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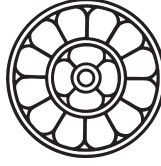
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,  
A new light breaks upon the earth,  
A new world is born.  
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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# MOTHER INDIA

## MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. LXVIII

No. 11

*“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”*

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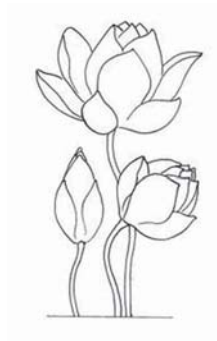


## CRY OF THE OCEAN'S SURGES

Cry of the ocean's surges, the long hexameter rolling  
Covers my spirit as tides roll over rapturous shores.  
Foam on its tops the pentameter curls to its cadenced closing,  
Two high waves, then a hush swoons on the ear in its fall.

SRI AUROBINDO

*(Collected Poems, CWSA, Vol. 2, p. 653)*



## **‘THE PLENITUDE OF THY LIFE AND THY ILLUMINATION’**

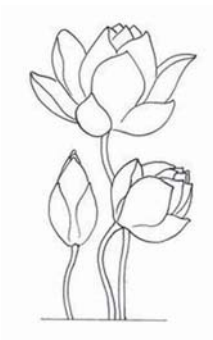
**May 21, 1914**

Outside all manifestation, in the immutable silence of Eternity, I am in Thee, O Lord, an unmoving beatitude. In that which, out of Thy puissance and marvellous light, forms the centre and reality of the atoms of matter I find Thee; thus without going out of Thy Presence I can disappear in Thy supreme consciousness or see Thee in the radiant particles of my being. And for the moment that is the plenitude of Thy life and Thy illumination.

I see Thee, I am Thyself, and between these two poles my intense love aspires towards Thee.

THE MOTHER

*(Prayers and Meditations, CWM 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. 1, p. 150)*



# PHYSICAL PAIN, THE TURN OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS, THE VICTORY OF THE DIVINE'S TRUTH

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE MOTHER ON NOVEMBER 25, 1962

**Sehra:** The doctors say that when Amal's kidney stone will come out, there will be a great deal of pain.

**The Mother:** The doctors always say things like that. You then make a formation of fear and keep expecting the pain. And the pain comes even when it needn't.

**Amal:** I recently read the review of a book on heart-trouble. The reviewer says that unless one has the courage of a lion, the hide of a rhinoceros and the intelligence of a moron, this book will make one take as heart-trouble the slightest indigestion or touch of flatulence or twitch in the chest-muscles!

**The Mother:** Yes, and even in the case of a real heart-attack, if one keeps calm and takes no notice of it and is unperturbed, the attack can pass off without any bad effect.

As for your stone, we have decided — haven't we? — that there shall be no pain in its passing out. You wrote to me asking for such a result.

About physical pain, I can tell you one thing. If the consciousness is turned upward, the pain vanishes. If it is turned downward, it is felt and even increases. When one experiments with the upward and the downward turnings, one sees that although the pain may not be there at all or on the contrary is very great, the body in both cases is in exactly the same condition. It is the turn of the consciousness that makes all the difference.

I say "turned upward" because to turn towards the Divine is the best thing, but what can be said in general is that if the consciousness is turned away from the pain to one's work or anything that interests one, there is the cessation of the pain.

And not only the pain but whatever damage there may be in the organ is set right much more easily when the consciousness is taken away from the trouble. Also, I may say that pain is not always indicative of great damage in the organ. The two are not balanced. The one can be without the other.

**Amal:** What you have written out for me in your birthday present gives me hope again for my spiritual future. I was nearly losing hope.

**The Mother:** You have a strong will that has carried you through a lot of things. Keep that will going.

**Amal:** I can't say I am a man of strong will, but the will in me can at times be made to act strongly — as it has been on many occasions in the past.

**The Mother:** Yes, you must set this will, which is capable of strength, against all troubles physical and spiritual.

People who are intelligent find always a difficulty in going through troubles. Those who are not particularly intelligent have an easier time.

**Amal:** You are always having a dig at me like that! Well, I'll try to put to work the will which you refer to.

Now I want to ask you a general question. Is it you who have inspired the Chinese cease-fire?

**The Mother** (*crossing her lips with the index-fingers of her hands*): Better not to pronounce anything. People see only a little way. The Divine sees much further. And there is a Truth which has to find its place on earth and create its own order. If you are quiet and allow it to come as it wants, things can be smooth. If there is resistance, there will be an amount of breaking. You may not know what exactly the Truth is like, but if you keep constantly the will that this Truth should be established, you will work for its arrival. If you start thinking one way or the other, you may not work in harmony with it. But if you preserve a calm consciousness and concentrate only on the victory of the Truth, you will help the Divine's Will to manifest. And this is what you must do always instead of deciding for yourself. You have yourself a will which can be very strong: use it for the swift establishment of the Divine's Truth.

AMAL KIRAN  
(K. D. SETHNA)

(First published in *Mother India*, January 1975;  
reprinted in *The Mother: Past — Present — Future*.)

\*  
\* \*

### TEXT OF AMAL'S BIRTHDAY CARD OF 25 NOVEMBER 1962:

25.11.62  
à Amal  
Bonne Fête!  
avec mes bénédictions  
pour qu'il n'y ait plus jamais  
d'ombre dans la Lumière.

Even within the confusion there is the seed of the Divine Order.

The Mother



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

*(Continued from the issue of October 2015)*

## **Chapter: XLVI**

### **A Scourge Removed**

The nationalist movement smouldered for a long time until Vivekananda's breath blew the ashes into flame, and erupted violently three years after his death. Another personality — the greatest after him — thrown into the limelight by the independence movement, was Aurobindo Ghose. He was the real intellectual heir of Vivekananda.

— Romain Rolland<sup>1</sup>

Passersby for whom the high walls of the Presidency Jail were only a monument of awe, now stopped and looked at it with reverence added to their awe, for now it housed men they loved and revered. Crowds gathered in front of it and along the roads to catch glimpses of the revolutionary brigade when it was led to the court as well as on its journey back.

Before Chittaranjan Das was to meet his client, Sri Aurobindo, much was to happen inside and outside that citadel. Inside, Barindra Kumar and his faithful followers had abandoned the idea of a daring jailbreak, but outside, their compatriots — members of the formidable group, the Anushilan Samiti — were planning for an armed raid on it to set the prisoners free. J. E. Armstrong, Superintendent of Police on Special Duty, wrote in his confidential report:

In February 1908 a printed notice, “Famine — an Appeal” was circulated in Calcutta, by the Calcutta Anushilan calling for subscriptions to enable the Samiti to undertake famine relief work in Orissa, and amongst the members of the committee we find appearing names of Arabindo Ghose, P. Mitter and Satish Bose. A few months later the arrests in the Maniktolla Garden were made and all the principal members of the Jugantar gang, including Arabinda Ghose were placed in the Presidency Jail to await their trial in the Alipore Bomb Case. About this time information was received that an attack on the Presidency Jail for the rescue of these prisoners was contemplated and that the Anushilan boys would take part in it . . .<sup>2</sup>

In several ways the Government agencies harassed the workers of the Anushilan Samiti and tried to stop their activities. Finally, the Calcutta Anushilan Samiti was declared illegal by Act XIV of 1908.

During the period when Gossain was vacillating between his temptation to swallow the police bait and his allegiance to the cause, he would stand beside Sri Aurobindo during the identification parade and tell him that the police were trying to extract information from him. Once Sri Aurobindo jokingly advised him to name Sir Andrew Fraser as the chief patron of the movement! To Sri Aurobindo's surprise he told him that he had named Surendranath Banerji as their head and had also said that he had once shown Banerji a bomb. Upon Sri Aurobindo asking him about the need for such a statement he answered that he intended to drive the police into despair by feeding them with similar false clues which could very well result in the case being dismissed! While the fellow-prisoners were sure that Gossain was lying, Sri Aurobindo thought that he was yet to make up his mind and he probably believed that he could spoil the case for the police through what he thought to be his effective technique.

Sri Aurobindo advised him not to indulge in such tomfoolery, inviting harm to himself.

But before long, his "to be or not to be" kind of conflict seemed to have been resolved. By the time the prisoners were herded together in the dormitory, Gossain had become a committed betrayer. His new benefactors had exhorted him to extract as much information as possible from his fellow-detainees, particularly about the secret supporters of their organisation. The seniors in the Intelligence department were shocked at the discovery that an I.C.S. officer like C. C. Dutt, holding a high post in the judiciary, was a collaborator of the revolutionaries. They naturally wondered if several other officials of different ranks were not involved in the unfolding conspiracy. In fact, Gossain's disclosure resulted in the dismissal from his post of a Munsiff of Eastern Bengal and Assam, Abinash Chakravarty, though the gentleman narrowly escaped being arrested because Gossain died before being cross-examined. We read in an exhaustive report prepared by F. C. Daly, D.I.G. in charge of C.I.D. and Special Branch:

It is certain that Babu Abinash Chakravarti was closely connected with the Jugantar party, and it was a question whether he should not be placed on trial along with the Manicktolla conspiracy gang. Doubtless he would have been, along with many others, charged in a supplementary case, had it not been for the daring assassination of the approver Gossain in the Alipore Jail. This was perhaps the boldest piece of work that revolutionary party has so far accomplished.

