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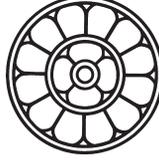
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,  
A new light breaks upon the earth,  
A new world is born.  
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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# MOTHER INDIA

## MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. LXVI

No. 1

*“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”*

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## SOUL, MY SOUL [1]

Soul, my soul, reascend over the edge of life, —  
Far, far out of the din burn into tranquil skies.  
Cross bright ranges of mind murmurless, visioned, white;  
Thoughts sail down as if ships carrying bales of light,  
Truth's form-ropes by the Seers woven from spirit threads,  
From wide havens above luminous argosies,  
Gold-robed Wisdom's divine traffic and merchandise.  
But then pause not but go far beyond Space and Time  
Where thy natural home motionless vast and mute  
Waits thy tread; on a throne facing infinity  
Thought-nude, void of the world, one with the silence be.  
Sole, self-poised and unmoved thou shalt behold below  
Hierarchies and domains, godheads and potencies,  
Titans, demons and men each in his cosmic role:  
Midst all these in the live centre of forces spun,  
Fate there under thy feet turning the wheels of Time,  
The World Law thou shalt view mapped in its codes sublime,  
Yet thyself shalt remain ruleless, eternal, free.

## SOUL, MY SOUL [2]

Soul, my soul, yet ascend crossing the marge of life:  
Mount out far above Time, reach to the golden end,  
Mind-belt's verge and the vague Infinite's spirit seas.  
Crossed by sails of the gods, luminous argosies,  
Silence reigns and the pure vastness of Self alone,  
Fulgent, shadowless, white, limitless, signless, one.  
God-light brooding above, spreading eternal wings,  
Free, held high above thought, void of the form of things,  
Live there lost in God space, rapturous, vacant, mute,  
Sun-bright, timeless, immense, single and absolute.

SRI AUROBINDO

*(Collected Poems, CWSA, Vol. 2, p. 678)*

**Soul, my soul [1].** No title in the manuscript. Circa 1936-37. Two handwritten manuscripts; a third is published as "Soul, my soul [2]".

**Soul, my soul [2].** No title in the manuscript. Circa 1936-37. This is the most completely revised, but shortest, manuscript of this poem.

## THE Gnostic HARMONY

HARMONY is the natural rule of the spirit, it is the inherent law and spontaneous consequence of unity in multiplicity, of unity in diversity, of a various manifestation of oneness. In a pure and blank unity there could be indeed no place for harmony, for there is nothing to harmonise; in a complete or a governing diversity there must be either discord or a fitting together of differences, a constructed harmony. But in a gnostic unity in multiplicity the harmony would be there as a spontaneous expression of the unity, and this spontaneous expression presupposes a mutuality of consciousness aware of other consciousness by a direct inner contact and interchange. In infrarational life harmony is secured by an instinctive oneness of nature and oneness of the action of the nature, an instinctive communication, an instinctive or direct vital-intuitional sense-understanding by which the individuals of an animal or insect community are able to co-operate. In human life this is replaced by understanding through sense-knowledge and mental perception and communication of ideas by speech, but the means that have to be used are imperfect and the harmony and co-operation incomplete. In a gnostic life, a life of superreason and supernature, a self-aware spiritual unity of being and a spiritual conscious community and interchange of nature would be the deep and ample root of understanding: this greater life would have evolved new and superior means and powers of uniting consciousness inwardly with consciousness; intimacy of consciousness communicating inwardly and directly with consciousness, thought with thought, vision with vision, sense with sense, life with life, body-awareness with body-awareness, would be its natural basic instrumentation. All these new powers taking up the old outward instruments and using them as a subordinate means with a far greater power and to more purpose would be put to the service of the self-expression of the spirit in a profound oneness of being and life.

An evolution of innate and latent but as yet unevolved powers of consciousness is not considered admissible by the modern mind, because these exceed our present formulation of Nature and, to our ignorant preconceptions founded on a limited experience, they seem to belong to the supernatural, to the miraculous and occult; for they surpass the known action of material Energy which is now ordinarily accepted as the sole cause and mode of things and the sole instrumentation of the World-Force. A human working of marvels, by the conscious being discovering and developing an instrumentation of material forces overpassing anything that Nature has herself organised, is accepted as a natural fact and an almost unlimited prospect of our existence; an awakening, a discovery, an instrumentation of powers of consciousness and of spiritual, mental and life forces overpassing anything that Nature or man has yet organised is not admitted as possible. But there would be

nothing supernatural or miraculous in such an evolution, except in so far as it would be a supernature or superior nature to ours just as human nature is a supernature or superior nature to that of animal or plant or material objects. Our mind and its powers, our use of reason, our mental intuition and insight, speech, possibilities of philosophical, scientific, aesthetic discovery of the truths and potencies of being and a control of its forces are an evolution that has taken place: yet it would seem impossible if we took our stand on the limited animal consciousness and its capacities; for there is nothing there to warrant so prodigious a progression. But still there are vague initial manifestations, rudimentary elements or arrested possibilities in the animal to which our reason and intelligence with their extraordinary developments stand as an unimaginable journey from a poor and unpromising point of departure. The rudiments of spiritual powers belonging to the gnostic supernature are similarly there even in our ordinary composition, but only occasionally and sparsely active. It is not irrational to suppose that at this much higher stage of the evolution a similar but greater progression starting from these rudimentary beginnings might lead to another immense development and departure.

In mystic experience, — when there is an opening of the inner centres, or in other ways, spontaneously or by will or endeavour or in the very course of the spiritual growth, — new powers of consciousness have been known to develop; they present themselves as if an automatic consequence of some inner opening or in answer to a call in the being, so much so that it has been found necessary to recommend to the seeker not to hunt after these powers, not to accept or use them. This rejection is logical for those who seek to withdraw from life; for all acceptance of greater power would bind to life or be a burden on the bare and pure urge towards liberation. An indifference to all other aims and issues is natural for the God-lover who seeks God for His own sake and not for power or any other inferior attraction; the pursuit of these alluring but often dangerous forces would be a deviation from his purpose. A similar rejection is a necessary self-restraint and a spiritual discipline for the immature seeker, since such powers may be a great, even a deadly peril; for their supernormality may easily feed in him an abnormal exaggeration of the ego. Power in itself may be dreaded as a temptation by the aspirant to perfection, because power can abase as well as elevate; nothing is more liable to misuse. But when new capacities come as an inevitable result of the growth into a greater consciousness and a greater life and that growth is part of the very aim of the spiritual being within us, this bar does not operate; for a growth of the being into supernature and its life in supernature cannot take place or cannot be complete without bringing with it a greater power of consciousness and a greater power of life and the spontaneous development of an instrumentation of knowledge and force normal to that supernature. There is nothing in this future evolution of the being which could be regarded as irrational or incredible; there is nothing in it abnormal or miraculous: it would be the necessary course of the evolution of consciousness and its forces in the passage

from the mental to the gnostic or supramental formulation of our existence. This action of the forces of supernature would be a natural, normal and spontaneously simple working of the new higher or greater consciousness into which the being enters in the course of his self-evolution; the gnostic being accepting the gnostic life would develop and use the powers of this greater consciousness, even as man develops and uses the powers of his mental nature.

It is evident that such an increase of the power or powers of consciousness would be not only normal but indispensable to a greater and more perfect life. Human life with its partial harmony, in so far as that is not maintained by the imposition of a settled law and order on the constituent individuals through a partly willing, partly induced, partly forced or unavoidable acceptance, reposes on the agreement of the enlightened or interested elements in their mind, heart, life-sense, an assent to a composite body of common ideas, desires, vital satisfactions, aims of existence. But there is in the mass of constituting individuals an imperfect understanding and knowledge of the ideas, life-aims, life-motives which they have accepted, an imperfect power in their execution, an imperfect will to maintain them always unimpaired, to carry them out fully or to bring the life to a greater perfection: there is an element of struggle and discord, a mass of repressed or unfulfilled desires and frustrated wills, a simmering suppressed unsatisfaction or an awakened or eruptive discontent of unequally satisfied interests; there are new ideas, life-motives that break in and cannot be correlated without upheaval and disturbance; there are life-forces at work in human beings and their environment that are at variance with the harmony that has been constructed, and there is not the full power to overcome the discord and dislocations created by a clashing diversity of mind and life and by the attack of disrupting forces in universal Nature. What is lacking is a spiritual knowledge and spiritual power, a power over self, a power born of inner unification with others, a power over the surrounding or invading world-forces, a full-visioned and fully equipped power of effectuation of knowledge; it is these capacities missing or defective in us that belong to the very substance of gnostic being, for they are inherent in the light and dynamis of the gnostic nature.

But, in addition to the imperfect accommodation of the minds, hearts, lives of the constituting individuals in a human society, the mind and the life of the individual himself are actuated by forces that are not in accord with each other; our attempts to accord them are imperfect, and still more imperfect is our force to put any one of them into integral or satisfying execution in life. Thus the law of love and sympathy is natural to our consciousness; as we grow in spirit, its demand on us increases: but there is also the demand of the intellect, the push of the vital force and its impulses in us, the claim and pressure of many other elements that do not coincide with the law of love and sympathy, nor do we know how to fit them all into the whole law of existence or to render any or all of them either justly and entirely effective or imperative. In order to make them concordant and actively fruitful in the whole

being and whole life, we have to grow into a more complete spiritual nature; we have, by that growth, to live in the light and force of a higher and larger and more integral consciousness of which knowledge and power, love and sympathy and play of life-will are all natural and ever-present accorded elements; we have to move and act in a light of Truth which sees intuitively and spontaneously the thing to be done and the way to do it and intuitively and spontaneously fulfils itself in the act and the force, — taking up into that intuitive spontaneity of their truth, into its simple spiritual and supreme normality, the complexity of our forces of being and suffusing with their harmonised realities all the steps of Nature.

It should be evident that no rationalised piecing together or ingenuity of mental construction can accord or harmonise this complexity; it is only the intuition and self-knowledge of an awakened spirit that can do it. That would be the nature of the evolved supramental being and his existence; his spiritual sight and sense would take up all the forces of the being in a unifying consciousness and bring them into a normality of accorded action: for this accord and concord are the true normality of the spirit; the discord, the disharmony of our life and nature is abnormal to it although it is normal to the life of the Ignorance. It is indeed because it is not normal to the spirit that a knowledge within us is dissatisfied and strives towards a greater harmony in our existence. This accord and concord of the whole being, which is natural to the gnostic individual, would be equally natural to a community of gnostic beings; for it would rest on a union of self with self in the light of a common and mutual self-awareness. It is true that in the total terrestrial existence of which the gnostic life would be a part, there would be still continuing within it a life belonging to a less evolved order; the intuitive and gnostic life would have to fit into this total existence and carry into it as much of its own law of unity and harmony as may be possible. Here the law of spontaneous harmony might seem to be inapplicable, since the relation of the gnostic life with the ignorant life around it would not be founded on a mutuality of self-knowledge and a sense of one being and common consciousness; it would be a relation of action of knowledge to action of ignorance. But this difficulty need not be so great as it seems now to us; for the gnostic knowledge would carry in it a perfect understanding of the consciousness of the Ignorance, and it would not be impossible, therefore, for an assured gnostic life to harmonise its existence with that of all the less developed life coexistent with it in the earth-nature.

If this is our evolutionary destiny, it remains for us to see where we stand at this juncture in the evolutionary progression, — a progression which has been cyclic or spiral rather than in a straight line or has at least journeyed in a very zigzag swinging curve of advance, — and what prospect there is of any turn towards a decisive step in the near or measurable future. In our human aspiration towards a personal perfection and the perfection of the life of the race the elements of the future evolution are foreshadowed and striven after, but in a confusion of half-enlightened knowledge; there is a discord between the necessary elements, an

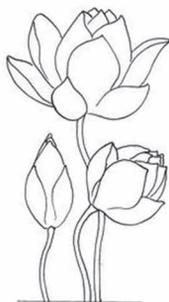
opposing emphasis, a profusion of rudimentary unsatisfying and ill-accorded solutions. These sway between the three principal preoccupations of our idealism, — the complete single development of the human being in himself, the perfectibility of the individual, a full development of the collective being, the perfectibility of society, and, more pragmatically restricted, the perfect or best possible relations of individual with individual and society and of community with community. An exclusive or dominant emphasis is laid sometimes on the individual, sometimes on the collectivity or society, sometimes on a right and balanced relation between the individual and the collective human whole. One idea holds up the growing life, freedom or perfection of the human individual as the true object of our existence, — whether the ideal be merely a free self-expression of the personal being or a self-governed whole of complete mind, fine and ample life and perfect body, or a spiritual perfection and liberation. In this view society is there only as a field of activity and growth for the individual man and serves best its function when it gives as far as possible a wide room, ample means, a sufficient freedom or guidance of development to his thought, his action, his growth, his possibility of fullness of being. An opposite idea gives the collective life the first or the sole importance; the existence, the growth of the race is all: the individual has to live for the society or for mankind, or, even, he is only a cell of the society, he has no other use or purpose of birth, no other meaning of his presence in Nature, no other function. Or it is held that the nation, the society, the community is a collective being, revealing its soul in its culture, power of life, ideals, institutions, all its ways of self-expression; the individual life has to cast itself in that mould of culture, serve that power of life, consent only to exist as an instrument for the maintenance and efficiency of the collective existence. In another idea the perfection of man lies in his ethical and social relations with other men; he is a social being and has to live for society, for others, for his utility to the race: the society also is there for the service of all, to give them their right relation, education, training, economic opportunity, right frame of life. In the ancient cultures the greatest emphasis was laid on the community and the fitting of the individual into the community, but also there grew up an idea of the perfected individual; in ancient India it was the idea of the spiritual individual that was dominant, but the society was of extreme importance because in it and under its moulding influence the individual had to pass first through the social status of the physical, vital, mental being with his satisfaction of interest, desire, pursuit of knowledge and right living before he could reach fitness for a truer self-realisation and a free spiritual existence. In recent times the whole stress has passed to the life of the race, to a search for the perfect society, and latterly to a concentration on the right organisation and scientific mechanisation of the life of mankind as a whole; the individual now tends more to be regarded only as a member of the collectivity, a unit of the race whose existence must be subordinated to the common aims and total interest of the organised society, and much less or not at all as a mental or

spiritual being with his own right and power of existence. This tendency has not yet reached its acme everywhere, but everywhere it is rapidly increasing and heading towards dominance.

Thus, in the vicissitudes of human thought, on one side the individual is moved or invited to discover and pursue his own self-affirmation, his own development of mind and life and body, his own spiritual perfection; on the other he is called on to efface and subordinate himself and to accept the ideas, ideals, will, instincts, interests of the community as his own. He is moved by Nature to live for himself and by something deep within him to affirm his individuality; he is called upon by society and by a certain mental idealism to live for humanity or for the greater good of the community. The principle of self and its interest is met and opposed by the principle of altruism. The State erects its godhead and demands his obedience, submission, subordination, self-immolation; the individual has to affirm against this exorbitant claim the rights of his ideals, his ideas, his personality, his conscience. It is evident that all this conflict of standards is a groping of the mental Ignorance of man seeking to find its way and grasping different sides of the truth but unable by its want of integrality in knowledge to harmonise them together. A unifying and harmonising knowledge can alone find the way, but that knowledge belongs to a deeper principle of our being to which oneness and integrality are native. It is only by finding that in ourselves that we can solve the problem of our existence and with it the problem of the true way of individual and communal living.

SRI AUROBINDO

*(The Life Divine, CWSA, Vol. 22, pp. 1077-85)*



## ‘IN ALL THINGS WE CAN SEE THY DIVINE INTERVENTION . . .’

**March 28, 1914**

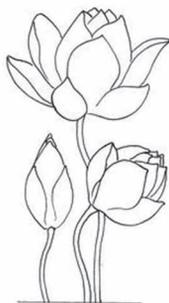
FROM the time we started and every day more and more, in all things we can see Thy divine intervention, everywhere Thy law is expressed, and I need all my inner conviction to feel that this is perfectly natural, so that I do not pass from wonder to wonder.

At no moment do I feel that I am living outside Thee and never have the horizons appeared vaster to me and the depths at once more luminous and unfathomable. Grant, O Divine Teacher, that we may know and accomplish our mission upon earth better and better, more and more, that we may make full use of all the energies that are in us, and Thy sovereign Presence become manifest ever more perfectly in the silent depths of our soul, in all our thoughts, all our feelings, all our actions.

I find it almost strange to speak to Thee, so much is it Thou who livest in me, thinkest and lovest.

THE MOTHER

*(Prayers and Meditations, CWM 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. 1, p. 111)*



## COMMENTARY ON ‘THOUGHTS AND APHORISMS’

*(Continued from the issue of December 2012)*

All that my Lover has, belongs to me. Why do you abuse me for showing off the ornaments He has given to me?

\* \* \*

My Lover took His crown and royal necklace from His head and neck and clothed me with them; but the disciples of the saints and the prophets abused me and said, “He is hunting after Siddhis.”

\* \* \*

I did my Lover’s commands in the world and the will of my Captor; but they cried, “Who is this corruptor of youth, this disturber of morals?”

\* \* \*

If I cared even for your praise, O ye saints, if I cherished my reputation, O ye prophets, my Lover would never have taken me into His bosom and given me the freedom of His secret chambers.

\* \* \*

I was intoxicated with the rapture of my Lover and I threw the robe of the world from me even in the world’s highways. Why should I care that the worldlings mock and the Pharisees turn their faces?

\* \* \*

To thy lover, O Lord, the railing of the world is wild honey and the pelting of stones by the mob is summer rain on the body. For is it not Thou that railest and peltest, and is it not Thou in the stones that strikest and hurtest me?

There is nothing to say. One can only bow before the perfection of the experience.

3 April 1970

(CWM 10: 336-37)

\*

There are two things in God which men call evil, that which they cannot understand at all and that which they misunderstand and, possessing, misuse; it is only what they grope after half-vainly and dimly understand that they call good and holy. But to me all things in Him are lovable.

\* \* \*

They say, O my God, that I am mad because I see no fault in Thee; but if I am indeed mad with Thy love, I do not wish to recover my sanity.

\* \* \*

“Errors, falsehoods, stumblings!” they cry. How bright and beautiful are Thy errors, O Lord! Thy falsehoods save Truth alive; by Thy stumblings the world is perfected.

\* \* \*

Life, Life, Life, I hear the passions cry; God, God, God, is the soul’s answer. Unless thou seest and lovest Life as God only, then is Life itself a sealed joy to thee.

