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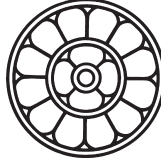
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,  
A new light breaks upon the earth,  
A new world is born.  
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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Vol. LXIX

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*“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”*

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## THE VEDANTIN'S PRAYER

Spirit Supreme

Who musest in the silence of the heart,  
Eternal gleam,

Thou only Art!

Ah, wherefore with this darkness am I veiled,  
My sunlit part

By clouds assailed?

Why am I thus disfigured by desire,  
Distracted, haled,

Scorched by the fire

Of fitful passions, from thy peace out-thrust  
Into the gyre

Of every gust?

Betrayed to grief, o'ertaken with dismay,  
Surprised by lust?

Let not my grey

Blood-clotted past repel thy sovereign ruth,  
Nor even delay,

O lonely Truth!

Nor let the specious gods who ape Thee still  
Deceive my youth.

These clamours still;

For I would hear the eternal voice and know  
The eternal Will.

This brilliant show

Cumbering the threshold of eternity  
Dispel, — bestow

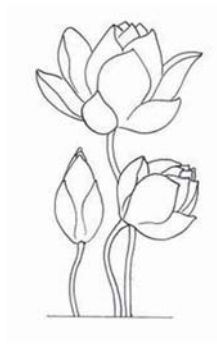
The undimmed eye,  
The heart grown young and clear. Rebuke in me  
These hopes that cry

So deafeningly,  
Remove my sullied centuries, restore  
My purity.

O hidden door  
Of Knowledge, open! Strength, fulfil thyself!  
Love, outpour!

SRI AUROBINDO

*(Collected Poems, CWSA, Vol. 2, pp. 212-13)*



# **EXPERIENCES AND REALISATIONS IN THE INTEGRAL YOGA**

## **PART THREE EXPERIENCES OF THE INNER CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS**

### **SECTION THREE EXPERIENCES OF THE COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS**

#### **Chapter One The Universal or Cosmic Consciousness**

##### **The Terms “Universal” and “Cosmic”**

There is no difference between the terms “universal” and “cosmic” except that “universal” can be used in a freer way than “cosmic”. Universal may mean “of the universe”, cosmic in that general sense. But it may also mean “common to all”, — e.g., “This is a universal weakness” — but you cannot say, “This is a cosmic weakness.”

\*

Universal applies to everything in the universe — there are individual beings everywhere, but not physical in the terrestrial sense — the composition being different.

##### **The Nature of the Cosmic Consciousness**

Man is shut up at present in his surface individual consciousness and knows the world (or rather the surface of it) only through his outward mind and senses and by interpreting their contacts with the world. By Yoga there can open in him a consciousness which becomes one with that of the world; he becomes directly aware of a universal Being, universal states, universal Force and Power, universal mind, life, matter and lives in conscious relations with these things. He is then said to have the cosmic consciousness.

\*

Men are usually shut up in the sense of their separate existence and know of the world and of other beings only what they see, hear, feel by their senses and their mental images and inferences. By Yoga one can get free of this limitation and become directly aware of the Cosmic Self, the self of other beings, of their movements, of the movements of the cosmic forces, etc. etc. That is the cosmic consciousness.

\*

Everyone has a universal consciousness standing concealed behind the individualised personality. When one becomes aware of it one feels in contact with the universal self and forces or one with them.

\*

When one has the cosmic consciousness, one can feel the cosmic self as one's own self, one can feel one with other beings in the cosmos, one can feel all the forces of Nature as moving in oneself, all selves as one's own self.

There is no why except that it is so, since all is the One.

