work should be done for the Divine. I told him how I felt partially dark in the US but light and open in Pondicherry and he said that was natural.

He said gurus can give experiences to *shishyas* but cooperation from the *shishya* is required to change his nature. Hence the Mother and Sri Aurobindo had to change tactics and tackle the root of the problem — inconscience of matter — directly.

With respect to all world events, he said we are in a transitional stage. The Supermind is working. He said the scientific-materialist approach of the West has to be replaced with an intuitive one. With respect to the intuitive approach to science, he said *nadi-shastra* of Ayurveda is a very subtle science with a solid basis. Educated persons such as scientists could be the pioneers of this intuitive approach.

He said that in another 150 years perhaps something could happen to stabilise the world. He said it would be at least 50 years before India could contribute solidly, if all goes well.

25 March 1992

I took dinner to Nirod-da in JIPMER. I was there from 6:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. In the course of the evening I showed him the manuscript of "Within-Without". He opened it at two or three pages and read the poems. He would scan the page up and down and read from various parts of the page until the whole poem was probably read two or three times. I recited a poem to him. After that he asked me to recite another, and later yet another. He said that poetic sense is there, feeling is there, experience is there. There is no formal following of metre but several lines scan well, and an ear for sound is there. The last poem he analysed thoroughly and showed me how one word in it did not make sense, by interpreting it as in the poem and as it was intended. I had left my pen by his side but he made no changes. Later, commenting on how



Sri Aurobindo corrected his poems, he said that in master poets directly the *intuition* comes in and makes the necessary change. He said Tagore and Nishikanta were also of that type.

He told me how the Mother appeared bigger than her physical size because of the tremendous energy and force about her. He demonstrated a few steps of her brisk walk.

He wanted to go for a walk despite the discomfort attending his medical condition. So I made sure the corridor was clear of nursing staff and we quietly made our way through some back doors to the hospital grounds (I carried his medical equipment in tow). We enjoyed a long, pleasant, leisurely spring walk. Each time the koyal sang he would pause, enjoy and exclaim, "There!"

*16 February 1992*

Yesterday at 8:30 p.m. I went into Nirod-da's room during his dinner. He gave an at-length impression of my talk of the morning, "India and the Changing World".

He said the delivery was quite good, measured, distinct and clear. He said the contents too were good. As soon as he heard the phrase, "in the nature of a footnote to Sri Aurobindo's wonderful and comprehensive anticipation of world-changes", he said he saw the mastery of English as well as insight into world-events and understanding of Sri Aurobindo's vision. He had much to say about the excellence of English displayed during the talk — fluency, aptness of vocabulary. He noted the influence of American usage in some turns of phrase. He also said that the development of the presentation was well-planned, especially in view of the breadth of the scope and the pressure of time. Moreover, he said he was struck by the maturity, depth and reach of the thesis presented. He said while some people could have such penetration into world-developments, such a cogent view and its presentation was rare, and mainly found in expert analysis of narrow topics. He said that more humour needs to be brought in to lighten the tone of the talk notwithstanding its serious subject. However, he said, I should not force it and that it would develop naturally. He said I should transcribe it and after review by him, get it published in *The Indian Express* or *The Hindu*, and that they also would like to see such articles submitted to them.

In the end as he went to wash, he said he was telling me all these things but I should not get a swollen head. He said since I am a scientist it may not happen. "It shows the best of European education. There is promise." Earlier, after the talk he gave me a lump of jaggery in the Ashram.

*Undated*

A few days after my sports-related surgery at JIPMER in January 1986, I talked at length with Nirod-da about body-consciousness. Very calmly he heard me and at the end told me not to worry about it. That made me whole, and it still does.



One evening outside his room he asked a sadhak, “Have you done sweeping around your Samadhi?” The sadhak responded that it wasn’t his samadhi. All of us burst into a laugh. Nirod-da exclaimed between chuckles, “Humour has happened” (*Humour hoe gelo*).

AKASH DESHPANDE



**The Mother’s Message for the New Year  
1960**

To know is good,  
to live is better,  
to be, that is perfect.