\* \* \*

“He loves her,” the senses say; but the soul says, “God, God, God.” That is the all-embracing formula of existence.

In this way Sri Aurobindo reveals and formulates the secret of existence. All that remains is to understand and live it.

4 April 1970

(CWM 10: 337)

\*

God took a child to fondle him in His bosom of delight; but the mother wept and would not be consoled because her child no longer existed.

\* \* \*

When I suffer from pain or grief or mischance, I say, "So, my old Playfellow, thou hast taken again to bullying me," and I sit down to possess the pleasure of the pain, the joy of the grief, the good fortune of the mischance; then He sees He is found out and takes His ghosts and bugbears away from me.

With sparkling humour Sri Aurobindo endeavours to make us understand the falsehood of the ordinary human consciousness and the luminous and all-powerful joy of the Divine Consciousness we must acquire.

*18 April 1970*

(CWM 10: 345)

\*

Sin is a trick and a disguise of Krishna to conceal Himself from the gaze of the virtuous. Behold, O Pharisee, God in the sinner, sin in thyself purifying thy heart; clasp thy brother.

As always, in his striking and humorous way, Sri Aurobindo tells us that the Divine truth is above both virtue and sin.

*19 April 1970*

(CWM 10: 346)

\*

Canst thou see God as the bodiless Infinite and yet love Him as a man loves his mistress? Then has the highest truth of the Infinite been revealed to thee. Canst thou also clothe the Infinite in one secret embraceable body and see Him seated in each and all of these bodies that are visible and sensible? Then has its widest and profoundest truth come also into thy possession.

\* \* \*

Divine Love has simultaneously a double play, an universal movement, deep, calm and bottomless like the nether Ocean, which broods upon the whole world and each thing that is in it as upon a level bed with an equal pressure, and a personal movement, forceful, intense and ecstatic like the dancing surface of the same Ocean, which varies the height and force of its billows and chooses the objects it shall fall upon with the kiss of its foam and spray and the clasp of its engulfing waters.

To make himself understood, Sri Aurobindo uses images that are accessible to everyone; but the marvels of Union infinitely exceed these human images.

*22 April 1970*

(CWM 10: 348)

\*

I used to hate and avoid pain and resent its infliction; but now I find that had I not so suffered, I would not now possess, trained and perfected, this infinitely and multitudinously sensible capacity of delight in my mind, heart and body. God justifies Himself in the end even when He has masked Himself as a bully and a tyrant.

\* \* \*

I swore that I would not suffer from the world's grief and the world's stupidity and cruelty and injustice and I made my heart as hard in endurance as the nether millstone and my mind as a polished surface of steel. I no longer suffered, but enjoyment had passed away from me. Then God broke my heart and ploughed up my mind. I rose through cruel and incessant anguish to a blissful painlessness and through sorrow and indignation and revolt to an infinite knowledge and a settled peace.

It is the same lesson that the Supreme Lord wants to teach the body which He is transforming.

23 April 1970

(CWM 10: 349)

The strangest of the soul's experiences is this, that it finds, when it ceases to care for the image and threat of troubles, then the troubles themselves are nowhere to be found in one's neighbourhood. It is then that we hear from behind those unreal clouds God laughing at us.

Lord, and when You want the image to change into your likeness, what do You do?

4 May 1970

*I did not understand what You wrote yesterday.*

What Sri Aurobindo calls "the image" is the physical body. So I asked the Lord what He does when He wants to transform the physical body, and last night He gave me two visions in answer.

One concerned the liberation of the body consciousness from all the conventions regarding death; and in the other He showed me what the supramental body will be. You see that I did well to ask Him!

9 May 1970

(CWM 10: 352-53)

\*

To be master of the world would indeed be supreme felicity, if one were universally loved; but for that one would have to be at the same time the slave of all humanity.

\* \* \*

After all, when thou countest up thy long service to God, thou wilt find thy supreme work was the flawed and little good thou didst in love for humanity.

That is why, rather than to serve, it is better to belong totally, absolutely to the Divine.

*13 May 1970*

*In order to belong absolutely and totally to the Divine, isn't it necessary to begin by serving the Divine?*

Certainly, to place all one's work at the service of the Divine is a very good way of approach, but it doesn't go much further than what Sri Aurobindo describes, and for some it is not satisfying.

*14 May 1970*

(CWM 10: 353-54)

\*

There are two works that are perfectly pleasing to God in his servant; to sweep in silent adoration His temple-floors and to fight in the world's battlefield for His divine consummation in humanity.

\* \* \*

He who has done even a little good to human beings, though he be the worst of sinners, is accepted by God in the ranks of His lovers and servants. He shall look upon the face of the Eternal.

Sri Aurobindo's effort was always directed towards liberating his disciples or even his readers from all preconceptions, all conventional morality.

*15 May 1970*

(CWM 10: 354)

\*

Our parents fell, in the deep Semitic apologue, because they tasted the fruit of the tree of good and evil. Had they taken at once of the tree of eternal life, they would have escaped the immediate consequence; but God's purpose in humanity would have been defeated. His wrath is our eternal advantage.

Sri Aurobindo is trying to make us understand how the limitations of our vision prevent us from perceiving the Divine Wisdom.

22 May 1970

(CWM 10: 356)

\*

The rejection of falsehood by the mind seeking after truth is one of the chief causes why mind cannot attain to the settled, rounded and perfect truth; not to escape falsehood is the effort of divine mind, but to seize the truth which lies masked behind even the most grotesque or far-wandering error.

*What is the "divine mind"?*

What Sri Aurobindo calls the divine mind is the prototype of the mental function which is totally and perfectly surrendered to the Divine and works only under divine inspiration.

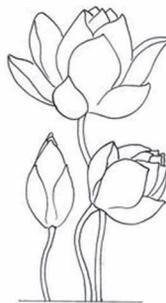
When a human being exists only by and for the Divine, his mind necessarily becomes a divine mind.

4 June 1970

(CWM 10: 360)

THE MOTHER

(*On Thoughts and Aphorisms*, CWM 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. 10)



**“PRAYER” —  
CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO**

Sri Aurobindo —

Quite a simple poem — except perhaps for the last line, but don't you find that effective in suggestion? I have, however, a variant in case you find nothing save obscure ingenuity.

**PRAYER**

There is no lack of love in Thee,  
~~rich~~ [1]

But, O sweet Splendour, bless  
~~soul first with~~ [2]

My proud heart with a penury  
Of dedicated emptiness.

Thy blue and gold and silver light  
Can never cease to drop,  
For Thou hast generously made  
wide  
All heaven a ~~huge~~ inverted cup [3]

'Tis we are shut in outward self  
Nor deepen eyes to see  
That  
~~How~~ dawn and vesper, noon and night [4]

pouring  
Are ~~wasting~~ Thy divinity. [5]

Sri Aurobindo's comment:

- [1] *Sri Aurobindo crossed out “rich”*
- [2] *Sri Aurobindo crossed out “soul first with”*
- [3] *Sri Aurobindo crossed out “huge”*
- [4] *Sri Aurobindo crossed out “How”*
- [5] *Sri Aurobindo crossed out “wasting”*

It is beautiful as well as simple and very felicitous in its suggestiveness. The last line is as good as the others — I don't see any obscurity in it.

12 October 1934

\* \* \*

## PRAYER

There is no lack of love in Thee,  
But, O sweet Splendour, bless  
My proud heart with a penury  
Of dedicated emptiness.

Thy blue and gold and silver light  
Can never cease to drop,  
For Thou hast generously made  
All heaven a wide inverted cup.

'Tis we are shut in outward self  
Nor deepen eyes to see  
That dawn and vesper, noon and night  
Are pouring Thy divinity.

AMAL KIRAN  
(K. D. SETHNA)

*Poetry written from the reasoning intellect is apt to be full of ingenious conceits, logic, argumentation, rhetorical turns, ornamental fancies, echoes learned and imitative rather than uplifted and transformed. This is what is sometimes called classical poetry, the vigorous and excellent but unemotional and unlifted poetry of Pope and Dryden. It has its inspiration, its truth and value; it is admirable in its way, but it is only great when it is lifted out of itself into intuitive writing or else invaded by the heart. For everything that needs fire rather than light, driving-force rather than clearness, enthusiasm rather than correctness, the heart is obviously the more potent instrument. Now, poetry to be great must have either enthusiasm or ecstasy.*

*Sri Aurobindo*

*(Essays Divine and Human, CWSA, Vol. 12, p. 29)*

# **SRI AUROBINDO: LIFE AND TIMES OF THE MAHAYOGI**

*(Continued from the issue of December 2012)*

## **Chapter XIX**

### **A Glimpse of the Unexplored Episodes**

The last century of the second millennium after Christ has begun; of the twenty centuries it seems the most full of incalculable possibilities & to open the widest door on destiny. The mind of humanity feels it is conscious of a voice of a distant advancing Ocean and a sound as of the wings of a mighty archangel flying towards the world, but whether to empty the vials of the wrath of God or to declare a new gospel of peace upon earth and goodwill unto men, is as yet dark to our understanding.

Sri Aurobindo  
*Jottings from a notebook<sup>1</sup>*

UNLIKE the 21<sup>st</sup> century that blared itself into our attention, thanks to the changed global condition comprising of complex factors beginning from the growth of a collective awareness and sharing of emotions to radical progress in manifold communication and motivated commercial strategies, the advent of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a low-key affair.

Each anticipation of Sri Aurobindo in the ‘jotting’ quoted above (that had remained unpublished) became precisely manifest. The 20<sup>th</sup> century indeed opened “the widest doors on destiny” of mankind by achieving for it political and social freedom, paving the way for it to aspire for higher goals if it would. It saw the end of imperialism and colonialism. What is even more significant, it saw practically the end of an institution far older than imperialism and colonialism that existed from the dawn of history, that is monarchy. Institutionalised feudalism too folded up. If the century saw the rise of Soviet communism heralding the equality of men, it also brought the system crashing down because that tended to choke that most momentous evolutionary bequest of Time: the freedom of the individual. The trend also received an enormous boost through scientific and technological innovations placed at the service of man. What was of momentous consequence, fascism, the most deadly foe of human progress, was vanquished.

The century also stood witness to “the wrath of God” that burst upon the globe

as two Great Wars — their magnitude unparalleled in history — and several revolutions and also unfortunate division and reconstitution of nations leaving behind trails of massacres, wars and a plethora of unforeseen problems. Religious and communal passions proved a ghastly challenge to our faith in the process of man's liberation from atavism and collective prejudices. Last but not the least, the century had to suffer devastating misuse of science and other yields of 'civilisation' on its march.

On the other hand, the century presented us with hitherto inconceivable institutions "of peace upon earth and goodwill" too — the United Nations and allied organisations, apart from a number of ventures in international cooperation on scientific, ecological, educational, cultural and humanitarian planes.

Queen Victoria died on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 1901 after reigning for 63 years and the pompous ceremonies marking the transition and coronation of the new emperor were designed to impress the masses in the colonies, in India in particular, about the stabilised state of the Empire.

But under the surface, at a number of centres all over India a mighty determination to tear asunder the colonial bondage was in the process of formation. We have seen that such was the state of the military structure and the prowess of the British administration that youth-power prepared for unconditional sacrifice could indeed topple it through an armed uprising, with other measures like non-cooperation and boycott supporting it. Those involved in this daring scheme took every possible step to leave no trace of their plans and actions for their adversaries to detect, and that certainly is one of the prime reasons for the failure of our historians to give this phase of India's struggle for freedom its due, but the equally critical reason for the malfunction of scholars is their conscious or unconscious apathy in this regard. Avid research could surely have enabled them to dig deeper into whatever evidence of that stage of preparation for a national uprising was available by the time the country achieved independence. In any case, several individuals who participated in it as well as those who had direct knowledge of it were still alive then.

By and by the men who mattered and the relevant materials have disappeared.

An important fact that emerges from the remnants of evidence still available to us is clear: those who dreamed of ending the foreign rule were believers in force. Not even half a century had passed since the end of the great Mutiny of 1857. The Rani of Jhansi and Nana Sahib continued to be living legends. In fact, many were under the impression that Nana Sahib was alive and was planning a surprise assault on the enemy, the British. The young ruler of Manipur, Kumar Trikendrajit, led an unexpected fight against the British forces (1890-91) and it was rumoured that his aged but valiant commander, popularly known as Thangal General, an outsider, was none other than Nana Sahib under a pseudonym. Both the ruler and his commander were hanged.<sup>2</sup>

We have referred to the Boer War (1899-1902), an unequal struggle between the Boers (South African natives of Dutch and Huguenot origin, basically farmers)

and the English army. It gained notoriety for the latter's cruelty. Innocent people were herded into concentration camps and thousands of acres of their farms were destroyed through a scorched earth policy.<sup>3</sup> We can sense what Sri Aurobindo felt in this tragic episode and consequently of the spirit behind his mobilisation of the youth power in India from a poem he wrote during the war that was found in his papers much later. These are the opening lines:

O Boers, you have dared much and much endured  
 For freedom, your strong simple hearts inured  
 To danger and privation nor so made  
 As by death's daily grasp to be dismayed,  
 Nor numbers nor disasters in the field,  
 Nor to o'erwhelming multitudes to yield.  
 It was no secondary power you faced,  
 But she who has the whole wide world embraced,  
 England whose name is as the thunder, she  
 Whose navies are the despots of the sea,  
 Napoleon's conqueror whose fair dreadful face  
 Great nations loathe and fear and choose disgrace  
 Rather than meet in wild and dangerous war  
 Victors of Waterloo and Trafalgar.<sup>4</sup>

Before the polite and supplicant policy of the Congress diluted it, the standpoint of the Indian freedom-lovers was to confront the oppressors with valour and face force with force. Of so many young men who were inspired with this ideal (we will focus on some of them later) one was Charu Chandra Dutt (1876-1952). Born in Coochbehar of wealthy and influential parents he grew up amidst opportunities and became an able rider and hunter. He was keen to learn the techniques of fighting so that he could use them against the British. However he was sent to England and obliged to enter the I.C.S. by his father. Back in India he held several positions, mostly judicial, and was posted at different places.

It was a chance meeting with Sri Aurobindo at the Baroda railway station that changed the normal bureaucratic course of his career. He was on his way to Mumbai and Sri Aurobindo, accompanied by Deshpande and Jatin Bandopadhyay, happened to be at the station in order to see off Shashi Hesse, an artist who on a visit to Baroda had become friendly with Sri Aurobindo. We do not know what transpired between them, but from that very moment Dutt's allegiance to Sri Aurobindo became unqualified and absolute. He had been married to Lilavati Devi, the sister of Subodh Mallik who, later renowned as Raja Subodh Mallik, was to become one of the most trusted associates and a personal friend of Sri Aurobindo and often his host during the Swadeshi days that were to follow.

Even though Dutt continued in the Civil Service his real interest lay in organising secret societies to educate and train revolutionaries wherever he was posted. His activities did not remain hidden from the authorities, but despite all their efforts they were unable to find a single proof on the basis of which he could have been prosecuted. Even then after Sri Aurobindo's arrest in the Alipore Conspiracy Case, he was compelled to go on leave for two years and stay under his father's observation at half his pay. Despite being an upright and meritorious judge, his promotion was stopped.

He resumed service in 1910 and was retired in 1925. At an invitation from Rabindranath Tagore he served the Viswa Bharati as its Upacharya for seven years. When a review by him in the Viswa Bharati journal was brought to Sri Aurobindo's notice with a query if he knew the author, Sri Aurobindo wrote down this rare recollection of him:

Charu Dutt? Yes, saw very little of him, for physically our ways lay far apart, but that little was very intimate, one of the band of men I used most to appreciate and felt as if they had been my friends comrades and fellow-warriors in the battle of the ages and would be so for ages more. But curiously enough, my physical contact with men of his type, there were two or three others, was always brief. Because I had something else to do this time, I suppose.<sup>5</sup>

All this is relevant as a preface to Dutt's involvement in an unusual and dramatic project of the revolutionaries during 1904-5. It reveals how wide was the net they had spread and how many fronts they had opened to corner the formidable foreign regime.

The project, according to Dutt, had been chalked out by the "highest authorities" — which by implication would mean Sri Aurobindo and Tilak. The term 'The Master' in the passage quoted below refers to Sri Aurobindo.

It was winter. An unknown Maratha youth met me at Thane and said, "I come from the lawyer Bodasrao Sahib. He wants to meet you for a purpose that is quite urgent. It is extremely confidential." I was in a fix. The Master was away in Calcutta. I did not know Bodasrao. I told the visitor, "I'll think about it and inform Bodasrao later." He left. Two days later Bodasrao himself appeared before me with a letter from Dr. Deshmukh, a great friend of Tilak, stating, "Bodas, the bearer of this letter can be totally trusted." I formed the impression that the gentleman was intelligent, clever and smart in action. He spoke in a straight manner. He began by saying that their highest authorities had sent him to me in order to explain their scheme to me in clear terms. What I understood is this: The Portuguese have assured the authorities that they would hand over Goa to the Indians for a satisfactory price. But the transfer had to be carried out

in such a clever manner that nobody should be able to suspect the Governor and the administration of Goa. In other words a mock rebellion must be staged and the Governor taken hostage. Bodas told me that the necessary money had been arranged and all other preparations made. However, there is one hitch. Once the Governor of Goa is taken prisoner the Government of India would strike with bombs. The solution is, if any of the big powers instantly extends its recognition to the new government of Goa and despatches a ship to the harbour, Goa could claim the status of an independent entity, not a region just seized by some rebels. In that case the British could not do anything about Goa without declaring war with that big power. I found the proposition quite right. But what was I expected to do? What was the instruction of our leaders in that respect? Bodas told me what they had already done. "We at first requested France to help us, then we requested Germany. Both drove us out. They refused to help in any manner, but were kind enough to assure us that they would never inform the English about our plan. Then we went to the Russians. Now Russia is locked in a fierce battle with Japan. The Consul heard us with great attention and said that for the manner in which England betrayed his country in its conflict with Japan, the Emperor will be very happy to give it a blow. But their Minister concerned would wish to know if there is any man holding a high position behind our move. That is the reason our leaders have sent me to you. If necessary you have to meet the Consul and endorse our proposal." I told him that I was most willing to do so; I may be called whenever the moment comes. But the Consul had told Bodas that a battle in the sea between Russia and Japan was imminent. If Russia triumphed, it would certainly help us and teach England a lesson. But if it is defeated, it would be unable to help. Our bad luck. Japan was badly beaten in that encounter. The Consul called Bodas and conveyed their position. What is surprising, the British came to know nothing of this scheme. The big powers kept silent. After a few weeks the government of Goa locked up a small Ashram in Panjim and exiled its secretary.<sup>6</sup>

Subsequent research shows that the Intelligence had "told the Viceroy that there were proofs of treasonable correspondence with Russia and staff officers . . ." <sup>7</sup> Probably some other officers in high position too were involved in the plan that remained unfulfilled, but the great secrecy maintained in the affair did not let one know about the other.