\*

The ordinary consciousness of man is confined to his own individuality — he can enter into the consciousness of others and of the universe only by indirect means or a superficial and incomplete apprehension, by sense experience, contacts of emotional sympathy, mental concepts, analogy with his own movements, inference. In Yoga at a certain point this limitation breaks down, the consciousness enlarges itself, becomes directly aware of the Cosmic Self and knows the individual self to be one with it; of the Cosmic Energy and meets directly the action of the cosmic forces; of the cosmic mind, life, matter and feels first a contact of its individual mind, life, body with them, then a unity in which one's own individual mentality, vitality, physicality is felt as only a part of the universal, a wave of the ocean, a dynamo receiving and formulating the universal forces. Finally, the individual melts into the cosmic consciousness, the whole world is felt in oneself and oneself suffused through the world — it is the cosmic Consciousness, Mind, Life, material Energy that works through the individual function. The separate ego either does not exist or is only a convenience for the universal Spirit and its action. This is the complete consummation of the cosmic Consciousness, but in its fullness it is not common, belonging properly to what we may call the Overmind realisation; but a constant partial and growing experience of it or an increasing contact with the cosmic Consciousness is a normal part of Yoga.



### **The Cosmic Consciousness and the Overmind**

The cosmic consciousness does not belong to overmind in especial; it covers all the planes.

\*

The overmind is the basis of the total cosmic consciousness, but the cosmic consciousness itself can be felt on any plane, not only above mind, but in mind, life, matter.

### **The Cosmic Consciousness and the Transcendent**

The consciousness in the individual widens itself into the cosmic consciousness outside and can have any kind of dealing with it, penetrate, know its movements, act upon it or receive from it, even become commensurate with or contain it — which was what was meant in the language of the old Yogas by having the *brahmāṇḍa* within you.

The cosmic consciousness is that of the universe, of the cosmic Spirit and cosmic Nature with all the beings and forces within it. All that is as much conscious as a whole as the individual separately is, though in a different way. The consciousness of the individual is part of this, but a part feeling itself as a separate being. Yet all the time most of what he is comes into him from the cosmic consciousness. Only there is a wall of separative ignorance between. Once it breaks down he becomes aware of the cosmic Self, of the consciousness of the cosmic Nature, of the forces playing in it etc. He feels all that as he now feels physical things and impacts. He finds it all to be one with his larger or universal self.

There is the universal mental, the universal vital, the universal physical nature, and it is out of a selection of their forces and movements that the individual mind, vital and physical are made. The soul comes from beyond this nature of mind, life and body. It belongs to the Transcendent and because of it we can open to the higher Nature beyond.

The Divine is always One that is Many. The individual spirit is part of the “Many” side of the One, and the psychic being is what it puts forth to evolve here in the earth-nature. In liberation the individual self realises itself as the One (that is yet Many). It may plunge into the One and merge or hide itself in its bosom — that is the Laya of the Adwaita; it may feel its oneness and yet as part of the Many that is One enjoy the Divine, that is the Dwaitadwaita liberation; it may lay stress on its Many aspect and be possessed by the Divine, the Visishtadwaita, or go on playing with Krishna in the eternal Vrindavan, the Dwaita liberation. Or it may, even being liberated, remain in the Lila or manifestation or descend into it as often as it likes. The Divine is not bound by human philosophies — it is free in its play and free in its essence.

\*

One has to get above the cosmic consciousness of the mind, life and matter by entering into the spiritual levels above the ordinary mind, into the higher consciousness. This does not cut one off from the cosmic consciousness, but one sees it without being involved in it.

\*

It [*the correspondent's experience*] is the release from the limitations by the body consciousness and the opening into the wider being which is universal although it has an individual centre. As this develops one becomes aware of the true Self silent and illimitable and the cosmic consciousness. The concentration at the apex above the head is the station in the thousand-petalled lotus. There one becomes aware of states of mind above the ordinary human *buddhi*, the higher mind, the illumined mind, the intuition, the overmind — finally when one has achieved the overmind one opens directly to the supramental consciousness.