(*Words of the Mother – III*, CWM 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. 15, p. 171)



## LIVING WITH *THE LIFE DIVINE*

### 1. *The Life Divine*

WHAT drew me first to the sumptuous volume with a blue dust-jacket was the title: *The Life Divine*. It took a noticeable space on Father's shelf, closest to his working table. Often I would see him browsing through it. Or keep it to his left, as he typed a quotation from it. He was familiar with the book's contents but this was a single-volume edition which had just then come out, belonging to a series published in the United States. Actually, the shelf containing Sri Aurobindo's works had an incongruous look. Folio, quarto, demi-octavo, thin, plump: the books were of all kind. But they were well-thumbed, and a few were guarded with special care like the two volumes of *Essays on the Gita* (1944) and *The Mother* (1940) as they had been specially inscribed to "Srinivasa" or "Padmasani" by Sri Aurobindo. As yet my interest had not got into the contents of the books, but two titles were favourites: *The Life Divine*, *Savitri*. My eyes would automatically light upon the names on the spine if I came near the shelf. Those were days of my early teens and I had not learnt to approach Sri Aurobindo except through poems like 'Despair on the Staircase' which Father would read out to me. He would then tell me of T. S. Eliot and recite his poem on Macavity:

Macavity's a Mystery Cat:  
He's called the Hidden Paw —  
For he's the master criminal who can defy the Law.  
He's the bafflement of Scotland Yard,  
The Flying Squad's despair:  
For when they reach the scene of crime —  
Macavity's not there!

When writing a thesis on *Savitri*, I had to write an introductory chapter on the other works of Sri Aurobindo though the thesis itself would deal only with the epic. Since the poem was seen as a poetic delineation of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, *The Life Divine* needed to be given a few pages in the introduction. Attempting to write the note meant making a heroic effort to read the book which again led to dreamy-eyed wonderment. Such luxurious sentences! And the title! I referred to it as "a gem of a title" in my note for even then I gave some thought to the inversion. Why not a straightforward *The Divine Life*? This was a poet who had taken up the exposition of philosophy, and a poet can never be a dry-scholar. And so a title in which Sri Aurobindo seemed to pursue the Life Divine by trying to live the divine life.

Sri Aurobindo's was a lifelong commitment to pursue the life divine in various fields. In the beginning, he tried to track it in philosophy. He read a lot of philosophy when a student in England and even began a philosophical treatise when still in his teens! This unfinished attempt to explain "the cosmos on the foundation of the principle of Beauty and Harmony" has been published as *The Harmony of Virtue*. At that time his immediate inspirations were Plato's *Republic* and *Symposium*. Discussions as in an academic seminar form the text in the style of Plato's works. The *Republic* has conversants like Thrasymachus, Glaucon and Cleitophon. Sri Aurobindo's conversants are students in Cambridge (where Sri Aurobindo was at that time): Keshav Ganesh Desai, Broome Wilson, Trevor, Trench. All of them have a bantering tone but are serious nevertheless. Quite bookish, they know their Plato and Oscar Wilde very well. Keshav is no doubt a projection of our own Sri Aurobindo. What is duty? What is morality? These are the opening chords.

Already we see Sri Aurobindo in consonance with the life divine. If it is Ananda that moves creation, wit and humour move the dialogues in *The Harmony of Virtue*. Keshav unabashedly votes for easeful indolence:

Life is too precious to be wasted in labour, and above all this especial moment of life, the hour after dinner, when we have only just enough energy to be idle. Why, it is only for this I tolerate the wearisome activity of the previous twelve hours.<sup>1</sup>

Early youth pouring over Plato and Kant, the future author of *The Life Divine* is already visible in the self-questionings (presented as dialogues) to find out the nature of Beauty and Virtue that are present in this flawed world. Does their presence indicate a concerted move to a better world, a divine life on earth? And that this is what gives a hope for the future? Keshav thinks so when he says, "the beautiful human soul will rest on the solid basis of humanity but build up for itself a personality distinct and individual." He further says that the evolutionary movement is not the creation of a new race but transformation of the existing humanity:

... the vulgar opinion learns that the principle of evolution or gradual perfection is the reigning principle of life and adopts the idea to its own stupid fallacy that perfection implies the elimination of all that is vivid and picturesque and likely to foster a personality. Evolution does not eliminate but perfects.<sup>2</sup>

This is a discussion among undergraduate students in Cambridge University underlining the seriousness with which the growing consciousness of late teenage

1. *SABCL*, Vol. 3, p. 1.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 51-2.

can turn towards philosophical speculation with aplomb. Several decades later Sri Aurobindo presents a Satyavan who is also a young man and who has spent his growing years in a forest hermitage. We come far away from the sophisticated rooms in Cambridge where young men studying for the rigorous Tripos gather at night over a drink and spout a good deal about Plato and Kant, the philosophers of Athens and the culture of Ancient India. This is a thick wood in the outskirts of Shalwa kingdom where nature alone has been Satyavan's teacher. But then, he too gets to speculate whether there is a power behind the wonders of nature just as the Cambridge students try to unravel a plan behind the various cultures evolved through centuries. He speaks of his self-enquiry to Savitri when he meets her for the first time:

Once were my days like days of other men:  
 To think and act was all, to enjoy and breathe;  
 This was the width and height of mortal hope:  
 Yet there came glimpses of a deeper self  
 That lives behind Life and makes her act its scene.  
 A truth was felt that screened its shape from mind,  
 A Greatness working towards a hidden end,  
 And vaguely through the forms of earth there looked  
 Something that life is not and yet must be.  
 I groped for the Mystery with the lantern, Thought.  
 Its glimmerings lighted with the abstract word  
 A half-visible ground and travelling yard by yard  
 It mapped a system of the Self and God.  
 I could not live the truth it spoke and thought.  
 I turned to seize its form in visible things,  
 Hoping to fix its rule by mortal mind,  
 Imposed a narrow structure of world-law  
 Upon the freedom of the Infinite,  
 A hard firm skeleton of outward Truth,  
 A mental scheme of a mechanic Power.<sup>3</sup>

Determined to get at the mystery behind creation, Satyavan turned to art. In the original *Mahabharata*, Narada says that he was also known as Chitrasva as he was an expert in making clay horses. Sri Aurobindo writes:

I strove to find its hints through Beauty and Art,  
 But Form cannot unveil the indwelling Power;  
 Only it throws its symbols at our hearts.

3. *Savitri*, CWSA, Vol. 34, pp. 406-07.

It evoked a mood of self, invoked a sign  
 Of all the brooding glory hidden in sense:  
 I lived in the ray but faced not to the sun.  
 I looked upon the world and missed the Self,  
 And when I found the Self, I lost the world . . .<sup>4</sup>

Sri Aurobindo was not satisfied with a partial approach, though he read and wrote a good deal during his years at Baroda. One had to experience personally the Truth of Existence. His readings in India's scriptures assured him that there had been yogis in the past who had been able to gain personal experience of the Supreme and afterwards they lived the life divine with natural ease. He began with pranayama, breath-control. Sometime later he was introduced to Yogi Vishnu Bhaskar Lele who agreed to teach him yoga. The two sat on a swing in Sardar Majumdar's wada at Baroda. The very first lesson was that the pupil should turn away from activities like politics that agitate the mind to achieve success in yoga. Sri Aurobindo's own record of what exactly happened in the first few days of his discipleship makes it all clear:

"Sit down," I was told, "look and you will see that your thoughts come into you from outside. Before they enter, fling them back." I sat down and looked and saw to my astonishment that it was so; I saw and felt concretely the thought approaching as if to enter through or above the head and was able to push it back concretely before it came inside.

In three days — really in one — my mind became full of an eternal silence — it is still there.<sup>5</sup>

The silence within makes the passageway through which we can move from our earthly life to the life divine. Of course, once we are able to link ourselves to the Divine, we can come back to our normal life. This is what we seek when we try to meditate, a silence that calms our nerves and links us to the Divine, away from the sounds and sights of everyday life on earth. This linkage too has been explained by Sri Aurobindo:

From that moment, in principle, the mental being in me became a free Intelligence, a universal Mind, not limited to the narrow circle of personal thought as a labourer in a thought-factory, but a receiver of knowledge from all the hundred realms of being and free to choose what it willed in this vast sight-empire and thought-empire.<sup>6</sup>

4. *Ibid.*, p. 407.