*(To be continued)*

MANOJ DAS

## References and Notes

1. Sri Aurobindo: "At the Turn of the Century"; CWSA, Vol. 6, p. 63.

2. Nana Sahib, it is worth remembering in order to appreciate the mind-set of the freedom-loving youth of that generation, was a symbol of defiance and pluck, particularly in Northern and Western India. In his last letter to Col. Hope Grant, written from the jungles along the Indo-Nepal frontier, Nana Sahib wrote: "What right have you to occupy India and declare me an outlaw? What! You Feringhis are the kings and we are thieves in our own country?" (The National Archives, New Delhi) The Government of Nepal said that Nana Sahib was dead. But he was rapidly turning into a formidable legend. His wife who lived in Nepal refused to dress as a widow. Officers competed with one another in claiming rewards for arresting the dreaded prince by taking into custody a number of mendicants till those at the top were disgusted. According to a well-researched thesis *Nana Sahib and the Rising at Cawnpore* by P. C. Gupta (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1963) the last to be arrested was an old pilgrim near Rajkot, in 1895. The local officer telegraphed to his boss: "Have arrested Nana Sahib. Wire instruction." Came the reply: "Release him at once." The Government received intelligence that Nana was in Russia, planning an invasion of India with the Czar's help. The nightmare soon assumed such proportions that the trade and money market in "Bombay was perceptibly affected".

A play by Jean Richepica, *Nana Sahib* (1883) had become popular. In the library of an amateur German Indologist, Elizabeth Beck at Munich, this author chanced upon a book with the same title, written by a Prussian noble Hermann Goedsche. He portrayed Nana as a hero. Writes P. C. Gupta, "In English literature he was one of the extraordinary monsters of ferocity and slaughter, but in the hands of the French he became a scented sybarite who read Balzac, played Chopin on the piano and lolling on a divan, fanned by exquisite odalisques from Kashmere, had a roasted English child brought in occasionally on a pike for him to examine with his pince-nez. Jules Verne, in one of his less-known novels, imagined Nana Sahib as a wandering fakir who returned to India a few years later and met an old enemy, a British officer near Aurangabad." George Trevelyan writes in his *Letters of a Competition-wallah* (1864) that a favourite amusement on a wet afternoon for a party in a country-house was to sit on and about the billiards table devising novel methods of torture for Nana Sahib.

3. Here is a passage from a first-hand report of the situation by J. E. Neilly, in *Besieged with Baden-Powell* (1900) included in *The Faber Book of Reportage*, edited by John Carey; Faber and Faber, London, 1987: Hunger had them in its grip, and many of them were black spectres and living skeletons. I saw them crawling along on legs . . . with their ribs literally breaking through their shrivelled skin – men, women and children . . . Day after day I heard outside my door continuous thumping sounds. They were caused by the living skeletons who, having eaten all that was outside the bones, smashed them up with stones and devoured what marrow they could find. They looked for bones on the dust-heaps, on the roads everywhere, and I pledge my word that I saw one poor fellow weakly follow a dog with a stone and with unerring aim strike him on the ribs, which caused the lean and hungry brute to drop a bone, which the Kafir carried off in triumph to the kerb, where he smashed it and got what comfort he could from it.

4. Sri Aurobindo: "To the Boers", Poems from Manuscripts, Circa 1900-1906; CWSA, Vol. 2, p. 247.

5. C. C. Dutt: *Purano Katha – Upasamhar*; Published by Shri Shishirkumar Acharya Choudhury, Kolkata.

6. *Ibid.*

7. M. N. Das: *India under Morley and Minto*; George Allen & Unwin, London.

### Attitude towards Violent Revolution

[Sri Aurobindo did not believe in, nor did he like, violent revolution.]

*This is incorrect. If Sri Aurobindo had not believed in the efficacy of violent revolution or had disliked it, he would not have joined the secret society whose whole purpose was to prepare a national insurrection. His historical studies had not taught him the lesson indicated here. On the contrary, he had studied with interest the revolutions and rebellions which led to national liberation, the struggle against the English in mediaeval France and the revolts which liberated America and Italy. He took much of his inspiration from these movements and their leaders, especially Jeanne d'Arc and Mazzini. In his public activity he took up non-cooperation and passive resistance as a means in the struggle for independence but not the sole means and so long as he was in Bengal he maintained a secret revolutionary activity as a preparation for open revolt, in case passive resistance proved insufficient for the purpose.*

*Sri Aurobindo*

(*Autobiographical Notes . . .*, CWSA, Vol. 36, p. 71)

## A LETTER

(From Nicos Hadjicostis to a friend on the beauty of Sri Aurobindo's language)

Jane,

I was thinking why I had found “Old Goriot” by Balzac, considered one of the greatest novels of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, quite mediocre, uninspiring, and to a certain degree even shallow. And why I cannot easily read novels any more (I never read novels too much, anyway, but now it has become almost impossible for me). Actually, now that I think about it, I can't read and enjoy that many writers any more, after I have been “permeated” or should I say . . . “invaded and conquered” by Aurobindo's prose!

I recall, at the end of 2003, when I started reading my first philosophical book after having read Aurobindo; it was the “Philosophy of Consciousness without an Object” of M. Wolff — how “poor” and devoid of beauty and depth I felt his language was in comparison to Aurobindo's. Wolff's language is actually great, and his book was praised not just for its content but also for its excellent prose. Now I actually like it, and read Wolff with great pleasure. However, coming as I was from my total immersion in “The Life Divine”, made me feel something similar to what I feel listening to some lesser composer, after having listened to Bach! The latter is so multi-dimensional, has so much substance and depth, that a Mendelsson or a Schubert seem to be empty and shallow when put next to him.

Aurobindo's language in “The Life Divine” is not just the best English prose ever written; it is also the greatest prose ever written in ANY language — period. Aurobindo is Plato and Shankara, Michelangelo and Bernini, Bach and Beethoven, Shakespeare and Proust . . . all in one.

He is at once Infinite and Intimate, Otherworldly and Tangible, Ungraspable yet the most Clear and Transparent, the pinnacle of Rational thinking yet Loving like a father. His prose reaches the limits of language yet it remains the clearest language of all; it exceeds itself to become Poetry, yet it miraculously still remains prose; it is apparently convoluted and long-winded, yet it is the most condensed form possible that can express the Inexpressible; it is seemingly words and sentences, but in reality it is a Divine Song that lingers forever and ever in one's ear; it is contained in a book, but it surpasses all books and all other human creations since the beginning of time.\*

\* with the possible exception of Steve Jobs's iPad! :)

Nicos

## ESSENTIALS OF INDIAN CULTURE

(Continued from the issue of December 2012)

[The strikethroughs and italics indicate the changes made by Sri Aurobindo — deletions and additions]

It is in Indian *culture* that the spiritual goal of individual and social life has been *held up and followed* ~~with an~~ *out in many of its implications with an insistence as it has been done that we see* nowhere else on the earth; and no other religion ~~than Hinduism~~ has been ~~so~~ *able to the same extent* to introduce spiritual elements even into popular religions and the life of the masses. The Indians' *mind* recognised the divinity of man even in the lowest scale of culture and development, and *it* prescribed for him means *and tried to* ~~gave~~ *give* him opportunities *at every stage* to develop his life according to his natural capacity, his *adhikara*. In order to understand the full implications of the attempts made by the Indians in ~~the~~ *this* direction, *their effort to universalise the spiritual tendency and its influence*, we have to look to the principles on which they based their *whole* culture and the manner in which they *actually* applied them to life.

Indian religion in its dealings with life, throughout all its stages of progress, has consistently ~~held~~ *maintained* two perceptions of great wisdom: [.] ~~The approach to the~~ *First, it saw what certain other religions with a more specious formula of universality have failed to perceive and by the failure lost all chance of success in their endeavour; it saw that the approach to the spirit cannot be sudden and immediate for all individuals or for the community of men in the mass, but must come ordinarily through a progressive training, an enlarging of the natural life, a culture of the physical, the vital and the mental* ~~life being and nature~~. At the same time in order that its greater aim might be fruitful there must *be* throughout, *on all the being and in each part of the nature* some ~~kind~~ way of insistence on the spiritual motive *and* some kind of religious influence. Therefore Indian culture has worked always by two co-ordinated, mutually stimulating and always interblended operations. First, it has laboured to lead upward the enlarging life of the individual and the community through the natural to the spiritual existence, ~~and secondly~~. *At the same time, it has striven to keep that highest aim before the mind and throw at every stage of the natural life and, long before it could reach the spiritual consciousness, prepare it, by the influence on of the mind so turned upward upon each circumstance and on each action of the human being, for the final change.*

In pursuit of ~~the~~ *their* first aim ~~of~~ *to enlarging and developing* the natural life of the people, the ancient Indians made a framework of society which was the

synthesis and gradation of the fourfold object of *life this earthly existence*; ~~the~~ *they established a fourfold order of society and the fourfold stages of life*. Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha — these four were held up as the objects of *life in the body*. Dharma is *the* moral and social laws; artha is the economic aspect of life; Kama is enjoyment, the hedonistic aspect of life; moksha is the ultimate goal, the higher life in the spirit. It is clear from this *comprehensive order* that the ancient Indians did not neglect any aspect of *life earthly living* in pursuit of something beyond; ~~but wanted~~ *their aim was to rise towards a higher life consciousness through the a previous right use and development of all the possibilities of the natural life existence*. And ~~so~~ *in order* that men might develop their possibilities by following their true nature, their swadharma, they were divided into four broad classes according to their nature, and their work in society was determined according to their varna, their order, Guna Karma. This fourfold *order division* “rests on the conception of right works as a rightly ordered expression of the nature of the individual being through whom the work is done, that nature assigning him his line and scope in life according to his inborn quality and his self-expressive function”.

*The lifetime* was divided into four successive stages — *the stages of the student, the householder, the forest-recluse and the free super-social man*. A sound basis of ~~life of~~ *for the individual's development* was laid by discipline and training at the formative period of his *life; growth and greater* attention was paid to the development of the natural capacities and ~~the~~ instruments of the student, *to the formation of his mind and character, than to merely*. *There was not that heavy stuffing him* with all sorts of information which *too often* goes by the name of education at the present time. ~~And the true goal of life as in~~ Moksha or spiritual existence was firmly impressed in his mind *as his true eventual goal* so that he might use his next stage of *life, the household family life, as a means for further spiritual development towards fitness for that high aim*. ~~Thus acquiring~~ *And it was only when he had acquired full experience of the natural life of man and done his work for the world that he would normally enter into the final stages when he had in which he would give up all his social obligations and bindings and devote himself wholly to the manifestation of the Spirit within him*.

This remarkable *and unique* frame of social organisation subsisted in its purity in the *later Vedic and the heroic age in India retained something of its some* effectiveness ~~was retained~~ in the whole period of cultural vigour but degenerated ~~wholly~~ in the period of decline. It ~~will~~ *would* be an idle and futile attempt ~~now~~ to seek to revive ~~that the fine but now too antique frame which that~~ suited the conditions in ancient India. ~~The caricature~~ *On the contrary its ruined and degenerated forms have to be cleared away so that they may make and room made* for a larger and more flexible framework which will further the growth and evolution of the national life. But it is necessary ~~for us~~ to study ~~those these~~ ancient forms, ~~to~~ accept the spiritual truth that underlies them and ~~to~~ understand how through them the ancient

Indians sought to develop and enlarge the life of the individual and the community through the natural to the spiritual existence, through an all-round culture of the body and the mind to the higher possibilities of a divine life in the Spirit.

But the turn of the other more direct spiritual *method of operation of their ancient culture* is of a still greater importance, because it is that which, always surviving, has coloured permanently the Indian mind and life and remained the same, behind whatever change of forms, throughout all the ages of *the civilisation*. This second side of ~~the~~ *its* cultural effort took the form of an endeavour to cast the whole life into a religious mould and to multiply means and devices which would help by their insistent suggestions and opportunity and their mass of effect to stamp a Godward tendency on the entire existence. The whole *of life* is a religion, ~~this was the true ideal for an Indian~~ *a power of the spirit that should be turned towards the spirit — thus might be phrased the formula of the true Indian ideal*. Not only the general atmosphere and the general trend of the culture was religious but its persistent effort was to impress the mind at every moment and in each particularity with the religious influence. To do this the more effectively and by a living and practical adaptation it took its idea of the varying natural capacity of man, adhikara. The whole *of life* for an Indian ~~at~~ *in* every grade of society was so arranged that every step he might take ~~in life~~ would remind him of his spiritual goal. That gave its tone and turn to his thought and action and produced the subtle sensitiveness to the spiritual appeal and the greater readiness to turn to the spiritual effort which are even now distinguishing marks of the Indian temperament. That readiness is in fact what we mean by the spirituality of the Indian people.

### [Final Version Incorporating Sri Aurobindo's Corrections]

It is in Indian culture that the spiritual goal of individual and social life has been held up and followed out in many of its implications with an insistence that we see nowhere else on the earth and no other religion has been able to the same extent to introduce spiritual elements even into popular religions and the life of the masses. The Indian mind recognised the divinity of man even in the lowest scale of culture and development, and it prescribed for him means and tried to give him opportunities at every stage to develop his life according to his natural capacity, his *adhikara*. In order to understand the full implications of the attempts made by the Indians in this direction, their effort to universalise the spiritual tendency and its influence, we have to look to the principles on which they based their whole culture and the manner in which they actually applied them to life.

Indian religion in its dealings with life, throughout all its stages of progress, has consistently maintained two perceptions of great wisdom. First, it saw what certain other religions with a more specious formula of universality have failed to

perceive and by the failure lost all chance of success in their endeavour; it saw that the approach to the spirit cannot be sudden and immediate for all individuals or for the community of men in the mass, but must come ordinarily through a progressive training, an enlarging of the natural life, a culture of the physical, the vital and the mental being and nature. At the same time in order that its greater aim might be fruitful there must be throughout, on all the being and in each part of the nature some way of insistence on the spiritual motive and some kind of religious influence. Therefore Indian culture has worked always by two co-ordinated, mutually stimulating and always interblended operations. First, it has laboured to lead upward the enlarging life of the individual and the community through the natural to the spiritual existence. At the same time, it has striven to keep that highest aim before the mind at every stage of the natural life and, long before it could reach the spiritual consciousness, prepare it, by the influence of the mind so turned upward upon each circumstance and on each action of the human being, for the final change.

In pursuit of their first aim to enlarge and develop the natural life of the people, the ancient Indians made a framework of society which was the synthesis and gradation of the fourfold object of this earthly existence; they established a fourfold order of society and four stages of life. Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha — these four were held up as the objects of life in the body. Dharma is the moral and social law; *artha* is the economic aspect of life; *Kama* is enjoyment, the hedonistic aspect of life; *moksha* is the ultimate goal, the higher life in the spirit. It is clear from this comprehensive order that the ancient Indians did not neglect any aspect of earthly living in pursuit of something beyond; their aim was to rise towards a higher consciousness through a previous right use and development of all the possibilities of the natural existence. And in order that men might develop their possibilities by following their true nature, their *swadharma*, they were divided into four broad classes according to their nature, and their work in society was determined according to their *varna*, their order, *Guna Karma*. This fourfold division “rests on the conception of right works as a rightly ordered expression of the nature of the individual being through whom the work is done, that nature assigning him his line and scope in life according to his inborn quality and his self-expressive function”.

The lifetime was divided into four successive stages — the stages of the student, the householder, the forest-recluse and the free super-social man. A sound basis for the individual’s development was laid by discipline and training at the formative period of his growth and great attention was paid to the development of the natural capacities and instruments of the student, to the formation of his mind and character. There was not that heavy stuffing with all sorts of information which too often goes by the name of education at the present time. *Moksha* or spiritual existence was firmly impressed in his mind as his true eventual goal so that he might use his next stage, the household family life, as a means for further development towards fitness for that high aim. And it was only when he had acquired full experience of the

natural life of man and done his work for the world that he would normally enter into the final stages in which he would give up all his social obligations and devote himself wholly to the manifestation of the Spirit within him.

This remarkable and unique frame of social organisation subsisted in its purity in the later Vedic and the heroic age in India retained something of its effectiveness in the whole period of cultural vigour but degenerated in the period of decline. It would be an idle and futile attempt to seek to revive the fine but now too antique frame that suited the conditions in ancient India. On the contrary its ruined and degenerated forms have to be cleared away and room made for a larger and more flexible framework which will further the growth and evolution of the national life. But it is necessary to study these ancient forms, accept the spiritual truth that underlies them and understand how through them the ancient Indians sought to develop and enlarge the life of the individual and the community through the natural to the spiritual existence, through an all-round culture of the body and mind to the higher possibilities of a divine life in the Spirit.

But the turn of the other more direct spiritual method of operation of their ancient culture is of a still greater importance, because it is that which, always surviving, has coloured permanently the Indian mind and life and remained the same, behind whatever change of forms, throughout all the ages of the civilisation. This second side of its cultural effort took the form of an endeavour to cast the whole life into a religious mould and to multiply means and devices which would help by their insistent suggestion and opportunity and their mass of effect to stamp a Godward tendency on the entire existence. The whole of life is a religion, a power of the spirit that should be turned towards the spirit — thus might be phrased the formula of the true Indian ideal. Not only the general atmosphere and the general trend of the culture was religious but its persistent effort was to impress the mind at every moment and in each particularity with the religious influence. To do this the more effectively and by a living and practical adaptation it took its idea of the varying natural capacity of man, *adhikara*. The whole of life for an Indian in every grade of society was so arranged that every step he might take would remind him of his spiritual goal. That gave its tone and turn to his thought and action and produced the subtle sensitiveness to the spiritual appeal and the greater readiness to turn to the spiritual effort which are even now distinguishing marks of the Indian temperament. That readiness is in fact what we mean by the spirituality of the Indian people.

*(To be continued)*

ANILBARAN ROY

# LABOUR OF LOVE

*(Continued from the issue of December 2012)*

## **Part 4 — Mother of Love**

### a. Love, the Driving Force Behind Creation

IN her prayer dated June 1, 1914, the Mother invokes the ‘power of divine Love’:

O victorious power of divine Love, Thou art the sovereign Master of this universe, Thou art its creator and its saviour, Thou hast permitted it to emerge from chaos, and now Thou leadest it to its eternal goal. . . .