\*

The cosmic consciousness has many levels — the cosmic physical, the cosmic vital, the cosmic Mind, and above the higher planes of cosmic Mind there is the Intuition and above that the Overmind and still above that the Supermind where the Transcendental begins. In order to live on the Intuitive plane (not merely to receive intuitions), one has to live in the cosmic consciousness because there the cosmic and individual run into each other as it were, and the mental separation between them is already broken down, so nobody can reach there who is still in the separative ego.

A reflected static realisation of Sachchidananda is possible on any of the cosmic planes, but the full entering into it, the entire union with the Supreme Divine dynamic as well as static, comes with the transcendence.

\*

It [*realisation of the Cosmic Divine*] is sufficient if only a static Consciousness is aimed at — but if transformation and the dynamic Divine is the aim, then the whole must be known. To realise the Cosmic Divine is after all impossible without entering into or opening to the cosmic consciousness — but one has to know the cosmic Prakriti as well as the cosmic Purusha.

### **Spiritual, Cosmic and Ordinary Consciousness**

1. The spiritual consciousness is that in which we enter into the awareness of Self, the Spirit, the Divine and are able to see in all things their essential reality and the play of forces and phenomena as proceeding from that essential Reality.

2. The cosmic consciousness is that in which the limits of ego, personal mind and body disappear and one becomes aware of a cosmic vastness which is or is filled by a cosmic Spirit and aware also of the direct play of cosmic forces, universal mind forces, universal life forces, universal energies of Matter, universal Overmind forces. But one does not become aware of all these together; the opening of the cosmic consciousness is usually progressive. It is not that the ego, the body, the personal mind disappear, but one feels them as only a small part of oneself. One begins to feel others too as part of oneself or varied repetitions of oneself, the same self modified by Nature in other bodies or, at the least, as living in the larger universal self which is henceforth one's own greater reality. All things in fact begin to change their value and appearance; one's whole experience of the world is radically different from that of those who are shut up in their personal selves. One begins to know things by a different kind of experience, more direct, not depending on the external mind and the senses. It is not that the possibility of error disappears, for that cannot be so long as mind of any kind is one's instrument for transcribing knowledge, but there is a new vast and deep way of experiencing, seeing, knowing, contacting things, and the confines of knowledge can be rolled back to an almost immeasurable degree. The things one has to be on guard against in the cosmic consciousness are the play of a magnified ego, the vaster attacks of the hostile forces — for they too are part of the cosmic consciousness — and the attempt of the cosmic Illusion (Ignorance, Avidya) to prevent the growth of the soul into the cosmic Truth. These are things that one has to learn by experience; mental teaching or explanation is quite insufficient. To enter safely into the cosmic consciousness and to pass safely through it, it is necessary to have a strong central unegoistic sincerity and to have the psychic being, with its divination of truth and unfaltering orientation towards the Divine, already in front in the nature.

3. The ordinary consciousness is that in which one knows things only or mainly by the intellect, the external mind and the senses and knows forces etc. only by their outward manifestations and results and the rest by inferences from these data. There may be some play of mental intuition, deeper psychic seeing or impulses, spiritual intimations etc. — but in the ordinary consciousness these are incidental only and do not modify its fundamental character.

### The Widening of the Consciousness

It is very good. The widening of the consciousness so as to be in touch with the Universal Infinite is an important stage in the sadhana.

\*

The ordinary man lives in his own personal consciousness knowing things through his mind and senses as they are touched by a world which is outside him, outside his consciousness. When the consciousness subtilises, it begins to come into contact with things in a much more direct way, not only with their forms and outer impacts but with what is inside them, but still the range may be small. But the consciousness can also widen and begin to be first in direct contact with an immense range of things in the world, then to contain them as it were, — as it is said to see the world in oneself, — and to be in a way identified with it. To see all things in the self and the self in all things — to be aware of one being everywhere, aware directly of the different planes, their forces, their beings — that is universalisation.

\*

Opening is when it [*the consciousness*] receives the higher forces — widening is when it is no longer limited to the body but widens to meet the cosmic consciousness.

