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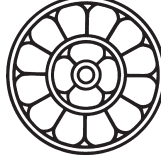
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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‘VISION DELIGHTFUL . . .’

Vision delightful alone on the hills whom the silences cover,
Closer yet lean to mortality; human, stoop to thy lover.
Wonderful, gold like a moon in the square of the sun where thou strayest
Glimmers thy face amid crystal purities; mighty thou playest
Sole on the peaks of the world, unafraid of thy loneliness. Glances
Leap from thee down to us, dream-seas and light-falls and magical trances;
Sun-drops flake from thy eyes and the heart’s caverns packed are with pleasure
Strange like a song without words or the dance of a measureless measure.
Tread through the edges of dawn, over twilight’s grey-lidded margin;
Heal earth’s unease with thy feet, O heaven-born delicate virgin.
Children of Time whose spirits came down from eternity, seizing
Joys that escape us, yoked by our hearts to a labour unceasing,
Earth-bound, torn with our longings, our life is a brief incompleteness.
Thou hast the stars to sport with, the winds run like bees to thy sweetness.
Art thou not heaven-bound even as I with the earth? Hast thou ended
All desirable things in a stillness lone and unfriended?
Only is calm so sweet? is our close tranquillity only?
Cold are the rivers of peace and their banks are leafless and lonely.
Heavy is godhead to bear with its mighty sun-burden of lustre.
Art thou not weary of only the stars in their solemn muster,
Sky-hung the chill bare plateaus and peaks where the eagle rejoices
In the inhuman height of his nesting, solitude’s voices
Making the heart of the silence lonelier? strong and untiring,
Deaf with the cry of the waterfall, lonely the pine lives aspiring.

SRI AUROBINDO
Opening lines of ‘Ahana’

(Collected Poems, CWSA, Vol. 2, p. 477)

A BEGINNING, NOT A COMPLETION

WHAT we are doing, if and when we succeed, will be a beginning, not a completion. It is the foundation of a new consciousness on earth — a consciousness with infinite possibilities of manifestation. The eternal progression is in the manifestation and beyond it there is no progression.

If the redemption of the soul from the physical vesture be the object, then there is no need of supramentalisation. Spiritual Mukti and Nirvana are sufficient. If the object is to rise to supraphysical planes, then also there is no need of supramentalisation. One can enter into some heaven above by devotion to the Lord of that heaven. But that is no progression. The other worlds are typical worlds, each fixed in its own kind and type and law. Evolution takes place on the earth and therefore the earth is the proper field for progression. The beings of the other worlds do not progress from one world to another. They remain fixed to their own type.

The purely monistic Vedantist says, all is Brahman, life is a dream, an unreality, only Brahman exists. One has Nirvana or Mukti, then one lives only till the body falls — after that there is no such thing as life.

They do not believe in transformation, because mind, life and body are an ignorance, an illusion — the only reality is the featureless, relationless Self or Brahman. Life is a thing of relations; in the pure Self, all life and relations disappear. What would be the use or the possibility of transforming an illusion that can never be anything else (however transformed) than an illusion? There is no such thing for them as a “Nirvanic life”.

It is only some Yogas that aim at a transformation of any kind except that of ignorance into knowledge. The idea varies, — sometimes a divine knowledge or power or else a divine purity or an ethical perfection or a divine love.

What has to be overcome is the opposition of the Ignorance that does not want the transformation of the nature. If that can be overcome, then old spiritual ideas will not form an obstacle.

It is not intended to supramentalise humanity at large, but to establish the principle of the supramental consciousness in the earth-evolution. If that is done, all that is needed will be evolved by the supramental Power itself. It is not therefore important that the mission should be widespread. What is important is that the thing should be done at all in however small a number; that is the only difficulty.

If the transformation of the body is complete, that means no subjection to death — it does not mean that one will be bound to keep the same body for all time. One creates a new body for oneself when one wants to change, but how it will be done cannot be said now. The present method is by physical birth — some occultists suppose that a time will come when that is not necessary — but the question must

be left for the supramental evolution to decide.

The questions about the supermind cannot be answered profitably now. Supermind cannot be described in terms that the mind will understand, because the terms will be mental and mind will understand them in a mental way and mental sense and miss their true import. It would therefore be a waste of time and energy which should be devoted to the preliminary work — psychicisation and spiritualisation of the being and nature without which no supramentalisation is possible. Let the whole dynamic nature led by the psychic make itself full of the dynamic spiritual light, peace, purity, knowledge, force; let it afterwards get experience of the intermediate spiritual planes and know, feel and act in their sense; then it will be possible to speak last of the supramental transformation.

*

All that [*ideas such as “everything will soon be spiritualised”*] is absurd. The descent of the supramental means only that the Power will be there in the earth consciousness as a living force just as the thinking mental and the higher mental are already there. But an animal cannot take advantage of the presence of the thinking mental Power or an undeveloped man of the presence of the higher mental Power — so too everybody will not be able to take advantage of the presence of the supramental Power. I have also often enough said that it will be at first for the few, not for the whole earth, — only there will be a growing influence of it on the earth life.

*

It [*the world*] wants and it does not want something that it has not got. All that the supramental could give, the inner mind of the world would like to have, but its outer mind, its vital and physical do not like to pay the price. But after all I am not trying to change the world all at once but only to bring down centrally something into it it has not yet, a new consciousness and power.

*

[*Will cosmic Mind, Life and Matter be transformed?*]

Not in their entirety — for that is not our business. It is ourselves that we have to transform and change the earth consciousness by bringing in the supramental principle into the evolution there. Once there it will necessarily have a powerful influence on the whole earth-life — as mind has had through the evolution of men, but much greater.

*

It is not possible for a force like the Supramental to come down without making a large change in earth conditions. It does not follow that all will become supramentalised and it is not necessary — but mind itself will be influenced as life has been influenced by the development of mind on earth.

*

Nothing permanent can be done without the real Supramental Force. But the result of its descent would be that in human life intuition would become a greater and more developed force than it now is and the other intermediate powers between Mind and Supermind would become also more common and develop an organised action.

*

It is not for considerations of gain or loss that the Divine Consciousness acts — that is a human standpoint necessary for human development. The Divine, as the Gita says, has nothing to gain and nothing that it has not, yet it puts forth its power of action in the manifestation. It is the earth-consciousness, not the supramental world that has to gain by the descent of the supramental principle — that is sufficient reason for it to descend. The supramental worlds remain as they are and are in no way affected by the descent.

*

It [*the descent of the Supermind*] would not necessarily be known by everybody beforehand. Besides even if the descent were here one would have to be ready before one could get the final change.

*

It is the supermind we have to bring down, manifest, realise. Anything higher than that is impossible at this stage of the evolution except as a reflection in the consciousness or a power delegated and modified in its descent.

*

The descent of the Supramental can hasten things, but it is not going to act as a patent universal medicine or change everything in the twinkling of an eye.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Letters on Yoga – I*, CWSA, Vol. 28, pp. 288-92)

SRI AUROBINDO'S LETTERS ON THE MOTHER

(Continued from the issue of March 2013)

SECTION THREE

THE MOTHER AND THE PRACTICE OF THE INTEGRAL YOGA

Opening, Sincerity and the Mother's Grace

The Meaning of Opening

What is real opening?

It is the receptivity to the Mother's presence and her forces.

What is the right and perfect rule of opening?

Aspiration, quietude, widening of oneself to receive, rejection of all that tries to shut you to the Divine.

How shall I know that I am opening to the Mother and not to other forces?

You have to be vigilant and see that there is no movement of disturbance, desire, ego.

What are the signs of a real opening to the Mother?

That shows itself at once — when you feel the divine peace, equality, wideness, light, Ananda, Knowledge, strength, when you are aware of the Mother's nearness or presence or the working of her Force, etc., etc. If any of these things are felt, it is the opening — the more are felt, the more complete the opening.

What is the way to open all the knots of the being?

By aspiration, by consent of the being to the workings of the Divine Force, by the descent and working of that Force.

25 April 1933

What does “opening” mean? Is it “not to keep anything secret from the Mother”?

That is the first step towards opening.

17 June 1933

*

How does one “open”?

By faith and surrender in a quiet mind.

18 June 1933

*

To be open is simply to be so turned to the Mother that her Force can work in you without anything refusing or obstructing her action. If the mind is shut up in its own ideas and refuses to allow her to bring in the Light and the Truth, if the vital clings to its desires and does not admit the true initiative and impulses that the Mother’s power brings, if the physical is shut up in its desire, habits and inertia and does not allow the Light and Force to enter in it and work, then one is not open. It is not possible to be entirely open all at once in all the movements, but there must be a central opening in each part and a dominant aspiration or will in each part (not in the mind alone) to admit only the Mother’s workings, the rest will then be progressively done.

28 October 1934

*

To remain open to the Mother is to remain always quiet and happy and confident, not restless, not grieving or desponding, to let her force work in you, guide you, give you knowledge, give you peace and Ananda. If you cannot keep yourself open, then aspire constantly but quietly that you may be open.

Opening to the Mother and the Integral Yoga

I cannot understand whether I am doing Yoga. Can it be said that I am doing your Purna Yoga?

Everyone who is turned to the Mother is doing my Yoga. It is a great mistake to suppose that one can "do" the Purna Yoga — i.e. carry out and fulfil all the sides of the Yoga by one's own effort. No human being can do that. What one has to do is to put oneself in the Mother's hands and open oneself to her by service, by bhakti, by aspiration; then the Mother by her light and force works in him so that the sadhana is done. It is a mistake also to have the ambition to be a big Purna Yogi or a supramental being and ask oneself how far have I got towards that. The right attitude is to be devoted and given to the Mother and to wish to be whatever she wants you to be. The rest is for the Mother to decide and do in you.

April 1929

*

I offer myself at your feet. Accept me as your child and show me the divine path. Give me directions and inform me what will be the attitude in my sadhana.

Write to him¹ that he can begin sadhana, if he feels truly the call. He need do nothing at first but sit in meditation for a short time every day and try to open himself to the Mother's power, aspiring for the opening, for a true change of consciousness, for peace, purity and strength to go through the sadhana, for her protection against all difficulties and errors and for an always increasing devotion. Let him see first if he can thus successfully open himself.

2 November 1929

*

Today at soup time I remained concentrated. I felt all kinds of eccentric movements rise up, but they were not in contact with the Mother. Sometimes when I concentrate to get contact with her force and touch, I feel that my head is becoming a solid block, compact, and that my mind has become a vacuum. But I think this prevents the opening and permits attacks from above when the consciousness goes below.

You write always as if all opening must be to the confused mental and vital movements, thoughts, voices etc. That is not so. You can be open in all your being, but to the Mother alone, to the Divine alone and to nothing else.

When the consciousness is filled with the Mother's force, then there is the condition you speak of as felt in the head — a solid block, compact, silent, free from all random thoughts and movements. But this can be felt not only in the head,

1. Written by Sri Aurobindo to his secretary, who replied to the enquirer. — Ed.

but in all the body and also in all the consciousness above, around and below the body. When it is like that then all foreign intrusions are either automatically excluded or if they come, easily observed and rejected as not one's own and not the Divine's. One feels full of the Divine, full of the Mother's force and presence so that nothing else can enter and misuse the mind, the vital or the body.

6 April 1931

*

Sita suffered without Rama, the Gopis without Krishna — how they longed for God! This will not happen to us because you and the Mother are here with us. If this is the Truth, why do we still feel dissatisfied at times? How to establish the Truth in the mind and vital so that we have an end to the feelings of dissatisfaction?

The Truth for you is to feel the Divine in you, open to the Mother and work for the Divine till you are aware of her in all your actions. The physical presence here is not enough; there must be this consciousness of the divine presence in your heart and the divine guidance in your acts. This the psychic being can easily, swiftly, deeply feel if it is fully awake; once the psychic has felt it, it can spread to the mental and vital also.

16 February 1932

*

The advantage of being in the psychic consciousness is that you have the right awareness and its will being in harmony with the Mother's will, you can call in the Mother's Force to make the change. Those who live in the mind and the vital are not so well able to do this; they are obliged to use mostly their personal effort and as the awareness and will and force of the mind and vital are divided and imperfect, the work done is imperfect and not definitive. It is only in the Supermind that Awareness, Will, Force are always one movement and automatically effective.

7 May 1932

*

You have only to aspire, to keep yourself open to the Mother, to reject all that is contrary to her will and to let her work in you — doing also all your work for her and in the faith that it is through her force that you can do it. If you remain open in this way the knowledge and realisation will come to you in due course.

15 May 1932

*

Keep yourself open to the Mother in the right attitude of surrender and you will receive from her gradually all that you need within you.

21 November 1932

*

I began work on this masonry project a month ago. At first I had only a general idea of the work. Then I got the necessary energy and interest. Now I think that the fourth aspect of the Mother — richness in detail, completeness, perfection — is coming. I await further suggestions.

It is very good. By remaining psychically open to the Mother, all that is necessary for work or sadhana develops progressively, that is one of the chief secrets, the central secret of the sadhana.

13 February 1933

*

There is no part of you that is not open, but you have to make the opening always wider and the reception more complete; but that too will be done progressively if you remember and call the Mother's force at all times and remain confident, vigilant and devoted, as you have been and are.

25 February 1933

*

Sri Aurobindo says in reply to your letter² that you can meditate on the Mother in the heart and call on her — remember her and dedicate or offer to her all your life and thoughts and actions. If you like you can make a japa of her name. You can call to her to purify your being and change your nature.

Or you can concentrate to call down from above you (where it always is) first her calm and peace, then her power and light and her ananda. It is always there above the head — but superconscient to the human mind — by aspiration and concentration it can become conscient to it and the adhar can open to it so that it descends and enters into mind, life and body.

14 March 1933

*

2. Written by Sri Aurobindo to his secretary, who replied to the enquirer. — Ed.

If a sadhak even after a long time cannot open himself fully and constantly to the Mother owing to great obstacles in his nature, will he die in the middle and not be accepted by the Mother?

There is no meaning in such a question. Those who follow the Yoga here are accepted by the Mother — for “accepted” means “admitted into the Yoga, accepted as disciples”. But the progress in the Yoga and the siddhi in the Yoga depend on the degree to which there is the opening.

24 June 1933

*

Keep open to the Mother — throw away the faults and defects of character you can change of yourself — allow the Mother’s power to work in you — then these difficulties can be made to disappear, the mind will open.

3 May 1934

*

A cloud surrounds me. Protect me and give me strength. Let me open completely to the Mother.

To be open to the Mother *entirely*, you should be open both within and without. You should be perfectly frank and tell her everything — do not shrink from showing to her candidly all that is within you. That will at once enable you to be completely open and her also to help you fully.

22 July 1934

*

I am not getting much time to sit down for meditation, but the calmness is maintained throughout my work. What should I do when I can make no time for meditation?

Keep yourself open, remember the Mother always — call for her help and guidance in your work. You must get into a condition in which not only the calmness remains always but the sadhana is going on all the time in work and rest as well as in meditation.

20 September 1934

*

I understand that once the Mother accepts us as disciples, we should simply go to her. One should not be miserable if one does not see her in the heart. One has only to remain with her in the Asram.

No, it is not enough to be in the Asram — one has to open to the Mother and put away the mud which one was playing with in the world.

25 September 1934

*

I could not decide whether to give up my present work or to change it. Then I thought I will leave the work in order to meditate. But I do not know what is good for me. You alone know everything.

It is a mistake to exercise the mind about these things and try to arrange them with the ordinary mind. It is by confidence in the Mother that the opening needed will come when your consciousness is ready. There is no harm in arranging your present work so that there will be time and energy for some meditation, but it is not by meditation alone that what is needed will come. It is by faith and openness to the Mother.