O Love, resplendent Love, Thou penetratest, Thou transfigurest all.

The entire process of creation started out of Love. The supreme Mother saw that the Infinite reduced Himself and entered into the dark Inconscient. She saw the Soul entangled in the abyss of darkness and so out of Her deep love for the Lord, She plunged into the utter chaos to liberate and retrieve the Soul. The whole story of evolutionary creation is nothing but the Mother’s Sadhana of Love; to free the Soul from the dark clutches of the Inconscient, and to unfold It from the lower to the higher stages of consciousness; namely Matter, Life and Mind — and still further.

This love is apparently dormant and unexpressed in Matter, but in life it is active. It is this love that impels the trees to grow and the flowers to bloom, and in the animal world it becomes expressive and more exposed, but in a very crude form, a physico-vital love. Whereas in a human being, the thinking creature, love takes various forms; love between friends, between couples, between lovers, between mother and child etc. Mostly these are physico-vital-mental shades of love. The purest form of human love can be seen between mother and child. But the highest expression of love is when the human love turns towards the divine Love; the devotion of the sadhak for the Supreme. Devotion is love mingled with adoration or reverence or worship. The sadhak’s intense love or bhakti for the Divine hastens the all-important identification with Him, and the establishment of Peace, Light, Love and Delight within him as the final reward.

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b. The Mother, the Incarnation of the Supreme's Love

Unfortunately man turns a blind eye to this supreme Felicity. He is preoccupied with the lesser and smaller objects of love; sex, wealth and power. The human consciousness has been degraded to such a low state that for man love is equated with these three things. Now, how is it possible to pull him out of the strong roots of darkness and ignorance which are spread rampant in his nature since several aeons? It is the divine Love which can do it. Yes, Love can do the miracle of changing humanity and earth. The Supreme, the All-Consciousness has submerged itself into the dark Matter on purpose; to awaken mankind and earth gradually from unconsciousness to Consciousness, from darkness to Light, from suffering to Delight. And the Mother, His emissary and the incarnation of the Supreme Mother, has descended upon this dark material earth to enlighten them, to transform them by the Lord's Love. He has told her:

“If thou wouldst learn to love truly, this is how thou shouldst love . . .” . . . in darkness and unconsciousness . . . (May 24, 1914)

Several aeons of habits have accumulated in the human nature. His chaotic lower nature needs a thorough stirring and churning so that all the thick layers of dark elements which have so strongly stuck to it (lower nature) could be scrubbed clean for Light and Consciousness to penetrate into it —

And Thou usest Thy supreme Love to churn all these elements in this way. . . .

so that men

. . . may awaken to consciousness and the full light of knowledge.  
(May 28, 1914)

Constantly in the ‘Prayers’ the Mother hails the Lord as ‘the sweet Master of love’ or ‘the divine Master of love’. She fervently invokes Him to make her a fit instrument to receive His Love so that she could help Him to eradicate ignorance and pain from earth. She is convinced that

. . . Thy all-powerful Love shall save the world. (June 17, 1913)

Men have gone ‘astray’ because they have not tasted the sweetness of Love, and the Mother is eager to guide mankind towards the All-Love. She prays:

If there is a sweetness in being Thy divine love at work in the world, there is as great a sweetness in being the infinite aspiration which rises towards that infinite love. (May 31, 1914)

c. The Mother doing Bhaktiyoga for the Transformation of Mankind and Earth

She has volunteered to become a love-link in order to unite all the human-flowers, the innumerable earth-flowers into a bouquet of divine Love:

Love is nothing but the tie that binds and holds together all the flowers of Thy divine bouquet. It is an unobtrusive role, modest, unrecognised, a role essentially impersonal, which can find all its utility only in this very impersonality.

(January 5, 1917)

Love is the Divine's means to unite men with Him. The Mother has accepted to become this Love in order to help the Lord to hasten the Work of His integral manifestation upon earth. Her one-pointed aspiration is:

. . . let me be Thy living Love in the world and nothing but that! . . .

Let me be a vast mantle of love enveloping all the earth, entering all hearts, murmuring in every ear Thy divine message of hope and peace.

(May 9, 1914)

Oh! to become Thy living love as 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! . . . (February 19, 1914)

The fire of love brightens all the dark corners of the being and brings a radical change in it; darkness transforms into Light, unconsciousness into Consciousness, pain into unalloyed Bliss. The Mother aspires to become a vast mantle of love covering the entire earth, and to penetrate into the hearts of men and awaken them to Love and Light. The most dominant note we hear throughout her 'Prayers' is:

O Lord, I would like to be so ardent a love that all lonelineses may be filled up by it and all sorrows soothed.

O Lord, I cry unto Thee: Make me a burning brazier which consumes all suffering and transforms it into joyous light irradiating the hearts of all! . . .

Grant my prayer: Transform me into a brazier of pure love and boundless compassion. (February 2, 1914)

She wants to become the very 'hearth' or 'brazier of pure love', so that the innumerable small 'sparks' that emit from it may spread far and wide upon earth, and enter into the hearts of men and kindle in them "similar fires, fires of Thy divine Love". (January 23, 1917) Time and time again she invokes the Lord to make her 'a brazier of Love':

. . . Thou who governest my life, kindle in my heart the flame of Thy pure love that it may burn like a glowing brazier, consuming all imperfections and transforming into a comforting warmth and radiating light the dead wood of egoism and the black coals of ignorance. (December 16, 1913)

Or,

Let Thy potent breath feed the brazier, that it may become ever vaster and more formidable, that all darkness and blind resistance may be absorbed, set ablaze, transfigured into Light in the marvellous purifying flame.

(September 14, 1914)

Again,

. . . may this body, now a burning brazier, radiate Thy divine, impersonal, sublime and calm love from every pore. . . . (May 23, 1914)

And,

Transmute me into that burning brazier so that all the atmosphere of earth may be purified with its flame. (August 27, 1914)

Finally,

I have become the purifying fire of Thy love. O Lord . . . accept the holocaust of this brazier of love, that Thy reign may come, Thy light triumph over darkness and death. (September 4, 1914)

She aspires that all of herself — soul, heart, mind, life and body — may become ‘a burning brazier of love’, so that

. . . this aggregate be entirely moulded from Thy complete and sublime love . . .  
. . . in Thy love is Thy servitor’s sovereign lever of work. (May 23, 1914)

And she prays:

. . . grant that my love for Thee may grow ever greater so that I may be all love, Thy love itself, and that, being Thy love, I may unite integrally with Thee. . . . May everything in this being become pure, profound, disinterested, divine love — from the unfathomable depths to the outermost substance. (*Ibid.*)

She prays to the psychic Fire within her:

O splendid Agni, Thou art so living within me, I call Thee, I invoke Thee that Thou mayst be more living still, that Thy brazier may become more immense, Thy flames higher and more powerful, that the entire being may now be only an ardent burning, a purifying pyre. (September 30, 1914)

She prays to the Lord that her mind, life and body be transformed by the power of His Love:

. . . may thought be clarified, organised, enlightened, transformed by Thy love; may all the life-forces, solely impregnated by Thy love and moulded from it, draw from it irresistible purity and constant energy, power and rectitude. May this weakened intermediary being . . . reconstitute itself with elements entirely moulded from Thy love; . . . (May 23, 1914)

Always increase the number of elements, atoms or universes, capable of living integrally in and by Thy love. (June 27, 1914)

We have already discussed earlier the Mother's all-powerful yearning to transform her body, because it has "to serve Thee as Thy instrument" (May 20, 1914), and at the same time it represents Matter, Earth. If the body is transformed, Matter and Earth too will be transformed. The Lord has told the Mother that her body

"... is myself; dost Thou not see my light shining in it?" And indeed I saw Thy divine Love, clothed in intelligence, then in strength, constituting this body in its smallest cells and shining so brightly in it that it was nothing but a combination of millions of radiant sparks, all manifesting that they were Thyself. . . .

This divine world of Thy immutable domain of pure love and indivisible unity must be brought into close communion with the divine world of all the other domains, right down to the most material in which Thou art the centre and very constitution of each atom. To establish a bond of perfect consciousness between all these successive divine worlds is the only way to live constantly, invariably in Thee, accomplishing integrally the mission Thou hast entrusted to the entire being in all its states of consciousness and all its modes of activity.  
(May 20, 1914)

The Mother aspires that the divine Love glows in every cell of her body. Her entire being yearns to transform itself into the very embodiment of Love, right from the highest to the lower-most levels of consciousness. She wants to become a brilliant column of love-fire destroying all darkness and ignorance, and radiating Love, Light and Delight everywhere, in everything, in every one:

O my beloved Lord, my heart is bowed before Thee, my arms are stretched towards Thee imploring Thee to set all this being on fire with Thy sublime love that it may radiate from there on the world. (December 27, 1916)

Sweet Master of Love, grant that all my consciousness may be concentrated in Thee so that I may live only by love and light and that love and light may radiate through me and awaken in all on our journey; may this physical journey be like a symbol of our action and may we leave everywhere a trace of Thee like a trail of light and love. (March 13, 1914)

. . . to live Thy love, to radiate Thy love, with such potency and effectiveness that all may feel fortified, regenerated and illumined by our contact.  
(March 7, 1914)

Thou wantest that from the heart of this heavy and obscure Matter I make the volcano of Thy Love and Light burst forth . . . (January 11, 1915)

The Mother merges with the supreme Love, and she becomes the Lord's 'inexhaustible love'. She has become His 'messenger flame' of love:

. . . penetrate all things; living within the heart of each atom I kindle therein the fire which purifies and transfigures . . . (June 2, 1914)

All those who do not recognise Thee, all those who do not know Thee, all those who try to turn away from Thy sweet and divine law, I take into my arms of love, I cradle them in my heart of love and offer them to Thy divine flames, so that penetrated by Thy miraculous effluence, they may be converted in Thy beatitude. (June 1, 1914)

The *Prayers* show the Mother's intense yearning to become the divine Love. Repeatedly she invokes the Lord to make her 'the fire of love', 'the hearth of love', 'the brazier of love'. Such is her overwhelming aspiration to hasten the Divine's Work upon earth that she implores the Master to make her a 'volcano of love' so that all earthly darkness and ignorance may be blown over once for ever, and the reign of divine Felicity may be established permanently upon earth.

Till now in our study of the present subject 'The Mother of Love' we have noticed that the Mother repeatedly compares love with fire. There are also a few passages in her *Prayers* where she likens it to water. At least once in her *Prayers* she expresses her intense aspiration to become 'a reservoir of...love', 'torrents of love', 'wave of love', 'tide of love', etc. The Mother wants her heart to be

. . . open and empty that Thou mayst fill it with Thy divine Love . . .  
 (December 27, 1916)

And she prays:

O Lord . . . my heart is wide open before Thee, that Thou mayst make of it a reservoir of Thy infinite love. (*Ibid.*)

Love springs from the heart and the Mother wants her heart-bud to be tended by the Lord's Love, so that by Its transforming waters the heart can blossom integrally and perfectly:

If Thou allowest the heart to blossom freely at the touch of Thy divine Love, this transformation is easy and comes of itself. (January 14, 1917)

Then,

An immense wave of love descends over all things and penetrates all things  
 (June 9, 1914)

because

Thy love is like a rising tide, invading the entire being and breaking upon all things. (September 10, 1914)

She enters the very source of divine Love — the Lord's heart, from where

. . . inexhaustible torrents of love spring forth. Thy heart is my dwelling-place. . . .  
 In Thy heart I have nestled and I have become Thy heart. (May 28, 1914)

And she prays

O my sweet Master, essence of this love, I am Thy heart, and the torrents of Thy love pass through the entirety of my being and flow out to awaken Thy love in all things or rather to awaken all things to the consciousness of Thy love which animates all. (June 1, 1914)

The Mother has enfolded the entire mass of ignorant humanity into her loving embrace, so that by the miraculous influence of her love the needed change could be possible, and awaken men and earth to 'a life divine'.

Drop by drop Thou allowest to fall in a fertilising rain the living and redeeming flame of Thy almighty love. When these drops of eternal light descend softly on our world of obscure ignorance, one would say a rain upon earth of golden stars one by one from a sombre firmament. (March 31, 1917)

(Concluded)

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*A divine life upon earth, the ideal we have placed before us, can only come about by a spiritual change of our being and a radical and fundamental change, an evolution or revolution of our nature. The embodied being upon earth would have to rise out of the domination over it of its veils of mind, life and body into the full consciousness and possession of its spiritual reality, and its nature also would have to be lifted out of the consciousness and power of consciousness proper to a mental, vital and physical being into the greater consciousness and greater power of being and the larger and freer life of the spirit. It would not lose these former veils but they would no longer be veils or imperfect expressions but true manifestations; they would be changed into states of light, powers of spiritual life, vehicles of a spiritual existence. But this again could not be if mind, life and body were not taken up and transformed by a state of being and a force of being superior to them, a power of Supermind as much above our incomplete mental nature as that is above the nature of animal life and animated Matter, as it is immeasurably above the mere material nature.*

*Sri Aurobindo*

*(Essays in Philosophy and Yoga, CWSA, Vol. 13, p. 558)*

## PREPARING FOR THE MIRACULOUS

EVOLUTION, according to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, is a long and difficult climb of Nature, in the organisms it creates, to regain its original divinity. Therefore humanity, given its imperfection, cannot be the ultimate step or crown of the evolution. Beyond the human gradation are the higher worlds and beings humans have always intuited or dreamed of, and still further beyond are the infinitudes of the Divine. “The animal is a living laboratory in which Nature has, it is said, worked out man. Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious co-operation she wills to work out the superman, the god.”<sup>1</sup>

The next step in the evolution, announced by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, is the “superman” or supramental being. The human is the mental being; therefore, what is more than human must be called supra-mental. As the mental consciousness has been incorporated into life on Earth from its pre-existent involutory level in the cosmic manifestation, so the supramental consciousness will incorporate from the supramental level or Supermind, which is the creative divine Consciousness.

As Sri Aurobindo and the Mother said, the difference between the human and the superhuman is much greater than between the animal and the human. Considering the intricacies it has taken for *Homo sapiens* to form on a physical basis prepared by his evolutionary predecessors, if the appearance of the supramental being on Earth is a still greater wonder, its realisation will be vastly more complex. For what the incorporation of a supramental, i.e. divine consciousness in a material body demands, is that matter be divinised. Only then will the future species beyond the human become a possibility.

What such a transformed supramental body on our material planet will be, we cannot even try to imagine, for our mind is too limited. That matter, or the material living cell, can be refined is shown by the human body in its development from the body of the primate. Materialistic science, accepting to examine only the surface processes of things, is not a competent guide in this, and creates constantly more problems than it solves.

How did the human come to walk upright? Why is his body naked? How did he manage to reason and talk? Many questions with many more constantly changing “scientific” answers, some of them requiring minor miracles which science promises to explain later. How will the body and the mind of still half animal *Homo sapiens* be changed into the features of the gods? The only way seems to be a series of major miracles. But are the realisations of the soul and of the spirit, preconditions of the transformation, not already in themselves miracles?

1. Sri Aurobindo: *The Life Divine*, p. 6.

When examining in *The Human Cycle* the communal life of the future supramental beings, “a spiritualised society . . . the kingdom of God upon earth,” Sri Aurobindo wrote: “Certainly, this will not come about easily, or, as men have always vainly hoped . . . by a sudden and at once entirely satisfying change and magical transformation. The advance, however it comes about, will be indeed of the nature of a miracle, as are all such profound changes and immense developments; for they have the appearance of a kind of realised impossibility. But God works all his miracles by an evolution of secret possibilities which have been long prepared, at least in their elements, and in the end by a rapid bringing of all to a head, a throwing together of the elements so that in their fusion they produce a new form and name of things and reveal a new spirit. Often the decisive turn is preceded by an apparent emphasising and raising to their extreme of things which seem the very denial, the most uncompromising opposite of the new principle and the new creation.”<sup>2</sup>

The biological sciences are actively propagating their positivist teaching that evolution is nothing but the work of chance in an accidental universe, and that it is not progressive. Consequently the appearance of the human being is purely a matter of luck. Stephen Jay Gould, for instance, “was adamantly opposed to progress, speaking of it as ‘a noxious, culturally embedded, untestable, nonoperational, untractable idea’ that must be replaced if we wish to understand the patterns of history.” “It is a delusion engendered by our refusal to accept our insignificance when faced with the immensity of time.” (Michael Ruse) The religious and spiritual view, on the contrary, has held of old that the human being is the masterpiece of the creation, and even that it was made in the image of God.

For Sri Aurobindo, in whose cosmic scheme evolution is the backbone, *Homo sapiens*, possessing a psychic being, is provisionally the highest step of evolution, although on the whole ladder back to the Divine he stands only somewhere halfway. Sri Aurobindo has explained that, if a new, supramental species is to be worked out, the process will resemble the emergence of the previous evolutionary stages. There will be the ascendant urge in the highest existing species (which in humanity translates as ‘aspiration’); an answer will come from the corresponding next higher level in the pre-existing general manifestation (which Sri Aurobindo calls the ‘involution’); and this response will create in the aspiring species a number of intermediary subspecies, leading up to the formation of the new main species.

As the gap between the human and the superhuman or divine is enormous, the variety of intermediary beings may be wide-ranging. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had come to lay the foundations of this transformation. From 1956 onwards the Mother confirmed repeatedly that the appearance of the supramental being on Earth was certain.

The moment of humanity’s transformation, she said, was now — by which she

2. Sri Aurobindo: *The Human Cycle*, p. 183.

meant a “now” on an evolutionary timescale. In fact, the unification of humanity which causes the present unprecedented upheavals on our globe, resulting in an almost total disorientation among humans, was predicted by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother as one of the inevitable phenomena of the Great Transition.

The path which Sri Aurobindo and the Mother called the Integral Yoga is therefore not a fixed system with a defined goal to be realised within the lifetime of the practitioner (as are other paths of yoga). What they have initiated is continuing now in ways humans cannot foresee, but to the general trend of which they can collaborate if they feel called to. The great evolutionary adventure of the past will be continued in unimaginable ways. Already a century ago, after the self-assuredness of the bourgeois era and before the explosions of the twentieth-century wars, Sri Aurobindo announced “the time of the unexpected”.

The present insecurity, posited by the post-modern intellectuals as an innate modality of the human mind, is general, except in the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother which clearly and in detail defines the rationale behind ours and the coming times. If all is That — the fundamental premise of the *Upanishads* — then the present vortices in humanity are also That, and the most secure foothold must be the inner Presence, the Divine in us. On this basis one can be prepared for the unexpected — for the miraculous, which is the assured future definitively to come.