5. *On Himself*, SABCL, Vol. 26, pp. 82-3.

6. *Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 24, p. 1258.

That is how he says he edited the *Bande Mataram* for 4 months and wrote 6 volumes of the *Arya*, “not to speak of all the letters and messages etc., etc., I have written since.” It turned out that Sri Aurobindo could be guided by the Witness within from now onwards. Seeking personal experience to verify received knowledge became a way of life with him. His outward life was fully engaged. But whether in the classroom or in the editorial chair or the solitary cell in the Alipore Jail, he was busy in the inner countries of the mind which had become a laboratory to find out the formula which would help humanity to achieve the life divine. He used the work of his predecessors in this search when in the prison in an intense manner: the *Upanishads*, the *Gita*. When he was being taken to the prison, Sri Aurobindo did have an anxious moment: “What is this that has happened to me?” He was told to wait and so he was content to wait. He may not have been anxious but certainly he must have been ready for the message, expectant. He says it was “in this seclusion the earliest realisation, the first lesson came to me.”

The conclusion is obvious. Sri Aurobindo was meant to lead humanity, not a mere geographical piece of earth. He was to be the representative of man striving to know the pathway to the divine life. His job was in the spiritual laboratory, not in the political market-place. There were others around who could lead Indians in the struggle for achieving a politically free India, but Sri Aurobindo alone could achieve the spirit's freedom and teach others how to do it. So he took up the sadhana outlined in the *Gita*. As a result, Krishna who was born in a prison became a presence in the prison that held Sri Aurobindo. With Krishna's presence around, where are the prison bars? And when the Alipore Jail had a cowshed, was it not Gokula for our Master?

From the industrial section to the cowshed, from the cowshed to the industrial section, travelling to and fro I would recite the deeply moving, ageless, powerful *mantras* of the *Upanishads*, or watching the movements and activities of the prisoners I tried to realise the basic truths of the immanent Godhead, God in every form. In the trees, the houses, the walls, in men, animals, birds, metals, the earth, with the help of the *mantra*: All this is the Brahman (*sarvam khalvidam Brahma*). I would try to fix or impose that realisation on all of these. As I went on doing like this sometimes the prison ceased to appear to be a prison at all. The high wall, those iron bars, the white wall, the green-leaved tree shining in sunlight, it seemed as if these commonplace objects were not unconscious at all, but that they were vibrating with a universal consciousness, they love me and wish to embrace me, or so I felt. Men, cows, ants, birds are moving, flying, singing, speaking, yet all is Nature's play; behind all this is a great pure detached Spirit rapt in a serene delight. Once in a while it seemed as if God Himself was standing under the tree, to play upon his Flute of Delight, and with its sheer charm to draw my very soul out.<sup>7</sup>

7. *Tales of Prison Life*, translated by Sisir Kumar Ghose (1985), pp. 63-64.

This is indeed moving towards the divine life, feeling the gentle showers of raindrops in monsoon time at first, getting ready to take up the challenge of the full force of the rainy season. The overwhelming downpour came not much later. Sri Aurobindo began living his divine life in Pondicherry, his Cave of Tapasya. Between his coming to Pondicherry and the launching of the *Arya* which was to carry *The Life Divine* in its issues, lay the four years of “silent Yoga”. There were physical rigours, lack of financial resources and the exile from his personal library which he had accumulated in Baroda. There were also fasts and the testing of other traditional methodologies to gain illuminations to chart the path divine. The publishing of *Yogic Sadhan* at this time on what he had “received” as yogic instructions probably from Raja Rammohun Roy.<sup>8</sup> Never a dull moment in this journey towards the life divine! In fact, for several years life divine for Sri Aurobindo seems to have been leading a spartan life and typing away to fill the pages of the *Arya*!