An informant who was himself deep in the revolutionary movement names the following as leading financial supporters:

Subodh Chandra Mullick and Nirode Chandra Mullick, wealthy Calcutta house-owners residing in Wellington Square.

Rajendra Nath Mukherji alias Misri Babu of Uttarpara in the Hooghly district. Charu Ch. Dutt, a Judge of the Bombay Civil Service, and son of Kalikadas Dutt, Dewan of the Cooch Behar State.

P. Mitter, Bar-at-Law, since deceased.

Manoranjan Guha, mine owner of Giridih in the Hazaribagh district.

All the above were said to be financial supporters of the Manicktolla Garden party. Charu Ch. Dutt was described as one of the prime movers of the conspiracy . . . Several other Barristers and a large number of pleaders of the High Court and in the mufosil were named as supporters and sympathisers. Notable among these was one B. C. Chatterji, Bar-at-Law, who has since married the daughter of Surendra Nath Banerjee.<sup>3</sup>

In an authentic compilation of Bengali biographical accounts we read that Abinash Chakravarty had come in contact with Sri Aurobindo and had become a nationalist. Later he became a collaborator in Bagha Jatin's organisation preparing for an armed struggle.<sup>4</sup>

We do not know and probably will never know how many people holding important positions had secret alliance with the revolutionaries.

If Naren Gossain's confessions were a menace for the revolutionaries, they proved to be a disgusting headache for the investigators. Following his revelations the police captured several young men including Sudhir Sarkar at Khulna who was planning his escape into the forests of Sundarbans, but the police had to pay an utterly vexatious price for thinking that Gossain was any match for his selected preys. The young men whose knowledge of the secret societies Gossain was trying to exploit took full advantage of his foolhardiness and enjoyed 'confiding' to him a fat lot of comic inventions. They told him that while one Viswambharam Pillay headed the society in the Tamil region, Purushottam Natekar, Prof. Bhatt and Krishnajirao Bhao headed the organisations at Satara, Bombay and Baroda respectively. In vain did the police search for these illusory entities, once or twice taking hold of gentlemen because of some similarity to the names submitted by Gossain, only to eat humble pie before long.

Narendra was taken out of the prisoners' dock and placed in the witness box for the Crown on the strength of a King's pardon that was tendered and accepted on June 23, 1908. He was examined on June 24, 25, 29 and July 3. He would say before the Court what the police had taught him the previous night. Several political leaders were named who had nothing to do with the conspiracy. Stories were told about the accused which had never occurred. There was a regular

consternation amongst the accused more for those who had sympathised with the cause or helped it in their own way than for their own selves.

In the Court and in Alipore Central Jail, where the accused were quartered, Naren was allowed a certain amount of liberty. In the Courtroom he mixed with the police officers and other hangers-on and was as free as any of them till the time came for the prisoners to be taken back to the jail. He was separated from the other accused and put in the European Ward.

A tense situation indeed! Naren's evidence admissible under the law would spell disaster, it was realised, not only to the persons concerned but to the cause itself.<sup>5</sup>

The plan to eliminate Naren Gossain began to take shape — confined probably to no more than four or five persons. The two directly involved were Satyendranath Basu (1882-1908) and Kanailal Datta (1888-1908). They did not take even Barindra Kumar into confidence.

But another significant event — a happy one for a change — took place before that daring plan was put into execution. It was Sri Aurobindo's 36<sup>th</sup> Birthday — the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1908. It was of course a coincidence that a correspondent of a pro-British daily newspaper, *The Empire*, was granted permission by the authorities to interview him on this day. This is how the report appeared in the paper:

Ever since the commencement of the trial until Saturday (15 August 1908) Arabindo has preserved a stolid lethargic demeanour.

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

The Arabindo of Saturday was, however, quite another being. His personality, hitherto grave and prepossessed, had been metamorphosed into one of sprightliness and sunniness. The cause of all this jollification, as Arabindo explained, was to a certain extent remarkable. "In the first place," he explained, "today is my birthday; and we are celebrating it as best we can under the circumstances. I was born on the 15th August 1872, and on that anniversary in 1906 the National College opened its doors to teach among other things, the principles of Swadeshism. It was either the day before or the day after my birthday, 1907," he continued waxing warm with the subject, "that I was arrested in connection with the first 'Bande Mataram' sedition case. And more remarkable still, my birthday is round again today and the Magistrate has given a definite assurance that he will commit on the evidence given in this, a case not of sedition but revolution.

"Besides all this, my brother Birendro [Barindra] is threatened on my birthday to be charged with abetment of murder in the Mozufferpore affair,

besides having to stand his trial for conspiracy. These are what I call a remarkable string of coincidences,” he added with a smile.

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

Arabindo’s facetious parting shot to the “frequenter” was: “You can add to those coincidences the fact that I shall be very probably coming back from the Andamans on my birthday next year.”<sup>6</sup>

Let us now return to the episode with Naren Gossain for its centre:

Satyen was the son of Abhay Charan Bose, the younger brother of Rishi Rajnarain Bose, hence an uncle to Sri Aurobindo though ten years younger. He was an outstanding youth leader at Midnapore (now Medinipur) who organised Swadeshi and boycott in his town successfully. The martyr Kshudiram was his recruit into the fold of the revolutionaries. He was with Sri Aurobindo at the historic Surat Congress and played an important role in organising the Nationalist camp.

Kanailal Datta hailed from Chandernagore and entered the freedom movement through his participation in the Swadeshi. He joined the revolutionaries with great enthusiasm.

There are detailed and sensational accounts of their mission and its accomplishment left by some of the fellow-accused as well as a few among those who were directly connected with them during that time. But we better limit our scope to a brief and dispassionate summary of the episode provided to us by Nolini Kanta Gupta:

Revolvers began to be collected . . . But how did we hide them? Well, I had one in my keeping. On one side of the mound we used as a bed I had made a hole. In order to prevent discovery and lest the sentries should know, I used to sit with my back against the mound and go on digging with my bare hands from behind. The earth was removed to either side and covered with the blanket. In this way the pistol could be kept hidden in a cavity within my “bed”. The opening was plastered over with mud and then covered up with a tin plate on which they served us meals. But what happened to the pistol I left buried in this way I do not know. For as these plans and preparations were getting under way, there came a bolt from the blue, a deluge that swept away everything like

a house of cards. It was Kanai and Satyen who had brought that about.

I did not know Satyen much, for we were told that he was ill and had been kept in the jail hospital. Kanai too was not much of a mixer. But we could sometimes hear him say, "Jail is not for me. I shall give the slip to the British Government." We used to laugh at his words. . . .

To come back to Kanai. Most of the time he used to lie in bed covered up from head to foot. If one got curious and asked him why, he would reply, "Oh, I am trying to find my way into the inner worlds." One day, a jail warder came and gave him the good news that he had passed his B.A. examination — the results were just out. Kanai had joined in our activities while appearing for his examination. The next we heard about him was that he was ill and had been removed to the jail hospital. And then . . .

All of a sudden, one evening, the alarm bell of the jail rang out. This bell with its furious clang was rung only in a grave emergency. At the same time a prisoner ran wildly about, shouting in Hindustani, "*Naren Gosain thanda ho gaya, Naren Gosain thanda ho gaya,*" — "Naren Gosain has been done for, Naren Gosain has been done for!" Before we had time to think or realise what had happened, swarms of armed policemen with rifles and fixed bayonets trooped into the courtyard where we had been taking our evening stroll. They pushed us back into our quarters like a drove of sheep or as if we had been animals for slaughter. Everyone was searched and we got a few rude jostlings. We were made to form a line and sit down on the spot and the order came, "Now to the 44 Degrees."

Kanai and others had wanted to get rid of Naren Gosain as soon as possible, not simply because he had been a traitor to the country but in order that his testimony be rejected in the Sessions court, for his evidence would have no value unless it could be tested in cross-examination. . . .

Now we were back again to where we had been at the beginning. It was exactly as before; except that now, instead of keeping us three in a room, they made us live separately and alone in our cells. For the authorities had now come to realise what kind of stuff we had beneath the mild surface. That was the end of our golden age in jail. All our special facilities and privileges were withdrawn. The court-room was now the only place where we could meet.<sup>7</sup>

And what about Sri Aurobindo amidst this sudden explosion of hitherto unknown excitement, anxiety and panic? Remembers Sudhir Sarkar who was with him at that moment:

On the day Naren Goswami was killed by Kanai, the sound of the firing brought cheer to our hearts. For, it had been decided beforehand that we would make an attempt at jail-break by forcing our way through the main gate of the prison

as soon as help in the form of bombs and pistols arrived from outside. We thought that help had come. But those repeated sounds of firing seemed to come not from the direction of the main gate, but from the hospital. By and by news reached us that Kanai had overpowered and finished off Naren Goswami in front of the jail hospital. We felt like dancing out of sheer joy. The alarm bell had already started ringing following the sound of the shots.