9 October 1934

*

Openness is not always complete from the first — a part of the being opens, other parts of the consciousness remain still closed or half open only — one has to aspire till all is open. Even with the best and most powerful sadhak the full opening takes time; nor is there anyone who has been able to abandon everything at once without any struggle. There is no reason to feel therefore that if you call, you will not be heard — the Mother knows the difficulties of human nature and will help you through. Persevere always, call always and then after each difficulty there will be a progress.

20 April 1935

*

What poise or mode should we keep for the supramental descent?

As for poise or mode — that you need not trouble yourself about. An entire faith, opening, self-giving to the Mother are the one condition necessary throughout.

23 September 1935

*

It seems to me that the best place for getting rid of wrong movements is the Asram, under the Mother's grace, help, protection and physical nearness.

That is only true if one can open oneself to the Mother. To be here and shut up to it and under another control does not help.

8 March 1936

*

That is what must be done. Trust in the Mother and will only to be open to her always and as quietly confident as may be. The work to be done is too great for the outer mind to understand how it is to be done; it is only by growing light and experience that one day it begins to understand — it is also too great and difficult for it to do by itself, — it can only help the Power that is working by its readiness, aspiration, faith, quietude. But in no sadhak are these things constant — the aspiration gets suspended, the faith wavers, the quietude is disturbed or shaken — but still the Mother is there at work and one has only to persevere, — finally the perseverance will be justified by the result. To give up is the one thing one must never do.

14 May 1936

*

That the mind is turning away more and more from outward things and the will to be turned wholly to the Mother is growing is very good, for that is the first necessity. The condition of being so turned and wholly open can then more easily develop. The two minutes' flash of opening showed you how it will come; for it comes like that, by glimpses at first of brief duration, but afterwards it grows in hold and duration till it is ready for permanence. It is a new birth in the nature and so it can't come all at once, but once begun it grows till it is perfect. Of course the more quiet the consciousness can remain in a steady way, the more the condition is favourable for this to be.

19 July 1936

*

The first thing one has to be careful not to do, is not to shut oneself in any way to the Mother. If one conceals what is happening in one from the Mother, something gets shut up. It is the mistake X has been making. Formerly she was quite open and unreserved and whenever there came a difficulty she got the full help. The Mother has told her to be perfectly open and hide nothing; if she does that, she will soon recover.

The Mother can not only know everything but do everything if she decides to do so — but if she did, where would be the sadhana? All would be only puppets moving in her hands. There are certain conditions which the sadhak must satisfy, and the Divine veils his power and knowledge so that the sadhak may have the occasion to love and will and think and act and grow into the true consciousness.

As for writing, the Mother has no time any longer, that is why she leaves it to me. X formerly used to tell the Mother to take full rest and not wear herself out etc. — how is it now she weeps because the Mother does not write? Her former attitude was the true one — she was in the psychic consciousness and always with the Mother's presence close to her.

*

In meditation you must call on the Mother and concentrate on the call in your heart till you feel an opening to her or some inner contact with her.

*

I cannot meditate, for when I sit many thoughts come in. Which path must I take, then, to advance and make it easier for the Mother to work in me?

If you cannot meditate, pray. Offer all you do to the Mother and pray to her to take control of your actions and your nature. Love and worship. What is needed is to get a full opening in which you will become conscious of the Mother. These things will bring the opening. Only, even if it takes time, you must not get depression, despair or revolt — for these things get into the way of the opening.

*

The whole thing is to keep yourself open to the Mother. The preparation of the nature for the decisive experiences always takes time and should be a continuous self-opening without discouragement or impatience for immediate results.

*

Confidence in the Mother followed by a full opening to her is the best way.

*

O Mother, how long will you remain far from me? Am I not your child?

The Mother is never far from you. If you keep open, you will always feel her with you.

*

My sweet Mother, let me live in you.

Keep open to the Mother's peace and joy — by living in it you will come to live in her.

*

Am I right in believing that Mother will do everything for me?

Yes, but it must be done with your inner assent and you must take the right attitude and openness to the Mother.

*

Mother, how can one always receive Ananda from you?

By thinking less and less of oneself and more and more of the Divine.

Mother, how can I open myself to you?

By quieting the mind and vital, by concentrating more on the Mother and by calling for her Force to enter and work in the being.

Mother, why is one harmed when one enters into relation with someone?

It is because one receives mental and vital influences from others and some of these are harmful.

Lord, when will all my undesirable activities be abolished and only daivic activities remain? That is to say, when will I behave only as the Mother wants?

When the psychic being comes in the front.

Mother, how can one develop the buddhi?

The ordinary way is to read and study or to observe and try to understand all things; the sadhak's way is to open his mind to the light from above.

Loyalty and Fidelity

If an adverse Force comes, one has not to accept and welcome its suggestions, but to turn to the Mother and refuse to turn away from her. Whether one can open or not, one has to be loyal and faithful. Loyalty and fidelity are not qualities for which one has to do Yoga; they are very simple things which any man or woman who aspires to the Truth ought to be able to accomplish.

21 April 1937

The Psychic and Opening

When I opened myself to the Mother in meditation, I saw her approaching me with an infant in her arms. As she came near, the golden Purusha frowned at her and she drew back behind you. I have seen this vision several times. What am I to do? You fill my whole being but, despite opening myself to the Mother, she is not allowed to approach me.

The infant in the Mother's arms is the symbol of the psychic being. The soul in direct touch with the divine Truth is hidden in man by the mind, the vital being and the physical nature (*manas, prāṇa, anna* of the Taittiriya Upanishad); one may practise Yoga and get illuminations in the mind and the reason, power and all kinds of experiences in the vital, even physical siddhis, but if the true soul-power behind and the psychic nature do not come into the front, nothing genuine has been done. In this Yoga, the psychic being is that which opens the rest of the nature to the true supramental light and finally to the supreme Ananda. If the soul is awakened, if there is a new birth out of the mere mental, vital and physical into the psychic consciousness, then the Yoga can be done; otherwise (by the mere power of the mind or any other part) it is impossible. It is this new birth, this awakening of the psychic consciousness, that the Mother is offering in the vision. If the golden Purusha refuses it, it must be because he is bound by some kind of attachment, probably to mere "knowledge". In that case, he is not very consistent; for it was he who demanded surrender to the Mother and now he rejects the very heart and meaning of the surrender. Probably this repeated experience is an indication of the principal difficulty in the sadhana. If there is refusal of the psychic new birth, a refusal to become the

child new born from the Mother, owing to attachment to intellectual knowledge or mental ideas or to some vital desire, then there will be a failure in the sadhana. Only if it is accepted, can his coming and doing sadhana here be fruitful.

26 November 1929

*

Keep yourself open to the Mother's Force, but do not trust all forces. As you go on, if you keep straight, you will come to a time when the psychic becomes more predominantly active and the Light from above prevails more purely and strongly so that the chance of mental constructions and vital formations mixing with the true experience diminishes. As I have told you, these are not and cannot be the supra-mental Forces; it is a work of preparation which is only making things ready for a future Yoga-siddhi.

18 September 1932

*

What is the conscious way to bring the psychic to the front? Does awakening of the psychic being mean its coming to the front?

No. Awakening is a different thing, it means the conscious action of the psychic from behind. When it comes to the front it invades the mind and vital and body and psychicises their movements. It comes best by aspiration and an unquestioning and entire turning and surrender to the Mother. But also it sometimes comes of itself when the Adhar is ready.

5 May 1933

*

Is our inner being already open to the Mother or does it open in the course of the sadhana?

The inner being does not open except by sadhana or by some psychic touch on the life.

30 November 1933

*

When I think of the Mother's compassion, I start weeping with gratefulness. Never before in my life have I felt so much affection. If my mind is a bit quiet, will I be able to feel her help?

Yes, it is by quieting the mind that you will become able to call the Mother and open to her. The soothing effect was a touch from the psychic — one of the touches that prepare the opening of the psychic with its gift of inner peace, love and joy.

17 September 1934

*

Today again after pranam there were some vital dissatisfactions. But they have a great effect on the heart which has now begun to open to the Mother.

Get rid of these dissatisfactions, they prevent the permanent psychic opening.

29 September 1934

*

The heart is beginning to open to the Mother, but it is still easily touched by lower vital suggestions. That is probably why the vital is not always happy with the way the Mother deals with me at pranam.

What the psychic always feels is "What the Mother does is for the best", and it accepts all with gladness. It is the vital part of the heart that is easily touched by the suggestions.

29 September 1934

*

I am not sure whether a direct psychic opening could have been done in my case without any difficulty.

The direct opening of the psychic centre is easy only when the ego-centricity is greatly diminished and also if there is a strong bhakti for the Mother. A spiritual humility and sense of submission and dependence is necessary.

16 July 1936

Sincerity

This child of the Mother is so unworthy. Only she knows when the child will be fit to have a place in her lap.

There is only one thing needed to make anyone fit for the Mother's grace — it is a perfect sincerity and a truthful openness to the Mother in all the being.

2 February 1934

*

I see many defects in my nature — for instance my tendency to get angry and to argue. I request the Mother to change all this, for it is in her hands to transform me.

It depends not only on the will of the Mother but on the sincerity of the sadhak. I do not see that you have any sincere will to do Yoga or to change.

13 July 1934

*

X once said to the Mother that if the sincerity was perfect there would be transformation in a day; to this the Mother replied "Yes". I do not understand how that could be possible — a long process of conversion of consciousness compressed into one day's work. Perhaps the Mother said yes to emphasise the importance of sincerity.

By sincerity Mother meant being open to no influence but the Divine's only. Now, if the whole being were sincere in that sense even to every cell of the body, what could prevent the most rapid transformation? People cannot be like that, however much the enlightened part of them may want to, because of the nature of the Ignorance out of which the ordinary Prakriti has been built — hence the necessity of a long and laborious working.

26 July 1934

*

Why do people often say that this Yoga is a very arduous one, full of difficulties and obstacles? One who is sincere and open exclusively to the Divine Mother would not believe this. It is difficult only for those who refuse to take her as their all.

Of course; but most do not find it easy to take the Mother as their all.

22 March 1935

*

We are told the Mother can act best if a sadhak is sincere. But what is meant by this?

What is meant by sincere sadhana? In the Mother's definition of sincere, it means "opening only to the Divine Forces", i.e. rejecting all the others even if they come.

21 April 1936

The Mother's Grace

Do calm and equality come down from above by the Mother's Grace?

When they descend, it is by the soul's aspiration and the Mother's grace.

*

The Mother's grace is there always; open yourself to it in quietude and confidence.

*

I don't feel Mother's grace as before. Sometimes I get the suggestion that I am not fit for her service and for Yoga.

What is all this nonsense? The grace of the Mother does not withdraw; open yourself and you will feel it.

1 May 1929

*

The presence whose fading he regrets can only be felt if the inner being continues to be consecrated and the outer nature is put into harmony or at least kept under the touch of the inner spirit. But if he does things which his inner being does not approve, this condition will be inevitably tarnished and, each time, the possibility of his feeling the presence will diminish. He must have a strong will to purification and an aspiration that does not flag and cease, if the Mother's grace is to be there and effective.

6 May 1930

*

To practise Yoga implies the will to overcome all attachments and turn to the Divine alone. The principal thing in the Yoga is to trust in the Divine Grace at every step, to direct the thought continually to the Divine and to offer oneself till the being opens and the Mother's force can be felt working in the Adhara.

26 July 1932

*

When a sadhak feels the Mother's Grace coming down in him, is it by the consent of the Purusha in him?

What do you mean "by the consent"? The Mother's Grace comes down by the Mother's will. The Purusha can accept or reject the Grace.

22 April 1933

*

Is there any law of the working of the Mother's Grace?

The more one develops the psychic, the more is it possible for the Grace to act.

13 August 1933

*

Is the Mother's Grace always general?

Both general and special.

8 February 1934

*

How to receive what the Mother gives generally?

You have only to keep yourself open and whatever you need and can receive at the moment will come.

10 February 1934

*

Some like me have exceptionally great imperfections and defects. We have no claim for any Yoga, much less for the Integral Yoga. Sheerly out of her care and grace, the Mother has managed to keep us here; but the only return we have given is to tire her out.

It is so — if the sadhaks had been different in their reaction to the Mother's grace, the work in the physical would have been much easier and less perilously subject to hostile attacks; perhaps it would have been done by now.

12 July 1936

Opening and Presence

Make yourself quiet and open — have complete confidence and you will feel the Mother's presence with you.

9 October 1933

*

It is by the constant remembrance that the being is prepared for the full opening. By the opening of the heart the Mother's presence begins to be felt and by the opening to her Power above the Force of the higher consciousness comes down into the body and works there to change the whole nature.

7 August 1934

*

The Mother says, "Keep yourself always open to me" and "I am always with you and around you." How am I to feel her presence always? Also, what does "conscious" mean and how does one become conscious?

The Divine Mother is everywhere and at all times she is with you. If one opens and becomes conscious, then one can feel her presence. It is because the nature is ignorant, full of itself and its desires that one cannot feel the presence. If one turns from self and desires and lives inwardly and outwardly for the Divine, then one begins to feel the divine Presence.

*

The condition you describe is a very good one and it is evident from it that you opened sincerely to the Mother when you met her. Keep that sincere opening always and eventually a state of peace and joy and the sense of the Mother's presence will become permanent.

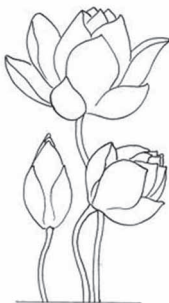
*

My dear Mother, peace in my vital, peace in my heart, peace everywhere.

Let the vital and the heart open always to the Mother's presence — the true source of peace.

SRI AUROBINDO

(The Mother with Letters on the Mother, CWSA, Vol. 32, pp. 150-68)



‘NOW ALL IS CHANGED . . . ’

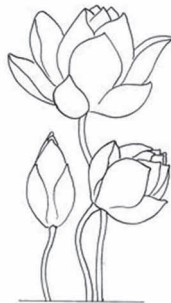
April 1, 1914

I FEEL we have entered the very heart of Thy sanctuary and grown aware of Thy very will. A great joy, a deep peace reign in me, and yet all my inner constructions have vanished like a vain dream and I find myself now, before Thy immensity, without a frame or system, like a being not yet individualised. All the past in its external form seems ridiculously arbitrary to me, and yet I know it was useful in its own time.

But now all is changed: a new stage has begun.

THE MOTHER

(Prayers and Mediations, CWM 2nd Ed., Vol. 1, p. 114)



‘CONSCIOUSNESS IN *ONE* BODY AND THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF ALL’

A question has been put. I translate it: “While describing her experiences of last August and September, the Mother spoke of the exclusion of the mind and the vital. Why must they be eliminated for a rapid and effective transformation of the body? Does not the supramental consciousness act upon them also?”

CERTAINLY it acts, it has *already* acted for a long time. It is because the body is accustomed — was accustomed — to obeying the vital and particularly the mind, and therefore this was in order to change its habit, so that it would obey only the higher consciousness. It is for that, so that the thing would go faster. In people it is through the mind and the vital that That acts, but I have said it was also more sure. As an experience this is rather risky. But it increases the tempo considerably, for normally one has to act upon the body through the other two, whereas in this way, when the two are not there, That acts directly. That’s all.

The procedure is not recommended! Each time the occasion arises, I repeat it; people should not imagine that they should try it (they would not be able to do so, but that does not matter), it is not recommended. One must take the necessary time. It was only because of the mounting years . . . so that it would go quicker.