But then, the divine life was not just wrestling with concepts and received knowledge. It was also trying to experience the atmosphere of that life. Indian culture had given plenty of material to Sri Aurobindo in this area. If the *Upanishads* and *Gita* went with him to the Alipore Jail, the *Vedas* opened new vistas of images and spiritual experience for Sri Aurobindo. The *Vedas* from very ancient times and bhakti poets like Chandidas: here also were pathways to the life divine. He could get engaged in philosophical terminology with the same ease with which he lost himself in the rhythms of Vidyapati. As far as he was concerned there was no life undivine for him! Surely one cannot argue with a yogi who challenges all our concepts of comfort and discomfort, happiness and sorrow, wealth and poverty!

Even in rags I am a god;  
Fallen, I am divine;  
High I triumph when down-trod,  
Long I live when slain.<sup>9</sup>

It was my good fortune that I could experience the joys and anxieties of *gurukula-vasa*, being the daughter and student of K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar. I cannot pin-point the day I came to study the works of Sri Aurobindo. There was never any systematic ‘study’ of the writings of Sri Aurobindo that Father laid down for me. I was just exposed to them. For the rest, listening to Father reading or writing about the Mother and Sri Aurobindo became a way of life. Whatever the subject on hand, I had always these works in the background beckoning me with an idea here, a phrase there.

When I was a student, there were three or four copies of *The Life Divine* at

8. See A. B. Purani, *Life of Sri Aurobindo* (1958), p. 145.

9. ‘Life’, *Collected Poems*, CWSA, Vol. 2, p. 541.

home but my favourite was the New York Library publication of 1952. Either I was attracted by the get-up (the light blue jacket is still fresh) or I felt very scholarly to be sitting in the chair with the book open in front of me. It was more of “playing the sedulous ape”. This is how Father sits with the book, his right hand holding the red-and-blue pencil. This is how he puts the bookmark. Before closing the book, the little piece of paper would be lifted to his eyes and placed back. It was a money order receipt with Mother’s signature.

Soon I had appropriated this edition of *The Life Divine* for myself. When he noticed it, he took away the bookmark and placed it in his copy of *Essays on the Gita*. When I went away from home following my marriage, my father allowed me to take the book. Thus I have literally lived for half a century and more with *The Life Divine* volume! Since those early days I have come to it often and I have struggled to understand many of the passages. Though my understanding has been limited, I have always received a sure Ananda, just reading the book, for it has led me into other adventures in the realm of philosophy and literature. “Reading *The Life Divine* is good but we must learn to live the divine life” was Father’s message to me. I have lived with *The Life Divine* book next to me all these years. But have I been living the divine life? However, I am very sure that no child of the Divine Mother is a zero and each child does live the divine life in his or her own way. Reading *The Life Divine* itself can be the life divine as we experience the Delight of Existence in its rhythm. To have heard it read by my father or listen to his reciting the first paragraph when we were out for a walk, that was Bliss of Existence. Which of us can tear ourselves away from the grand commencement?

The earliest preoccupation of man in his awakened thoughts and, as it seems, his inevitable and ultimate preoccupation, — for it survives the longest periods of scepticism and returns after every banishment, — is also the highest which his thought can envisage. It manifests itself in the divination of Godhead, the impulse towards perfection, the search after pure Truth and unmixed Bliss, the sense of a secret immortality. The ancient dawns of human knowledge have left us their witness to this constant aspiration; today we see a humanity satiated but not satisfied by victorious analysis of the externalities of Nature preparing to return to its primeval longings. The earliest formula of Wisdom promises to be its last, — God, Light, Freedom, Immortality.<sup>10</sup>

*(To be continued)*

PREMA NANDAKUMAR

10. *The Life Divine*, CWSA, Vol. 21, pp. 3-4.



## A REVIEW OF *ŚRADDHĀ*<sup>1</sup>

AFTER a gap of some years, the journal *Śraddhā* has again made its appearance. The first issue of the resurrected journal is in our hands. It gives us pleasure to declare that the new *Śraddhā* is a veritable treat for the scholarly-inclined. The avowed intention of the editor, Arup Basu is to publish, “a series of serious, meaningful, objective and insightful studies, which will convey, without any dilutions or admixtures, the significance of the teachings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo and their relevance to contemporary issues of existence.” A laudable aim indeed!