## Of laws and miracles

Science tells us that the universe functions according to laws which the human mind can find out and formulate. “The scientific culture that arose in Western Europe, of which we are the inheritors, was dominated by adherence to the absolute invariance of laws of Nature, which thereby underwrote the meaningfulness of the scientific enterprise and assured its success.” (John Barrow)

In recent times, however, the laws of physics, “once regarded as cast in tablets of stone”, began to look less definitive. What was once the domain of a few “eccentric” scientists like David Bohm, Rupert Sheldrake or Ilya Prigogine, is now more and more accepted by scientific orthodoxy and may soon be integrated into the standard paradigm. “As soon as the laws are confined to some abstract realm of ideal mathematical forms, there is no problem,” writes Paul Davies, “but if the laws are considered to inhabit, not a transcendent Platonic realm, but the real universe, then it’s a very different story.” And a French scientist states squarely: “The fundamental laws [of physics] are now about possibilities and no longer about certitudes.”

Sri Aurobindo did not only rely on his yogic insight, he followed the evolution of science, including physics, from nearby, and in his writings one finds numerous references to Einstein’s relativity theories and the puzzling conclusions of quantum

mechanics. It was part of the fundamental attitude of this “mystic” never to lose contact with reality and the world. This should be kept in mind when reading the following passages by him. Quite aware of the confirmations of science, he explains here that the reality of what science tries to grasp, describe and understand is much more complex than science even accepts. The simple but crucial reason is that physical science has in Galileo, Descartes and Newton reduced reality to the realm of matter, declaring the other principles of what constitutes reality — life, mind, spirit — to be reducible to matter, or otherwise to be outside the sphere of interest of serious science.

“If we look carefully at these workings of Nature,” Sri Aurobindo writes in *The Life Divine*, “once we put aside the veil of familiarity and our unthinking acquiescence in the process of things as natural because so they always happen, we discover that all she does in whole or in parts is a miracle, an act of some incomprehensible magic.”<sup>3</sup> And in a letter he writes: “Science, like most mental and external knowledge, gives you only truth of process. I would add that it cannot give you even the whole truth of process; for you seize some of the ponderables, but miss the all-important imponderables . . . After all the triumphs and marvels of Science the explaining principle, the rationale, the significance of the whole is left as dark, as mysterious and even more mysterious than ever.”<sup>4</sup>

“There is no fundamental significance in things if you miss the Divine Reality; for you remain embedded in a huge surface crust of manageable and utilisable appearance. It is the magic of the Magician [the Divine as Creator] you are trying to analyse, but only when you enter into the consciousness of the Magician himself can you begin to experience the true origination, significance and circles of the Lila. I say ‘begin’ because the Divine Reality is not so simple that at the first touch you can know all of it or put it into a single formula; it is the Infinite and opens before you an infinite knowledge to which all Science put together is a bagatelle.”<sup>5</sup>

If reality consists of the hierarchical gradations which from old have been called the Chain of Being, modern science, with physics as its norm, has voluntarily blocked its own access to reality, for it has chosen as its fundamental premise that all existence is material and nothing else. In a future world of Truth, however, the whole of reality must be taken into account. As Sri Aurobindo writes: “If science is to turn her face towards the Divine, it must be a new science not yet developed which deals directly with the forces of the life-world and of Mind [cf. the Chain of Being] and so arrives at what is beyond Mind; but present-day science cannot do that.”<sup>6</sup>

The self-assuredness, at times arrogance, of academic science and most of its

3. Sri Aurobindo: *The Life Divine*, p. 341.

4. Sri Aurobindo: *Letters on Yoga*, pp. 196-97.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 197.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 205.

practitioners has become part of the modern mentality. The foregoing reflections are therefore relevant to support an open attitude towards the present conditions in a rapidly changing world and the dramatic happenings all over the globe which are brought to our knowledge day by day. The events of history have never been predictable to the human mind. Still less is it capable of discerning the trends of our contemporary history and their possible consequences, now that we are constantly informed about the goings-on in the four corners of the world. If in the present crisis atmosphere we want to find some solid ground, we must not turn to science but inwards and find there what is the core of our existence, while on the outside we must have confidence in “the magic of the Magician”, inevitably working for a new and better world. From this standpoint all history, like all existence and manifestation, is one continuous miracle. This knowledge can help us to prepare for the future miracles capable of solving our global problems, miracles which, according to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, will reveal the meaning of it all and are certain to happen.

### **The preparatory work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother**

What do we, Aurobindians, stand for? Is the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother just another of those well-intentioned New Age fancies, or does it have a basis in fact which can be spelled out?

In the first place there are their abundant writings and transcribed sayings covering a period of nearly a century; this literature is considered by knowledgeable persons the richest in the history of modern spirituality. (Sri Aurobindo was nominated for the Nobel Prize of Literature in 1950, the year of his demise.) Then there is also the inner coherence of the facts of their spiritual adventure into the unknown, supported by a mass of direct and indirect evidence. It must be remembered that spiritual matters are not subject to scientific proof; they can only be confirmed through faith and direct experience. What Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are, what they have done, and what continues to happen as the continuation of the Work done during their lifetime, must ultimately be a matter of personal acceptance based on an open attitude in the mind, the gift of faith in the heart, and an inner empathy resulting from the long history of one's soul.

Until recently, that is until about 1970, little was known about the facts of their lives. Most of their letters and notes, conversations, Sri Aurobindo's *Record of Yoga* and *Mother's Agenda* were published after that date, which was also the time when serious research in archives and other documentary sources began to be made. This means, among other things, that the writings of most of the first commentators or exegetes remained limited mainly to Sri Aurobindo's works in the *Arya*, the Mother's *Prayers and Meditations*, and personal correspondence.

No doubt, this literature contained the foundations on which Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's avataric mission could be understood. Books like *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga* and *Essays on the Gita* contained all essentials of the Aurobindian Revolution. But the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother was an adventure into the unknown which went through countless yogic crises, struggles and reversals many years after the *Arya* and the *Prayers and Meditations* had been written. For instance, Sri Aurobindo's battle in the 1930s to bring the Supermind down on Earth remained known only to a small circle of disciples around Dilip Kumar Roy and Nirodbaran Talukdar, to whom Sri Aurobindo gave some glimpses of his gigantic yogic effort in his correspondence with them. The important series of articles written for the *Bulletin* and later named *The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth* remains largely unappreciated even today. And one reads seldom about the intimations by the Mother about her work of physical transformation, which was, after all, her avataric Yoga in the last years of her life, the crucial step which would make the appearance of the overman and the supramental being possible.

It is a matter of importance that the creation of the supramental being, the next step in the terrestrial evolution, is not to happen according to a once-and-for-all fixed ideological scheme, but that it is an open, unknown process of transformation that has been started by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother during their lifetime, that is continuing now, and that will continue for a long time to come. It is a "pilgrim's progress" into the miraculous.

### *Overman*

Sri Aurobindo, continuously occupied with completing *Savitri* and with the urgency of his avataric task, did not write essayistic prose any more in the last years of his life. The reason may have been that for this kind of literary work his consciousness had to descend again to the human level. Besides, his eyesight had deteriorated and he had to dictate everything to an amanuensis, poetry as well as prose. All the same, he could not refuse a request from the Mother for a contribution to the *Bulletin* of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education which she had newly founded. Therefore he dictated eight articles between 30 December 1948 and the time he left his body, on 5 December 1950.

What started as an encouragement of the students' ideals, and therefore a reminder to them of his and the Mother's Work, suddenly took another turn: for the first time Sri Aurobindo spoke about the necessity of intermediary beings between the existing species of *Homo sapiens* and the coming species of supermen, *Homo supramentalis*. This transitional being he gave no name, but called it "a new humanity". "it would not be the total transformation, the fullness of a divine life in a divine body. There would be a body still human and indeed animal in its origin and fundamental character and this would impose its own inevitable limitations on the

higher parts of the embodied being.”

All the same, “Its mentality would be an instrument of the Light and no longer of the Ignorance. At its highest it would be capable of passing into the supermind and from the new race would be recruited the race of supramental beings who would appear as the leaders of the evolution in earth-nature. Even, the highest manifestations of a mind of Light would be an instrumentality of the supermind, a part of it or a projection from it, a stepping beyond humanity into the superhumanity of the supramental principle. Above all, its possession would enable the human being to rise beyond . . . into those highest powers of the mind in its self-exceedings which intervene between our mentality and supermind and can be regarded as steps leading towards the greater and more luminous principle [*i.e.* Supermind].”<sup>7</sup>

In April 1958 the Mother said: “It can be confirmed with certainty that there will be an intermediate specimen between the mental and the supramental being, a kind of overman who will still have the qualities and in part the nature of man, that is, who will still belong in his most external form to the human species with its animal origin, but who will transform his consciousness sufficiently to belong in his realisation and activity to a new race, a race of overmen [*surhommes*]. This species may be considered a transitional species, for one can foresee that it will discover the means of producing new beings without going through the old animal method . . . So we could call overmen [*surhommes*] those who, in their origin, still belong to the old method of generation, but in their achievement are in conscious and active contact with the new world of supramental realisation.”<sup>8</sup>

Two remarks are in order here.

Firstly, the above quotations of Sri Aurobindo clearly show the need of a series of “miraculous” transformations between our species of “animal man”, as Sri Aurobindo and the Mother called it, and the supramental being. In the course of the evolution of life on Earth the formation of a species with a higher consciousness, succeeding *Homo sapiens*, is inevitable. Between the primates and *Homo sapiens* in its various appearances the gap was enormous; between *Homo sapiens* and the supramental being the gap is unimaginable.

Secondly, where, in the aforementioned quotation from the Mother, there is written “overmen”, the English translators have used each and every time the term “supermen”, unaware of significance of the Mother’s words and of the contents of *The Supramental Manifestation*. The Mother gave her *Entretiens* in French, for those talks were actually French classes for the students of the Ashram School. What Sri Aurobindo had called “a new humanity”, the Mother called *surhomme* which literally means “overman”, not “superman”, and which is the being corresponding to the *surmental*, the “overmind”. This error is unfortunately the source of an enormous

7. Sri Aurobindo: *Essays in Philosophy and Yoga*, pp. 537 and 585.

8. The Mother: Conversation of 16 April 1958. [*In certain passages the author has used his own translation from the original French. —Ed.*]

confusion, for other translators follow by example and commit systematically the same error, e.g. throughout the English translation of the *Agenda*.

One result is that lots of texts are written on the future glories of the Supermind and supermanhood, but hardly anything about the transitional processes required to fashion the supramental being, that is: about our own participation in the Work. The effort of the practitioner of the Integral Yoga at present is to become, through his aspiration and surrender, one of the transitional beings which will make the appearance of the supramental being possible. As the Mother said: “This was certainly what Sri Aurobindo expected of us: what he conceived of as the overman, who must be the intermediate being between humanity as it is and the supramental being created in the supramental way — in other words, in no way part of the animal life any longer and freed from all animal needs . . . It is quite obvious that intermediary beings are necessary, and that it is these intermediary beings who must find the means to create beings of the Supermind. And there is no doubt that, when Sri Aurobindo wrote this, he was convinced that this is what we have to do.”<sup>9</sup>

### *The manifestation of the Supermind*

The avataric task of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother consisted in bringing down a new, higher consciousness into the Earth atmosphere: the consciousness of the Supermind. Life on Earth is still predominantly the fiefdom of the “hostile powers”, which are the direct descendants of the Inconscient from which the evolution started. As these are powers of the Ego, it is in their nature to counter anything that would weaken the egoistic self-affirmation of Life, in other words they resist unconditionally any spiritual endeavour.

As Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have stated explicitly, the rather weak personality of Adolf Hitler got its strength and inspiration from an asuric power, the Lord of Falsehood who calls himself Lord of the Nations. It was at the inspiration of this occult personality that the Second World War took place, to counteract the avataric Work that would lead to the appearance of a divinised species on Earth. Even those who were aware of the interventions of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in the war thought that, once the war was over, the crucial problem it posed for the ascendance of humanity was solved. On the contrary, the asuric powers still intensified their action, so much so that Sri Aurobindo wrote to a correspondent: “Other blacknesses threaten to overshadow or even engulf mankind . . .” and that he had to take the drastic decision to descend into death in order to change things in the occult depths at the roots of existence.

What this yogic, or rather avataric, master-act actually meant, we cannot even guess. But its result was that only six years later the Supramental Manifestation took

9. The Mother: Conversation of 25 September 1957.

place, and the evolutionary progress was guaranteed forever. After a lifetime of unprecedented spiritual effort for humanity, Sri Aurobindo had seen that the result of his and the Mother's Work was not assured. Not intending "to give his sanction to a new edition of the old fiasco", he had to do what none had done before: remove whatever blocked the development of the evolution and kept the Earth bound to its origin in the Ignorance. The success of his act was confirmed on 29 February 1956.

On that day the Mother noted down: "This evening the Divine Presence, concrete and material, was there present amongst you. I had a form of living gold, bigger than the universe, and I was facing a huge and massive golden door which separated the world from the Divine. As I looked at the door, I knew and willed, in a single movement of consciousness, that 'the time has come', and lifting with both hands a mighty golden hammer I struck one blow, one single blow on the door and the door was shattered to pieces. Then the supramental Light and Force and Consciousness rushed down upon earth in an uninterrupted flow."<sup>10</sup>

Before this universal event all was possibility; after it all had become certainty.

This event should not be seen only in the context of the lives of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, or of the twentieth century. Its significance was much, much more encompassing. To be possible the past of humanity, and in humanity of the Earth, had to be sufficiently prepared; the potential of all the cycles of the evolution and of human history in its various known or lost civilisations had to be worked out. In this event the Work of all Avatars, and of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in their previous lives, was finally justified. (Once, when asked what he had done in his previous lives, Sri Aurobindo answered simply: "Carrying on the evolution.") Events in the material and the occult worlds always take place against a background where time and space are quite different from the dimensions we move in. The supramental manifestation, or the beginning of the new age, in 1956, should be seen in this kind of perspective. One could interpret the preceding centuries as leading up to it, and in the succeeding decennia things have undoubtedly accelerated under its influence. But 29 February 1956, at that point in our space and time, was "the moment".

### *The ship from the new world*

On 3 February 1958, the Mother had an experience which she deemed sufficiently important to dictate it immediately afterwards. "The supramental world exists permanently and I am there permanently in a supramental body. I had proof of it this very day, when my earth-consciousness went there and remained there consciously between two and three o'clock in the afternoon. Now I know that what was lacking for the two worlds to join in a constant and conscious relation is an intermediate zone between the physical world as it is and the supramental world as

10. The Mother: *Words of the Mother III*, p. 102.

it is. This zone is to be built both in the individual consciousness and in the objective world, and it is being built . . .

“I was on a huge ship which was a symbolic representation of the place where this work is going on. This ship, as large as a city, is fully organised, and it had already been functioning for some time, for its organization was perfect. It is the place where the people are being trained who are destined for the supramental life. These people, or at least part of their being, had already undergone a supramental transformation, for the ship itself and everything on board was neither material, subtle-physical, vital or mental: everything consisted of a supramental substance . . .

“The light was a mixture of gold and red, forming a uniform substance of a luminous orange. Everything was like that. The light was like that, the people were like that — everything had that colour, although in various shades, which made it possible to distinguish things from each other. The general impression was of a world without shadows. The atmosphere was full of joy, calm, order. Everything went in an orderly way and in silence . . .

“This immense ship had just reached the shore of the supramental world and a first group of people, who were destined to become the future inhabitants of the supramental world, were to go ashore. Everything had been arranged for this first disembarkation. . . . I was in charge of the whole enterprise from the beginning and throughout the proceedings. I had prepared all the groups myself. I stood on the ship at the head of the gangway calling the groups one by one and sending them ashore. . . . Things continued in this way until suddenly the clock here [in her room at the Ashram] struck three, and this brought me back violently. There was a sensation of suddenly falling into my body. I came back with a shock but with the full memory . . .

“When I was called back [into her material body] . . . I had a brief glimpse of myself — of my form in the supramental world, that is. . . . My upper part, particularly the head, was not much more than a silhouette of which the contents were white with an orange fringe. The more down towards the feet the more the colour looked like that of the people on the ship, that is to say orange; the more upwards the more it was translucent and white, with less red [red is the colour of Matter]. The head was only a contour with a brilliant sun in it. Rays of light radiated from it, which were actions of the will.

“As for the people I saw on board the ship, I recognized them all. Some were from here, from the Ashram, others were from elsewhere, but I know them too. . . . Most of the people who went ashore were middle-aged, except a few . . .

“When I came back I knew, simultaneously with the recollection of the experience, that the supramental world is permanent, that my presence there is permanent, and that only a missing link was needed for enabling the connection in the consciousness and in the substance, and it is this link which is now being established. There I had the impression of an extreme relativity — no, more exactly

the impression that the relation of this world with the other one completely changed the standpoint from which things must be evaluated or appraised. The standpoint was not at all mental, and it gave the strange inner feeling that lots of things we consider good or bad are not really so . . . What was obvious is that our opinion of what is divine or not divine is not right . . . In the people too I saw that what helps them become supramental, or prevents them from it, is very different from what we, with our habitual moral notions, imagine. I felt how ridiculous we are.”<sup>11</sup>

### *The big pulsations*

At the end of 1958 the time of withdrawal into her room had come for the Mother too. She was now 80, and would say later on that the outward signs of her Yoga of transformation were by most people understood as symptoms of her advanced age. Of the heroic, superhuman battle with the old world to create the new, and with the old body to create the new, we have the conversations published under the misleading title *Mother's Agenda*. For under the lemma “agenda” the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* has “a list of items of business to be discussed at a meeting . . . a list of matters to be addressed.” Even the *Nouveau Petit Robert* has under the same lemma “*carnet sur lequel on inscrit jour par jour ce qu'on doit faire, ses rendez-vous, ses dépenses, etc.* — which means “small notebook in which one enters day by day what one has to do, one's appointments, one's expenses, etc.” What *Mother's Agenda* actually does report is what had been done by her, her experiences, struggles, battles, encounters, and much more. It was actually the diary of her conversations with Satprem, a French disciple.