(Silence)

What is curious is that there are, as it were, demonstrations of the natural tendency of the body (I suppose it is not the same for all bodies: it depends upon how the body has been built, that is to say, father, mother, antecedents, etc.) a demonstration of the body left to itself. For example, this one has a kind of imagination (it is something queer), a dramatic imagination: all the time it has the feeling that it is living through catastrophes; and then, with the faith it always has, the catastrophe is transformed into a realisation — absurd things like that. So for a time, it is left to this imagination (this is what has happened these days) and when it is completely tired of this stupid activity, it prays, yes, with all its intensity, so that the thing may stop. Immediately, just that, hop! it does this (*gesture*), it turns around straightaway and goes into a contemplation — not distant, but quite close — of this wonderful Presence that is everywhere.

It is like this, like this (*Mother quickly turns two fingers*), it does not take time, there is no preparation or anything; it is hop! hop! in this way (*same gesture*), as though to show the stupidity of the body. It is something altogether idiotic, like a demonstration through evidence of the stupidity of the body left to itself, and then

of this wonderful Consciousness that comes, in which all that vanishes . . . like something which has no consistency, no reality, and which vanishes. And like a proof that it is not merely in the imagination, but that it is in the *fact*: proof of the power so that all this . . . vain dream of life as it is (which has become for the consciousness of this body something so frightful) can be changed into a wonder, like this, simply by the reversal of the consciousness.

The experience is repeated in all the details, in all the domains, as a demonstration through fact. And it is not a “long process” of transformation, it is as though something is reversed all of a sudden (*Mother turns two fingers*), and instead of seeing ugliness, falsehood, suffering and all that, suddenly it lives in bliss. And all the things are the same, nothing has moved, except the consciousness.

And so there remains (it is what lies in front, what is probably coming): how is the experience to be translated materially? . . . For the body itself, it is quite evident: during, say, one hour, or two or three, it suffered much, it was quite miserable (not a moral suffering, an altogether physical suffering), and then all of a sudden, brfff! all gone! . . . The body apparently has remained the same (*Mother looks at her hands*) in its appearance, but in place of an inner disorder which makes it suffer, everything is going well and there is a great peace, a great calm, and everything is going well. But this, it is for *one* body — how does it act upon others? It begins to notice the possibility in other consciousnesses. From the moral point of view (that is to say, in respect to attitudes and character and reactions), it is quite visible; even from the physical point of view sometimes: all of a sudden something disappears — as we had the experience when Sri Aurobindo removed a pain (*gesture as if a hand comes and takes away the pain*): one wondered . . . “Ah! gone, vanished, like that.” But it is not constant, not general, it is only to show that it can be so, by the fact that it is so in one case or another, to show that it can be like that.

One might say it in this way: the body has the feeling that it is imprisoned within something — yes, imprisoned — imprisoned as though in a box, but it sees through; it sees and it can also act (in a limited way) through something which is still there and which must disappear. This “something” gives the feeling of an imprisonment. How is it to disappear? That I do not know yet.

One has to find the relation between the consciousness in *one* body and the consciousness of all. And to what extent there is dependence and to what extent there is independence, that is to say, up to what point the body can be transformed in its consciousness (and as a result, necessarily, in its appearance) without . . . without the transformation of all — up to what point? And to what extent the transformation of all is necessary for the transformation of one body. This remains to be discovered.

(Silence)

If one were to tell everything, it would take hours. . . .

But this “box” you spoke of, it is a universal box . . .

Yes!

I have often had the feeling that all these so-called human laws or “natural” laws are merely an immense morbid imagination collectively fixed — that is the box.

Yes, exactly so, exactly so.

Then, how . . .

Yes, to what extent can an individual light act upon that? . . . There is the problem. . . . I do not know.

(Silence)

The vision is very clear, of the collective progress (our field of experience is the earth) that has taken place upon earth; but considering the past, it would seem that a formidable time is still needed for all to be ready to change. . . . And yet, it is almost a promise that . . . there is going to be a sudden change (which is translated in our consciousness as a “descent”, an action that “happens”, something that was not acting till now and which has begun to act — in our consciousness, it is translated in that way).

We shall see.

For the body itself, there is a growing experience, that is to say, a more and more precise experience *at the same time* of its fragility (extreme fragility: just a little movement could stop the present existence), and at the same time, at the same time, simultaneously, the sense of an eternity! — that there is an eternal existence. The two at the same time.

It is truly a period of transition!

(Silence)

Once or twice, when the body’s . . . what one might call its agony to know, was very intense, when it had the full sense of the Presence, this sense of the Presence everywhere, inside, everywhere (*Mother touches her face, her hands*), it asked how (not even why, it had no such curiosity), how could there be the present disorder? Well, when it was very intense, very intense, once or twice it had the feeling: once

this is found out, it is immortality. Then it begins thus to push, to push in order to catch the secret, it has the feeling that it is going to be found. . . . And then there is a kind of lull in the aspiration: “Peace, peace, peace . . .” Yes, once or twice the impression: “Oh! It is about to be understood” (“understood”, that is to say, *lived*; it is not “understood” with the thought: *lived*) and then . . . (*gesture of escape*). And a Peace which comes down.

But the feeling: it will be tomorrow. But tomorrow, which tomorrow? Not tomorrow according to our measure.

We shall see.

But the experiences are innumerable, with all the aspects. It would take hours and still one always has the feeling that the word, well, falsifies something. It is no longer so simple, no longer so beautiful, and no longer so clear. It becomes complicated.

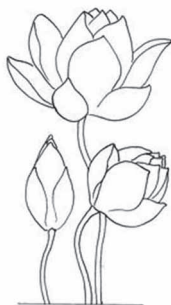
The body has absolutely wonderful moments; it has *hours* of agony. And all of a sudden, a wonderful moment. But that moment cannot be explained. . . . If one is to judge the degree of growth by the proportion of time, well . . . the wonderful moment lasts a few minutes, and there are hours of agony. There are even hours of suffering. And then if one judged the proportion accordingly, it is still very, very, very, extremely far away. . . .

But what is to be done? One has to go on, that is all.

21 December 1968

THE MOTHER

(*Notes on the Way*, CWM 2nd Ed., Vol. 11, pp. 143-47)



WHAT THE MOTHER ENDURED AND ACHIEVED FOR THE EARTH IN 1962

1

Introductory report¹

THE MOTHER was not well for some time in early 1962. But she kept on working. She even came to the Balcony now and again to give the morning Darshan as usual. But the 18th of March was the last day. After that, she fell seriously ill and did not come down from her room on the second floor.

She began to have heart-attacks. One day she had them twice in twenty-four hours. They were severe. A third followed the next day. Some time later she recounted to a disciple the experience connected with the heart-attacks. No definitive version is available, but the following account seems nearest the truth. She saw a huge being who looked exactly like Sri Aurobindo. This being asked her, "Will you surrender yourself to me?" The Mother, recognising that he was not Sri Aurobindo but an Asura, replied, "I surrender to the Lord. This body has been given over to His Supreme Will." It may be surmised that the pretending being started his hostile work against her and that Sri Aurobindo fought with him and saved her. The Mother remarked that the fight had been a crucial one in the course of the Integral Yoga.

A report has it that the same Asura in the shape of Sri Aurobindo appeared to a disciple and asked him to do Pranam to him. When the disciple was about to get down on his knees he saw the being's feet and at once realised that this was not Sri Aurobindo but a demon with a characteristic recorded in Indian tradition: the feet had the position of their toes and heels reversed. The disciple stopped himself and the demon vanished. The experience was told to the Mother, who found it significant in view of what had happened to her.

From the medical standpoint the Mother's life seemed to have hung by a thread during her illness. Once, at 2 a.m., her condition grew exceedingly bad. Her breathing was very difficult and she repeatedly put her hand on her chest and looked as if she might faint. Her doctor was sent for. According to reports, the Mother lay in a dead swoon for quite a time, and the doctor could barely feel her pulse. As the Mother had forbidden him to give any drug or injection, he could do absolutely nothing. He felt his responsibility terribly. Here he was, the Mother's special doctor, and could not take a step. What would people say if anything should happen?

The whole critical period came to an end on the 5th of May. A disciple had a

1. Based on notes made on the 9th of May 1962.

vision in which Sri Aurobindo appeared to him. He asked Sri Aurobindo why the Mother had to go through such dire suffering. Sri Aurobindo said that she had to pay almost as high a price as he had done for the future of humanity, but that now she had come out victorious.

The culmination of the Mother's experience of victory came on the night of the 12th of April. On the 13th, in spite of extreme weakness, she made a tape-record of her experience. On the evening of the 15th the tape-record was played to the members of the Ashram at the Playground.

Soon after the heart-attacks the Mother was utterly indrawn. One day she sat stiff for six hours in a deep trance, opening her eyes only at rare intervals. When asked whether she would take any food or drink, she signed with her head that she would take nothing. Even later on, she kept concentrating on her inner work and mostly seemed not to notice the people around her. But gradually she began to take interest in things. At certain hours she let a couple of sadhaks take their routine work to her. One of them reported that he had found her skin unusually shining.

The Mother astonished her doctor by the rapidity of her recovery. From such weakness that she could hardly lift a finger and from a state of constant heart-irregularity for days, she commenced moving by herself, though slowly, in her room. Her emaciated body was also fast picking up.

When her heart-attacks were over, she told an attendant, "You thought I was going. How could I go? Have I completed my work?" The attendant said, "Mother, you are not eating properly and have grown so very weak. Naturally we have fears." The Mother replied, "Do you think I depend on food and drink for my strength and life? I don't depend even on my lungs and heart."

After the great experience of April 12 she had the long passage on the Supreme Love in Book Eleven, "The Book of Everlasting Day", of Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* read out to her — the passage beginning

O beautiful body of the incarnate Word

and ending

Built is the golden tower, the flame-child born.²

It gave some idea of what she had become in relation to the Lord and to the world.

The Victory marked by the Mother's experience may be understood as a very decisive step further in her world-work. It was a great sequel to the achievement of the 29th February 1956 when the Manifestation of the Supermind on a universal scale had taken place in what the Mother had then called the earth's subtle atmosphere.

2. *Savitri*, CWSA, Vol. 34, pp. 698-702.

At that time the Supramental Light, Consciousness and Force had come. The experience of April 12 seems to have speeded up the future evolution of the world by bringing in the Supramental Love whose presence would keep impelling the earth towards a divine destiny in spite of all obstacles and apparent setbacks.

2

The Mother's experience on the night of April 12, 1962

[After a month of grave illness which had threatened her life, the Mother spoke for the first time on April 13, 1962. She lay stretched on her bed, in her room upstairs, very thin. Dr. Sanyal, Nolini, Vasudha and Pavitra were present. It was round about 10 o'clock in the morning.]

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. It was the formidable pulsations of the eternal stupendous Love, only Love. Each pulsation of the Love was carrying the universe further in its manifestation.

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

Everything was impersonal, nothing was individual.

This was going on and on and on and on.

The certitude that what is to be done is *done*.

All the results of the falsehood had disappeared: death was an illusion, sickness was an illusion, ignorance was an illusion — something that had no reality, no existence. Only Love and Love and Love and Love — immense, formidable, stupendous, carrying everything.

And how to express it in the world? It was like an impossibility, because of the contradiction. But then it came: "You have accepted that the world should know the Supramental Truth . . . and it will be expressed totally, integrally." Yes, yes. . . .

And the thing is *done*.

(Long silence)

The individual consciousness came back: just the sense of a limitation, a limitation of pain; without that, no individual.

And we set out again on the way, sure of Victory.

The skies are full of the songs of Victory.

The Truth alone exists; it alone shall be manifested. Forward!
 Glory to Thee, Lord, Supreme Triumpher!

(*Silence*)

Now, to the work.

Patience, endurance, perfect equality, and an absolute faith.

(*Silence*)

What I am saying is nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing but words if I compare it to the experience.

And our consciousness is the same, absolutely the same as that of the Lord. There was no difference, no difference.

We are That, we are That, we are That.

(*Silence*)

Later I shall explain better. The instrument is not yet ready. This is only the beginning.

Afterwards Mother added:

The experience lasted for at least four hours.

There are many things which I shall say later.³

AMAL KIRAN
 (K. D. SETHNA)

(*The Mother: Past-Present-Future*, pp. 164-68)

3. *Words of the Mother-III*, CWM, Vol. 15, pp. 391-92.

SRI AUROBINDO: LIFE AND TIMES OF THE MAHAYOGI

(Continued from the issue of March 2013)

Chapter XXI

Ideals and Aberrations

In the unending revolutions of the world, as the wheel of the Eternal turns mightily in its courses, the Infinite Energy which streams forth from the Eternal and sets the wheel to work, looms up in the vision of man in various aspects and infinite forms. Each aspect creates and marks an age. Sometimes She is Love, sometimes She is Knowledge, sometimes She is Renunciation, sometimes She is Pity. This Infinite Energy is Bhawani. . . .

Sri Aurobindo
*Bhawani Mandir*¹

FEW meetings between two persons could have such a lasting impact on the political destiny of a nation while it was in a melting pot, than the one between Sri Aurobindo and Bal Gangadhar Tilak. When did it first take place? Generally it is traced to the Ahmedabad Session of the Congress in December 1902. But there are reasons to believe that they had met earlier. It was one Mr. Manthale who introduced Sri Aurobindo through someone to the secret society where he came in contact with Tilak and others.² The two became close friends and Tilak even attended one of the sessions of Barindrakumar's experiments with "planchette and table tapping".³ Sri Aurobindo said, while talking to disciples on 18 December 1938,

When I came to Baroda from England I found out what the Congress was at that time and formed a contempt for it. Then I came in touch with Deshpande, Tilak, Madhav Rao and others. Deshpande got me to write a series in the *Indu Prakash* . . .⁴

The context of the reference to Tilak suggests that they had met well before the Ahmedabad Congress Session. In the course of the same conversation Sri Aurobindo described Tilak as "a really great man; a rare disinterested one."⁵

Abinash Bhattacharya, who for a time was working as personal assistant to Sri Aurobindo during the latter's stay in Calcutta, gives us this vignette:

Day after day throngs of people would come to see Aurobindo. He once expressed before me that this caused a little difficulty for his sadhana. I too faced a bit of difficulty: how to forbid the people. With humility I would send back many, but not all. One day at noon a Marwari (*sic*) — quite dignified in appearance — arrived, desiring to talk to Aurobindo. Humbly I requested him to come back after an hour. But he was not the one to give up. “All right. Let me sit here in this drawing room and talk to you. Thus can an hour be passed,” he said. Such was his smile that I could not back out. I too sat down and began talking to him. I was enjoying it. About fifteen minutes had passed when I saw Aurobindo Babu slowly descending. He saw the visitor from a distance and exclaimed, all smiles, “Oh, Tilak!” I felt a jolt. Bal Gangadhar Tilak! I bowed down before his feet and prayed to be pardoned. He caught me by my arms and lifted me and embracing me, said, “What wrong did you do? Where is the question of pardon? I did not introduce myself to you because I understood that Aurobindo was taking rest!”⁶

We are not sure of the exact time when the revolutionary secret society with which Tilak was involved had been formed, but one founded in the seventies of the 19th century by Vasudev Balwant Phadke, described by the distinguished historian R. C. Majumdar as “Father of militant nationalism in India”, was already in existence before Tilak participated in or organised such societies.⁷

After about two years of training as a soldier in the Baroda army Jatindranath Banerjee had left for Kolkata in 1901, with clear instructions from Sri Aurobindo for his activities. By then a number of organisations or movements were already formed or in the process of formation in Kolkata. Most of them were inspired by a patriotic fervour, but were rather vague about the direction in which to proceed. It was thought that they could be brought together if they were clear about their ultimate goal — the achievement of freedom through a revolution. Notable among such organisations were the Physical Movement Training in Bengal launched by the Anusilan Samiti founded in early 1902 by Satish Chandra Bose (1876-1948) and run by Barrister Pramathnath Mitter (also spelt Mitra, 1853-1910) who acted as its director, and another association for promotion of physical culture founded by Sarala Devi Chowdhurani (Ghosal) (1872-1945).