The issue carries articles by Prema Nandakumar, Shraddhavan, Matthijs Cornelissen, Sampadananda Mishra, Alok Pandey, Arabinda Basu, R. Y. Deshpande, Debashish Banerji, Larry Seidlitz, Kittu Reddy, M. S. Srinivasan, Stephen Phillips and Ranajit Sarkar.

Matthijs Cornelissen explores the mystic significance of Sri Aurobindo’s birthday, 15 August. The day also happens to be the day of Assumption of Mary, the taking up into heaven of the body and soul of the Virgin Mary when her earthly life had ended. Matthijs explores the mystical dimensions of this event and correlates it with Sri Aurobindo’s work. He speaks of the German mystic Eckhart who wrote that, “Mary’s virginity must be understood symbolically as the necessity of absolute purity to conceive, what in the Christian tradition is called the son of God.” Matthijs extends the symbolism when he sees Mary’s life as a manifestation of the earth-mother and concludes that the Earth has to be absolutely pure to receive the Divine. We can, he says, go farther with Eckhart and other mystics and take “Christ as the Divine in the human heart, then it means that each one has to be absolutely pure to receive the divine consciousness in ourselves. Mary’s assumption is thus to be seen as the redemption of the Earth, the reconnection of Earth and Heaven, and finally the divinisation of matter.”

Sri Aurobindo said that there was no such thing as chance in his life and indicated that Mary’s assumption on the date of his birthday does indeed carry a mystic significance. Matthijs, in prophetic words opines that the significance of his birth is “refashioning the bridge between earth and heaven, to usher in a new era in which the body and soul, the physical life and the life of the spirit can again become one.”

In the article, titled ‘Integral Psychology — Theorising its Disciplinary Boundaries’, Debashish Banerji brings in his usual high seriousness. He traces the relationship between the ancient Indian discipline of yoga and the modern western discipline of psychology. In doing so he delineates the boundaries of the emerging discipline of Integral Psychology. With beautiful clarity Banerji traces the entire

1. The 15 August 2009 issue of the quarterly journal published by Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Kolkata.

gamut of issues in the spirit of a cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary exercise. To give but one example, Banerji, asserting with Kant that the Subject can never truly know the truth or reality of Object, points to the limitation of psychiatry and psychotherapy, where “the ‘practitioner’ assumes a position of knowledge-dominance over the ‘patient’, without acknowledging that by dint of disciplinary limitations, the object of knowledge is never comprehensible.”

Stephen Phillips, the distinguished professor of philosophy, in his article on aesthetics compares and contrasts Sri Aurobindo’s aesthetic theory with that of the great Saivite master of the 10<sup>th</sup> Century, Abhinava Gupta. Abhinava’s view of an active spiritual being resonates with that of Sri Aurobindo and which Phillips points out, imparts the tantric turn to his teachings.

In Abhinava, all delight of relishing, *rasa* derives from Atman. But more specifically *Śanta Rasa* is doubly grounded in the Atman, “not just in that the self is witness enjoying all presentations but because there is characteristic expression of Self as a *bhava*. . . known to us in everyday life.” We would like to refer the reader to the aphorism of Saiva tantra, *Nartako Atma*, the self being conceived of as a dancer, pointing to its dynamic character.

In Alok Pandey’s article, ‘The path of Nachiketas’ the reader is told the story of the young boy Nachiketas and his encounter with Yama, the Lord of Death. This is a beautiful symbolic story from the Katha Upanishad, which is one of the finest Upanishads, abounding in magnificent poetry and memorable phrases. But here, the author is concerned with the symbolism of the story which he brings out with admirable skill.

Vajasravas, the father of Nachiketas, is the “old ego-consciousness, that which is full of desires and sacrifices ignorantly”. Nachiketas is, the author tells us, the discriminative Buddhi. Death is the upholder of the Law, Yama. He holds his kingdom of the lower triplicity — Matter, Life and Mind — in his firm control. He is Dharmaraja. So long as one is in the Ignorance, one is subject to the law of Death.

The rest of the Upanishad recounts how Yama tells Nachiketas the profoundest secrets of the spiritual life. We look forward to the rest of the article in the coming issues.