Sri Aurobindo was then taking his bath and he went on with it as if he had heard nothing. I was wiping his body. At that time I used to bathe Sri Aurobindo in the presence of the guards every morning since during that period he had ceased to make any effort at doing things himself, eating, bathing or anything; he had even stopped making comments. He remained in the state of perpetual absentmindedness. Our elders, Upen-da and others, finding me a strong and healthy lad, had selected me to look after him. I told Sri Aurobindo that the guards were asking people to get inside their rooms, and that the alarm bell was ringing because Goswami had been murdered. Shots could still be heard outside. Sri Aurobindo seemed to be totally unaware of all this as he slowly entered the room. Such a big event for us! He seemed hardly to take any notice of it. He never made any comment on these events even afterwards. His silence was something totally unlike that of ours, which is just the shutting of our mouths. Slowly his silence spread itself inwardly and outwardly; all became silent, as if all the inner mechanisms of his body, even the breathing, was suspended. When I could not reconcile his silence with my own feeling, I would mutter to myself: Has he gone mad? But inside myself I could not accept this. Whenever I came in contact with him, I felt a deep attraction towards him, an empathy, such as one feels towards one's very own.<sup>8</sup>

*(To be continued)*

MANOJ DAS

### References and Notes

1. Romain Rolland: *The Prophets of New India*.
2. Terrorism in Bengal; Vol. 2: Compiled & Edited by Amiya Kumar Samanta; Government of West Bengal, Kolkata.
3. *Ibid.*; Vol. 1.
4. *Bangali Charitabhidhan*; Sahitya Samsad, Kolkata.
5. Kalicharan Ghosh: *The Roll of Honour*; Vidya Bharati, Kolkata.
6. Reproduced from *The Empire*, in the *Bande Mataram*, now included in the *Collected Works of Sri Aurobindo*; Vol. 7, Sri Aurobindo Ashram.
7. Nolini Kanta Gupta: *Collected Works*, Vol. 7; Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.
8. *A Spirit Indomitable: Light on the Life of Sudhir Kumar Sarkar*; Sudhir Kumar Sarkar Birth Centenary Committee, Pondicherry.





**SARASWATI**  
**and**  
**MAHASARASWATI**



## ENVOI

*Ite hinc, Camenae, vos quoque ite jam, sane  
Dulces Camenae, nam fatebimur verum  
Dulces fuistis, et tamen meas chartas  
Revisitote sed pudenter et raro.\**

Pale poems, weak and few, who vainly use  
Your wings towards the unattainable spheres,  
Offspring of the divine Hellenic Muse,  
Poor maimèd children born of six disastrous years!

Not as your mother's is your wounded grace,  
Since not to me with equal love returned  
The hope which drew me to that serene face  
Wherein no unrepentful light of effort burned.

Depart and live for seasons many or few  
If live you may, but stay not here to pain  
My heart with hopeless passion and renew  
Visions of beauty that my lips shall ne'er attain.

For in Sicilian olive-groves no more  
Or seldom must my footprints now be seen,  
Nor tread Athenian lanes, nor yet explore  
Parnassus or thy voiceful shores, O Hippocrene.

Me from her lotus heaven Saraswati  
Has called to regions of eternal snow  
And Ganges pacing to the southern sea,  
Ganges upon whose shores the flowers of Eden blow.

SRI AUROBINDO

*(Collected Poems, CWSA, Vol. 2, p. 37)*

\* The poem was written circa 1890–98.

The Latin epigraph is from the *Appendix Vergiliana* (poems once ascribed to Virgil, but more likely by a contemporary), Catalepton, Carmen 5, lines 8–11. The following translation of these lines is by Joseph J. Mooney (*The Minor Poems of Vergil* [Birmingham, 1916]):

O Muses, off with you, be gone with all the rest!  
Ye charming Muses, for the truth shall be confessed  
Ye charming were, and modestly and rarely still  
Ye must revisit pages that I then shall fill. (*Collected Poems*, pp. 695–96)

## SARASWATI IN THE VEDAS

Man did not begin with reason, neither will he end with it. There are faculties within us which transcend reason and are asleep to our waking consciousness, just as life is asleep in the metal, consciousness in the tree, reason in the animal. Our evolution is not over, we have not completed even half of the great journey. And if now we are striving to purify the intellect & to carry reason to its utmost capacities, it is in order that we may discourage the lower movements of passion and desire, self-interest and prejudice and dogmatic intolerance which stand in the way of the illumination. When the intellectual buddhi is pure by vichara & abhyasa of these things, then it becomes ready to rise up out of the mind into the higher levels of consciousness and there lose itself in a much mightier movement which because of its greatness & perfection is called in the Rigveda mahas and in the Vedanta vijnana. This is what [is] meant in the Veda by Saraswati awakening the great ocean. Pavaka nah saraswati maho arnash chetayati. This is the justification of the demand in our own Yoga that desire shall be expelled, the mind stilled, the very play of reason & imagination silenced before a man shall attain to knowledge, — as the Gita puts it, na kinchid api chintayet. (*Kena and Other Upanishads*, CWSA, Vol. 18, p. 428)

\*

Why then is the Lord spoken of, unlike Parabrahman, in the masculine gender? Because he is now considered in His capacity as the great ruler & ordainer, not in His capacity as the source from which all things flow. As the source, substratum & container of things He is the Trinity, Prajna-Hiranyagarbha-Virat, in whom the Male & Female, Spirit & Matter, the Soul & its Shakti are still one & undivided. He is therefore best spoken of in the neuter. But when we see Him as the Ruler & Ordainer, the Manifested Brahman dealing with a world of phenomena already created, then division has taken place, the Shakti has gone forth to its works, and the great male Trinity, Brahma-Vishnu-Maheshwara, filled with the force of that Shakti are creating, preserving & destroying the countless worlds and the innumerable myriads of their inhabiting forms. Both these Trinities are in reality one Trinity, it is only the point of view that makes the difference. From this standpoint the Sruti goes on then to describe the Lord. He is *kavi*, the great seer & poet in the true sense of the word poet; the *kavi* is he who divines things luminously & distinctly by sheer intuition and whose divinations become, by their own overflow, creations. Paramatman as Sat-Brahma-Hiranyagarbha has this divine quality of poethood, — which men call the power of creation and it is therefore that his Shakti is described as Saraswati. Then the Lord is described as *manishi*, the Thinker. It is the thought of the Lord that is the basis or

substratum of all this creation; it is therefore that the inanimate object forms faultlessly, that the tree grows unerringly, that the animal acts with infallible instinct towards his dominant needs, that the star moves in its course & the mountain holds to its base. All the creations of the great Kavi would be inconstant in their relations and clash & collide till they destroyed each other if there were not this imperative Wisdom, with stability & equipoise as its characteristic, underlying all things & keeping them to their places, actions & nature. This Wisdom, be it noted, is the very nature of things; it is no deliberate invention, no thing of afterthoughts, adjustments & alterations, but unchangeable & the essential basis of existence from the beginning. Whatever form it take, of gravitation, or of attraction and repulsion, or of evolution, it is an eternal presence & the very nature of the world, प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म. This power of divine instinctive thought is one capacity of Paramatman as Chit-Mahadev-Prajna (Tamas, Sthanu). His other capacity is that of destruction, for He is the Spirit of immobility to whom the deep sleep of perfect unconditioned thought is the culmination (Chit) and if it were not for the activity of the Kavi in the Eternal, if the Thinker in Him were to blot out the Poet, all this pulsating world of phenomena would be stilled & resolve by inaction into the womb of undetermined condensed existence. (*Isha Upanishad*, CWSA, Vol. 17, pp. 162-64)

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My first contact with Vedic thought came indirectly while pursuing certain lines of self-development in the way of Indian Yoga, which, without my knowing it, were spontaneously converging towards the ancient and now unfrequented paths followed by our forefathers. At this time there began to arise in my mind an arrangement of symbolic names attached to certain psychological experiences which had begun to regularise themselves; and among them there came the figures of three female energies, Ila, Saraswati, Sarama, representing severally three out of the four faculties of the intuitive reason, — revelation, inspiration and intuition. Two of these names were not well known to me as names of Vedic goddesses, but were connected rather with the current Hindu religion or with old Puranic legend, Saraswati, goddess of learning and Ila, mother of the Lunar dynasty. But Sarama was familiar enough. I was unable, however, to establish any connection between the figure that rose in my mind and the Vedic hound of heaven, who was associated in my memory with the Argive Helen and represented only an image of the physical Dawn entering in its pursuit of the vanished herds of Light into the cave of the Powers of darkness. When once the clue is found, the clue of the physical Light imaging the subjective, it is easy to see that the hound of heaven may be the intuition entering into the dark caverns of the subconscious mind to prepare the delivery and out-flashing of the bright illuminations of knowledge which have there been imprisoned.