Son of an engineer, P. Mitter had returned from England in 1875 inspired by the Irish freedom movement. In 1883 when Surendranath Banerjee, to be renowned in the next decade as a foremost Congress leader of the moderate section, was put behind bars accused of contempt of court for an article he wrote for the *Bengalee*, a newspaper he edited, Mitter mobilised a secret force of 700 volunteers and made a daring plan to rescue him by raiding the prison; the plan, though, was not put into execution.⁸ About him Sri Aurobindo wrote:

P. Mitter had a spiritual life and aspiration of his own and a strong religious feeling; he was like Bepin Pal and several other prominent leaders of the new nationalist movement in Bengal, a disciple of the famous Yogi Bejoy Goswami, but he did not bring these things into his politics.⁹

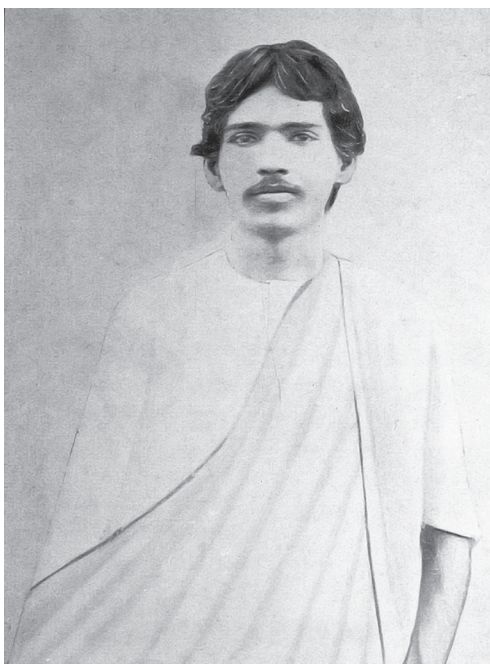
Sarala Devi was an educationist and social reformer, exceptionally courageous and dynamic when seen in the backdrop of her time. She was the daughter of Janakinath Ghosal, one of the founders of the National Congress and Swarnakumari Devi, a gifted writer and the elder sister of Rabindranath Tagore.

This was what the report of the Sedition Committee (known also as Rowlatt Committee after the name of its President, Mr. Justice S.A.T. Rowlatt) said about the Anusilan Samiti. Though its tone is expectedly contemptuous, it shows the Samiti's widespread network in the whole of Bengal:

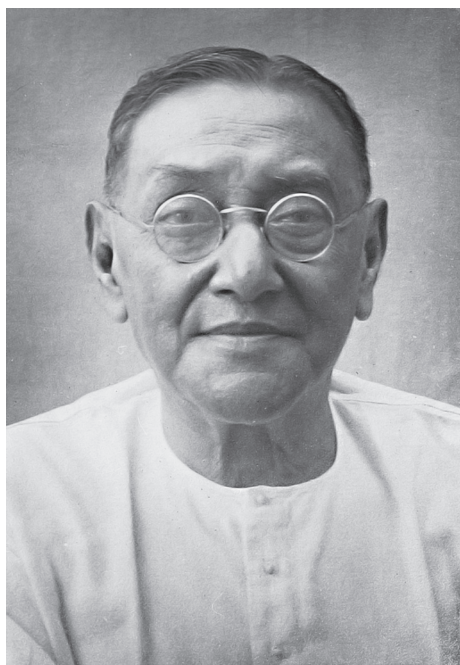
The associates formed a body called the Anusilan Samiti (society for the promotion of culture and training). One of these societies was soon in working order at Calcutta, the capital of Western Bengal, and another at Dacca, the capital of Eastern Bengal. They extended their ramifications in all directions. At one time the Dacca society had 500 branches in towns and villages. Beside these societies other less formal groups collected; but all were inspired by the same seditious principles, and united in creating an atmosphere which would swell their ranks and facilitate their operations. The atmosphere was to be created by building up public opinion by means of newspapers, songs and literature, preaching, secret meetings and associations. "Unrest" must be created. Welcome therefore unrest, "whose historical name is revolt!" There was unfortunately already more than enough unrest in both Bengals, but something far more violent and durable was desired by Barindra and his friends. Arabinda Ghose had joined him from Baroda; and the brothers with their immediate followers started various newspapers the most popular of which, published in fluent vernacular Bengali, was the *Jugantar* (New Era). This journal began to pour forth racial hatred, in March 1906, attained a circulation of 7000 in 1907, and rapidly reached a still wider range before it ceased to appear in 1908 in consequence of the newly passed Newspapers (Incitement to Offences) Act. Its character and teaching entirely justify the comments of the Chief Justice, Sir Lawrence Jenkins, quoting and adopting the following words of the Sessions Judge of Alipore. "They exhibit a burning hatred of the British race, they breathe revolution in every line, they point out how revolution is to be effected. No calumny and no artifice is left out which is likely to instil the people of the country with the same idea or to catch the impressionable mind of the youth."¹⁰



Tilak



Barindrakumar



Charu Dutt



Sarala Devi

This discloses several significant facts including the motive behind the News-papers Act of 1908, notorious for its ruthless application, and its success to a great extent in suppressing or diverting the trend of political awakening among the educated public.

The passage quoted refers to a time when Sri Aurobindo had finally come down to Calcutta. But he had carried on his mission through his emissaries like Jatindranath and later Barindrakumar from Baroda. However, when someone informed him about Barindrakumar describing him as the leader of the movement in his paper *Dawn*, Sri Aurobindo wrote back “exclaiming with great surprise” that what everyone knew he did not know! He later told his disciples during the days of their famous Evening Talks:

That is what it is. Barin does not give the true state of things. I was neither the founder nor the leader. It was P. Mitra and Miss Ghosal who started it at the inspiration of Baron Okakura.¹¹ They had already started when I visited Bengal, and I came to know about it. I simply kept myself informed of their work. My idea was an open, armed revolution in the whole of India. What they did at that time was very childish, e.g., beating magistrates and so on. Later it turned into terrorism and dacoities etc. which were not at all my idea or intention.¹²

By the time Barindrakumar returned to Bengal Jatindranath had, as we have already seen, done a great deal of work among a number of youths within a few months. Barindrakumar joined him and for some time the work proceeded along the desirable line — combining physical culture with revolutionary idealism. But before long the two leaders fell apart, though there was no basic or insurmountable difference between their action plans. Both Jatindranath and Barindrakumar were anxious to have quick results. Both planned to raise funds by any means — plundering the government collections or the wealth of the rich — for buying firearms and making other preparations. Hence the difference between the two can be attributed to their failure to rise above their egos. Twice did Sri Aurobindo, coming all the way from Baroda, try to unite them and put them back on the right track of idealism and it seemed that each time he achieved his goal, but the success proved short-lived.

There were numerous young men — a number of them with genuine qualities for leadership — who were ready for any sacrifice and their faith in leaders like Jatindranath and Barindrakumar was total to begin with. But they were disheartened before long. It is a fact, though intriguing for this writer and surely it will be the same for any other writer delving into whatever documents of the time are available — that for many of these youths Sri Aurobindo’s pronouncement had become the last word for any action, long before he publicly emerged on the political arena and was willy-nilly acknowledged as the leader of the nationalists. Tilak too was held in great esteem. It was a pity that the local leaders claimed to have obtained the sanction

of either of the two for decisions that were entirely their own. Here is an instance. Recounts Sarala Devi:

One day Jatin Banerjee, coming from Baroda, met me with a letter from Aurobindo Ghose. Aurobindo's elder brother, the Oxford-famed poet Manmohan Ghose, had become a dear friend of mine. My cabinet teemed with his charming letters steeped in poetry. Both the brothers were visionaries by nature. While one's vision remained confined in poetry, the other translated his into action.¹³

Sarala Devi helped Jatindranath in every possible way. Days passed. But Sarala Devi got a shock when Jatindranath confided to her that they were planning to raid the house of a wealthy old widow — killing her if necessary — and decamp with her treasure. When Sarala Devi protested, Jatindranath told her that it was Tilak Maharaj who had ordered the execution of the plan.

"I cannot believe this," said Sarala Devi, "until I hear him say so. Till then you must suspend the proposed operation."

There were no telephones. No communication between two persons on matters of this nature was possible without a personal meeting. And a meeting for such a purpose must be executed in absolute secrecy. "I wonder if people can imagine the courage that was necessary in those days for a lady to travel all alone to meet Tilak at Pune," writes Sarala Devi.

She made known to those concerned in Kolkata that she was undertaking a trip to Mumbai, but she broke her journey at Pune and made arrangements to stay at the residence of a family friend. She then invited herself to the house of a Marathi editor N. C. Kelkar and made him ask Tilak to come for dinner with her. Though extremely busy defending himself in a litigation, Tilak accepted the invitation for the sake of this unusual visitor.

Sarala Devi asked Tilak about Jatindranath's claim, and he answered forcefully:

Never. I don't have to bring into this issue any matter of right or wrong from a religious point of view. I am speaking purely from a political angle — from the experience of some Pune youths — that such acts are essays in futility. The fellows doing this will be caught. And they will earn the hostility of our countrymen when for money they murder our countrymen. You can unhesitatingly announce that such actions do not have my slightest approval. Those who cite my support for this are lying.¹⁴

Like Jatindranath, Barindrakumar too sought authenticity and authority for his plans in Sri Aurobindo's name. But such methods did not work; the movement under their leadership weakened. Other factors too contributed to this process.

Despite their ardent patriotic fervour, several leading figures of the day failed to rise above their prejudices. For example, there were affluent courtesans in Kolkata, accomplished in music and dance, and Abinash Bhattacharya was once put in touch with two of them who said they would consider themselves fortunate to contribute on a regular basis unusually large amounts for the cause of the country's liberation. A delighted Abinash rushed to P. Mitra with the news which was warmly welcomed by the barrister. But the famous Aswinikumar Dutt of Barisal spread a wet blanket on their enthusiasm. Money earned through immoral ways could not be used for the service of the motherland, he asserted. Despite Mitra's pleadings that the would-be-donors too were children of the motherland, Dutt vetoed the proposal.¹⁵

The circular-appeal subsequently made famous as *Bhawani Mandir*, the first political literature of the kind that openly referred to the country as the Mother, was written sometime in the early part of 1905 — the result of a prompting by some spirit that descended during one of the planchette or automatic writing sessions conducted by Barindrakumar at Baroda. The spirit seems to have directed in a cryptic way, *Mandir gado* — build a temple. The article was a call to the lovers of the country to collaborate in setting up a 'temple' for the worship of Shakti — the word, depending on its context, conveying the sense of power or strength or force directed to achieve a worthy goal. Ostensibly a hermitage with a temple at its centre, the project aimed at preparing the youth, living like ascetics, for sacrificing themselves for the freedom of the motherland.

All is growing large and strong. The Shakti of war, the Shakti of wealth, the Shakti of Science are tenfold more mighty and colossal, a hundredfold more fierce, rapid and busy in their activity, a thousandfold more prolific in resources, weapons and instruments than ever before in recorded history. Everywhere the Mother is at work . . . remoulding, creating. She is pouring Her spirit into the old; She is whirling into life the new.¹⁶

The proposed move was a brainchild of Barindrakumar although Sri Aurobindo drafted the manifesto. But as far as Sri Aurobindo was concerned, "the idea was soon dropped".¹⁷

If Sri Aurobindo did not take much interest in the project, neither did Barindrakumar himself after touring some hills in search of a suitable place and then retreating to Baroda with hill-fever. Some elements of his dream of such a romantic endeavour were probably reflected, about two years later, in his mobilising the famous Murari Pukur Garden group.

However, he must have, using Sri Aurobindo's name, inspired some of his compatriots to explore the possibility of executing the Mandir project. One of them was C. C. Dutt of the I.C.S. There was nothing Dutt would shrink from doing if he believed that it was Sri Aurobindo's wish, even if not an order from him. Since a

hermitage must function around a Guru, Barindrakumar obviously thought of roping in his own Guru, Sarkharia Baba, believed to be a leading fighter against the British forces during the ‘Sepoy Mutiny’ of 1857. Barindrakumar asked Dutt to visit the Baba and persuade him to take up that position. 45 years later, Dutt published his reminiscences in a prominent English daily in November 1950, hoping that “it could be of some interest to my readers as it was in a way connected with Sri Aurobindo’s political activities of those days”.¹⁸

These extracts from the article show how Sri Aurobindo’s name worked like magic:

I went to spend a few days with friends in Baroda. Aurobindo Babu was away in Calcutta on important national work. I put up with his friend Khaserao who was a good friend of mine too . . . But I had not gone there only for pleasure. A good part of my time was taken up by secret political work. For some time I had been building up a certain number of small centres in different parts of the Bombay Presidency. This work was my own. Aurobindo Babu had not as yet called upon me to join the big organisation. He had, however, taken me into his Bhawani Mandir Scheme and I was very proud of his trust.

The scheme was to establish in a hilly part of the country a temple to the Mother with an Ashram attached. In this Ashram a number of selected young men from different parts of India were to reside permanently and undergo training in Yoga . . . they should be in close contact with the villages around and instruct the peasantry in the three R’s and in sanitation, cottage industry and so forth . . . The most important part of the plan was, however, never disclosed. It was to train up a body of whole-time workers for the cause of India’s freedom . . .¹⁹

Accompanied by Deshpande, Dutt proceeded to meet Sarkharia Baba.

Next morning when our train arrived at Chharodi, I saw standing on the platform an elderly sannyasi, wearing a rugged and scanty outer garb, and with him two or three opulent-looking persons. Deshpande whispered to me, “There is Sarkharia Maharaj.” I promptly jumped out on the platform and in spite of his protest touched the Maharaj’s feet. He put his hand on my head and turning to Deshpande, asked, “Is this thy friend Charu Babu?”²⁰

But Dutt and Deshpande left for Ganganath after a brief halt at Sarkharia Baba’s Ashram. According to Dutt “Aurobindo Babu and his friend Deshpande had established a small residential school in the Ashram at Ganganath” on the river Narmada. Dutt saw that “the teaching given there followed the general lines laid down for the proposed Bhawani Ashram. There were efficient teachers and a military

pensioner was in charge of the gymnasium and the programme for drill.”²¹

Since Dutt’s chief mission was to meet Sarkharia Baba, the two returned to his Ashram by boat.

Sarkharia Baba was waiting on the ghat at Chharodi . . . He looked a true picture of the ‘Jivan-mukta Purusha’. . . He was pleased to see us again and took us to the Math . . . While we were finishing our meal the Baba walked off to the distant terrace and beckoned to me. When I ran up to him he said, “Now, Charu Babu, tell me about thy business quickly.” I replied that Aurobindo Babu had sent me with an urgent request and explained briefly the Bhawani Mandir Scheme. “You will have to come and live with us there, Maharaj,” I said, “and look after us.” With a twinkle in his eyes he asked, “And who are going to live in the Math?” I replied, “Men like me.” He gave me a tremendous whack on the back. “Men? Say rather rogues like thee.” I would not take refusal, but pressed him very hard. At last I played my master card, for I said that Aurobindo Babu would be sorely disappointed if I failed to persuade him. He said, “All right, tell him that I shall come and live with you three months every year.”