One of the most important events in the Mother's Yoga of those years took place on 3 April 1962, “after several weeks of grave illness”. Again she dictated a report of the event immediately afterwards, and it was published in *Words of the Mother III*, pp. 408 ff. In this report, seldom if ever commented upon, the Mother tells about “a group of people who want to create a religion based on the revelation of Sri Aurobindo. But they have taken only the side of power and force, a certain kind of knowledge and all that could be utilised by asuric forces.”<sup>12</sup> In this group there was “a big asuric being that has succeeded in taking the appearance of Sri Aurobindo. . . . This appearance of Sri Aurobindo has declared to me that the work I am doing is not his [*i.e.* Sri Aurobindo's]. It has declared that I have been a traitor to him and to his work, and has refused to have anything to do with me.”

11. The Mother: Conversation of 19 February 1958.

12. In *The Mother — The Story of Her Life*, Georges Van Vrekhem has the following footnote on p. 466: “It would indeed be easy to concoct a sectarian or totalitarian creed or cult from the teaching of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. One has only to put the accent on the new race of supermen in the making, to leave out the individuality of the way and the primary necessity of the realisation of the soul, and to extract a mythos from their writings, *Savitri* containing all necessary material to this end.”

And the report goes on: “I woke up at 2 o’clock [in the night] and noticed that the heart had been affected by the attack of this group that wants to take the life away from this body . . . They would have liked me dead years ago. It is they who are responsible for these attacks on my life. Up till now I am alive because the Lord wanted me to be alive, otherwise I would have gone long ago.

“I am no more in my body. I have left it to the Lord to take care of it, to decide if it is to have the Supramental or not. I know and I have said also that now is the last fight. . . . This is the Lord’s decision. I am not even asking what he has decided. If the body is incapable of bearing the fight, if it has to be dissolved, then humanity will pass through a critical time. What the asuric Force that has succeeded in taking the appearance of Sri Aurobindo will create is a new religion or thought, perhaps cruel and merciless, in the name of the supramental Realisation. But everybody must know that it is not true, it is not Sri Aurobindo’s teaching, not the truth of his teaching. . . .

“The fight is within the body. . . .”

This dramatic fight must have gone on for several days till the Mother, on 13 April, dictated the following victory bulletin in French, probably to Pavitra, another French disciple: “Suddenly in the night I woke with the full awareness of what we could call the Yoga of the World. The Supreme Love was manifesting through big pulsations, and each pulsation was bringing the world further in its manifestation. They were the formidable pulsations of the eternal stupendous Love, only Love. Each pulsation of the Love was carrying the universe further in the manifestation.

“And there was the certitude that what had to be done is done, and that the Supramental Manifestation is realised. . . .

“This was going on and on and on.

“The certitude that what had to be done is *done*. . . .”

Then the Mother switched to her native French: “And we set out again on the way, sure of the Victory.

“The skies are full of hymns of Victory.

“The Truth alone exists, it alone shall be manifested. Forward! Forward!

“*Gloire à Toi, Seigneur, Triomphateur suprême! . . .*” Glory to Thee, o Lord, supreme Triumpher! (This was one of the Mother’s mantric formulas which we find already in her *Prayers and Meditations*.)

The evocation of this episode, of the extended Yogic battle on the verge of life and death on which so much depended for humanity, including ourselves, may lead to reflections of the following kind. Firstly, the surroundings of the Mother, visible and invisible, were rather different from what most people who were present at the time knew or prefer to remember. She, who took everything into herself, had apparently to swallow more poison than nectar. At times when her life was in danger, she would point out an attack of black magic as the cause. The Asura, using human persons, was at his tricks maybe more than ever, as the avataric Yoga approached

the stage where the first supramental body was in the process of formation. Secondly, this phase of the Yoga, being the attempt at transformation for which Sri Aurobindo had ordered the Mother to remain in her body, is hardly ever remembered or commented upon, . . . Thirdly, all great spiritual innovations have been diminished, disfigured, reduced to a lower level and torn to sectarian shreds by human lack of understanding and blind or ambitious ego. Fourthly, the end of the Mother's transformational Yoga, if at that time her heart had failed, would not have meant the failure of the supramental transformation, assured since 1956; it would however have meant a cancellation of possibilities which could only be worked out by the Mother, and consequently a postponement of the transformative process for an indeterminate time. Lastly, rare are the souls able to discern the Asuric forces at work, for they are more subtle than the ignorant humans, have powers which humans deem to be divine, and do deeds the consequences of which humans cannot estimate.

### **The Overman Consciousness**

In the first hours of the very first day of 1969, the Mother had another special experience. "In the night it came slowly, and on waking up this morning there was as it were a golden dawn, and the atmosphere was very light. The body felt: 'Well, this is truly, truly new.' A golden light, imponderous and benevolent. 'Benevolent' in the sense of a certainty, a harmonious certainty. It was new. *Voilà*. And when I say '*Bonne année*' to the people, it is this that I pass on to them . . .

"On the 1<sup>st</sup> something truly strange happened, and I wasn't the only one to feel it, some others felt it too. It was just after midnight . . . What is surprising is that it didn't correspond at all with anything I was expecting — I was expecting nothing — [or] to other things I had felt. It was something very material, by which I mean that it was very external — very external — and it was luminous, with a golden light. It was very strong, very powerful. But even so its character was a smiling benevolence, a peaceful joy and a kind of unfolding into joy and light. And it was like a '*bonne année*' like a wish. . . . I don't know what it is, but it's a kind of benevolence, therefore it was something very close to the human. And it was so concrete, so concrete! . . . It has not gone away. One does not feel it to be something that has come to go away again . . .

"My own impression was that of an immense personality — immense! That is to say that for [that personality] the Earth was small, small like this [gesture as if holding a small ball in the hollow of her hand], like a ball. . . . It gave the impression of a personal divinity who comes to help. And so strong, so strong, and at the same time so gentle, so all-embracing . . . I have the impression that it is the formation which is going to enter, which is going to express itself . . . which is going to enter and express itself in the bodies which will be the bodies of the Supramental. Or

perhaps — perhaps — the overman [*le surhomme*], I don't know, the intermediary between the two [between the human and the supramental being]. Perhaps the overman. It was very human, but human in divine proportions, you see, human without weaknesses and without shadows. . . . Yes, perhaps the overman."<sup>13</sup>

The Mother has always warned that, if one has a spiritual experience, one should let it work itself out, without limiting and thereby fixing it through a mental formulation or interpretation. This is one of many examples of how she proceeded herself, evoking the experience without defining it, by carefully letting it continue to have its effect till it might become comprehensible by the mind.

The confirmation came eight days after the fact: "Yes, that's what it is: it is the descent of the consciousness of the overman. I had the assurance later on." On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January "it lasted, absolutely concrete, *there*, for two or three hours, and afterwards it spread out and went in search of people who could receive it. And I knew that it was the consciousness of the overman, that's to say, the intermediary between man and the supramental being." And ten days later she said: "Yes, it's very consciously active. It's as it were a projection of power. And it has now become something habitual . . . In one of the old *entretiens*, I said when I was speaking there at the Playground: 'There is no doubt that the overman will in the first place be a being of power, so that he may be able to defend himself.' It's that. It's that experience. It came back as an experience. And it's because it came back as an experience that I remembered having said it."

This statement about the spreading activity of the Overman Consciousness could not be clearer and more complete — and important in the development of the Integral Yoga. Nonetheless one has yet to read reflections or comments on it in the Aurobindian literature, where the existence of the Overman Consciousness and the existence of the overman him- and herself is barely acknowledged.

We should be aware that behind our existence and our tiniest effort there are: 1. the presence of Sri Aurobindo, for the Avatar never deserts his Work; 2. the presence of the Mother, who exists in the archetype of an immortal, omnipresent supramental body; 3. the Supermind, active in the Earth-atmosphere since 1956; 4. since 1 January 1969 the presence of the Overman Consciousness "in search of people who can receive it". The people called to participate in the realisation of the new world should be aware of these extraordinary Forces. The miraculous is present now as it was during the lifetime of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, but to perceive it one has to be prepared for it.

13. This and the following quotations in this section: *The Mother: Notes on the Way*, pp. 148 ff.

## Five confirmations

Is there any confirmation that Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's vision is not another "mystic" chimera? This is a common and valid question from the few, among the mass of humanity, who have heard of them. In answer one could point to Auroville, "the utopia of all utopias" continuing to exist and growing against all odds, and to the Matrimandir, that place "out of this world" at the centre of Auroville. But bizarre or impressive buildings have been built in many places on the globe, by groups or movements counted as no more than eccentric sects.

In 1947, on the occasion of India's independence, Sri Aurobindo was invited to address the nation in a radio broadcast, which he read from his room. On that occasion he talked about his "five dreams", these dreams being five prominent tasks he had set himself to be accomplished through his avataric work. The five dreams were: the freedom of India; the awakening of Asia; the formation of conglomerates of nations leading up to a worldwide community; world unity; and India's spiritual treasure to be shared by all humanity, the precondition to enable the appearance of a supramental species.

Now, in 2010, the status of the realisation of those five avataric tasks may be evaluated as follows.

It was on the occasion of India's freedom that Sri Aurobindo made his broadcast. (It might here be recalled that he was the very first to publicly demand unconditional independence for his motherland.) However, his categorical condition of India's full and effective participation in the one world of tomorrow — the complete unity of her physical body — has not yet been fulfilled, for Bharat Mata remains divided into India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

What seemed just after the Second World War an idealist's fancy, has now become a daily item on the world's news bulletins: Asia has awoken with such rapidity that experts think it should slow down. India and China, in 1947 part of the third world, are now rivals of the rich nations in the international market and have to be taken into account politically.

Conglomerates of nations are now in place, mostly constituted along geographical lines. The European Union, where at the time of writing 27 nations are learning to live together and cooperate, stands out as an example. Other conglomerates have been formed in South Asia, in Africa and in the Americas. The necessity of consultation and cooperation is now acute in a world where everything depends on everything else, and the well-being of all seems to hang by a thread.

Humanity has to reawake to the essential values which are spiritual, and which of old have been treasured in the East, more specifically in India, "the heart of Asia". As Sri Aurobindo has stressed time and again, a better world cannot come about without a change in the beings who constitute that world. This is not a question of philosophy or morals; it is a question of the way the human being exists, not by

chance or as a material organism, but as an incarnated soul. The new way in which the humans have to learn to see themselves, and which is the knowledge or “gnosis” India has to offer, is not a new dogmatic or ritualistic religion; it is the way of self-exploration leading to self-knowledge leading in its turn to knowledge and realisation of the All. For this is how the macrocosm and the microcosm (the human being) exist: as a reality much larger and complex than strict rationalism and materialism can grasp.

The world is growing receptive of these verities. Their synthesis is the integral vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the “perennial philosophy” worded for the present times. The knowledge of this revelation should not result in another systematisation or be calcified in the dogmas of a new religion; it should provide the guidance for the adventure of consciousness into which humanity is engaging — the adventure into the miraculous.

*Thus will the masked Transcendent mount his throne.  
When darkness deepens strangling the earth's breast  
And man's corporeal mind is the only lamp,  
As a thief's in the night shall be the covert tread  
Of one who steps unseen into his house.  
A Voice ill-heard shall speak, the soul obey,  
A Power into mind's inner chamber steal,  
A charm and sweetness open life's closed doors  
And beauty conquer the resisting world,  
The Truth-Light capture Nature by surprise,  
A stealth of God compel the heart to bliss  
And earth grow unexpectedly divine.  
In Matter shall be lit the spirit's glow,  
In body and body kindled the sacred birth . . .  
A few shall see what none yet understands;  
God shall grow up while the wise men talk and sleep;  
For man shall not know the coming till its hour  
And belief shall be not till the work is done.<sup>14</sup>*

GEORGES VAN VREKHEM

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14. Sri Aurobindo: *Savitri*, p. 55.

## GEORGES

GEORGES VAN VREKHEM, a well-known poet and playwright in Flemish-speaking Belgium, joined the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in 1970 after having read Satprem's *Sri Aurobindo or the Adventure of Consciousness*. As he later wrote in a poem, "One day I broke through an inner wall and found a fire within, and the power of that fire has gradually conjured me to another continent." The Mother gave him the name Matriprasad (meaning 'Blessing of The Mother' or 'Offering to The Mother') which he however never used. He started teaching at the Ashram school and, because of his proficient language skills, also became one of the secretaries of the Sri Aurobindo Society, in charge of international relations for their project Auroville.

In 1978, five years after the passing of the Mother, Georges packed all his belongings on a bullock cart and joined Auroville, settling in a small hut in the Aspiration community and starting teaching at Last School and making translations, such as of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata in Dutch. Then, in 1995, he began writing his own books. *Voorbij de Mens, Leven en Werk van Sri Aurobindo en De Moeder* was published in 1995; he then translated it into English as *Beyond Man, the Life and Work of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother*. It was published in India in 1997 and became a highly acclaimed seminal book. Amal Kiran (K. D. Sethna) judged it "among the best that have been written on Sri Aurobindo and the Mother". In this book Georges, for the first time, spoke about Sri Aurobindo and the Mother as the Two-in-One, the double-poled Avatar of the Supermind.

In 1997, Georges suffered a heart attack, was admitted to JIPMER hospital in Pondicherry and later subjected to a coronary angiography in Belgium, in preparation for a heart operation. But the operation was cancelled when the angiography showed that a bypass would have no effect as a part of the left heart chamber had died. Realising that his life would henceforth move at half-speed and that he could not fully depend on allopathic medicines, Georges taught himself homeopathy. He obtained a degree from the British Institute of Homeopathy and started treating himself, with considerable success. Yet, his health would never be the same and often he would complain of an uncertain future.

Georges had meanwhile been able to build and move into a two-room house in the Shakti community near Aspiration. It was a true hermitage, filled with books, with just sufficient space for a desk and a bed. Continuing his habit of reading copiously (friends and friendly foundations would donate towards his book purchases), he wrote a few more books: an extensive biography *The Mother, The Story of Her Life* (2000); *Overman — the intermediary between the human and the supramental being* (2001); and *Patterns of the Present — from the perspective of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother* (2002).

Then, for a period of four years, Georges spent his time studying one of the most gruesome periods of human history, the Second World War. “This reading makes me sick,” he used to complain. His motive: “Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had been speaking to their disciples about this War, about its occult significance, and about the asuric entity that possessed Hitler. Is there any historic material that collaborates their views?” There was, plenty — in German, English, French, Dutch and Spanish. His bookshelves soon flowed over. But it was with more than a sigh of relief that Georges finally disposed of this collection when his book *Hitler and His God, the background to the Hitler phenomenon* was published in 2006.

He continued writing about aspects of Sri Aurobindo’s and the Mother’s vision, as in the book *Evolution, Religion and the Unknown God* (2011), where he described the various theories of evolution and the concepts of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. That same year saw the publication of his last book, *Preparing for the Miraculous*, containing the 11 lectures Georges had given in 2010-2011 at Auroville’s Savitri Bhavan and Town Hall. In the last essay in this book Georges shared his conviction that the Two-in-One Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were, in fact, the Kalki Avatar who, in the Hindu tradition, will come at the end of the present *Kali Yuga*.

On the afternoon of August 31, 2012, Georges Van Vrekhem left his body following a cardiac arrest. He was 77.

CAREL

*There is very commonly a gulf between the higher parts and the lower vital even in ordinary life — in yoga it is apt to get emphasised until the lower vital changes, but if we can judge from the majority of people here, that change is most extraordinarily difficult.*

*Sri Aurobindo*

*(Letters on Yoga, SABCL, Vol. 24, pp. 1298-99)*

## **SRI AUROBINDO — A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR MODERN MAN**

INDIA has been a land with a great and glorious past. She has the heritage of a great culture and civilisation much advanced even in the very early stages of human history. A number of religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism were born in this great land of ours. Over the past centuries, a great number of spiritual personalities, (saints, seers, yogis, rishis) have inhabited this land — something which no other part of the world enjoys. Probably this is the reason behind her survival even under today's most deteriorating conditions. The spiritual tradition of this country has been described by Sri Aurobindo thus:

. . . the grand workshop of spiritual experiment, the laboratory of the soul has been India, where thousands of great spirits have been born in every generation who were content to work quietly in their own souls, perfect their knowledge, hand down the results of their experiments to a few disciples and leave the rest to others to complete. They did not hasten to proselytise, were in no way eager to proclaim themselves, but merely added their quota of experience and returned to the source from which they had come.<sup>1</sup>

Sri Aurobindo has also said that India is going to be the spiritual leader of the world.

But given this prophecy, what is the state of India today? Deterioration of values in all spheres and all walks of life — political, administrative and social. Even though we are scientifically and technologically advanced, morality and ethics are almost at the point of extinction from our lives. At this point of time, the modern right-thinking and cultured man seems to be extremely depressed and utterly disillusioned. And yet, even under these conditions, there are a few in whom there is the urge to look for a beyond. They visit temples, cultivate Bhakti, they worship, they pray and meditate for peace of mind; they also seek for a beyond. Their number is very small — a mere fractional percentage. But there is a gradual increase in their number, more and more are turning to religion and many try to follow the strict rules laid down by the Shastras; still, their inner urge for progress is not satisfied. In them, there is an urge for evolutionary progress. They then turn to the various spiritual disciplines and yogas of which there is no dearth in this country, to the teachings of spiritual Gurus who have lived in this country and have left behind records of their experiences.

1. *Bande Mataram*, CWSA Vol. 7, p. 978.

Such a seeker may turn to the Vedas, the Upanishads, the various philosophies, the inspiring words of the Gita, or Shaiva Siddhanta and other religious teachings. He would read the works of Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Ramana Maharshi and other yogis and siddhas. Some also turn to the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and Mother. Some of them, drawn to their teachings come to the Ashram in Pondicherry and offer prayers; some worship and pray for material benefits, worldly pleasures and other material fulfilments. Others are led to read the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in order to understand their philosophy and to progress in the inner life but they often find it difficult. An attempt is made here to make the teachings accessible and useful to a larger number of people with a receptive heart and opening.

Sri Aurobindo in a letter to one of his disciples writes:

The spiritual is a new consciousness that has to evolve and has been evolving. It is quite natural that at first and for a long time only a few should get the full light, while a greater number but still only a few compared with the mass of humanity, should get it partially. But what has been gained by the few can at a stage of the evolution be completed and more generalised and that is the attempt which we are making.<sup>2</sup>

And these words from *The Life Divine*:

To discover the spiritual being in himself is the main business of the spiritual man and to help others towards the same evolution is his real service to the race . . .<sup>3</sup>

express the aim of this article.