(*The Secret of the Veda*, CWSA, Vol. 15, p. 36)

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. . . we have the goddess Dakshina who may well be a female form of Daksha, himself a god and afterwards in the Purana one of the Prajapatis, the original progenitors, — we have Dakshina associated with the manifestation of knowledge and sometimes almost identified with Usha, the divine Dawn, who is the bringer of illumination. I shall suggest that Dakshina like the more famous Ila, Saraswati and Sarama, is one of four goddesses representing the four faculties of the Ritam or Truth-consciousness, — Ila representing truth-vision or revelation, Saraswati truth-audition, inspiration, the divine word, Sarama intuition, Dakshina the separative intuitional discrimination. Daksha then will mean this discrimination whether as mental judgment on the mind-plane or as intuitional discernment on the plane of the Ritam. (*Ibid.*, p. 73)

\*

The third hymn of Madhuchchandas is again a hymn of the Soma sacrifice. It is composed, like the second before it, in movements of three stanzas, the first addressed to the Ashwins, the second to Indra, the third to the Vishwadevas, the fourth to the goddess Saraswati. In this hymn also we have in the closing movement, in the invocation to Saraswati, a passage of clear psychological significance, of a far greater clarity indeed than those that have already helped us to understand the secret thought of the Veda. . . . (*Ibid.*, p. 80)

\*

. . . in the last movement of the hymn we have the clear and unmistakable indication of the Truth-consciousness as the goal of the sacrifice, the object of the Soma-offering, the culmination of the work of the Ashwins, Indra and the All-gods in the vitality and in the mind. For these are the three Riks devoted to Saraswati, the divine Word, who represents the stream of inspiration that descends from the Truth-consciousness, and thus limpidly runs their sense:

“May purifying Saraswati with all the plenitude of her forms of plenty, rich in substance by the thought, desire our sacrifice.

“She, the impeller to happy truths, the awakener in consciousness to right mentalisings, Saraswati, upholds the sacrifice.

“Saraswati by the perception awakens in consciousness the great flood (the vast movement of the Ritam) and illumines entirely all the thoughts.”

This clear and luminous finale throws back its light on all that has preceded it. It shows the intimate connection between the Vedic sacrifice and a certain state of mind and soul, the interdependence between the offering of the clarified butter and the Soma juice and luminous thought, richness of psychological content, right states of the mind and its awaking and impulsion to truth and light. It reveals the figure of

Saraswati as the goddess of the inspiration, of *śruti*. And it establishes the connection between the Vedic rivers and psychological states of mind. The passage is one of those luminous hints which the Rishis have left scattered amidst the deliberate ambiguities of their symbolic style to guide us towards their secret. (*Ibid.*, p. 90)

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The symbolism of the Veda betrays itself with the greatest clearness in the figure of the goddess Saraswati. In many of the other gods the balance of the internal sense and the external figure is carefully preserved. The veil sometimes becomes transparent or its corners are lifted even for the ordinary hearer of the Word; but it is never entirely removed. One may doubt whether Agni is anything more than the personification of the sacrificial Fire or of the physical principle of Light and Heat in things, or Indra anything more than the god of the sky and the rain or of physical Light, or Vayu anything more than the divinity in the Wind and Air or at most of the physical Life-breath. In the lesser gods the naturalistic interpretation has less ground for confidence; for it is obvious that Varuna is not merely a Vedic Uranus or Neptune, but a god with great and important moral functions; Mitra and Bhaga have the same psychological aspect; the Ribhus who form things by the mind and build up immortality by works can with difficulty be crushed into the Procrustean measure of a naturalistic mythology. Still by imputing a chaotic confusion of ideas to the poets of the Vedic hymns the difficulty can be trampled upon, if not overcome. But Saraswati will submit to no such treatment. She is, plainly and clearly, the goddess of the Word, the goddess of a divine Inspiration.

If that were all, this would not carry us much farther than the obvious fact that the Vedic Rishis were not mere naturalistic barbarians, but had their psychological ideas and were capable of creating mythological symbols which represent not only those obvious operations of physical Nature that interested their agricultural, pastoral and open-air life, but also the inner operations of the mind and soul. If we have to conceive the history of ancient religious thought as a progression from the physical to the spiritual, from a purely naturalistic to an increasingly ethical and psychological view of Nature and the world and the gods — and this, though by no means certain, is for the present the accepted view,<sup>1</sup> — we must suppose that the Vedic poets were at least already advancing from the physical and naturalistic conception of the Gods to the ethical and the spiritual. But Saraswati is not only the goddess of Inspiration, she is at one and the same time one of the seven rivers of the early Aryan world. The

1. I do not think we have any real materials for determining the first origin and primitive history of religious ideas. What the facts really point to is an early teaching at once psychological and naturalistic, that is to say with two faces, of which the first came to be more or less obscured, but never entirely effaced even in the barbarous races, even in races like the tribes of North America. But this teaching, though prehistoric, was anything but primitive.

question at once arises, whence came this extraordinary identification? And how does the connection of the two ideas present itself in the Vedic hymns? And there is more; for Saraswati is important not only in herself but by her connections. Before proceeding farther let us cast a rapid and cursory glance at them to see what they can teach us.

The association of a river with the poetical inspiration occurs also in the Greek mythology; but there the Muses are not conceived of as rivers; they are only connected in a not very intelligible fashion with a particular earthly stream. This stream is the river Hippocrene, the fountain of the Horse, and to account for its name we have a legend that it sprang from the hoof of the divine horse Pegasus; for he smote the rock with his hoof and the waters of inspiration gushed out where the mountain had been thus smitten. Was this legend merely a Greek fairy tale or had it any special meaning? And it is evident that if it had any meaning, it must, since it obviously refers to a psychological phenomenon, the birth of the waters of inspiration, have had a psychological meaning; it must have been an attempt to put into concrete figures certain psychological facts. We may note that the word Pegasus, if we transliterate it into the original Aryan phonetics, becomes Pājasa and is obviously connected with the Sanskrit *pājas*, which meant originally force, movement, or sometimes footing. In Greek itself it is connected with *pēgē*, a stream. There is, therefore, in the terms of this legend a constant association with the image of a forceful movement of inspiration. If we turn to Vedic symbols we see that the Ashwa or Horse is an image of the great dynamic force of Life, of the vital and nervous energy, and is constantly coupled with other images that symbolise the consciousness. *Adri*, the hill or rock, is a symbol of formal existence and especially of the physical nature and it is out of this hill or rock that the herds of the Sun are released and the waters flow. The streams of the *madhu*, the honey, the Soma, are said also to be milked out of this Hill or Rock. The stroke of the Horse's hoof on the rock releasing the waters of inspiration would thus become a very obvious psychological image. Nor is there any reason to suppose that the old Greeks and Indians were incapable either of such psychological observation or of putting it into the poetical and mystic imagery which was the very body of the ancient Mysteries.

We might indeed go farther and inquire whether there was not some original connection between the hero Bellerophon, slayer of Bellerus, who rides on the divine Horse, and Indra Valahan, the Vedic slayer of Vala, the enemy who keeps for himself the Light. But this would take us beyond the limits of our subject. Nor does this interpretation of the Pegasus legend carry us any farther than to indicate the natural turn of imagination of the Ancients and the way in which they came to figure the stream of inspiration as an actual stream of flowing water. Saraswati means, "she of the stream, the flowing movement", and is therefore a natural name both for a river and for the goddess of inspiration. But by what process of thought or association does the general idea of the river of inspiration come to be associated



with a particular earthly stream? And in the Veda it is not a question of one river which by its surroundings, natural and legendary, might seem more fitly associated with the idea of sacred inspiration than any other. For here it is a question not of one, but of seven rivers always associated together in the minds of the Rishis and all of them released together by the stroke of the God Indra when he smote the Python who coiled across their fountains and sealed up their outflow. It seems impossible to suppose that one river only in all this sevenfold outflowing acquired a psychological significance while the rest were associated only with the annual coming of the rains in the Punjab. The psychological significance of Saraswati carries with it a psychological significance for the whole symbol of the Vedic waters.<sup>2</sup>

Saraswati is not only connected with other rivers but with other goddesses who are plainly psychological symbols and especially with Bharati and Ila. In the later Puranic forms of worship Saraswati is the goddess of speech, of learning and of poetry and Bharati is one of her names, but in the Veda Bharati and Saraswati are different deities. Bharati is also called Mahi, the Large, Great or Vast. The three, Ila, Mahi or Bharati and Saraswati are associated together in a constant formula in those hymns of invocation in which the gods are called by Agni to the Sacrifice.