Sarkharia Maharaj was very fond of Barin, Sri Aurobindo’s younger brother. Barin took him to Surat during the Congress week of 1907 when he met our nationalist stalwarts. He was strongly impressed by them and deeply moved by the atmosphere, so Barin said. But the old Sannyasi had run his earthly race. Twelve years earlier he had been bitten by a rabid dog and that poison took effect now. On his return to Chharodi he had an attack of hydrophobia.

On his death bed he remembered a stirring scene of long ago and cried out, “Horses running, swords rattling, guns booming! What joy, what joy!” People said that he was one of the immortals of 1857.²²

(To be continued)

MANOJ DAS

References and Notes

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2. A. B. Purani: *Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo*; Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 2007, p. 657.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 612.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 568.
5. Nirodbaran: *Talks with Sri Aurobindo*; Vol. 1, 2009, p. 41.

6. Abinash Chandra Bhattacharya: Reminiscences originally published in *Galpa Bharati*, Kolkata; reproduced in *Sri Aurobindo Smriti* (Bengali) edited by Biswanath Dey, Sahityayan, Kolkata.

7. Amalendu Dey: *Banglar Pancha Saheed Smarane* (Bengali); Raktakarabi, Kolkata.

8. *Samsad Bangali Charitavidhan* (Bengali); Sahitya Samsad, Kolkata.

9. Sri Aurobindo: *Autobiographical Notes* . . .; CWSA, Vol. 36, p. 70.

10. Sedition Committee Report, 1918; Home Department, Govt. of (British) India.

11. “Baron Okakura had come to India with Vivekananda. He was a Japanese artist and art-critic, besides being a revolutionary who dreamed of One Asia, a dream he set forth in his book, *Ideals of the East*. So between Okakura and Nivedita and Sarala Ghosal and the Tagores, Jorasanko became a lively centre for revolutionary activity; just as it had become a cultural centre with Havel, Justice Woodroffe, Okakura, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Nivedita and Abanindranath.” Sujata Nahar: *Mother’s Chronicles*; Book Five, pp. 550-51.

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13. Sarala Devi Chowdhurani (Ghosal): *Jibaner Jharapata* (Bengali); Rupa & Co., Kolkata.

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16. Sri Aurobindo: *Bande Mataram*; CWSA, Vol. 6, p. 80.

17. Sri Aurobindo: *Autobiographical Notes* . . .; CWSA, Vol. 36, p. 74.

18. Charu Chandra Dutt: *The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 9 November 1950.

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*

All depends on what you want. If you want Yoga, take all that happens as the expression of the Divine Grace leading you towards your goal, and try to understand the lesson that circumstances give.

The Mother

Words of the Mother – II, CWM, Vol. 14, p. 96

ESSENTIALS OF INDIAN CULTURE

(Continued from the issue of March 2013)

[We continue with the reproduction of a few pages in two versions — the first indicating the changes Sri Aurobindo made, (~~striketrough~~ to indicate deletions and *italics* to indicate additions) then the final version after the changes.]

Chapter II – The Application

WE have seen that the main principle, the essential intention of Indian culture was extraordinarily high — the ideal of life was the development of the spirit of man to its highest divine possibilities. But the application of this principle, this intention, ~~that is,~~ *the practice of the system of Indian culture, as opposed to its theory and principle* ~~is~~ was a different *and more difficult* thing. India has not been wholly successful here, *as always happens when a principle or ideal is applied by our imperfect human nature*, but to have achieved even a partial success is a great contribution to the future possibilities of the ~~human-being~~ *race*. The Indian system was broad, flexible, free, so *planned* that the spirit might more and more express itself in life. In the end a decline came ~~upon it~~; but it was not due to the inherent defects in the system of culture but rather to a temporary exhaustion of the force of ~~living~~ *life*.

Hostile ~~€~~critics of Indian ~~culture~~ *civilisation* point to the misfortunes of India ~~for proving as a proof~~ that ancient Indian culture based on a spiritual ideal was in itself bad and unsound. But history ~~proves~~ *reveals* the falsity of such arguments. Greece was as ~~much~~ *unfortunate* as India; yet Europe owes half its civilisation to Greece. Italy was *unfortunate*; yet fewer nations have contributed more to European culture than *unfortunate* and incompetent Italy. India's misfortunes have been exaggerated; but ~~even if they be all that is alleged or pictured about them is true~~ and if they ~~are~~ *were* due to the ~~badness~~ *unsoundness* of our civilisation, to what is due then the remarkable fact of the obstinate survival of India, her culture and her civilisation under this load of misfortunes? There must be some heart of soundness, some saving truth which has kept this people alive and still enables it to raise its head and affirm its will to be and its faith in its mission.

Apart from the spirit and principle of the culture, apart from the system built on this principle, we have to see its actual working and effect in the values of life. Here we must admit great limitations, great imperfections. In no civilisation ancient or modern *has* the system ~~has established~~ been entirely satisfactory to the need of perfection in man; there is no civilisation *in* which the working has not been marred

by considerable limitations and imperfections. Mankind is still no more than semi-civilised and it was never anything else in the recorded history of its present cycle.

Every civilisation has its merits and defects, and only biased and prejudiced critics will exaggerate the dark side. Every civilisation has contributed something to the general perfection of the human race. Greece developed to a high degree the intellectual reason and the sense of form and harmonious beauty; Rome founded firmly *civic* strength and power and patriotism *and* law and order; modern Europe has raised to enormous proportions practical reason *and* science and efficiency and economic capacity; India developed the spiritual mind working on the other powers of man and exceeding them, the intuitive reason, the philosophical harmony of the Dharma informed by the religious spirit, the sense of the eternal and the infinite. The future will perfect these *gifts of the past cultures* and evolve fresh powers.

~~As regards modern~~ European civilisation *has been a powerful force; but its science and practical reason, its efficiency and economic production do not by themselves constitute a complete ideal of civilisation. Its ideal is much lower and less difficult than the arduous spiritual ideal of ancient India and yet much no abiding or complete success has not been achieved; the mind of man has been widened a little but not raised, and the his soul have has not been much perfected grown nearer to perfection.* The aggressive ugliness of modern European life, its paucity of philosophic reason and aesthetic beauty and religious aspiration, its constant unrest, its harsh and oppressive mechanical burden, its lack of inner freedom, its recent huge catastrophe, the fierce struggle of classes are things of which we have a right to take note, though ~~of course~~ we should not *therefore* ignore ~~also~~ the brighter side of modern ideals.

Again it may be said that Europe is struggling to rise while India is stagnating. The question still remains whether Europe is taking the only, the complete or the best way open to human endeavour and whether it is not the right thing for India, not to imitate Europe, though she well may learn from western experience, but to get out of her stagnation by developing what is best and most essential in her own spirit and culture.

That spirituality is of the greatest value to man and that India developed it more than every other country cannot be disputed now. ~~The only question remains whether~~ *But it has been alleged that spiritual Hinduism has had erred in the turn it took and had a most all-pervading, a most disastrous, paralysing, soul-killing, life-killing effect. The peculiarity of Indian culture is that it sought with all its force the highest truths of human life and human nature and tried to state them with an absolute fullness and apply them to life thus presenting them as a practicable ideal for the race. In such a turn* ~~There could have been an arisen easily the serious error in of~~ ignoring the present facts of human nature, neglecting the development of the body, life, mind and laying too *much exclusive a* stress on the ultimate spiritual goal. But as a matter of fact there has been no such error. Even the most extreme philosophies

and religions, Buddhism and Illusionism, which held life to be an impermanence or ignorance that must be transcended and cast away, yet did not lose sight of the truth that man must develop himself under the conditions of this present ignorance or impermanence before he can attain to knowledge and to that Permanent which is denied to temporal being. Buddhism was not solely a cloudy sublimation of Nirvana and the tyrannous futility of Karma; it gave us a great and powerful discipline for the life of man on earth. The enormous positive effects it had on society and ethics and the creative impulse it imparted to art and thought and in a less degree to literature, are a sufficient proof of the strong vitality of its method. If this positive turn was present in the most extreme philosophy of denial, it was still more largely present in the totality of Indian culture.

In its attempt to reach the highest Truths and the complete Truth the Indian mind often ~~had to lay~~ *laid* stress on *the extreme points in a given line of truth, but it always made a synthetic return from its extremes.* ~~Thus—~~There has ~~always~~ been constantly a tendency in the *extreme* direction of Buddhism and Mayavada. But the negation of life was never the one undisputed governing idea of Indian culture. The early Vedic religion did not deny, but laid a full emphasis on, life. The Upanishads did not deny life, but held that the world is a manifestation of the Eternal or Brahman, all here is Brahman, all is in the Spirit and the Spirit is in all, the self-existent Spirit has become all these creatures; life too is Brahman, the life-force is the very basis of our existence, the life-spirit Vayu is the manifest and evident eternal, pratyaksham brahma. But it affirmed that the present way of existence of man is not the highest or the whole; his outward mind and life are not all his ~~being~~ *nature*; to be fulfilled and perfect he has to grow out of his physical and mental ignorance into self-knowledge.

Buddhism arrived at a ~~late~~ *later* stage, ~~and~~ seized on one side of those ancient teachings ~~to make~~ *and made* a sharp spiritual and intellectual opposition between the impermanence of life and the permanence of the Eternal; ~~which brought to a head~~ a gospel of ascetic exaggeration *already in the air took permanent shape and came to the forefront under its influence.* But the synthetic Hindu mind struggled against this negation and finally threw out Buddhism though not without contracting an increased bias in ~~this~~ *the ascetic* direction. That bias came to its height in Shankara's theory of Maya which put its powerful imprint on the Indian mind and, coinciding with a progressive decline in the full vitality of the race, did tend for a time to fix a pessimistic and negative view of terrestrial life and ~~thus~~ to distort the large Indian ideal.

But Shankara's theory is not at all a necessary deduction from the great Vedantic authorities, the Upanishads, the Brahmasutras and the Gita, and was always combated by other Vedantic philosophies and religions which drew from them and from spiritual experience very different conclusions. At the present times, in spite of a temporary exaltation of Shankara's philosophy, the most vital movements of Indian thought and religion are moving again towards the synthesis of spirituality and life which was an essential part of the ancient Indian ideal.

But still it may be argued that whatever may have been the theory, the exaggeration was there and in practice discouraged life and action. ~~So we should~~ *Let us look into the actual achievements of ancient India in the various spheres of life and see how far there is room for this disparaging conclusion.*

II

(Final Version)

Chapter II – The Application

We have seen that the main principle, the essential intention of Indian culture was extraordinarily high — the ideal of life was the development of the spirit of man to its highest divine possibilities. But the application of this principle, this intention, the practice of the system of Indian culture, as opposed to its theory and principle was a different and more difficult thing. India has not been wholly successful here, as always happens when a principle or ideal is applied by our imperfect human nature, but to have achieved even a partial success is a great contribution to the future possibilities of the race. The Indian system was broad, flexible, free, so planned that the spirit might more and more express itself in life. In the end a decline came; but it was not due to the inherent defects in the system of culture but rather to a temporary exhaustion of the force of life.

Hostile critics of Indian civilisation point to the misfortunes of India as a proof that ancient Indian culture based on a spiritual ideal was in itself bad and unsound. But history reveals the falsity of such arguments. Greece was as unfortunate as India; yet Europe owes half its civilisation to Greece. Italy was unfortunate; yet fewer nations have contributed more to European culture than unfortunate and incompetent Italy. India's misfortunes have been exaggerated; but if all that is alleged or pictured about them is true and if they were due to the unsoundness of our civilisation, to what is due then the remarkable fact of the obstinate survival of India, her culture and her civilisation under this load of misfortunes? There must be some heart of soundness, some saving truth which has kept this people alive and still enables it to raise its head and affirm its will to be and its faith in its mission.

Apart from the spirit and principle of the culture, apart from the system built on this principle, we have to see its actual working and effect in the values of life. Here we must admit great limitations, great imperfections. In no civilisation ancient or modern has the system established been entirely satisfactory to the need of perfection in man; there is no civilisation in which the working has not been marred by considerable limitations and imperfections. Mankind is still no more than semi-civilised and it was never anything else in the recorded history of its present cycle.

Every civilisation has its merits and defects, and only biased and prejudiced

critics will exaggerate the dark side. Every civilisation has contributed something to the general perfection of the human race. Greece developed to a high degree the intellectual reason and the sense of form and harmonious beauty; Rome founded firmly civic strength and power and patriotism and law and order; modern Europe has raised to enormous proportions practical reason and science and efficiency and economic capacity; India developed the spiritual mind working on the other powers of man and exceeding them, the intuitive reason, the philosophical harmony of the Dharma informed by the religious spirit, the sense of the eternal and the infinite. The future will perfect these gifts of the past cultures and evolve fresh powers.

Modern European civilisation has been a powerful force; but its science and practical reason, its efficiency and economic production do not by themselves constitute a complete ideal of civilisation. Its ideal is much lower and less difficult than the arduous spiritual ideal of ancient India and yet no abiding or complete success has been achieved; the mind of man has been widened a little but not raised, his soul has not grown nearer to perfection. The aggressive ugliness of modern European life, its paucity of philosophic reason and aesthetic beauty and religious aspiration, its constant unrest, its harsh and oppressive mechanical burden, its lack of inner freedom, its recent huge catastrophe, the fierce struggle of classes are things of which we have a right to take note, though we should not therefore ignore the brighter side of modern ideals.

Again it may be said that Europe is struggling to rise while India is stagnating. The question still remains whether Europe is taking the only, the complete or the best way open to human endeavour and whether it is not the right thing for India, not to imitate Europe, though she well may learn from western experience, but to get out of her stagnation by developing what is best and most essential in her own spirit and culture.

That spirituality is of the greatest value to man and that India developed it more than every other country cannot be disputed now. But it has been alleged that spiritual Hinduism erred in the turn it took and had a most all-pervading, a disastrous, paralysing, soul-killing, life-killing effect. The peculiarity of Indian culture is that it sought with all its force the highest truths of human life and human nature and tried to state them with an absolute fullness and apply them to life presenting them as a practicable ideal for the race. In such a turn there could have arisen easily the serious error of ignoring the present facts of human nature, neglecting the development of the body, life, mind and laying too exclusive a stress on the ultimate spiritual goal. But as a matter of fact there has been no such error. Even the most extreme philosophies and religions, Buddhism and Illusionism, which held life to be an impermanence or ignorance that must be transcended and cast away, yet did not lose sight of the truth that man must develop himself under the conditions of this present ignorance or impermanence before he can attain to knowledge and to that Permanent which is denied to temporal being. Buddhism was not solely a cloudy sublimation of Nirvana

and the tyrannous futility of Karma; it gave us a great and powerful discipline for the life of man on earth. The enormous positive effects it had on society and ethics and the creative impulse it imparted to art and thought and in a less degree to literature, are a sufficient proof of the strong vitality of its method. If this positive turn was present in the most extreme philosophy of denial, it was still more largely present in the totality of Indian culture.

In its attempt to reach the highest Truths and the complete Truth the Indian mind often laid stress on the extreme point in a given line of truth, but it always made a synthetic return from its extremes. There has been constantly a tendency in the extreme direction of Buddhism and Mayavada. But the negation of life was never the one undisputed governing idea of Indian culture. The early Vedic religion did not deny, but laid a full emphasis on, life. The Upanishads did not deny life, but held that the world is a manifestation of the Eternal or Brahman, all here is Brahman, all is in the Spirit and the Spirit is in all, the self-existent Spirit has become all these creatures; life too is Brahman, the life-force is the very basis of our existence, the life-spirit Vayu is the manifest and evident eternal, *pratyaksham brahma*. But it affirmed that the present way of existence of man is not the highest or the whole; his outward mind and life are not all his nature; to be fulfilled and perfect he has to grow out of his physical and mental ignorance into self-knowledge.