\*

The widening of the consciousness beyond the body means that there is a preparation to pass out of the limitation by the body consciousness and feel oneself either in the cosmic consciousness or in contact with it. If one has this feeling of enlargement or wideness above the head one is in contact with the universal Self; below it is according to the level with the cosmic Mind, the cosmic vital or the cosmic physical consciousness. When one is entirely freed from the body limitation, then one feels the consciousness as infinite with the body only as something very small within it.

\*

It [*separation of the consciousness from the body*] means the liberation from the body sense in which one can truly say, “I am not the body.” This liberation is part of the cosmic consciousness — as is also the realisation of the cosmic Will.

It is the liberation from the body sense only. That is quite different from the control of the body.

\*

Yes, your experience was a very good one and your feeling about it was correct. When the consciousness is narrow and personal or shut in the body, it is difficult to receive from the Divine — the wider it expands, the more it can receive. A time comes when it feels as wide as the world and able to receive all the Divine into itself.

\*

If you feel the barrier in which you lived broken down and an inner ocean of wideness, then a great thing has happened in you. For it is this wideness that comes when the consciousness opens to the Divine. Into this wideness the Divine's peace, love, light and joy can pour and fix themselves there.

Go on calling the Mother and opening yourself to her. All the rest will come.

\*

By a widening of all the parts of the being, a sense of largeness and liberation of the mind, vital and physical, an opening to the Divine everywhere and many other signs [ — *so the Divine's wideness manifests itself*].

\*

Yes — it [*wideness*] is felt as if a great substantial vastness full of power and giving the sense of oneness free and infinite and the same from top to bottom.

\*

The emptiness and wideness in the brain is a very good sign. It is a condition for the opening horizontally into the cosmic consciousness and upward into the Self and higher spiritual Mind above the head.

\*

The lightness, the feeling of the disappearance of the head and that all is open is a sign of the wideness of the mental consciousness which is no longer limited by the brain and its body sense — no longer imprisoned but wide and free. This is felt in the meditation only at first or with closed eyes, but at a later stage it becomes established and one feels always oneself a wide consciousness not limited by any feeling of the body. You felt something of this wideness of your being in the second experience when the Mother's foot pressed down your physical mind (head) till it went below and left room for this sense of an infinite Self. This wide consciousness

not dependent on the body or limited by it is what is called in Yoga the Atman or Self. You are only having the first glimpses of it, but later on it becomes normal and one feels that one was always this Atman infinite and immortal.

\*

It is an experience of the extension of consciousness. In Yoga experience the consciousness widens in every direction, around, below, above, in each direction stretching to infinity. When the consciousness of the Yogin becomes liberated, it is not in the body, but in this infinite height, depth and wideness that he lives always. Its basis is an infinite void or silence, but in that all can manifest — Peace, Freedom, Power, Light, Knowledge, Ananda. This consciousness is usually called the consciousness of the Self or Atman, for it is a pure existence or self that is the source of all things and contains all things.

\*

You must dismiss the fear of the concentration. The emptiness you feel coming on you is the silence of the great peace in which you become aware of your self, not as the small ego shut up in the body, but as the spiritual self wide as the universe. Consciousness is not dissolved; it is the limits of the consciousness that are dissolved. In that silence thoughts may cease for a time, there may be nothing but a great limitless freedom and wideness, but into that silence, that empty wideness descends the vast peace from above, light, bliss, knowledge, the higher Consciousness in which you feel the oneness of the Divine. It is the beginning of the transformation and there is nothing in it to fear.

\*

If these were imaginations, you would be able to reproduce them exactly each time you thought of them. The idea that it is imagination comes from the physical mind which cannot believe in anything supraphysical.