Sri Aurobindo says that this world is a manifestation of the Divine. Spirit and matter are not different realities but they are two ends of the same reality. The Divine has taken a plunge into ignorance and became the very opposite of it — Matter; and Matter is evolving back to the Spirit. He also describes the entire range of existence as two hemispheres. The upper hemisphere consists of Sat, Chit and Ananda and the lower hemisphere consists of Matter, Life and Mind. Intermediate between these two, linking the two hemispheres is the Supermind, Vijnana or Gnosis. After many years of sadhana, he found this link connecting these two hemispheres. When this bridge is built, the two hemispheres can join and become one so that the lower receives the bliss of the higher one and fulfil itself. Sri Aurobindo describes this in his epic poem *Savitri* as follows:

2. *Letters on Yoga* Part I, p. 7. (Seventh edition 2000)

3. *The Life Divine*, CWSA Vol. 22, pp. 917-18.

The line that parts and joins the hemispheres  
Closes in on the labour of the Gods (p. 661)

Only this supramental consciousness has the power to transform man and take him forward in his evolutionary journey.

The purpose of this creation is to make matter house the spirit and to make this earthly life divine. To achieve this, man has to do the sadhana by going in, freeing himself from ignorance and start his inner life and progress towards the soul hidden in his heart.

To free the self is but one radiant pace;  
Here to fulfil himself was God's desire. (p. 312)

To do that, he has to first realise that he is not the body, nor the life, nor the mind, that he is essentially a spirit which has taken this body. God is inside him and if he goes within in search of his inner self, he can find him, as told in *Savitri*:

This bodily appearance is not all;  
The form deceives, the person is a mask;  
Hid deep in man celestial powers can dwell.  
...  
A spirit that is a flame of God abides,  
A fiery portion of the Wonderful,  
Artist of his own beauty and delight,  
Immortal in our mortal poverty. (p. 23)

The same truth is revealed by a Siddha poem in Tamil which asks that even if you offer flowers to the planted stone and tread around it, how would it talk when God is residing within you. This truth is revealed by Sri Aurobindo and Mother in many places in their writings and also in other places in *Savitri* like the one below:

Ascend from Nature to divinity's heights;  
Face the high gods, crowned with felicity,  
Then meet a greater god, thy self beyond Time. (p. 375)

Sri Aurobindo also reveals in *Savitri* that this creation began with God concealed in it and slowly the world is evolving to manifest God in itself. Also, the world toils through imperfection to achieve perfection where our body is the 'chrysalis' of a soul, meaning a shell-like case with scope for further growth like a butterfly in the making within a case.

In God concealed the world began to be,  
 Tardily it travels towards manifest God:  
 Our imperfection towards perfection toils,  
 The body is the chrysalis of a soul (p. 623)

We will see the steps by which man can realise the God within him. He has to do sadhana which means a conscious attempt to free himself from ignorance and begin his inner quest to find the soul within him so that his nature may be transformed and he be moulded into a better being. The approach involves the following steps.

He has to follow the path of Aspiration — Rejection — Surrender; to aspire for a higher life, to reject the unwanted qualities in himself and to surrender to a higher power (in our case, the Mother). Before doing this, the temple has to be cleaned (the consciousness purified). To achieve this, he could follow the methods given in many of the ancient teachings, available in plenty in India. The outer circumstances are merely the unfolding of what we are inside, and if one has a good heart, a mind filled with positive thoughts and a purity up to the level of the soul, one's external circumstances will also be most conducive to one's growth. The basic requirement for a sadhak is that he should get rid of the undesirable traits of jealousy, greed and anger; not allow the ego to dominate; refrain from uttering harsh words; desist from negative thoughts etc. put more simply, eliminate from his consciousness all that obstructs his inner seeking. Sri Aurobindo says in *Savitri*:

Only the pure in soul can walk in light. (p. 448)

When a sadhak is progressing in the yoga in this way, he may have various experiences. In cantos 3 to 5 of Book I of *Savitri* he speaks of some of them:

He felt the beating life in other men . . .  
 He heard the inspired sound of his own thoughts  
 Re-echoed in the vault of other minds; . . . (p. 27)

And again:

His commonest doings welled from an inner Light. (p. 44)

Then he has to silence the mind. He has to understand that mind does not think and thoughts come to him from outside and his mind is only a receiving station.

In the mind's silence the Transcendent acts  
 And the hushed heart hears the unuttered Word. (p. 315)

It means that the highest power or the Divine acts only through a silent mind and that a silenced heart is able to hear the ‘untold word’ of the soul. Here, silence means not the external silence but an inner silence where there is no thought process in the mind. Whatever thought comes to the mind shall not affect the mental peace, just as a bird flying over a pond does not disturb the still water. This is an initial step in the yoga. The time taken by a sadhak to achieve this depends upon the stage attained by him. For some, it may take months and years whereas another may achieve it in a short period of time. Also, whenever a bad or an unwanted thought or a violent thought occurs, the sadhak can consciously stop it even before it enters the mind. In the initial stages, this practice may not bear fruit but if he persists in doing this, he can gradually succeed and can altogether stop thoughts from entering his mind and thus keep his mental poise undisturbed.

Yet another experience is his emergence into the spirit — this could be called the ‘birth sublime’. Sri Aurobindo says that a mighty guidance leads man in his life and that when he has served this world, he is entitled to receive the bounty of God’s bliss and oneness as his birthright. By the way of progress, one day he is born into his spirit which is his second birth — a sublime birth. On that day, the spirit shall justify to him his past impediments and things that were distant will now come close and fructify. This is told in *Savitri*:

A mighty Guidance leads us still through all.  
 After we have served this great divided world  
 God’s bliss and oneness are our inborn right.  
 A date is fixed in the calendar of the Unknown,  
 An anniversary of the Birth sublime:  
 Our soul shall justify its chequered walk,  
 All will come near that now is naught or far. (p. 59)

According to Sri Aurobindo, when a man is progressing in this yoga, an important milestone is the opening of the Psychic being in him. Even though the Self supports him from above, it does not participate directly in his evolutionary journey, wherein its representative, the Psychic being participates and it is also the power which moves from birth to birth. At a stage of man’s progress, his Psychic opening, it shall come to the front and guide him completely, even including his small daily acts and ‘his commonest doings’ as already explained.

Out of the mystic cavern in man’s heart  
 The heavenly Psyche must put off her veil  
 And step into common nature’s crowded rooms  
 And stand uncovered in that nature’s front  
 And rule its thoughts and fill the body and life. (pp. 486-87)

As a crown of all this, there is that which can be taken as a complete programme prescribed by Sri Aurobindo for man in his onward spiritual journey. This passage occurs in Book VII of *Savitri*. It depicts a divine command to man, which says, “Remember why you were born in this earth; find out your soul which is hidden within your heart and in the process recover your true self. Maintain an inner silence, go into your inner depth and try to find God there. By doing so, your mortal nature shall change to a divine nature. Thereupon, open God’s door and experience His Bliss. If you clear yourself of all thoughts, making your brain still, God’s Truth shall wake within you and make you see things in a proper light. Also know that the senses hide the spirit’s sight. Then you will see the Eternal’s body in the world and realise him in all speech, all acts and contacts of this external world. Your heart shall beat in God’s rhythm and you shall contain the divine force in you and you shall conquer Death.”

“Remember why thou cam’st:  
Find out thy soul, recover thy hid self,  
In silence seek God’s meaning in thy depths,  
Then mortal nature change to the divine.  
Open God’s door, enter into his trance. . . .  
In the enormous emptiness of thy mind  
Thou shalt see the Eternal’s body in the world,  
Know him in every voice heard by thy soul, . . .  
Thy voice shall house the mightiness of his Word:  
Then shalt thou harbour my force and conquer Death.” (p. 476)

Even though man’s body is a chrysalis of the soul and he holds God in his secret being, the fact that he indulges in dark, obscure and violent acts is a question that daunts modern man. To this Sri Aurobindo answers through *Savitri* in Book VII. He says man holds not only God within him but also dark powers like the Titan, the Fury and the Djinn which are stationed in his subconscious and that at times when he loses balance, or is dragged down the ladder of consciousness, these dreadful powers take over his being and make him perform the most asuric and perverted acts which he would not have done in his normal state. This is the passage:

Man’s house of life holds not the gods alone:  
There are occult Shadows, there are tenebrous Powers, . . .  
Man harbours dangerous forces in his house.  
The Titan and the Fury and the Djinn  
Lie bound in the subconscious’s cavern pit  
And the Beast grovels in his antre den . . .  
The dreadful powers held down within his depths

Become his masters or his ministers;  
 Enormous they invade his bodily house,  
 Can act in his acts, infest his thought and life.  
 Inferno surges into the human air  
 And touches all with a perverting breath. (p. 480)

His advice to man is to identify these powers within him and to transform them. The Divine Mother will guard him from these powers and help him in this endeavour.

This can abolish man, annul his world.  
 But there is a guardian power, there are Hands that save,  
 Calm eyes divine regard the human scene. (p. 482)

There are two prominent strategic ways to reach God. One is through pain and suffering which is meant for those who have not yet fully accomplished the cleanliness of the temple or who have not yet rejected the impurities in themselves. The other is for those who have cleansed their temple. For them, the progress is through a sunlit path, possible for those who are completely pure, the truly blessed ones. This is expressed in the following lines of *Savitri*:

Yes, there are happy ways near to God's sun;  
 But few are they who tread the sunlit path;  
 Only the pure in soul can walk in light. (p. 448)

The ordeals or sufferings man undergoes in life are chosen by the soul because the soul feels that for man to grow he needs to learn by experience. Hence, when he undergoes any suffering, it is logical to ask what he has to learn by this instead of lamenting. This will make him outgrow his mistakes and help him in his progress towards God. This is brought out in the following lines of *Savitri*:

Our ordeal is the hidden spirit's choice,  
 Ananke is our being's own decree. (p. 465)

In letters to his disciples, Sri Aurobindo says:

In the yoga practised here the aim is to rise to a higher consciousness and to live out of the higher consciousness alone, not with the ordinary motives. This means a change of life as well as a change of consciousness. But all are not so circumstanced that they can cut loose from the ordinary life; they accept it therefore as a field of experience and self-training . . .

It is not absolutely necessary to abandon the ordinary life in order to seek after the Light or to practise yoga. . . . [Until a higher level of consciousness is obtained,] what is necessary is a power to practise an inner isolation, to be able to retire within oneself and concentrate at any time on the necessary spiritual purpose. There must also be a power to deal with the ordinary outer life from a new inner attitude . . . <sup>4</sup>

KRISHNAN SWAMINATHAN

4. *Letters on Yoga* Part I, pp. 146-47.

*The calm established in the whole being must remain the same whatever happens, in health and disease, in pleasure and in pain, even in the strongest physical pain, in good fortune and misfortune, our own or that of those we love, in success and failure, honour and insult, praise and blame, justice done to us or injustice, everything that ordinarily affects the mind. If we see unity everywhere, if we recognise that all comes by the divine will, see God in all, in our enemies or rather our opponents in the game of life as well as our friends, in the powers that oppose and resist us as well as the powers that favour and assist, in all energies and forces and happenings, and if besides we can feel that all is undivided from our self, all the world one with us within our universal being, then this attitude becomes much easier to the heart and mind. But even before we can attain or are firmly seated in that universal vision, we have by all the means in our power to insist on this receptive and active equality and calm. Even something of it, *alpam api asya dharmasya*, is a great step towards perfection; a first firmness in it is the beginning of liberated perfection; its completeness is the perfect assurance of a rapid progress in all the other members of perfection.*

*Sri Aurobindo*

*(The Synthesis of Yoga, CWSA, Vol. 24, p. 724)*

## A CAPTIVE OF HER LOVE

(Continued from the issue of December 2012)

1.3.1958

IN the book *Pioneer of the Supramental Age* you should read all and find what interests you. There are many things written there we did not know before. And there is a lot about Mother. In Purani's book, *Life of Sri Aurobindo*, on page 184 you will see a photo of our main buildings. The street you see in front in this direction is the Balcony Street. The same street is the street where our Nursing Home is, just five minutes to the right. I see Her balcony from our house.

\* \* \*

4.3.1958

Here is this instead of today's letter:

My Mother, Supreme Vibration,

Thou art now becoming my real Friend and my Teacher. It is almost all the day, without a break, that I listen to Thee and try to do what Thy will is. And Thou art so near, so close, every day closer to me. During the last days Thou hast poured on this being so much that it really feels like overflowing. I am so grateful. Thou hast made me conscious in the mental being and physical separately and they have surrendered to Thee. Now, when I walk or eat or do exercises the physical being feels Thee vibrating and working and it surrenders with all its strength and with immense happiness that Thou Thyself art moving this being. The physical being is now almost all the time prostrated at Thy feet with as great a humility as possible and it opens itself, all its most hidden corners, for Thee to see; and it is never satisfied with this opening, as for Thee all the tiniest twists must be visible, very clearly visible. So it goes on and on bringing them all before Thee, without end. I feel like a leper who lays before Thee all his wounds and never stops showing all of them, trying not to miss any, not even the smallest.

It is a vibration that comes and comes and before which I can only prostrate myself. And as Thou, being God, art becoming my intimate Friend and Teacher, with whom I talk all day, from early morning till late in the evening, all my life changes again and all becomes more and more simple, in its purity and reality, so that my thoughts stop existing — disappear — as it is all too holy. And yesterday I

asked Thee what is the matter with my vital — that it does not become conscious of itself — and in answer Thou hast made it act. It began to pour waves of a previous sexual character and I had to reject them one by one, imploring Thee all the time to give me strength. It began (like the last time with the pain in my ears) before the *Synthesis* Class and just as I was so vehemently imploring Thee to help me Thou hast entered and Thou hast looked again at me like last time. Oh, Mother, Thou art always with me, in me and around me! Thou knowest everything that troubles us, Mother! I prostrate myself at Thy feet in gratefulness and humility. And all the time during the class the battle was going on in the lower vital being. Then She took the vital and filled the lower vital being with peace. Is this the last examination of the vital? I do not think so. But this is not for me to think about. Thy will be done. Today the lower vital — surrendered and peaceful — is giving itself all the time to Thee, without end. But all this is only the beginning of surrender, as all the smallest elements have to surrender, each separately — each cell, each movement. And rejection must go on and on. Allow, Mother, that this being shall have strength enough to persevere and persevere.

\* \* \*

7.3.1958

Your letter arrived just a few minutes after I sent mine. So I start the next one immediately. Yes, for me She is God. Maybe I am blessed with a special kind of simplicity, which before used to make me look a bit queer in people's eyes, but which — as I see — proves to be the right key in the integral yoga. God is the Highest Vibration and She is this Highest Vibration. What more shall I ask? I do not want to know things with my crooked mental apparatus. I shall let myself be by the Supreme Grace and if She will bring me to Herself or to something still more Transcendent, what does that matter? For me She is the Supreme. How could I be giving myself, if it were not so?

A few hours ago I got a delicious lemonade from an old sadhika. I came to see her husband (a gardener) but he was not at home. So she invited me in and showed me her "laboratory". She distils rosewater and makes from flowers a wonderful syrup for the Mother. This, mixed with lemon juice and the rosewater, makes a "Göttergetränk" [drink of the gods]. It is interesting to see what things the sadhaks are doing for Mother. All this springs by itself out of their love for Her. My pleasant mental being, of course, immediately produced waves of criticism — Why don't we get such good things (!!) — But thank God I had today more equality than the day before yesterday. Lately I have broken two glasses and one saucer, allowed carrots to burn in the pot, spilt a cup full of liver juice — but never mind, if the mean forces still try something, the time will come that this will stop too.

I have a wonderful time arranging the “garden” in our Nursing Home. Garden = 7 metres x 2.20, and the rest is in flower-pots. Mother has sanctioned some expenses connected with it and there will be wonderful creepers! Tomorrow I shall know how many more flower-pots I shall get and the mason will come to make three holes in the pavement for the creepers. The lazy servant has responded to my giving myself to him as to Mother and shows a big interest in gardening. One of the sadhaks, a professional gardener, will help us. There are still no patients! and it is a glory to live alone in this beautiful house — only with Her. But we are keeping all the rooms ready, clean and with flowers, so that if a patient should come everything will be ready for him. It is as if all the house, the air, the plants were waiting for him.

I was so amused about your remark about the sadhaks — that they can be quite human! If you could see some of them! There is a mixture here, just a world in miniature and this seems to be the arrangement Mother wanted. First there are women who are not sadhikas. They are wives of sadhaks, slow, fat, inert and talkative, just like all women of this type. Some of the women are sadhikas — often older women who have been in the Ashram for about twenty years, who probably came here with their husbands. Among the men you will find all sorts of queer people and also bad people. Externally, I should say, you feel among these people as in a gathering of peasants and workers in Europe — Polish workers, not yours. But this does not mean that there is no real devotion in their hearts; and then, in this gathering, you begin to discover some subtle, concentrated faces — many among the young men. The children and young people also give a very human aspect to this community.

Yesterday evening there was a performance of the ballet class. Strange that it is still difficult for me to harmonise it inwardly completely with Her. But I shall learn. Now She teaches me more and more equality, but all the process goes on in the triple movement of the three figures of self-giving to the Divine. I begin to discover that there is a tremendous power hidden in what Mother advises. The self-giving becomes deeper every day and slowly all the activities and inner movements of the being are connected with these three figures and permeated by them. And this seems to be the purpose of it, because the whole life has to change into self-giving.

She is so infinitely good. This sounds childish, but that does not matter. You know, there is going on in me a dual process — one, lower, where I still (or rather something in my emotional centre) long to be able to prostrate myself before Her as a human person; and there is another process growing — the aspiration for the Highest, the Supreme. Of course, She knows it all because She sees me all the time and Her emanation is with me continuously. She knows that in my most inner being I want only the Highest and that I can do without the rest, that — strange to say — I even want already to do without the rest if the “rest” should be coming from the emotional only. It was yesterday. I got upset seeing how She blessed the children who took part in the performance — one by one they were coming and kneeling

before Her with their heads at Her feet. You know that this is the Indian way of greeting the parents. But for me it was more and so, inwardly, I became like a crying child who was not allowed to prostrate itself before Her. I lost my balance — as Sri Aurobindo says — for some time, but after an hour She gave me peace and equality again. I just gave it all up to Her. And when I came home after supper and started my “meditation”, which is rather talking to Her (I do it on my knees), I suddenly felt Her hands on my head and She blessed me. And this was when I was no more thinking of it, only feeling grateful for all She gives me. But I know why She granted it to me. I have often such intuitive feelings. The longing of my emotional centre was in a way pure — I did not want to grab, to possess Her, but to give myself to Her only. And in this act She purified also a lot that was still lying around in my emotional centre from olden times.