Buddhism arrived at a later stage, seized on one side of those ancient teachings and made a sharp spiritual and intellectual opposition between the impermanence of life and the permanence of the Eternal; a gospel of ascetic exaggeration already in the air took permanent shape and came to the forefront under its influence. But the synthetic Hindu mind struggled against this negation and finally threw out Buddhism though not without contracting an increased bias in the ascetic direction. That bias came to its height in Shankara's theory of Maya which put its powerful imprint on the Indian mind and, coinciding with a progressive decline in the full vitality of the race, did tend for a time to fix a pessimistic and negative view of terrestrial life and to distort the large Indian ideal.

But Shankara's theory is not at all a necessary deduction from the great Vedantic authorities, the Upanishads, the Brahmasutras and the Gita, and was always combated by other Vedantic philosophies and religions which drew from them and from spiritual experience very different conclusions. At the present times, in spite of a temporary exaltation of Shankara's philosophy, the most vital movements of Indian thought and religion are moving again towards the synthesis of spirituality and life which was an essential part of the ancient Indian ideal.

But still it may be argued that whatever may have been the theory, the exaggeration was there and in practice discouraged life and action. Let us look into the actual achievements of ancient India in the various spheres of life and see how far there is room for this disparaging conclusion.

(To be continued)

VISIONS AND VOICES

EVOLUTION OF BEAUTY

I

Beauty standing motionless in meditation is beauty of form,
Beauty moving and shining in meditation is beauty of life,
Beauty thinking in meditation is beauty of thought —
The Spirit of beauty is thus standing, moving and thinking from the far off beyonds.

II

Man first sought for the beautiful in the body of creation draped in all forms.
She was too unmoving for him and was standing wondrous and elusive.
Then defeated in his quest he sought for her in the quick life of all creation.
There too she was too quick for him and was moving wondrous and elusive.
Then again he sought for her in the animated thoughts of all creation.
There too she thought before him and was thinking wondrous and elusive.
Finally he found her shining wonderful at the giddy heights of the within of man
harmonised of body, life and mind.

DUTY, SACRIFICE, TRUTH

Duty is of the mental stuff; it is of the lower order. And truth is the outcome of the Supramental. The former is the coercive force of a lower order, a force of the mind which attempts to solve the perpetual conflict of variously moving forces found in the *kshetra* of man. The truth is of a superior origin and is the outcome of harmoniously moving forces whose home is where the gods take birth.

Duty is the will of the mental twilight trying to bring under its sway the several impulses of the vital or animal world. It has until now at the most partially succeeded in its object.

In the effort to fulfil a duty — which is only a dry abstraction of the intellect, a way of conduct found by intellect in order to achieve a harmony — man willingly or unwillingly conjoins to his dry intellectual abstraction called duty another of his negative efforts known as sacrifice.

In the world of truth there is no sacrifice. At his best a self-sacrificing man is only a self-pleased bankrupt trying to do charity by an entirely unsuccessful borrowing.

The multiple truths of the Supramental flow spontaneously as though in an infinite current of various channels moving in different directions, never colliding but enriching, embracing and kissing when met. They have the joy of self-fulfilment — altogether a new order yet to be discovered but already envisaged.

The joy of self-fulfilment is positive, harmonious and above-man; and the joy of self-sacrifice is troubled, uneven and is of the man.

Duty is the finely knotted and knuckled walking-staff of man groping and stumbling in the dimly lit vast forests of forces whose movements perpetually collide, clash, appear, disappear, rise, fall, and whose destiny and end are still unintelligible to hunch-backed, groping and ancient Man.

THE DEMANDS OF THE TRUTH-SOUL AND THE LOWER NATURE

The title of this article consists of a contradiction in terms. There are demands of the lower nature and they are observed now and again by the Sadhakas; but to speak of the demands of the Truth-Soul is altogether untrue. For the Truth-Soul is a container of all things and there is not even the slightest chance for it to make any demand at any time. The Truth-Soul, to speak in the known simile of the lower nature, is a shell-covered seed which under proper climate and favourable weather breaks, comes out of the shell, grows, awakens out of the earth as a plant, buds, blossoms and finally falls as seed on the same earth out of which it came, as though getting involved again into inconscience only to come out again on a newer round and in newer forms. The Truth-Soul obeys its own law, its own rhythm and its own course, and its movements are dictated only by itself. There is a why for everything of the lower nature — movements and all — because there is a nature above the lower. But there is no such why for the Truth-Soul, and itself and its movements are its own joy, truth and power.

The lower nature is incomplete and finite. This very incompleteness and the stamp of finiteness form of themselves all the demands, not silent and peaceful but clamorous demands, that we face time and again surging in our lower nature. Almost at all times we identify ourselves in our ignorance with the demands of the lower nature, and consequently pain, misery, grief and all their accompaniments affect us willy-nilly. But for our identification with the demands, we could have safely steered through.

The demands of the lower nature are infinite in number and kind; and one cannot give a final satisfaction to any one of them in any way. Their satisfaction is not in the things they seek for. Not only a satisfaction but an innate joy will be attained only by the cessation of the demands, which is an impossibility under this cover of ignorance — the lower nature.

“Desire desiring defeats its own end” is a truth. The demands of the lower

nature are a heap of chaotically moving desires. They do not cease to move even when they get the thing desired. Hence they are also an endless and aimless movement.

Now the only question is how to deal with them. The grace from above and a faith in its power of transformation and a complete *śraddhā* in us will take us a long way. Then a conscious yielding to the pressure of the Truth-Soul which is above us will slowly tend to break the cover of ignorance allowing the rays of the Sun of Truth to enter into us. Under the transforming heat of the Sun of Truth, the demands of the lower nature will be transmuted into self-impelled movements of delight, and the lower nature itself will be transformed into that of which it is a mutilated and incomplete reflection.

WORK, FAITH, AND KNOWLEDGE

Work, faith and knowledge are interdependent principles of life. Work is the hammering that makes man, if not now, at least after a time, self-luminous. It is a necessary principle for perfection. If man had not to work, he would not be what he is today. Work is nothing but an output of energy by the expense of which he profits more than he gives. The entire cosmos is a tremendous travail for the birth of something divine. That tremendous travail of the cosmos reflects itself as work in individuals. We are unconscious of that which is to be born; also we are unconscious of the divine meaning of what we do. From the spiritual height alone the things that are obscure grow clear. Even what are called works of no importance contribute to man's growth to perfection.

When man works, he works by faith. Faith is the unilluminated will in man. What is will in the spiritual consciousness is faith in the lower heights of mind, life and body. Will is the materialising power of consciousness. When consciousness vibrates, it vibrates to action. Vibration is the will that achieves the thing that is in the consciousness. What we see is the process which we call work. The will, the consciousness and what the will achieves, i.e. work, are one and the same thing in different aspects. That is Truth. The will brings down something from the consciousness of the Consciousness. This will is enmeshed in Matter. It rises above, i.e. it evolves from matter, accomplishing what is inherent in it. That inherent something is the real-idea of the consciousness. This real-idea is driven by its own force. It attains a partial awareness in its ascent into the mental-sheath. Then it is faith. The real-idea, the secret inherent something, in its ascent into the supermind becomes self-luminous. Then it is no more a secret something; for it stands self-revealed. There in the supramental plane, it is one of the multifarious groupings of the consciousness as real-ideas, aware of its own destined end, achieving its own end by the force that is itself. There consciousness and force are not two different things.

There force is consciousness and consciousness is force. Hence particular groupings of consciousness that are real-ideas are will. That means a will that knows and a real-idea that is will. Now faith is the driving force of action which is soul going through several experiences for its own delight. When faith blossoms into knowledge then it is a case of I know and I act; until then it is a question of mental knowing, I try to act for what I want. Here faith disappears. In case of faith, in the first place, I do not try to act but I am simply driven to act for what is wanted of me. It is in this sense that faith moves mountains. In the supramental knowing also faith disappears. There the individual knows what is to be done. The individual is knowingly moved to action; but it may be — while he is yet at the lower heights of the supermind — at the expense of the individual's joy or grief. But it will be ultimately a self-luminous action moving in self-delight.

To start with, the faith; faith transformed into a self-aware will resulting in the divine action must be the object of *sadhana*, and that is the synthesis.

(To be continued)

AMRITA

*(Amrita Birth Centenary Commemorative Volume, September 1995,
Sri Mira Trust, Pondicherry, 1995, pp. 49-53)*

One thing you must know and decide:

It is if you want the True Divine as He is, or if you want a Divine in keeping with your own conception of what He ought to be.

And if you have decided to surrender sincerely and totally to the Divine and to be and do what He wants you to be and do according to His own will, or if you want the Divine to do what you want Him to do and to act according to your own will.

The Mother

Words of the Mother – II, CWM, Vol. 14, p. 114

THE DESCENT INTO NIGHT

(*Savitri*: Book II, Cantos 7 and 8)

(*Continued from the issue of March 2013*)

PART III (Cont.)

The Descent

I. Descent into Subconscious (Canto 7)

3. Perverted Powers:

From that “No-man’s land” in the city of ancient Ignorance Sri Aurobindo passed without much opposition and descended to probe and explore a greater darkness of the nether realm. At first he met with not much difficulty, for he was missioned by the Divine to undertake that work of Transformation and the Abyss desired to possess the prized soul of the divine incarnate:

Him the heights missioned, him the Abyss desired:
None stood across his way, no voice forbade.
For swift and easy is the downward path,
And now towards the Night was turned his face.

Savitri, p. 211

In this region of perverted Powers,

A greater darkness waited, a worse reign,
If worse can be where all is evil’s extreme;
Yet to the cloaked the uncloaked is naked worst.

Ibid.

In a deep moment’s trance passing over mind’s border into another world,

He crossed a boundary whose stealthy trace
Eye could not see but only the soul feel.

Ibid.

And

Into an armoured fierce domain he came
 And saw himself wandering like a lost soul
 Amid grimed walls and savage slums of Night.
 Around him crowded . . .
 . . . proud palaces of perverted Power,
 Inhuman quarters and demoniac wards.
 A pride in evil hugged its wretchedness;
 A misery haunting splendour pressed those fell
 Dun suburbs of the cities of dream-life.

Ibid.

Life there was

A strong and fallen goddess without hope,
 Obscured, deformed by some dire Gorgon spell
Savitri, p. 212

and,

Allured to their abyss the spirit's fall. . . .
 In booths of sin and night-repairs of vice
 Styled infamies of the body's concupiscence
 And sordid imaginations etched in flesh,
 Turned lust into a decorative art

Ibid.

That was

A new aesthesis of Inferno's art
 That trained the mind to love what the soul hates
Savitri, p. 213

In that region

Agony was made a red-spiced food for bliss,
 Hatred was trusted with the work of lust
 And torture took the form of an embrace

Ibid.

In this regime that soiled the being's core,

Beauty was banned, the heart's feeling dulled to sleep
And cherished in their place sensation's thrills;
The world was probed for jets of sense-appeal.

Ibid.

Worship was offered to the Undivine.

Ibid.

A new philosophy theorised evil's rights,
Gloried in the shimmering rot of decadence

Ibid.

That region armed with knowledge the primaeval brute, and its mind "scrambled into the pit to dig for truth", lighting its search with the "subconscient's flares".

Thence bubbling rose sullyng the upper air,
The filth and festering secrets of the Abyss

Savitri, p. 214

From that fetid atmosphere originated the so-called positive fact and real life, Freud's psycho-analysis of the libido. As a result

A wild-beast passion crept from the secret Night
To watch its prey with fascinating eyes

Ibid.

This is "a bestial ecstasy" where

The air was packed with longings brute and fierce

Ibid.

4. Démoniac Power:

In man's depth there lurked a force démoniac:

A mighty energy, a monster god,
Hard to the strong, implacable to the weak,
It stared at the harsh unpitying world it made
With the stony eyelids of its fixed idea.

...

In others' suffering felt a thrilled delight
 And of death and ruin the grandiose music heard.
 To have power, to be master, was sole virtue and good:
 It claimed the whole world for Evil's living room,
 Its party's grim totalitarian reign
 The cruel destiny of breathing things.

Savitri, pp. 214-15

Or

The Titan's heart is a sea of fire and force;
 He exults in the death of things and ruin and fall,
 He feeds his strength with his own and other's pain;
 In the world's pathos and passion he takes delight,
 His pride, his might call for the struggle and pang.
 He glories in the sufferings of the flesh
 And covers the stigmata with the Stoic's name.

Savitri, p. 452

Beings of this region

. . . climbed in speech upon high wings of thought
 But harboured all that is subhuman, vile
 And lower than the lowest reptile's crawl.

Savitri, p. 215

Their cold stone-hearted strength obeyed only the "Titan's law" and

One looked in vain for a trace of pity and love;
 There was no touch of sweetness anywhere,
 But only Force and its acolytes, greed and hate:
 There was no help for suffering, none to save,
 None dared resist or speak a noble word.

Ibid.

and

Armed with the aegis of tyrannic Power,
 Signing the edicts of her dreadful rule
 And using blood and torture as a seal,
 Darkness proclaimed her slogans to the world.

Ibid

On awed and prostrate hearts Falsehood enthroned

The cults and creeds that organise living death
And slay the soul on the altar of a lie.

Savitri, p. 216

The people of the gulfs despised the sun. In that stifling atmosphere truth could not live, “a barriered autarchy excluded light”:

A bull-throat bellowed with its brazen tongue;
Its hard and shameless clamour filling space
And threatening all who dared to listen to truth
Claimed the monopoly of the battered ear

Ibid.

5. A gaunt spiritual blank / A soulless Void:

In these menacing realms Sri Aurobindo moved

Passing from dusk to deeper dangerous dusk,
He wrestled with powers that snatched from mind its light
And smote from him their clinging influences.

Ibid.

and

Around him grew a gaunt spiritual blank,
A threatening waste, a sinister loneliness
That left mind bare to an unseen assault,
An empty page on which all that willed could write
Stark monstrous messages without control.

Savitri, p. 217

A travelling dot on downward roads of Dusk, . . .
He faced a sense of death and conscious Void. . . .
He heard the grisly voices that deny;
Assailed by thoughts that swarmed like spectral hordes, . . .
He strove to shield his spirit from despair,
But felt the horror of the growing Night
And the Abyss rising to claim his soul.

Ibid.

Then

His spirit became an empty listening gulf
Void of the dead illusion of a world:
Nothing was left, not even an evil face.

Ibid.

He reached the neighbourhood of death and felt its horror. A wonderful picture of that stage finds expression in *Savitri*, —

He was alone with the grey python Night.
A dense and nameless Nothing conscious, mute,
Which seemed alive but without body or mind,
Lusted all being to annihilate
That it might be for ever nude and sole.

Ibid.

Entering the region of death itself while still alive, the traveller of the Worlds experienced death, or how could he redeem the world from its clutch? Listen to this magnificent entry —

As in a shapeless beast's intangible jaws,
Gripped, strangled by that lusting viscous blot,
Attracted to some black and giant mouth
And swallowing throat and a huge belly of doom,
His being from its own vision disappeared
Drawn towards depths that hungered for its fall.

Savitri, pp. 217-18

What about the horror of death, a nameless and unutterable fear!