This opening of the chest into the void (not really the void, but the infinite Akash of the Chit universal and illimitable) is always the sign of an opening of the emotional being into the wideness of the Universal Divine. The image of the Akash is often seen by sadhaks in Dhyana. When the consciousness is liberated, whether in the mind or other part, there is always this sense of the wide infinite emptiness. From the top of the head to the throat is the mental plane of the being — a similar opening and emptiness or wideness here is the sign of the mind being freed into the Universal. From the throat to the stomach is the higher vital or emotional region. Below is the lower vital plane.

\*

It is of course the inner wideness in which you were absorbed so that outward things went on of themselves without engaging the interest. In the meditation it was the same descent into the head — when it fills the head, there is often this feeling of there being no head, only that which is coming down or else a wideness in which that is acting. In the end one gets the feeling of being not something confined in the head and body, but a wide consciousness with the body only as something comparatively small inside it. The vision was a figure of this wider consciousness with the Mother's inner presence always there.

\*

Yes, what you see is right.<sup>1</sup> It is why the former Yogins preferred to remain in the wide consciousness aloof from the play of the energies — they regarded the latter as something belonging to the life of illusion which would fall away only by the rejection of the physical life through knowledge. It is when you oscillate from one consciousness to another that you seem to lose the higher one or feel as if it were lost. By keeping it within always, one is able to regard both sides and change the recalcitrant lower nature.

\*

The wideness comes when one exceeds or begins to exceed the individual consciousness and spread out towards the universal. But the psychic can be active even in the individual consciousness.

\*

At the beginning the experience of wideness like other experiences comes only from time to time. It is only afterwards that it becomes frequent and remains long, till finally it settles and the consciousness remains always wide.

### **The Cosmic Consciousness and the Cosmic Self**

In the cosmic consciousness the personal I disappears into the one Self of all. The I which alone exists is not that of the person, the individualised I, but the universalised I identical with all and with the cosmic Self (Atman).

\*

*1. The correspondent said that when he lived in the wide consciousness above, he could remain undisturbed by the energies of the lower nature. But when he tried to change those energies, he became troubled and confused by their downward pull. — Ed.*

It is what it represents itself to be — an experience of the universal consciousness aspiring to the Divine Truth and beginning to receive its light. It is not your own consciousness, although you feel it in yourself, but a symbolic experience of this universal Vishwa-Purusha. These things one sees when one opens to the Cosmic Consciousness. Observed, felt and taken rightly they help to liberate, universalise and impersonalise. But keep the ego out of it — *everybody* opening to the Cosmic Divine will have these or similar experiences. Observe and go forward.

\*

There is no doubt that you will succeed in your endeavour — all that is needed is firm persistence till the success is complete.

What you saw in the vision was the wide and luminous infinite of what is called the universal Self or spirit. It is that which is one of the fundamental things into which one enters when one reaches the higher consciousness and goes above. The personal being naturally feels itself as something very small and insignificant in that Infinite. But in that Infinite there are higher and higher levels and it is to these levels that the Mother was leading you when she took you by the hand. This often happens in meditation or trance when one has once gone upward into the spiritual infinity. The reason why you did not see the Mother's form was not that the Mother hid herself, or anything in you came between, but that you were both moving in the formless Infinite as spiritual beings and so it was easier to feel the presence than to see any physical form. Not that the form cannot be there, but it is less insistent and therefore not so soon seen as on the physical plane.

The silence in the head and heart and the emptiness are both necessary and desirable. When they are there, the consciousness finds them natural and they give it the sense of lightness and release; that is why the thoughts or speech of the old kind are foreign to it and when they come give fatigue. This silence and emptiness must grow, so that the higher consciousness with its knowledge, light, Ananda, peace can come down in it and progressively replace the old things. They must indeed occupy not only head and heart but the whole body.

### **The Cosmic Consciousness and Self-Realisation**

Liberation is the first necessity — to live in the peace, silence, purity, freedom of the Self. Along with that or afterwards if one awakens to the cosmic consciousness, then one can be free, yet one with all things.