*Iḷā sarasvatī mahī, tisro devīr mayobhuvah;  
barhiḥ sīdantvasridhah.*

“May Ila, Saraswati and Mahi, three goddesses who give birth to the bliss, take their place on the sacrificial seat, they who stumble not,” or “who come not to hurt” or “do no hurt.” The epithet means, I think, they in whom there is no false movement with its evil consequences, *duritam*, no stumbling into pitfalls of sin and error. The formula is expanded in Hymn 110 of the tenth Mandala:

*Ā no yajñam bhāratī tūyam etu,  
iḷā manuṣvad iha cetayantī;  
Tisro devīr barhir edam syonaṁ,  
sarasvatī svapasaḥ sadantu.*

“May Bharati come speeding to our sacrifice and Ila hither awakening our consciousness (or, knowledge or perceptions) in human wise, and Saraswati, — three goddesses sit on this blissful seat, doing well the Work.”

It is clear and will become yet clearer that these three goddesses have closely connected functions akin to the inspirational power of Saraswati. Saraswati is the

2. The rivers have a symbolic sense in later Indian thought; as for instance Ganges, Yamuna and Saraswati and their confluence are in the Tantric imagery Yogic symbols, and they are used, though in a different way, in Yogic symbolism generally.

Word, the inspiration, as I suggest, that comes from the Ritam, the Truth-consciousness. Bharati and Ila must also be different forms of the same Word or knowledge. In the eighth hymn of Madhuchchandas we have a Rik in which Bharati is mentioned under the name of Mahi.

*Evā hyasya sūṇṛtā, virapśī gomatī mahī;  
pakvā śākhā na dāśuṣe.*

“Thus Mahi for Indra full of the rays, overflowing in her abundance, in her nature a happy truth, becomes as if a ripe branch for the giver of the sacrifice.”

The rays in the Veda are the rays of Surya, the Sun. Are we to suppose that the goddess is a deity of the physical Light or are we to translate “go” by cow and suppose that Mahi is full of cows for the sacrificer? The psychological character of Saraswati comes to our rescue against the last absurd supposition, but it negatives equally the naturalistic interpretation. This characterisation of Mahi, Saraswati’s companion in the sacrifice, the sister of the goddess of inspiration, entirely identified with her in the later mythology, is one proof among a hundred others that light in the Veda is a symbol of knowledge, of spiritual illumination. Surya is the Lord of the supreme Sight, the vast Light, *br̥haj jyotiḥ*, or, as it is sometimes called, the true Light, *ṛtam jyotiḥ*. And the connection between the words *ṛtam* and *br̥hat* is constant in the Veda.

It seems to me impossible to see in these expressions anything else than the indication of a state of illumined consciousness the nature of which is that it is wide or large, *br̥hat*, full of the truth of being, *satyam*, and of the truth of knowledge and action, *ṛtam*. The gods have this consciousness. Agni, for instance, is termed *ṛtacit*, he who has the truth-consciousness. Mahi is full of the rays of this Surya; she carries in her this illumination. Moreover she is *sūṇṛtā*, she is the word of a blissful Truth, even as it has been said of Saraswati that she is the impeller of happy truths, *codayitrī sūṇṛtānām*. Finally, she is *virapśī*, large or breaking out into abundance, a word which recalls to us that the Truth is also a Largeness, *ṛtam br̥hat*. And in another hymn, (I.22.10), she is described as *varūtrī dhiṣaṇā*, a widely covering or embracing Thought-power. Mahi, then, is the luminous vastness of the Truth, she represents the Largeness, *br̥hat*, of the superconscient in us containing in itself the Truth, *ṛtam*. She is, therefore, for the sacrificer like a branch covered with ripe fruit.

Ila is also the word of the truth; her name has become identical in a later confusion with the idea of speech. As Saraswati is an awakener of the consciousness to right thinkings or right states of mind, *cetantī sumatīnām*, so also Ila comes to the sacrifice awakening the consciousness to knowledge, *cetayantī*. . . .

As Saraswati represents the truth-audition, *śruti*, which gives the inspired word, so Ila represents *dr̥ṣṭi*, the truth-vision. If so, since *dr̥ṣṭi* and *śruti* are the two powers of the Rishi, the Kavi, the Seer of the Truth, we can understand the close connection

of Ila and Saraswati. Bharati or Mahi is the largeness of the Truth-consciousness which, dawning on man's limited mind, brings with it the two sister Puissances. We can also understand how these fine and living distinctions came afterwards to be neglected as the Vedic knowledge declined and Bharati, Saraswati, Ila melted into one.

We may note also that these three goddesses are said to bring to birth for man the Bliss, Mayas. I have already insisted on the constant relation, as conceived by the Vedic seers, between the Truth and the Bliss or Ananda. It is by the dawning of the true or infinite consciousness in man that he arrives out of this evil dream of pain and suffering, this divided creation into the Bliss, the happy state variously described in Veda by the words *bhadram*, *mayas* (love and bliss), *svasti* (the good state of existence, right being) and by others less technically used such as *vāryam*, *rayiḥ*, *rāyaḥ*. For the Vedic Rishi Truth is the passage and the antechamber, the Bliss of the divine existence is the goal, or else Truth is the foundation, Bliss the supreme result.

Such, then, is the character of Saraswati as a psychological principle, her peculiar function and her relation to her most immediate connections among the gods. . . .  
(*Ibid.*, pp. 91-97)

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The three riks of the third hymn of Madhuchchandas in which Saraswati has been invoked, run as follows, in the Sanskrit: —

*Pāvakā naḥ sarasvatī, vājebhir vājīnīvātī;  
yajñam vaṣṭu dhiyāvasuḥ.  
Codayitrī sūnṛtānām, cetantī sumatīnām;  
yajñam dadhe sarasvatī.  
Maho arṇaḥ sarasvatī, pra cetayati ketunā;  
dhiyo viśvā vi rājati.*

The sense of the first two verses is clear enough when we know Saraswati to be that power of the Truth which we call inspiration. Inspiration from the Truth purifies by getting rid of all falsehood, for all sin according to the Indian idea is merely falsehood, wrongly inspired emotion, wrongly directed will and action. The central idea of life and ourselves from which we start is a falsehood and all else is falsified by it. Truth comes to us as a light, a voice, compelling a change of thought, imposing a new discernment of ourselves and all around us. Truth of thought creates truth of vision and truth of vision forms in us truth of being, and out of truth of being (*satyam*) flows naturally truth of emotion, will and action. This is indeed the central notion of the Veda.

Saraswati, the inspiration, is full of her luminous plenitudes, rich in substance of thought. She upholds the Sacrifice, the offering of the mortal being's activities to the divine by awakening his consciousness so that it assumes right states of emotion and right movements of thought in accordance with the Truth from which she pours her illuminations and by impelling in it the rise of those truths which, according to the Vedic Rishis, liberate the life and being from falsehood, weakness and limitation and open to it the doors of the supreme felicity.

By this constant awakening and impulsion, summed up in the word, perception, *ketu*, often called the divine perception, *daivya ketu*, to distinguish it from the false mortal vision of things, — Saraswati brings into active consciousness in the human being the great flood or great movement, the Truth-consciousness itself, and illumines with it all our thoughts. We must remember that this truth-consciousness of the Vedic Rishis is a supra-mental plane, a level of the hill of being (*adreh sānu*) which is beyond our ordinary reach and to which we have to climb with difficulty. It is not part of our waking being, it is hidden from us in the sleep of the superconscient. We can then understand what Madhuchchandas means when he says that Saraswati by the constant action of the inspiration awakens the Truth to consciousness in our thoughts.

But this line may, so far as the mere grammatical form of it goes, be quite otherwise translated; we may take *maho arṇas* in apposition to Saraswati and render the verse “Saraswati, the great river, awakens us to knowledge by the perception and shines in all our thoughts.” If we understand by this expression, “the great river”, as Sayana seems to understand, the physical river in the Punjab, we get an incoherence of thought and expression which is impossible except in a nightmare or a lunatic asylum. But it is possible to suppose that it means the great flood of inspiration and that there is no reference to the great ocean of the Truth-Consciousness. Elsewhere, however, there is repeated reference to the gods working by the vast power of the great flood (*mahnā mahato arṇavasya*) where there is no reference to Saraswati and it is improbable that she should be meant. It is true that in the Vedic writings Saraswati is spoken of as the secret self of Indra, — an expression, we may observe, that is void of sense if Saraswati is only a northern river and Indra the god of the sky, but has a very profound and striking significance if Indra be the illumined Mind and Saraswati the inspiration that proceeds from the hidden plane of the supramental Truth. But it is impossible to give Saraswati so important a place with regard to the other gods as would be implied by interpreting the phrase *mahnā mahato arṇavasya* in the sense “by the greatness of Saraswati”. The gods act, it is continually stated, by the power of the Truth, *ṛtena*, but Saraswati is only one of the deities of the Truth and not even the most important or universal of them. The sense I have given is, therefore, the only rendering consistent with the general thought of the Veda and with the use of the phrase in other passages. (*Ibid.*, pp. 100-02)

We find that Saraswati, one of the seven rivers, is the river of inspiration flowing from the Truth-consciousness. (*Ibid.*, p. 108)