A formless void suppressed his struggling brain,
A darkness grim and cold oppressed his flesh,
A whispered grey suggestion chilled his heart

Savitri, p. 218

and his life,

Haled by a serpent-force from its warm home
And dragged to extinction in blank vacancy
Life clung to its seat with cords of gasping breath;
Lapped was his body by a tenebrous tongue.
Existence smothered travailed to survive

Ibid.

The poet describes that nameless and unutterable fear —

As a sea nears a victim bound and still,
The approach alarmed his mind for ever dumb
Of an implacable eternity
Of pain inhuman and intolerable.

Ibid.

and

An anguished nothingness his endless state.
A lifeless vacancy was now his breast,
And in the place where once was luminous thought,
Only remained like a pale motionless ghost
An incapacity for faith and hope
And the dread conviction of a vanquished soul
Immortal still but with its godhead lost

Ibid.

To endure that nameless fear of death was the only solution for the traveller in the Night. And

. . . he endured, stilled the vain terror, bore
The smothering coils of agony and affright;
Then peace returned and the soul's sovereign gaze.

Savitri, pp. 218-19

With peace a calm Light replied to the “blank horror”, and “the Godhead in him woke”. Thus could Sri Aurobindo, the traveller in the subconscious realm, face the pain and danger of the world,

He mastered the tides of Nature with a look:
He met with his bare spirit naked Hell.

Savitri, p. 219

II. Descent into Inconscient (Canto 8)

The subconscious is the labour of “the hidden heart of Night”, the Inconscient's stark unconsciousness. Only by entering into the hidden heart of Night could that “the endless terrible Inane” be revealed. Towards that core of Night the world-redeemer then turned his gaze. Thus could he

Rescue the preamble and the saving clause
 Of the dark Agreement by which all is ruled
 That rises from material Nature's sleep
 To clothe the Everlasting in new shapes.

Savitri, p. 75

That "hidden heart of Night" denied the eternal Truth and hoped to abolish God and reign alone. Yet in that core of Night Sri Aurobindo found "the secret code of the history of the world". Also

Great titan beings and demoniac powers,
 World-egos racked with lust and thought and will,
 Vast minds and lives without a spirit within: . . .
 Embodied the dark Ideas of the Abyss.

Savitri, p. 220

All high things served their nether opposite

Savitri, p. 222

and

Heaven's face became a mask and snare of Hell.

Ibid.

and

In an enormous action's writhen core
 He saw a shape illimitable and vague
 Sitting on Death who swallows all things born.
 A chill fixed face with dire and motionless eyes,
 Her dreadful trident in her shadowy hand
 Outstretched, she pierced all creatures with one fate.

Ibid.

A dateless sovereignty of terror and gloom, revered by the racked wretchedness, took the figure of a darkened God who held "in thrall a miserable world".

Hate was the black archangel of that realm;
 It glowed, a sombre jewel in the heart
 Burning the soul with its malignant rays,
 And wallowed in its fell abysm of might.

Savitri, p. 229

The world-redeemer plunged in Night to know her dreadful core,

In Hell he sought the root and cause of Hell.
 Its anguished gulfs opened in his own breast;
 He listened to clamours of its crowded pain,
 The heart-beats of its fatal loneliness.

Savitri, p. 230

In such menacing tracts, in “tortured solitudes” Sri Aurobindo descended:

Companionless he roamed through desolate ways
 Where the red Wolf waits by the fordless stream
 And Death’s black eagles scream to the precipice,
 And met the hounds of bale who hunt men’s hearts
 Baying across the veldts of Destiny, . . .

Ibid.

and “in footless battlefields of the Abyss”, he

Fought shadowy combats in mute eyeless depths,
 Assaults of Hell endured and Titan strokes
 And bore the fierce inner wounds that are slow to heal.
 ...
 He drank her poison draughts till none was left.

Ibid.

And

In Matter’s blank denial gaoled and blind,
 Pinned to the black inertia of our base
 He treasured between his hands his flickering soul.

Ibid.

Then he ventured into mindless Void and felt the curious small futility of the creation of material things, and

. . . stifled in the Inconscient’s hollow dusk,
 He sounded the mystery dark and bottomless
 Of the enormous and unmeaning deeps
 Whence struggling life in a dead universe rose.

Savitri, p. 231

Then the traveller came into the abysmal secrecy

Where darkness peers from her mattress, grey and nude,
And stood on the last locked subconscious's floor
Where Being slept unconscious of its thoughts
And built the world not knowing what it built.

Ibid.

In the "last locked subconscious's floor" he saw the record of the vanished stars, in the slumber of the cosmic Will "He saw the secret key of Nature's change".

All was uncovered to his sealless eye.
A secret Nature stripped of her defence,
Once in a dreaded half-light formidable,
Overtaken in her mighty privacy
Lay bare to the burning splendour of his will.

Savitri, p. 83

"In the shadow of a mused Inconscience" is hidden "the secret key of Nature's change". He saw in Night the Eternal's shadowy veil from where a light came to him, an invisible hand was laid upon the error and the pain, sweetness of an arm's embrace from the Key of Nature's change. A new knowledge arrived to him from the core of Night; he knew death for a cellar of the house of life, felt destruction as creation's hasty pace and "hell as a short cut to heaven's gates". Armed with that knowledge, a light from the Eternal's shadowy veil, alive and breathing a deep spiritual breath, Sri Aurobindo sounded the Inconscient mystery, dark and bottomless, and entered the Inconscient's "magic printing house", "Illusion's occult factory", to tear life's formats prepared in the Abyss, and shatter the stereotypes of Ignorance. Then Nature could expunge her stiff mechanical code. The "dark Agreement" of the soul with Night by which all is ruled, that rises from material Nature's sleep, had to be expunged: finally breaking into Inconscient's depths he saw God's slumber (Inconscient) shape the magic worlds in "Illusion's occult factory" —

And in the Inconscient's magic printing house
Torn were the formats of the primal Night
And shattered the stereotypes of Ignorance.
Alive, breathing a deep spiritual breath,
Nature expunged her stiff mechanical code
And the articles of the bound soul's contract,
Falsehood gave back to Truth her tortured shape.
Annulled were the tables of the law of pain,
And in their place grew luminous characters.

Savitri, pp. 231-32

and

Then Life beat pure in the corporeal frame;
The infernal Gleam died and could slay no more.

...

The soul lit the conscious body with its ray,
Matter and Spirit mingled and were one.

Savitri, p. 232

Regarding Sri Aurobindo's confrontation with the Inconscient, Soli Albless has made an important revelation:

On 15 August 1950, an old sadhak with a capacity for vision saw Sri Aurobindo drawing into himself fumes that were rising from the subconscious parts of the people as they were coming to him for *darshan* in a procession. He was gathering up the lower elements of earth-nature within the area of representative humanity and then drawing them into himself.

(Quoted in *All India Magazine*, December 1998, p. 5)

In the "battlefields of the Abyss"

Or shut into the pits of error and despair,
He drank her poison draughts till none was left.

Savitri, p. 230

That was Sri Aurobindo's sacrificial action to cancel "the articles of the bound soul's contract" with the Night,

Rescue the preamble and the saving clause
Of the dark Agreement by which all is ruled . . .

Savitri, p. 75

"For this he left his white infinity"

To evoke a person in the impersonal Void,
With the Truth-Light strike earth's massive roots of trance,
Wake a dumb self in the inconscient depths
And raise a lost power from its python sleep
That the eyes of the Timeless might look out from Time
And the world manifest the unveiled Divine.

Savitri, pp. 72-73

It would be appropriate to quote here certain excerpts from a talk of the Mother to a disciple. The talk was published in *Perspectives of Savitri* Vol. I, edited by Dr. R. Y. Deshpande. The Mother commented:

It may then be said that *Savitri* is a revelation, it is a meditation, it is a quest of the Infinite, the Eternal . . . Surely, if one sincerely follows what is revealed here in each line one will reach finally the transformation of the Supramental Yoga . . . (pp. 45-46)

Regarding Sri Aurobindo's descent into the Night she says:

These are experiences lived by Him, realities, supracosmic truths. He experienced all these as one experiences joy or sorrow, physically. He walked into the darkness of inconscience, even in the neighbourhood of death, endured the sufferings of perdition, and emerged from the mud, the world-misery to breathe the sovereign plenitude and enter the supreme Ananda. He crossed all these realms, went through the consequences, suffered and endured physically what one cannot imagine. Nobody till today has suffered like Him. He accepted suffering to transform suffering into the joy of union with the Supreme. It is something unique and incomparable in the history of the world. He is the first to have traced the path in the Unknown, so that we may be able to walk with certitude towards the Supermind. He has made the work easy for us. *Savitri* is his whole Yoga of Transformation, and this Yoga appears now for the first time in the earth consciousness. (p. 47)

(Concluded)

ASOKA K. GANGULI

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A CAPTIVE OF HER LOVE

(Continued from the issue of March 2013)

29.4.1958

YOUR letter has arrived. It takes only five days. I always read your letters in the main Ashram courtyard (near the Samadhi). She is there also, near, on the first floor; usually at that time (1 p.m., when I am back from the dining room) She has Her lunch. So I am reading the letter to Her too. When I am writing about Her, especially in what I wrote here yesterday, I do not now mean Her as a human personality, a human form only, but I begin to feel Her really in me and around me as a vibration, which is also just She, the Same, glorious and wonderful above everything and the One I love infinitely. This personal aspect of the Vibration gives to life something so great that I cannot tell you how wonderful it is. I now can understand that I could even make a toothbrush for Her, even if it took many hours, or I could just do anything, even what would seem nonsense, because nonsense that was really for Her would become a glory — as She is the Highest Will and Love.

The Darshan Day of April 24 has a special touch. It is connected with the beginnings of physical exercises in the Ashram when Sri Aurobindo and Mother for the first time had the groups marching in front of them. So we were all day dressed in our shirts and shorts, with white socks and tennis shoes, white caps and Mother's emblem pinned to the shirt. The cap is made of net, with two ribbons we bind around the head so that it looks like a turban. You have seen it in the *Bulletin*. So already for the morning Balcony Darshan we were standing in groups; then, before the Blessings (10 a.m.) we passed in twos around the Samadhi and Mother came down for concentration. As usual on Darshan days She sat in one of Sri Aurobindo's rooms upstairs. There is such silence there that everything vibrates in that Silence. And we passed by Her one by one. I am sending you half the message She handed me. I kept for myself the French half. Everything She gives is charged with Power. Now I know I did not attach enough value to this before, while in Europe. But it is real power that acts through the object She gives, be it a piece of soap or a flower.

When I read your remarks about the joy of ball-throwing to Mother I remembered that I wanted to write you more about joy. It was this morning during the Balcony Darshan and even before. It is a new joy that came to me, that I have never known before — a joy connected with self-giving and aspiration — and this joy is so great that it is changing my whole life again.

Now coming back to the Darshan. In the afternoon from 5.30 p.m. we had ceremonial marching, a real *défilé* before Her, and later Gujarati students danced,

some very beautifully. A Canadian lady who came six weeks ago took part too. She was in a ballet in Canada. At the end we had as usual the evening meditation and for me the day closed with such a warm feeling of Her closeness and security as I had never had before. Marching and a *défilé*, which in itself would be not much, become sheer delight when it is done for Her. And so it is with everything. She just turns everything into delight, as if by “magic”.

I often think I should write more about the organisation of work here, as I promised to Heinz, but the time will come that I will do this too. Now I just write as I write.

* * *

4.5.1958

We have got a patient and I had no time to finish this letter earlier. A lady after a severe gall-bladder attack. But she feels much better already. I feel completely wet with perspiration, so if there are any spots on the paper it is from that. Mother has begun to reveal Herself to me in other people, widening my love for Her — so that I really love Her in my patient. It is again like leading a new life. And it spreads and spreads to many people. Oh! it is becoming so spontaneous and brings such great joy and happiness. It is only the beginning, but it will grow and grow for all eternity. She gives me so much — it is like the waters of the sea, without end.

* * *

15.5.1958

I just finished licking my fingers after the ceremony of mango eating. Now it is the season for mangoes. I did not know before that they grow here. One makes a hole at the top and sucks with delight like a little baby, the delight that comes out of the little hole. Naturally it can be eaten in a cultured way too, with a spoon. It is now 10.30 p.m. and I should go to bed, but I just have no time during the day or no inspiration and now I feel like writing. An hour ago I came back from the playground after meditation. I am so thankful that I can really meditate now. Mother says somewhere that the most important thing is to be in a state of attentive silence as if listening to something very subtle, but not to want to know what is being said. This will come out of the depths some time after the meditation. Just ardent, vibrating, attentive silence.

Yesterday one of the sadhaks (European) who left suddenly a few weeks ago, came back as a Buddhist monk with shaved head, beads and yellow robe. Of course, Mother accepted him. And as for myself, I thoroughly understood what a moth is

doing; one turns round and round the Light, nearer and nearer. I would not mind if this meant death. When I write to you I usually forget that my life is not always exactly easy here with helpers, etc. But it seems all to be of no importance when I think of Her or feel Her. I just feel the delight that all this is Her Will manifesting itself. Her Will is the glory that manifests. I have now got a Polish-French dictionary from Katowice, so now I can know any word I want in English and German too, as I have French-English and French-German too.

We had thunderstorms and rain — it was wonderfully refreshing, but today we perspire again. My patient is much better. Yesterday she was taken in a car to Mother as it was her birthday.

* * *

27.5.1958

Our patient left and I have again more time. We have finished the big cleaning of the house with streams of water, which in this heat was quite pleasant.

Tomorrow X will give me a mango from Bombay. They are the best mangoes in the world, introduced there some centuries ago by Portuguese from Goa. She gets parcels from her husband. What a pity that I do not have a husband!

Oh, my felicity grows and grows. I had a few weeks of difficulty, gray days with inertia trying to get hold of me. But now it is so different. Whether there is inertia or not, I am all the time in Her arms. I never knew before that trust and confidence have such an uplifting power in them. When I am very conscious of the immense trust I have in Her, in the tiniest and biggest things, there comes always such a warm wave of love that surrounds me and I feel Her so very near to me. I have stopped thinking about my yoga, my progress, etc. I only aspire that I might be conscious of Her working in me, that I may not forget the sacrifice of every little thing to Her and that I might become Herself. And I surrender. That is my life. If I am to become more and more like Her, I must lose the ego and become one with all people, all the world. Everything is included in becoming more and more as She is — She contains all. She is the Creatrix of all the Universe. So why should I concentrate on anything else? There is nothing else. And She is for me not the person I see. She together with Sri Aurobindo is the Highest. And I try to feel Her always together with Him — Ishwara-Shakti.¹ This helps me so much. And in the *Synthesis* it is plainly said that “the seeker of the integral Truth feels in the duality of Ishwara-Shakti his closeness to a more intimate and ultimate secret of the divine Transcendence and the Manifestation than that offered to him by any other experience.”² Just a

1. *Ishwara-Shakti*: The Lord and his creative Power.

2. *The Synthesis of Yoga* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1970), p. 116.

week ago we were translating it with Her in Her class. This is always an inexpressible experience to know that the Highest about whom we read is sitting there in front of us at the desk, reading aloud about Himself (Herself). It happens that sometimes She stops or even puts Her head on the desk for a while. Then we know that from somewhere in the world a call has come to the Mother and that She concentrates and acts. Then She quietly goes on reading and translating. And somewhere a soul was helped.

I received your letter of the 21st. It is so wonderful that being so much concentrated on Her and “turning round” Her, I do not feel at all far from all the friends you write about. Just the opposite. The knowledge and feeling is growing that She is in each of them.