To have the cosmic consciousness without the liberation etc. is possible, but then there is no freedom anywhere in the being from the lower nature and one may become in one's extended consciousness the playground of all kinds of forces



without being able to be either free and detached from the Prakriti or free and master.

On the other hand, if there has been self-realisation, there is one part of the being that remains untouched amid the play of the cosmic forces — while if the peace and purity of the self has been established in the whole inner consciousness, then the outer touches of the lower nature cannot come in or overpower. This is the advantage of self-realisation preceding the cosmic consciousness and supporting it.

\*

When there is the development of the Self-realisation or of the cosmic consciousness or if there is the emptiness which is the preliminary condition for these things, there comes an automatic tendency for a unity with all — their affections, mental, vital, physical may easily touch. One has to keep oneself free.

\*

Affections here [*in the preceding letter*] has not the ordinary sense — it means “ways in which they are affected by things”, e.g. joy, grief, pleasure, pain, illness etc.

\*

What you feel is the normal condition when the liberation takes place. The work of the senses etc. goes on as before, but the consciousness is different, so that one feels not only the sense of liberation, separation etc., but that one is living in quite another world than that of the ordinary mind, life or senses. It is another consciousness with another knowledge and way of looking at things that begins. Afterwards as this consciousness takes possession of the instruments, there is a harmony of it with the sense and life; but these too become different, with a changed outlook, seeing the world no more as before but as if made of another substance with another significance.

\*

It is when you feel the universal or divine beauty or presence in things that the senses are open to the Divine.

\* \* \*

## **Chapter Two Aspects of the Cosmic Consciousness**

### **The Cosmic Ignorance and the Cosmic Truth**

I think you are speaking of two different sides of the cosmic Consciousness, that which is behind all Cosmos and that which is expressed in the apparent universe.

\*

There are in the cosmic consciousness two sides — one the contact with and perception of the ordinary cosmic forces and the beings behind these forces, that is what I call the cosmic Ignorance — the other is the perception of the cosmic Truths, the realisation of the one universal, the one universal Force, all the Vedantic truths of the One in all and all in one; all the various aspects of the Divine in the cosmic and a host of other things can come which do help to realisation and knowledge — provided they are taken in the right way. However all that can be best dealt with when it actually comes. It does not always come as soon as there is the widening — many pass through the widening of the consciousness to what is beyond the cosmic and take the cosmic in detail afterwards — and it is perhaps the safest order.

\*

Each defect of the nature of the Ignorance is a deformation of something in the higher nature — a deformation which amounts to a contradiction even. It is a concretised perception of this that you got in your experience.

\*

There is no ignorance that is not part of the cosmic Ignorance — only in the individual it becomes a limited formation and movement, while the cosmic Ignorance is the whole movement of world-consciousness separated from the supreme Truth and acting in an inferior motion in which the Truth is perverted, diminished, mixed and clouded with falsehood and error. The cosmic Truth is the view on things of a cosmic Consciousness in which things are seen in their true essence and their true relation to the Divine and to each other.

\*

The Yogi's cosmic experiences are spiritual experiences — experience of the play of the Forces and its relation with the self, the action of the Guide, what is behind the appearance of things, occurrences etc. etc., the actual relations of the workings of Purusha and Prakriti etc. The Divine Truth is the truth of the divine Essence, Consciousness, Self-Knowledge, Light, Power, Bliss. It is something from which the cosmos derives with all its movements, but it is more than the cosmos.

\*

The cosmic Truth is the truth of things as they are at present expressed in the universe. The Divine Truth is independent of the universe, above it and originates it.

### **The Cosmic Harmony and Discords**

A cosmos or universe is always a harmony, otherwise it could not exist, it would fly to pieces. But as there are musical harmonies which are built out of discords partly or even predominantly, so this universe (the material) is disharmonious in its separate elements — the individual elements are at discord with each other to a large extent, — it is only owing to a sustaining divine Will behind that the whole is still a harmony to those who look at it with the cosmic vision. But it is a harmony in evolution, in progress — that is, all is combined to strive towards a goal which is not yet reached, and the object of our Yoga is to hasten the arrival to this goal. When it is reached, there will be a harmony of harmonies substituted for the present harmony built up on discords. This is the explanation of the present appearance of things.