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These are evidently not the waters of the Punjab, but the rivers of Heaven, the streams of the Truth, goddesses like Saraswati, who possess the Truth in knowledge and open by it the doors of the beatitude to the human creature. (*Ibid.*, p. 201)

\*

For Sarama is not Saraswati, she is not the inspiration, even though the names are similar. Saraswati gives the full flood of the knowledge; she is or awakens the great stream, *maho arṇaḥ*, and illumines with plenitude all the thoughts, *dhiyo viśvā vi rājati*. Saraswati possesses and is the flood of the Truth; Sarama is the traveller and seeker on its path who does not herself possess but rather finds that which is lost. (*Ibid.*, p. 211)

\*

The Panis have to be slain or routed so that their riches may be ravished from them and devoted to the higher life. "Thou who didst sever the Pani in his continuous ranks, thine are these strong givings, O Saraswati. O Saraswati, crush the obstructors of the gods" (VI.61). (*Ibid.*, p. 239)

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Even Saraswati becomes a slayer of the Panis. (*Ibid.*, p. 143)

\*

Saraswati, who is the stream of the Word or inspiration of the Truth, is also a Dasyu-slayer and winner of the shining herds . . . (*Ibid.*, p. 243)

## MAHASARASWATI

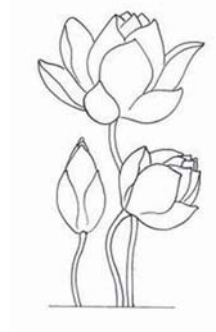
### The Mother's Power of Work and Her Spirit of Perfection and Order

Mahasaraswati is the Mother's Power of Work and her spirit of perfection and order. The youngest of the Four, she is the most skilful in executive faculty and the nearest to physical Nature. Maheshwari lays down the large lines of the world-forces, Mahakali drives their energy and impetus, Mahalakshmi discovers their rhythms and measures, but Mahasaraswati presides over their detail of organisation and execution, relation of parts and effective combination of forces and unfailing exactitude of result and fulfilment. The science and craft and technique of things are Mahasaraswati's province. Always she holds in her nature and can give to those whom she has chosen the intimate and precise knowledge, the subtlety and patience, the accuracy of intuitive mind and conscious hand and discerning eye of the perfect worker. This Power is the strong, the tireless, the careful and efficient builder, organiser, administrator, technician, artisan and classifier of the worlds. When she takes up the transformation and new-building of the nature, her action is laborious and minute and often seems to our impatience slow and interminable, but it is persistent, integral and flawless. For the will in her works is scrupulous, unsleeping, indefatigable; leaning over us she notes and touches every little detail, finds out every minute defect, gap, twist or incompleteness, considers and weighs accurately all that has been done and all that remains still to be done hereafter. Nothing is too small or apparently trivial for her attention; nothing however impalpable or disguised or latent can escape her. Moulding and remoulding she labours each part till it has attained its true form, is put in its exact place in the whole and fulfils its precise purpose. In her constant and diligent arrangement and rearrangement of things her eye is on all needs at once and the way to meet them and her intuition knows what is to be chosen and what rejected and successfully determines the right instrument, the right time, the right conditions and the right process. Carelessness and negligence and indolence she abhors; all scamped and hasty and shuffling work, all clumsiness and *à peu près* and misfire, all false adaptation and misuse of instruments and faculties and leaving of things undone or half done is offensive and foreign to her temper. When her work is finished, nothing has been forgotten, no part has been misplaced or omitted or left in a faulty condition; all is solid, accurate, complete, admirable. Nothing short of a perfect perfection satisfies her and she is ready to face an eternity of toil if that is needed for the fullness of her creation. Therefore of all the Mother's powers she is the most long-suffering with man and his thousand imperfections. Kind, smiling, close and helpful, not easily turned away or discouraged, insistent even after repeated failure, her hand sustains our every step on

condition that we are single in our will and straightforward and sincere; for a double mind she will not tolerate and her revealing irony is merciless to drama and histrionics and self-deceit and pretence. A mother to our wants, a friend in our difficulties, a persistent and tranquil counsellor and mentor, chasing away with her radiant smile the clouds of gloom and fretfulness and depression, reminding always of the ever-present help, pointing to the eternal sunshine, she is firm, quiet and persevering in the deep and continuous urge that drives us towards the integrality of the higher nature. All the work of the other Powers leans on her for its completeness; for she assures the material foundation, elaborates the stuff of detail and erects and rivets the armour of the structure.

SRI AUROBINDO

*(The Mother with Letters on the Mother, CWSA, Vol. 32, pp. 22-23)*



## ON MAHASARASWATI

*Since all creation is her work, can it be taken that it is the personalities of the Mother who, behind the veil, prepare the conditions for the descent of the Avatar or Vibhutis?*

If you mean the divine personalities of the Mother — the answer is yes. It may even be said that each Vibhuti draws his energies from the Four, from one of them predominantly in most cases, as Napoleon from Mahakali, Rama from Mahalakshmi, Augustus Caesar from Mahasaraswati.

*(Letters on Himself and the Ashram, CWSA, Vol. 35, p. 113)*

\*

*Is it mostly the Mahasaraswati aspect of the Mother that works in our sadhana here?*

At present since the sadhana came down to the physical consciousness — or rather it is a combination of Maheshwari-Mahasaraswati forces. *(Ibid., p. 325)*

\*

*Yesterday night I saw Maheshwari above my head, Mahakali in my vital being and Mahalakshmi seated in my mind and heart. Each one radiated a different light from her body. Then I saw a few subtle powers descending into my being.*

Maheshwari's natural place is in the higher consciousness above mind, for she is the wideness and largeness and wisdom of the Divine. Mahakali acts most naturally through the higher vital which is the instrument of force and power. Mahalakshmi acts through the heart — in your case at present she is acting through the mind also, though that is less usual — ordinarily it is Mahasaraswati.

*(The Mother with Letters on the Mother, CWSA, Vol. 32, p. 66)*

### Mahasaraswati

*Today, immersed in deep meditation, I saw a beautiful chakra opening above my head, and on that chakra two lotuses were blooming and on those lotuses you and the Mother were sitting. After that, I invoked the Mother in my entire*



*being and then I saw Mahasaraswati descending. Why did Mahasaraswati descend at my call and why did the chakra open above my head?*

It is Mahasaraswati's work to use the power and light and experiences that come in from above so as to change in detail the whole outer nature.

\*

*What is the wisdom that brought deeper gyri in the human brain, the perfect septa in the ventricles of the heart and such other details of structure? Is it the work of Mahasaraswati?*

Yes — all perfection in intricacy of detail shows the touch of Mahasaraswati.

\*

*Sitting in meditation today I saw a river flowing from the higher consciousness level to the heart level in me. On this river was a golden boat and seated in it was Mahasaraswati, travelling down the river in golden and white light. What is the meaning of this?*

That is the work of Mahasaraswati to move between the higher consciousness and the heart and through them establish the rule of the Truth in all details of the mind and life and physical nature. (*Ibid.*, pp. 71-72)

\*

Lakshmi is usually golden, not white. Saraswati is white.

(*Letters on Yoga – III*, CWSA, Vol. 30, p. 156)

\*

Yes, Mitra is rather a combination of the two powers [*Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati*].

(*Letters on Yoga – I*, CWSA, Vol. 28, p. 458)

\*

The faith in the divine Shakti must be always at the back of our strength and when she becomes manifest, it must be or grow implicit and complete. There is nothing that is impossible to her who is the conscious Power and universal Goddess all-

creative from eternity and armed with the Spirit's omnipotence. All knowledge, all strengths, all triumph and victory, all skill and works are in her hands and they are full of the treasures of the Spirit and of all perfections and siddhis. She is Maheshwari, goddess of the supreme knowledge, and brings to us her vision for all kinds and widenesses of truth, her rectitude of the spiritual will, the calm and passion of her supramental largeness, her felicity of illumination: she is Mahakali, goddess of the supreme strength, and with her are all mights and spiritual force and severest austerity of tapas and swiftness to the battle and the victory and the laughter, the *aṭṭahāsyā*, that makes light of defeat and death and the powers of the ignorance: she is Mahalakshmi, the goddess of the supreme love and delight, and her gifts are the spirit's grace and the charm and beauty of the Ananda and protection and every divine and human blessing: she is Mahasaraswati, the goddess of divine skill and of the works of the Spirit, and hers is the Yoga that is skill in works, *yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*, and the utilities of divine knowledge and the self-application of the spirit to life and the happiness of its harmonies. And in all her powers and forms she carries with her the supreme sense of the masteries of the eternal Ishwari, a rapid and divine capacity for all kinds of action that may be demanded from the instrument, oneness, a participating sympathy, a free identity, with all energies in all beings and therefore a spontaneous and fruitful harmony with all the divine will in the universe. The intimate feeling of her presence and her powers and the satisfied assent of all our being to her workings in and around it is the last perfection of faith in the Shakti.