Arabinda Basu’s short piece on evolution lays out Sri Aurobindo’s ideas on evolution. The author clearly delineates the difference between the biological theory of evolution as propounded by Charles Darwin and the spiritual evolution of consciousness in Sri Aurobindo. He also discusses the evolutionary ideas in Samkhya and the Yoga philosophies.

Kittu Reddy deals with Sri Aurobindo’s views on the Hindu-Moslem question. The relevance of this issue is of capital importance to the country, particularly at the present stage of our history. The article should prove to be of great interest to all concerned with our problems with the neighbouring country.

Larry Seidlitz has a longish article in which he attempts to lay down the simple

steps of the yoga for the impatient modern mind that seeks exact procedures to be followed. The author tries to suggest clear-cut steps, which the newcomer to the yoga can follow without difficulty. While the steps themselves may be unexceptionable, the question remains whether they truly reflect the Integral Yoga. The very simplicity of the steps, perhaps does not do justice to the complex and sophisticated understanding of the psychological entity that is man. However, the author intends to continue the article and it is possible that the sequel may rectify this first incomplete impression. We would also like to point out that typographical errors mar the full power of some of the mantras quoted.

Prema Nandakumar's pieces are always a delight. They bring a fresh approach to tradition, combining scholarship and sensitivity. The article 'Veda Vyasa's *Mahabharata* in Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*' whose first part appears in this issue more than fulfills our expectations.

Shraddhavan takes for her subject Sri Aurobindo's Uttarpara speech; her article ranges much farther, though — taking in *Tales of Prison Life*, *The Synthesis*, the *Upanishads*, and *Savitri* — and with these inputs helping us to come closer to Sri Aurobindo.

In his discussions on the 'Possibilities of Man', R. Y. Deshpande begins with the first paragraph of Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine*. Deshpande writes, "The formula of God, Light, Freedom, Immortality was discovered ages ago and many attempts were made for its application." He takes a bird's eye view of some of these attempts, touching on the stages of social evolution, Aristotle, Plato, Bertrand Russell, Communism, Adam Smith, Karl Marx, Hegel, Pitrim Sorokin, Amartya Sen — all these viewpoints assigned their relative position vis-à-vis Sri Aurobindo's vision.

M. S. Srinivasan's article explores the function of culture as the source of development, accepting the approach of the modern social scientist and the management thinker, yet presenting a deeper perspective based on Indian thought. He leads up to the necessity of the recognition and implementation by governments of the important cultural factors that are an integral part of the nation-unit.

Sampadananda Mishra states that "There have been several attempts to find the true sense of the Vedic Mantras. But the secret of the Veda is yet to be discovered." This article, 'Sri Aurobindo and Vedic Riks' is an attempt to lift a little corner of the veil that has for centuries guarded the mystery. The plan and scope of this exploration makes us hope that the author will go beyond the constraints of a journal article and bring us a booklength treatment of this subject.

Ranajit Sarkar's erudite and perceptive approach, bringing together Madhusudan Dutta, Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo around the theme of Urvashi is everything that students of literature and culture could wish for — a rich convergence of personalities and styles, with enough suggestions for further revelations.

These many delights await the *sudhi pathaka* in this slim but sumptuous volume.

Before concluding, it may be pointed out that the design on the cover — two

hands guarding a sacred flame — was originally a sketch that the Mother made for the cover of a compilation of quotations from Mother and Sri Aurobindo on Love. Just as the inner flame has to be cherished and protected, just as love, true Love must secretly grow, so too must faith, *Śraddhā*, be nurtured, shielded, encouraged, so that it may blaze forth and its power radiate in us and in the world. This has been expressed in the editorial: “Our aim shall be, in all circumstances, to hold fast to the true inner meaning of the word *Śraddhā*.”

B. V. M.

(P. S – Even as we go to Press, the November issue of *Śraddhā* has arrived. – Ed. Note.)



### **The Mother’s Message for the New Year 1961**

This wonderful world of delight waiting at our gates for our call, to  
come down upon earth . . .

(*Words of the Mother – III*, CWM 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. 15, p. 173)