\* \* \*

21.3.1958

Before I forget, I want to give you a picture of the purely human aspect of the Morning Darshan. It is not always so bad, but often children — I mean Ashram children — come also and while waiting until Mother comes they amuse themselves as they can; some laugh or play with the dogs that also come and participate in the Darshan. Dogs bark of course and sometimes bite each other. When a party of people come to Pondicherry from the country or another town, there is a lot of noise and quarrelling with the rickshaw men about the price. You may also see that in the middle of the street where we stand a beggar has settled down with all his belongings, or maybe it is a pilgrim or a “yogi”, nobody knows. Lately there was one like that who stayed for some days. He never got up, but quietly sat during Darshan with all of us around him. You may also see one or two ladies dressed according to the latest Paris fashion standing near some old sadhaks with white beards and naked breasts. Some wives of sadhaks gossip and chatter, some men talk, many sit comfortably on the pavement under the balcony staring at us or meditating (?) until the last moment. They get up in a rush or flutter when She appears. Then there are the late-comers and some want to reach their usual places instead of standing aside. And in the midst of all these movements you see people completely immersed in meditation, waiting for Her, vigilant, not caring in the least for what is going on around them. It was not very easy at the beginning, but now I also do not care — even if my neighbour touches me every few seconds with his elbow, looking at his watch, and from the other side a deep bass greets his friend. Now it is like magic. The world disappears when I come under the balcony, even if it is ten or fifteen minutes before Darshan. Of course, during Darshan there is complete silence. You hear only crows. There were two who used to come regularly

— and some other birds and from time to time a dog. But all this is something in another world, of no importance — and my being drinks the Grace.

Have you got the *Bulletin* and *Mother India* already? There are some very helpful truths and teachings of the Mother in the last numbers that freed me of many a burden and hypnosis. Especially when She says that the Supramental Force is acting already in the atom, in the cells. It helps me to drop the thoughts of illness. I find now that all our mind is an awful burden and I ask Her continuously to free me. I feel that the mind prevents me from having a really pure, simple relationship with Her, to depend only on Her — and nothing more! Also in the *Advent* of 1952, 1953 and 1954 are wonderful talks based on Mother's teachings.

During the last days my heart trouble came back and suggestions that it is because of the physical exercises and that I should stop them. The day before yesterday the pain became more acute and again I could learn that She is in the pain. Oh, sometimes I just cannot express what happiness it gives, this nearness and closeness of Hers. And I learned and loved Her in that pain and the pain changed into happiness. I had my exercises immediately after and I did not give in to any suggestions. It was the first time that I could do all the running without a break for a rest. And the fatigue which She later takes away from us, was much less than usual. I begin to see that this world of ignorance is much less powerful than what it looks like — when we once begin to see its weakness.

My "garden" is already arranged. The gardener and I became good friends, which She probably wanted. I learned from him that even with lazy servants, one can demand a greater effort from them than I expected. We now have ferns under two palms and a bush in the middle and smaller ferns and greens all over in a pattern. No flowers on the plot because there is not enough sunshine. It is wonderfully shady. The flower-garden is in the flower-pots and it will be still bigger.

On Wednesday She spoke of the hypertension in the whole world and of the concentration of all the Asuric forces on the earth — so it is no wonder that you feel these waves. Did you read the talk of Hers in the *Bulletin* where She mentions Her protection over all who are earnestly on the path? There She also says that here in Pondicherry we cannot breathe without breathing Her consciousness! Today, after a long time, there is a distribution in the playground. It is something glorious to know that after a few hours I shall be looking into the eyes of God. Oh! I shall try to open all the corners of my being so that She can see everything. Maybe it should not make a difference, but still I am so happy that I shall be near Her — legally so to say, without pushing myself.

I wanted also to describe for you the life at the playground. Michèle says — and very rightly — that it reminds her of a Forum Romanum. We stand or sit or walk, silently or talking. There is complete freedom. Until 7 p.m. there are physical exercises only and from 7 p.m. those sadhaks who do not belong to the groups can also enter. Children also run around and older boys and girls. Many are on the flat

roof-terraces. Some stand in front of the open reception room of the Mother, meditating; as long as there is no light in the room it can be done; later, when there is light, it means that She is coming from a back room to receive people — then it should not be done, but the magnetic power is so great that people cannot control themselves. The most interesting thing is the “double life” that is going on. Somebody walks, for example, but he is really doing hard inner work or is so immersed in Her Love that you can see it from his face. There are some sitting cross-legged along the walls; many have their chosen places where they always sit. A group of children sing, I hear somebody accompanying them on the piano.

\* \* \*

23.3.1958

I am so happy today, so very happy. My mind has quieted down since yesterday evening. She gave me peace. It was at first a kind of void but now it is the peace of a child. I do not worry. I do not think if this or that was wrong or not, I just trust Her and learn to love Her. She is my only refuge. I try to give to Her every little thing I am doing, thinking or feeling. This might be “work” for years, but something decisive has happened. Oh, it is as if I have already once written this to you — but now it is much more concrete — it is as if somebody was freeing me from the burden of centuries. I have never realised before how harmful the mind can be. Of course, it had its value in the development of the individual ego, but now it is like putting down a heavy rucksack in the mountains beside the lake and sighing with happiness. And it is so much easier to feel humility and go on deepening it. Nothing in me questions or reasons — I just prostrate myself before God and aspire to learn to be nothing. Life seems to have become so simple; just to go on giving myself and aspiring and rejecting — all the work of purification she is doing Herself. All this is so clearly said in Sri Aurobindo’s *The Mother*, but before so many things escaped me or I felt them differently or the mind simply prevented them from being felt.

\* \* \*

24.3.1958

The self-giving is now more generous and free — as She wants it. The difference is that before while giving to Her, while offering my acts or feelings or thoughts, I looked at them and then I gave them to Her. Now I just look up to Her and try to learn to grasp all and throw it up in a large, free sweep — everything that comes. It must be like a stream flowing to God, like an inundation that sweeps everything with it. I feel it. The discernment of wrong movements is also there — it must be —

and their rejection, but it is as if included in the main movement towards Her. Since the mind bothers me less I realise it all more and more clearly. When I think that I have been here only three months and that every single moment She creates my being anew, I can only prostrate myself before Her with ardent gratitude and humility.

After I had written the first part of this letter to you there came *tamas*, inertia, unconsciousness, etc. and so much nonsense in thinking that even a few days ago it would have upset me. And now — Oh! I am so grateful, so grateful — all my being takes the attitude as if of soaring up (not running away) to Her and with both my hands I take all this nonsense with me without looking at it too much.

I wanted to explain two things I have written earlier. It is very difficult to describe the Ashram. My last description of *sadhaks* concerned only the dining room and mainly their manners there. I also once said that I tremble while cooking. It is a special kind of trembling — maybe it should be called differently — it is just this feeling that it is for Her, that She is there, that She is working in me — and all this together creates a zeal and concentration and longing to do the work, to cook the meat as perfectly as possible (my patient gets meat).

And now here is the continuation of the playground-life description. In a corner or in the midst of people, an old, very old *sadhak* practises his physical exercises. He does not care a penny and nobody looks at him. He has a skipping rope and goes on. There will be mass exercises but I do not take part in them. I only take part in group exercises between 7.30 and 8 p.m. — just to open another door for Her — as I have told you. On the benches on the opposite side *vis-à-vis* Mother's room sit the visitors or wives of *sadhaks* mostly. These have also their corner beside the benches where they sit on towels, cushions, etc. It is a bit of a gossip corner.

*(To be continued)*

JANINA STROKA

*(A Captive of Her Love* by Janina Stroka edited by Michèle Lupsa,  
Published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1998)

*The Self is never affected by any kind of pain. The psychic takes it quietly and offers it to the Divine for what is necessary to be done.*

*Sri Aurobindo*

*(Letters on Yoga, SABCL, Vol. 24, p. 1580)*

## THE LUMINOUS PAST

(Continued from the issue of December 2012)

RIGHT after I joined the boarding, the children began to present a cultural programme on the occasion of Durga Puja a few days after the date of the puja. Nolini-da used to be the chief guest. He encouraged the children to put on a programme once a year. He was very fond of listening to recitations from Sri Aurobindo's *Durga Stotra* and the Mother's *Prayers and Meditations*. The children would present dances and songs. They would also enact some play. This was part of their school activities. We used to arrange photographs of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo on the verandah and decorate the place with ornamental designs on the floor and there were flower pots. I used to place a chair on the lawn. The children stood on the terrace and watched the cultural programme. Nolini-da and Amrita-da used to come.

After Jatin-da's passing I lost all my enthusiasm and could not work on any programmes for two years. In November 1967, during the school holidays which last for a month and a half, I saw that only four children in the boarding had gone out. My pupils from the School had not left either. On 5<sup>th</sup> November, I told Bharati-di that for the 1<sup>st</sup> December programme at the theatre, on the occasion of the anniversary of the School, I wanted my pupils to enact a short piece written by the Mother. She spoke about my wish to the Mother. On Wednesday morning, Nolini-da sent word that I should go and see him immediately. I rushed to him. As soon as he saw me, he said, "You may present a programme for 1<sup>st</sup> December with the participation of the children, based on something written by the Mother. The Mother has given her permission. Today is Wednesday the 7<sup>th</sup>. Next Sunday, after 10.30, the children should come here and show me what they have prepared. If I am satisfied, they can participate in the 1<sup>st</sup> December programme."

On Wednesday evening, I went to Bharati-di with the Mother's book. When she heard that the Mother had given her permission, she said happily, "Come, let us choose a small story from the Mother's book." We chose the Mother's story, *Les Vertus*. This short story is extraordinarily beautiful.

A beautiful palace was built for all the celestial divine beings. In this beautiful palace, one day, these divine beings decided to hold a gathering. All of them assembled in this great celebration. These divine beings all knew one other. Suddenly, a new divinity, wearing very simple clothes on her slim body presented herself very shyly at the entrance of this joyous assembly. Everyone was busy at that time. *Generosity* was distributing flowers to her friends. *Sincerity* was spreading her light everywhere. Then *Courage* blocked the path of the newcomer at the gate. *Prudence*, after consulting the others, came to the gate and with a sweet smile requested this

new guest to come in. Then everyone moved forward, very surprised. No one had ever seen this new divinity in any other gathering before. *Prudence*, very humbly and hesitatingly said in a sad tone, “We are all very eager to know who you are.” The newly-arrived guest replied regretfully with a sigh, “Alas, I am a total stranger on the earth. I am *Gratitude*.”

We chose this story to be enacted on stage. Bharati-di said, “You can make the children of the boarding learn their parts by heart. There will be many learned people in the audience. Only a few children will be given roles. According to their capacities, give them rehearsals twice a day. On Sunday morning bring them to me. I will correct their pronunciation. At 10.30, take them to Nolini.” I did as I was told. Nolini-da considered everything and said, “It’s fine. This play will be performed on 1<sup>st</sup> December, for the School’s anniversary, at the Theatre Hall. Come back to me after fifteen days, on Sunday, at the same time, to see how they have progressed in their preparation.”

Bharati-di and I used to take the children three times a week to the Theatre Hall for rehearsals. The play was ready very quickly for the presentation. Fifteen days later, Nolini-da saw the acting once again. He said, “That’s all right. It is good. The last rehearsal will be on the 29<sup>th</sup> November at the Theatre Hall. Amrita and I will go there. Photographs will be taken on that day. Krishnalal will provide the backdrops. The lighting will be done by Vishwanath.”

The Mother informed everyone. The children were photographed with Nolini-da and Amrita-da in their stage costumes. By costumes I mean *salwar-kameez* and flowers for ornaments. Their wrists and head were decorated with garlands of jasmine. I did not allow them to use any colours. The boys wore *dhotis* and *kurtas*. On 1<sup>st</sup> December, the performance was for the members of the Ashram, and on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, it was for the eminent guests of Pondicherry. After hearing the huge applause, the children were overwhelmed. This is called the Mother’s Grace.

The Mother called Bharati-di. Full of praise, she said she was very happy that her story had been so well enacted. Nolini-da called us. He told us that the anniversary of the boarding was coming up on the 9<sup>th</sup> so I should take the children to the Mother after the meditation around the Samadhi. On the appointed day, and at the time fixed, all of us together went up to the Mother’s room and stood before her. The Mother told her attendants, “You may leave. It will take me a while to finish with them.”

I was the first one to stand in front of the Mother. The Mother looked at me for a moment and said, “A few learned people who know French, and who came to me for *pranam*, have all said that *Les Vertus* was performed very beautifully. From now on, every year, for the 1<sup>st</sup> December programme, you may take something from my writing and train the children to put it up on stage at the Theatre Hall.” I had never harboured such a hope. Having received such a big opportunity from the Mother I expressed my gratitude inwardly. All this was thanks to Bharati-di. If she had not

been there, I would never have had the courage to take up such a difficult task.

After this, the Mother asked the children's names. She wanted to know who had done which role. She did not stop laughing as she looked at the toys they had brought for her. Jayashankar gave to the Mother his toy. She placed it on her lap and looked at it. Suddenly the toy jumped up. The Mother was startled and she held it very tightly. Vasudha was arranging the Mother's table a little distance away. She laughed and came running. She told the Mother, "Mother, this is a village farmer. He can play the drum." The Mother thrilled with joy. Vasudha told Jayashankar to wind up the toy fully and to place it in the middle of the Mother's room. The drummer began to move around the room, dancing, as he played on his drum. The Mother shook her head like a small child and exclaimed, "How wonderful! How wonderful! On 25<sup>th</sup> December, I will give this for the children's Christmas lottery."

Everyone joyously did their *pranams* to the Mother and having taken her blessings, waited. I did my *pranam*. After this, she picked up a large tin of chocolates which was kept beside her. She held it with both her hands. I too had to hold it with both my hands. Looking at everyone, the Mother said, "Goodbye, my children." When everybody had turned away, the Mother brought her face close to my ear and said, "Mind you, don't eat it all by yourself." What a sweet smile she had!

\*

In February 1968, Bharati-di told me, "The Mother's happiness knows no bounds. Today when she saw me, she told me, full of joy, 'My childhood dream is soon going to become a reality. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of this month, the foundation of that dream city will be laid. Nolini will be in charge of the foundation of Auroville. The sacred earth of all the official countries of the world will be brought by the boys and girls of those countries and will be mixed with the earth of Auroville. Nolini will preside over the foundation ceremony. Matrimandir will be built. There will be four chambers in the Matrimandir for the four powers of the Mother. The day Matrimandir will open its doors, streams of pilgrims like the waters of the tide will gather in Auroville from all over the world. Matrimandir will show the way to the path of the Truth. I have told the world that those who want to lead a life of freedom and peace can come and live in Auroville.'" On the Auroville foundation day there was such an atmosphere of peace that it reminded us of that day in 1960. On that day it seemed as if we were living in the Golden Age. The Mother had asked the whole Ashram to be decorated in golden cloth and golden light and made it look like a golden heaven. That day was "The day of the Lord". The ambrosial joy and peace of that day appeared on the screen of our minds on the Auroville foundation day. I have been to Auroville many times. One night I worked on the construction site of Matrimandir and received the *prasad* from Aurokitchen. Each time I experienced the atmosphere of a golden heaven.

\*

Now let me come back to the stories of the Ashram. I wasn't keeping very well after this. After the Durga Puja I had put on a small cultural programme with the children of the boarding. It was a small programme. This programme for the puja consisted of the recitation of Sri Aurobindo's *Durga Stotra*, one of Mother's prayers and a funny story by Rabindranath Tagore followed by some singing and music. It seemed this particular programme was not much to Nolini-da's liking. I was also of the same opinion. I asked Nolini-da what could be done in the future. He said encouragingly, "Things do not come out the same way every time. They will do well next time." I remained in hope for the next year.

\*

The following year Pavitra-da passed away after a long period of suffering. How the school was going to be run and what kind of rules and regulations there would be is what worried everybody. When Pavitra-da passed away, the Mother said that six hours before leaving, as he lay unconscious, he had very slowly, poured himself completely into her. The Mother's miraculous powers had made the impossible possible having found a worthy instrument. The responsibility of the School fell on André-da. In this connection, I had the opportunity to have a personal meeting with him on two occasions. His courtesy, way of speaking and manners will always remain stamped on my memory. I will come to all this a little later.

\*

After the passing of Pavitra-da, Amrita-da too became gradually weaker and weaker. One evening I entered his room and saw him quietly reclining in an easy chair in a corner of his office. He made a sign to me with his hand asking me to come closer. When I went near him, I realised that he was unwell. I was unsuccessful in trying to go away. He wanted to know why I had come to him. When he heard that he had to go and see the Mother for discussing a particular subject on my behalf, he said, "I have been forbidden to go upstairs. My heart is weak. I am not supposed to climb stairs. I will write and inform the Mother tomorrow. You will get the answer in the right time."

Then he told me something very touching, "You can take from my file the paper signed by the Mother. I have got Mother's signature on it so that your boarding remains under the care of Dr. Dasgupta."

I said, "Let it be for now. When I need it I will take it from you."

"I won't be there for long. My ticket has been booked," Amrita-da said.

Only Amrita-da could say such a hard truth in such a gentle manner. I stood silently for a moment then came out quietly. The next day Amrita-da sent me a note from the Mother on which was marked the permission to go and see her. A week

later, Amrita-da left us and found his place forever at the feet of Sri Aurobindo. The Mother said, “Amrita is still with all of us. His love and affection will not allow him to be far from us. He will come back on the earth with Sri Aurobindo. Not before that.” How fortunate was Amrita-da!

*(To be continued)*

PRAMILA DEVI

(Translated by Sunayana Panda from the original Bengali “*Ujwal Ateet*”)

*Change . . .*

1. *Hatred into harmony*
2. *Jealousy into generosity*
3. *Ignorance into knowledge*
4. *Darkness into light*
5. *Falsehood into truth*
6. *Wickedness into goodness*
7. *War into peace*
8. *Fear into fearlessness*
9. *Uncertainty into certainty*
10. *Doubt into faith*
11. *Confusion into order*
12. *Defeat into victory*

*The Mother*

*(Words of the Mother – III, CWM 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. 15, p. 223)*

*The world expresses a foreseen Truth, obeys a predetermining Will, realises an original formative self-vision, — it is the growing image of a divine creation.*

*Sri Aurobindo*

*(The Life Divine, CWSA, Vol. 21, p. 128)*

With Compliments from Well-wishers

Knowledge waits seated beyond mind and intellectual reasoning, throned in the luminous vast of illimitable self-vision.

Sri Aurobindo

*(The Life Divine, CWSA, Vol. 21, p. 129)*

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