(*The Synthesis of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 24, pp. 780-81)

\*

The consciousness is like a ladder: at each great epoch there has been one great being capable of adding one more step to the ladder and reaching a place where the ordinary consciousness had never been. It is possible to attain a high level and get completely out of the material consciousness; but then one does not retain the ladder, whereas the great achievement of the great epochs of the universe has been the capacity to add one more step to the ladder without losing contact with the material, the capacity to reach the Highest and at the same time connect the top with the bottom instead of letting a kind of emptiness cut off all connection between the different planes. To go up and down and join the top to the bottom is the whole secret of realisation, and that is the work of the Avatar. Each time he adds one more step to the ladder there is a new creation upon earth. . . . The step which is being added now Sri Aurobindo has called the Supramental; as a result of it, the consciousness will be able to enter the supramental world and yet retain its personal form, its individualisation and then come down to establish here a new creation. Certainly this is not the last, for there are farther ranges of being; but now we are at work to

bring down the supramental, to effect a reorganisation of the world, to bring the world back to the true divine order. It is essentially a creation of order, a putting of everything in its true place; and the chief spirit or force, the Shakti active at present is Mahasaraswati, the Goddess of perfect organisation.

*(Questions and Answers 1929-1931, CWM, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. 3, pp. 178-79)*

\*

I gave the example of Mahakali, because the conception of Mahakali in the human consciousness is especially horrible. When one goes to other divinities like Mahasaraswati, for instance, to whom all kinds of artistic, literary and other capacities are ascribed, it is no longer so terrible.

*(Questions and Answers 1950-1951, CWM, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. 4, p. 396)*

\*

*“Mahasaraswati is the Mother’s Power of Work and her spirit of perfection and order. The youngest of the Four, she is the most skilful in executive faculty and the nearest to physical Nature. . . . Always she holds in her nature and can give to those whom she has chosen the intimate and precise knowledge, the subtlety and patience, the accuracy of intuitive mind and conscious hand and discerning eye of the perfect worker.”*

*(The Mother, p. 33)*

In the order of manifestation, she was the last. And in her special nature, in the quality of her vibration, she is very close to . . . even a little child. She likes young people, children, things in the making, which have a long way before them to be transformed and perfected. She likes the activities of the young. She is the youngest in nature and the last to manifest.

*Sri Aurobindo speaks of a “conscious hand”; what does that mean?*

What! I have told you this I don’t know how many times, I have explained it hundreds of times and you still ask this question? I have told you that no matter what you want to do, the first thing is to put consciousness in the cells of your hand. If you want to play, if you want to work, if you want to do anything at all with your hand, unless you push consciousness into the cells of your hand you will never do anything good — how many times have I told you that? And this is felt. You feel it. You can acquire it. All sorts of exercises may be done to make the hand conscious and there

comes a moment when it becomes so conscious that you can leave it to do things; it does them by itself without your little mind having to intervene.

*(Questions and Answers 1950-1951, CWM, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. 4, pp. 402-03)*

\*

*Are the images we see of Mahasaraswati true?*

Oh, Lord! (*Laughter*) When a very small child tries to make someone's portrait, does it resemble that person? It is very much like this, sometimes worse! Because the child is frank and sincere, whereas the one who makes the images of the gods is full of fixed notions and preconceived ideas, or else of all that others have said about the subject and of what has been written in the scriptures and what has been seen by people. And so he is bound by all that. *At times, from time to time*, there are artists who have an inner vision, a great aspiration, a great purity of soul and of vision, who have made things which are reasonably good. But this is extremely rare. And generally, I believe it is almost the opposite.

*(Questions and Answers 1954, CWM, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. 6, p. 275)*

\*

*"All the work of the other Powers leans on her [Mahasaraswati] for its completeness. . . ."*

Mahasaraswati. Yes, because she is . . . (*silence*) precisely the goddess of perfection. For her everything must be done down to the last detail, and done in an absolutely perfect way. And she wants, she insists that it should be done physically, totally, materially, that it should not remain in the air, you see, like a mental or vital action, but that it should be a physical realisation in all its details, and all the details be perfect, that nothing be neglected. So all that the others undertake in the other domains she concretises and brings to its material perfection.

*(Ibid., p. 283)*

\*

*Sweet Mother, why is Mahasaraswati the youngest of the four?*

Because her work came last; so she came last. (*Silence*) It is in this order that they manifested, in the order given here. These aspects are like the attributes of the

Mother, which manifested in succession according to the necessities of the work; and the necessity of perfection was the last, so she is the youngest. (*Ibid.*, p. 289)

\*

Mahasaraswati's mission is to awaken the world to the need of perfection; but perfection itself belongs to the Supreme Lord alone; no one else can even know what it is.

\*

*Ma, please help me to have a clear representation of the four aspects of the Mother as described by Sri Aurobindo in his book The Mother.*

In their aspect above the Overmind, in the higher regions, the aspects of the Mother have very simple forms and don't have multiple limbs.

All the details and complications are appearances mostly added by men in order to give a symbolic expression to invisible qualities.

(*Words of the Mother – III*, CWM, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. 15, pp. 17-18)

\*

[Significance given by the Mother to the flower *Rondeletia odorata*:]

Mahasaraswati's perfection in work

[The explanation she gave:]

Is not satisfied with makeshift

(*Spiritual Significance of Flowers*, p. 102)

## FROM A TALK OF 9 NOVEMBER 1926

*Disciple:* Do you promise that the world of the Gods will descend?

*Sri Aurobindo:* I don't promise anything. "If the Supramental comes down," that is what I say.

*Disciple:* Can it be obstructed by us?

*Sri Aurobindo:* No. You can help it.

*Disciple:* Would it not create a noise in the world?

*Sri Aurobindo:* You must not expect to make a noise. It is a *silent* work. Publicity would attract hostile forces. You can take up external work only when it is *in* you: when you are doing the Sadhana in the mind then the outer activities like the *Arya* and writing, etc., can go on. But when I came down to the vital I stopped all that.

*Disciple:* Is it true that the Higher Power has no human considerations for the Adhar in which it descends, because for the Power it does not seem to matter if the Adhar breaks?

*Sri Aurobindo:* The best is to have the Mahasaraswati and Maheshwari aspects working. Formerly I used to work in that way. Many would not be able to bear Mahakali — only a few can pull with impunity. All the four aspects have to be harmonised in us. The ideal condition is to have in front any one aspect of the Power that is necessary for action, with the three others behind it.

*Disciple:* What would be the significance of the Supermind to humanity?

*Sri Aurobindo:* What it will mean to mankind may be known later on, not now.

(*Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo*, recorded by A. B. Purani, p. 500, 2007 Edition)

## THE DESCENT OF MAHASARASWATI

You know, today is a great day, the descent of Mahasaraswati. She is particularly attached to me and renders me a lot of service from day to day. And I too love her. In each of my tasks where perfection is necessary I receive her invariable help. She comes to help me. And she finds a great joy, because she is occupied with the material progress, the perfection, the harmony and the joy in the work. It is for this that she is near me, to do this or that thing to lighten my work. She is always there to give a 'helping hand' so that my work is done as perfectly as possible, and evidently faster. You know, it is in the physical perfection that the work of transformation begins. And it is in an impeccable perfection in material life that the seed of transformation can grow. That is why she is indispensable to begin the process of material transformation. When all around me, and everywhere I look, in the surrounding and near me, she has established a harmony, a peace and a joy in her expression with a dedication and a surrender to belong to me, then, spontaneously, the body absorbs these things in itself and the work of transformation is done much more easily. It is in this way that Mahasaraswati helps me to hasten the work of transformation.

Sometimes, when I have a lot to do and I know that physically it would be impossible to accomplish so many things at the same time, I distribute the work to these gods and goddesses, (moreover there are many of them who are there and they find a great joy in doing something for me), it is like this that I become somewhat free to do my work of sadhana on myself. And among them Mahasaraswati predominates, speeding up all that I have to do. She is very close to me and she knows the reward for rendering a service to me. She is very devoted. The thing that I love the most is that she is a perfectionist of the highest degree and does not ask much in return and she is always on the alert to help me. It is the same with Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Durga, because they know very well that it is by me that they progress, and they will have as much as is necessary. That is why they have the right attitude. But the gods, if they do something for me, they are greedy to have something in return. But I know very well what I have to do and neglect no one. Then, you see how all this work gets done, even without my thinking about it. But I keep some work specially for myself, the work of transforming the body, which demands a real effort, otherwise I would be lazy like all you. (*laughter*)

*Mother, the gods and the goddesses help You in so many ways. . . . But for us, You are there, You support us and provide us with all that we need. It is for this, Mother . . .*

Ah! if you knew all that I do for all of you, all that I accomplish, all that I formulate for each one; I arrange, and I hasten the process, I help so that you may progress; I protect you and make you invulnerable to attacks — how much I have to fight constantly so that you are safe and sound; how much I have to stoop or come down to sort out the many forces and powers so that you are protected and well-provided for and that the Good, the True, the Grace and the Divine Love spread over all of you; how much I push you and push you towards the truth of your existence. You know nothing about it! You have no idea! What a privilege, what a marvel! What an opportune moment! So much blessings! So much compassion! Such kindness! Even for the gods I do not do one hundredth of what I do for all of you. And yet they are so happy to have a little bit of what I do for them, even the little that I do is great and vast. Besides, there is no comparison. It is surely not something that can be measured like this, by your laws and your mental norms. In fact, I expect, no, it's rather, I hope, much, much from you all, much more than the gods. That is why I take so much trouble to lift you all up. *Voilà !*

This is the moment to take the decision and to embark towards this horizon full of hope, light and harmony. There is nothing else which gives to life this Peace, this Joy, and this Love. My child, my child, do not miss this opportunity, even like the one today, the day of Saraswati Puja, or any other occasion. These are indications, 'signposts or stepping stones' to launch oneself towards the Infinite (it could be anything, a word, a series of events, a circumstance, a shock, even an accident,) to be enthused to take the right decision, to turn towards the Divine.