* * *

28.5.1958

My patients always tell me a lot about the Ashram and themselves. In a way a nurse gets a chance to get to know people and conditions better than many other people. It is sometimes difficult to believe that Mother accepts *all* human nature — very human nature — to be cleansed here. [. . .] I have learned never to let a thought of judgment or criticism enter into me in connection with it, because in the middle of it, permeating it all, vibrates and radiates and is continuously doing the work of Transformation — the Supreme. Every single person is being scrubbed and chiselled and cleansed and taught — often with humour. Like myself yesterday. We had movies, an Italian film, “The Miracle of Milano”. These films are arranged in the playground and as they are long, there is brought for Mother a kind of chaise-longue upholstered with blue silk. She rests there the whole time with us. There is something very “gemütlich” [homely] in it and it is the only time I try to sit near to Her. And I really belong to the very few who do not run after Her. From the beginning I felt that the inner contact is the most important thing. But this time during the movie I just enjoyed this closeness, though I also worked inwardly all the time. So yesterday when the film came to the end I stood up. (She sits against the wall and we all sit with our backs towards Her.) So I stood up and turned towards Her. Doing it I did not notice that the electric light was out (although there was bright moonlight) and that other people were sitting. I stood and looked at the chaise-longue and it was empty (I was three metres from Her), so I thought that She had left during the film which She never does. I stood as if hypnotised and I felt that something was going on. I sat down again after a while as the news was being shown. When the news came to an end and I turned again to Her, She was there quietly resting on Her chaise-longue. You know that the most essential aspiration in me is now to find Her in other people. So She taught me that *all* these reactions towards Her physical

person, so common here, I have to drop and find Her in my inner being and in other people. All this went very deep into me and She made me feel that it was very important, at least at the present stage of my yoga.

My dear servant Armogom forgot to cover the tiny seedlings of sunflowers and all but four are dead. But I do love him. Today he was for the first time in his life at the barber's and I admired him loudly. Today he tried to convince me that the floors are dirty because of the bright sunshine but I succeeded in convincing him that he does not wipe them well. And all this we naturally explained to each other with our hands!

The days pass wonderfully quietly. Nahar says that this year is especially hot so I am very thankful that She has made me bear the heat without too many difficulties. We have even an electric fan in the Nursing Home, but I have never used it for myself.

* * *

31.5.1958

7.30 in the morning.

Since the lesson She gave me during the movies I know that I could never find Her if the element of outer appearances were allowed to remain in my attitude towards Her. But as my love for Her is great it all developed in such a wonderful way. I felt that I myself can do nothing and She made me come to the point where I could take all my love for Her into my hands and offer it to Her for purification and transformation. This happened the day before yesterday during the Balcony Darshan and She accepted my offering. Since it happened I begin to feel more and more as if I am on the way to becoming nothing. I know that there is plenty still in me to be given to Her, but it now seems to be so logical — just to go on: to give this, and there is less in me, and again this and there is still less in me; and so I shall come progressively to the moment of being nothing, because She will have taken all of me. Oh! this is such happiness! Yesterday during the children's class She spoke about the "Supreme Love which knows everything and can do everything". I let this sentence work in me and it seems that nearly each preoccupation with myself — the small myself — is in such a situation just an offense and foolishness.

Yesterday I saw something of the country surrounding Pondicherry. Mother possesses many estates, farms, gardens and lakes, 2-7 miles out of town in different places. It is a wonderful feeling to feel Her so much spread over the land around. In each place there are one or more sadhaks living there and there is such a nice atmosphere. I have seen a pottery and a poultry farm and two vegetable gardens, very big ones. I went in a jeep that brings vegetables for the Ashram. I wanted to see the pottery and what clay they use and how they dry the pots as I am doing some

sculpture. But they were so kind to show me also other places on the way. Near the pottery is a lovely house where the father of our director of physical education lives. He supervises all the rice fields. The feeling of Her presence in all these places made me see once more that even if the sadhaks are more or less human, She is the Lord of everything and radiates through them. And you know, Riek, there is now also such happiness radiating in our Nursing Home. Our patient said it to Mother and people who come say it too.

11 a.m.

The servants show angry faces. S is offended because I gave the mosquito net to him to wash and not to A. And A is today dark like a cloud. It is not easy. I discovered that A is really a fisherman and that he had never before entered a real house! And I continue my conversation with Her: “Thou art playing with me, and playing. I know now Thy masks. Thou shalt not deceive me any more.” And it really helps. My heart becomes light, a joy comes to me and I can smile. I tear down all the masks and there She is in all Her glory. So I smile at Her and prostrate myself before Her in each of them.

* * *

1.6.1958

June already! How quickly time passes. I have just finished an “Alfonso” — the best mango in the world. I have eaten it, of course, for Her — anyway I tried to eat it for Her, but I am afraid it was too good and I forgot Her in the middle of the “Alfonso”! But slowly I shall learn this too. It is the first of the month and we got our monthly supplies: I had asked for one toilet soap, four washing soaps, toilet paper and matches. As usual She was present and this time each got from Her a marigold. Oh! if I could give myself completely, completely! Sometimes I think I am not so far from it and then She shows me what a mess of conceit I still am. But She — “*l’Amour Suprême, qui sait tout et qui peut tout*”³ — She loves me as She loves all and She will purify and transform me. So I do not worry, but am happy.

* * *

3. “the Supreme Love which knows everything and can do everything”

2.6.1958

Tomorrow is Nahar's birthday. I shall make him a birthday card with Polish patterns. This morning She made me feel that She *really* carries me in Her arms. Oh! All yoga is just feeling this more and more as real and so we enter a new world.

Fifteen or more years ago I also used to maintain that the Grace was carrying me in Her arms, but now I feel it more and more. Now I am going to the Ashram, which means the main building, to get this letter posted.

* * *

(To be continued)

JANINA STROKA

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

When the baker wants to make the dough of his bread rise, he puts some leaven into it, and it is from within that the transformation takes place.

When the Divine wanted to rouse Matter, awaken it and make it rise towards God, He threw Himself into Matter under the form of love, and it is from within that the transformation takes place.

So it is by living from within an organisation that one can help it to become enlightened and rise towards the Truth.

The Mother

Words of the Mother – II, CWM, Vol. 14, p. 118

THE LUMINOUS PAST

(Continued from the issue of March 2013)

ONCE, as he was leaving after finishing lunch, Nolini-da came to me and said, “Pramila, I am going to read one of my essays the day after tomorrow at 3 o’clock. Minku, Jatindranath and you should go the laboratory. I will read it for the three of you. I will inform the others myself.”

In my joy I exclaimed, “How fortunate we are!”

I went to the laboratory on 19th January at three o’clock. About five minutes later Nolini-da came and sat down in his chair. He said, “Shall I start reading?”

Then we had a discussion on his writings on the Mother. What he had written was based on the Mother’s writing. I cannot now remember the subject. All I can remember is his incomparable way of speaking. It did not seem at all that he was reading. Flawless, natural and charming was his style of reading. Mostly he would read his short pieces. They were small but beautiful. It did not take him very long to finish reading. At the end he looked at us with that same loving gaze with which he had welcomed us in the beginning.

*

It was August. I had not been able to go to the Mother on my previous birthday. This time if I had her kind permission, I would be able to go to her. Two days before my birthday, Nolini-da said, “The Mother has said that you can go to see her after 4 p.m.” My heart was filled with a new joy when I thought that I would be able to place my head at the Mother’s feet after two years. On this birthday I did not invite anyone. Only the children of the boarding had a somewhat special meal. The students of the class too had something special in the morning. In the late afternoon I did my *pranam* to Nolini-da and went upstairs to see the Mother. When I saw the door at the top of the stairs open I went straight and stood at the door of the big hall. There was no one around. A little later Millie-di came and took me to the Mother’s room. I had never been inside this room. There was no one else but the Mother and me. The Mother looked at me, smiling sweetly. She asked me to sit down. I knelt at her feet. The Mother took the flowers from my hand and placed them in a dish. She sorted the different flowers. Now and then she looked at me. I did my *pranam*. Perhaps because she was seeing me after such a long time she took her time to bless me. I stood up when I finished my *pranam*. I took the flowers from the Mother’s hand and bowing, brought my head closer to her. She placed her hand on my head and blessed me. As I was coming out, I paused near the door and turned round to

look again at the Mother. I had this experience. The Mother, unseen by me because my back was turned as I was going out of the room, was still looking at me with her radiant gaze. I felt embarrassed. I was delighted to see that look on the Mother's face, she who is full of compassion.

*

One morning, Jatin-da came and gave me this news: Janina, who had been suffering from a high fever for two days, had passed away that morning. I felt really miserable. After having received so much affection from her, I could not go and see her in her moment of suffering. All the memories of the past started coming back to me in a whirl. A few days later I came to know that the Mother had given a message after her passing. She had said that Janina's life had been a worthy one. All that Janina had asked from the Mother in this life had been granted. She had made the right use of all the qualities that the Mother had bestowed upon her. Her soul had found liberation. The Mother inaugurated a beautiful exhibition of all of Janina's drawings. This exhibition was open for two weeks. Many art-lovers from foreign countries wanted to buy Janina's drawings, and were willing to pay a high sum. But the Mother announced that she had no intention of selling Janina's drawings. Mr. and Mrs. Heinz from Germany came and offered to the Mother all the objects which were connected with her life. To me they gave a photograph of Janina where she was smiling sweetly and a painting of hers where she had depicted the Mother holding her in her arms. I could not give anything in return for those gifts from such a friend. The only thing I could do was to pray at Sri Aurobindo's Samadhi and at the Mother's feet for the peace of her soul.

*

The Mother has said that in human life happiness far outweighs unhappiness. Pushing away the momentary sadness of our lives the Mother gave us happiness beyond measure.

She sent word that on 9th December, which is the day of Sri Aurobindo's Mahasamadhi, after the meditation I should bring the children of the boarding to her. On 9th December, Nolini-da came to the Meditation Hall and instructed us to go upstairs and wait near the door to the Mother's room. We climbed the three flights of stairs to heaven. I went first to the door of Mother's room, holding the hand of the youngest child. I had asked the eldest and the most intelligent girl to stand at the end. The door opened. One by one, in a line we went and stood before the Mother. She gave us a bright smile and said, "Happy birthday, Happy New Year, my children." We had waited two years and now we were about to receive blessings from the Mother's hands on the anniversary of the opening of our boarding. Our hearts were

filled with waves of joy.

The Mother was alone. Right at the beginning a drop of water fell from a flower petal on to the cloth covering the Mother's lap. She used to cover her lap with a napkin. The Mother began to look for another cloth to put in its place. At once I took the end of my freshly ironed sari and wiped the drop of water. There was no stain of water on the Mother's dress. She was assured and continued receiving the *pranam*. It took a long time for us to finish our *pranams*. At the very end it was my turn. I put my head on the Mother's soft feet and with all my heart offered my *pranam*. Sweet Mother pressed my head with both her hands on her sacred feet. Then I stood up. She placed in my hands a beautiful blessing card, on which there was a picture of a lotus, and gave me a big yellow rose. She looked at everyone and smiled sweetly. Now it was time to say goodbye. The Mother said, "Goodbye, my children." With a new joy in our hearts we went to Nolini-da's room, and after showing who had received what, we came back to Jhunjhun Home, to our abode of peace.

*

Now I will tell you the story of a theft. One night, almost around midnight a man entered my room and, taking my time-piece from the table, ran out, only to slip and fall at the door. It had rained during the night. I woke up hearing the noise and shouted, "Thief, thief!" I later noticed some dried mud marks on my floor.

The thief ran up the stairs and onto the terrace. The children woke up and looked at their tables. The thief had also taken their pencils and pens. Jayshankar was not in his room. I ran out into the street and called Jayshankar by his name.

He called me from the terrace. "Didi, I have come here to catch the thief. Look, there, he is running away, far away." Jayshankar came down holding a big stick in his hands.

I asked him, "Where did you get this stick?"

He answered, "The thief gave it to me."

"Why?"

"Madhav Pandit's name is written on it. The thief said, 'Give this to him.'"

"Did he take the stick from Madhav Pandit's house and come to our terrace to give it? Do you know him?"

"No, I don't know him."

"So why did you go?"

"To catch him. He escaped by slipping down the drain pipe. I told him, 'I am coming down too.' The thief said, '*Tambi* (younger brother), don't come down. You will fall.'"

"What would you have done if he had carried you away?"

"He would not have taken me away. He was smiling with joy when he saw me."

The younger children told Jayshankar, “So, you are the thief’s younger brother!” Jayshankar replied, “He was not a thief. He did not take the stick.”

I said, “But he took my clock away.”

Jayshankar said with great sadness, “What will you do now? How will you go to school without the clock to tell you what time it is?”

By then it was six in the morning. He took the stick and ran to give it to Madhav Pandit. Then he went to Amrita-da and told him about the theft. He also told him that I had to be given a new clock.

In the afternoon Kameshwar came with three policemen. They measured the footprints of the thief and made an estimate of the value of the things which had been stolen. It added up to eight rupees (of those days). The thief turned out to be the husband of our maid-servant. But the police could not catch the thief. He and his wife ran away from Pondicherry. By evening, Amrita-da sent me another clock.

The Mother sent her blessings through Pavitra-da. He asked us, “Do you all sleep with the doors open?”

“Yes, Pavitra-da, we leave them open.”

“So, what will you do now?”

“From today, all of us have decided to bolt the doors from the inside.”

“Mother has thought about this matter. She has said very forcefully to tell you that under no circumstance should anybody shut the doors. The reason behind this is that shutting the doors will create fear in the minds of the children. Once fear gets in, you can do nothing. The children will lose their courage, they will never be able to progress in life. Courage is the greatest possession of the young. Courage brings wisdom. Can you not sleep with the doors open?”

“I will not shut the doors. I was only thinking of the children when I spoke of shutting the doors. Now there is no question of shutting the doors. We have to obey the Mother’s instructions.”

“The Mother has said that all of you should repeat the Mother’s and Sri Aurobindo’s name in your minds before going to sleep. These names will be your shield of protection. Because of this incident of theft you have received from the Mother a new courage, and inner strength and much more.”

This was our Sweet Mother’s sweet initiation. We accepted this lesson with great joy. Even now none of us shuts the doors. Even if we shut them we do not use the bolt.

(To be continued)

PRAMILA DEVI

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

**CELEBRATING THE CENTENARY YEAR OF
THE MOTHER'S FIRST COMING TO PONDICHERRY
(MARCH 29, 2013-MARCH 29, 2014)**

On this auspicious occasion, we are launching two programmes:

I. "SACAR Research Assistance" starting August 15, 2013:

1. Fellow of SACAR (3 Years)
2. Scholar in Sri Aurobindo's Thought (1 Year)
3. Researcher in Sri Aurobindo Studies (6 Months)

II. "The University of Tomorrow" (the name was blessed by the Mother in 1972) — a Learning Centre in the Vision & Thought of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother — independent and self-governed, not affiliated to the UGC or any University in India, offers the following 12-week Online Certificate Courses in Integral Studies starting August 15, 2013:

1. Integral Philosophy
2. Integral Yoga Psychology
3. Integral Education
4. Integral Management
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8. Integral Vision of Human Unity
9. Integral Vision of Poetic Criticism
10. Integral Vision of Indian Culture
11. Integral Personality Development
12. Inner Psychology and Health

III. Launching of our new e-magazine "Sri Aurobindo Darshan" (the name was blessed by the Mother in 1972) on March 29, 2013. Please visit: www.sacar.in

Admissions to both the above programmes open on May 1, 2013.

For details, please contact: sacar@auromail.net