Let us march forward towards this Beauty and this new Light which is beckoning you and inviting you to follow the path of transformation that is already prepared. It is this that has a value. It is this that is worth living for. . . . *Voilà !*

*Mother, I understand, but how to do it? How to take the first steps? All that we do is annulled so quickly, even by a moment of negligence or of impulsiveness. How to move forward, how to follow You?*

First of all, to will ardently, to aspire to be purified in order to prepare the base. Once the foundation of truth is laid, then I am there to help you further . . . and yet my help is always there. It acts when you make an effort or you aspire. . . .

*(Mother concentrates awhile and then speaks)*

And you know, all these gods and goddesses help me a lot, not only for the terrestrial work, but also on the whole towards a complete accomplishment — such as to maintain Harmony, Peace and Light in the world, as well as in the cosmic and extra-terrestrial planes.

And each time I came down for the 'Special Blessings' during the pujas, all the



gods and the goddesses accompanied me to have a privileged 'darshan' of me and also to participate in what I used to bring down in the terrestrial atmosphere to transform life. There were, naturally, these four Powers like Mahasaraswati, Mahalakshmi, Mahakali and Durga. . . , but there were so many other gods that I do not remember their names. There were also the gods of the Vedic age and then other gods who were there to be transformed. In fact, there was a crowd before me. One after another they came near me to announce their presence and I greeted each one of them happily. It was truly a sight; especially when I saw Krishna among them. It was charming. And the atmosphere was full of joy and assurance. And each one participated in his way. It was like a manifestation. And today the presence of Mahasaraswati is palpably felt. . . .

If you have an imperious need of perfection, — in your heart, in your actions, in all that you do, even in your attitude, — to be more and more perfect, then be sure that you are under Mahasaraswati's influence. You must aspire towards this perfection and accomplish it in your daily life. This thirst for perfection should be one of the aims that you pursue, the perfection which strives towards a greater perfection, always progressive, complete, global, with an amplitude and a certitude, more and more vast and infinitely true. The consciousness must turn towards this state or mode which requires and which is satisfied only by the need of perfection, only to find the perfection in whatever we do in life; then it is a solid base for our yoga of transformation. Then one understands the necessity of all that she gives constantly and bestows upon us in her full compassion. Otherwise all is lost, dissolved in the atmosphere . . . like this, (*gesture*) as it happens constantly with all that the Lord sends to us, without end — this rain of Love, of Light, of Ananda, of His Kindness, of His Compassion and His Grace which is showered constantly. . . . The whole atmosphere is charged and is flooded from all sides . . . and no one takes advantage of this great phenomenon. What a loss! What an occasion squandered.

Well, my child, be an exception and you will see the reward.

*Au revoir.*

\*  
\*   \*

*(The Mother spoke about Mahasaraswati on another occasion)*

You must do everything for perfection. Do everything only for perfection. Find the inner perfection to express the perfection in the physical world. You know Mahasaraswati demands a perfection, a harmony and an exactitude which alone can satisfy her.

\*

*(From a written reply of the Mother)*

If you feel within you an ardent need for perfection in your consciousness and in your action; if nothing short of a perfect perfection can satisfy you, then you can be sure that Mahasaraswati has presided over your birth and that her influence is always with you.

\*

*(Prayer given by the Mother)*

The perfections of yesterday are no longer sufficient for me. I want to be able to understand and to realise the perfection of tomorrow.

Give me the consciousness that I am nothing, in order to be able to become something.

*(Blessings of the Grace — Conversations with the Mother  
Recollected by Mona Sarkar, pp. 88-94)*

## SARASWATI PUJA BLESSINGS OF 21 JANUARY 1961

I am going downstairs on the 21<sup>st</sup>, for Saraswati Puja. They have prepared a folder with a long quotation from *Savitri* and five photos of my face taken from five different angles.

The title of the folder is the line from *Savitri* that gave me the most overpowering experience of the entire book (because, as I told you, as I read, I would *live* the experiences — reading brought, instantly, a living experience). And when I came to this particular line . . . I was as if suddenly swept up and engulfed in . . . ('the' is wrong, 'an' is wrong — it's neither one nor the other, it's something else) . . . Eternal Truth. Everything was abolished except this:

*For ever love, O beautiful slave of God*

That alone existed.

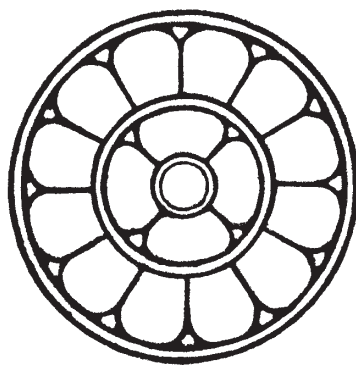
(A conversation with a disciple on January 12, 1961)

[on the following pages:

- the cover of the folder
- the new year prayer
- the line from *Savitri*
- the long quotation
- the five photos]

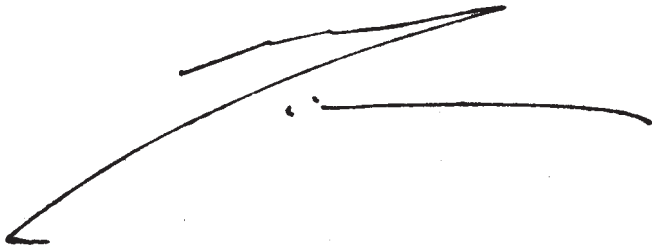


*For ever love, O beautiful slave of God.*



1967

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



For ever love, O beautiful slave of God.



She walked in their front towards a greater light,  
Their leader and queen over their hearts and souls,  
One close to their bosoms, yet divine and far.  
Admiring and amazed they saw her stride  
Attempting with a godlike rush and leap  
Heights for their human stature too remote  
Or with a slow great many-sided toil  
Pushing towards aims they hardly could conceive;  
Yet forced to be the satellites of her sun  
They moved unable to forego her light,  
Desiring they clutched at her with outstretched hands  
Or followed stumbling in the paths she made.  
Or longing with their self of life and flesh  
They clung to her for heart's nourishment and support :  
The rest they could not see in visible light;  
Vaguely they bore her inner mightiness.  
Or bound by the senses and the longing heart,  
Adoring with a turbid human love,  
They could not grasp the mighty spirit she was  
Or change by closeness to be even as she.  
Some felt her with their souls and thrilled with her;  
A greatness felt near yet beyond mind's grasp;  
To see her was a summons to adore,  
To be near her drew a high communion's force.  
So men worship a god too great to know,  
Too high, too vast to wear a limiting shape;  
They feel a Presence and obey a might,  
Adore a love whose rapture invades their breasts;  
To a divine ardour quickening the heart-beats,  
A law they follow greatening heart and life.



Opened to a breath is the new diviner air,  
Opened to man is a freer, happier world :  
He sees high steps climbing to Self and Light.  
Her divine parts the soul's allegiance called :  
It saw, it felt; it knew the deity.  
Her will was puissant on their nature's acts,  
Her heart's inexhaustible sweetness lured their hearts,  
A being they loved whose bounds exceeded theirs;  
Her measure they could not reach but bore her touch,  
Answering with the flower's answer to the sun  
They gave themselves to her and asked no more.  
One greater than themselves, too wide for their ken,  
Their minds could not understand nor wholly know,  
Their lives replied to hers, moved at her words:  
They felt a godhead and obeyed a call,  
Answered to her lead and did her work in the world;  
Their lives, their natures moved compelled by hers  
As if the truth of their own larger selves  
Put on an aspect of divinity  
To exalt them to a pitch beyond their earth's.  
They felt a larger future meet their walk;  
She held their hands, she chose for them their paths :  
They were moved by her towards great unknown things,  
Faith drew them and the joy to feel themselves hers;  
They lived in her, they saw the world with her eyes.

*Savitri Book IV, Canto II*

*Sri Anuband*





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in the satisfaction of others.”*

*THE MOTHER*

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