\*

This harmony of the lower consciousness is a harmony of discords brought about by a clash and mixture of forces.

\*

It [*a rhythmic word like a song*]<sup>2</sup> is a representation in sound of the cosmic harmony from which the Ignorance is a fall and a discord.

\*

*2. The correspondent heard a rhythmic word entering into his ears from above. The word was like a song and its rhythm sustained the universe, though it worked through destruction. — Ed.*

There is a rhythm in everything unheard by the physical ear and by that rhythm things exist.

### **The Cosmic Will**

It is not possible for the individual mind, so long as it remains shut up in its personality, to understand the workings of the Cosmic Will, for the standards made by the personal consciousness are not applicable to them. A cell in the body, if conscious, might also think that the human being and its actions are only the resultant of the relations and workings of a number of cells like itself and not the action of a unified self. It is only if one enters into the Cosmic Consciousness that one begins to see the forces at work and the lines on which they work and get a glimpse of the Cosmic Self and the Cosmic Mind and Will.

\*

Everything here is not perfect, but all works out the cosmic Will in the course of the ages.

### **Opening to the Cosmic Mind**

What is happening is that you have got into touch with the cosmic Mind where all sorts of ideas, possibilities, formations are moving about. The individual mind takes up those which appeal to it or perhaps come into distinct form when they touch it. But these are possibilities, not truths, so it is better not to let them run free like that.

\*

One [*who is open to the cosmic Mind*] is aware of the cosmic Mind and the mental forces that move there and how they work on one's mind and that of others and one is able to deal with one's own mind with a greater knowledge and effective power. There are many other results, but this is the fundamental one. This is of course if one opens in the right way and does not merely become a passive field of all sorts of ideas and mental forces.

\*

The opening to cosmic mind makes the experience of the Divine everywhere for instance more easy — but it is not essentially spiritual; if there is not a coming of wider spiritual experiences, then it need not be spiritual at all.

### Opening to the Cosmic Life

One [*who is open to the cosmic Life*] becomes aware of all the life-forces and of how they act upon oneself and others, upon mind, upon body — also the force movements behind events. One becomes too directly aware of the vital plane, its worlds, its beings, and the direct action of their formations on the earth-life. One has to become aware also at the same time of one's own true vital being and act from it and not from the surface or desire vital in relation to all these things. All this effect does not come at once, — it develops as the contact with the cosmic Life increases.

\*

In the universal vital especially there is a deceptive attraction and an exhilarating rush of power (not true quiet power but mere force) which those who yield to it cling to as a drunkard to his intoxicants. It gives them a sense of being strong and great and full of interesting things — when it is taken from them, they feel “like ordinary people” and ask for it back again.

\*

You had a mental and the beginning of a vital opening to the cosmic consciousness — kept on the spiritualised level, the vision or feeling of the Divine Ananda without seeking for possession or a gross outer enjoyment, it would have established a Yogic consciousness and made a base for knowledge and peace and power and psychic love and surrender to come down.

### The Cosmic Consciousness and the Physical

One cannot be high in the cosmic consciousness unless one has taken one's station above the body in a cosmic wideness which envelops the whole being. What you did was to open to it to a certain extent and then, instead of plunging into it at once as some do, your sadhana took the turn of coming down into the physical to prepare it. That is not altogether an undesirable turn — for many suffer by not having taken it. X for instance got a very evident opening into the cosmic, but he lost his way in it altogether because neither his vital nor his physical were cleared of certain very serious imperfections.

\*

Yes, it is the psychising and purification that have been going on, but you had some openings of contact with the cosmic consciousness which did not prolong themselves when you came into the physical. X's ascents, I suppose, are more a going out of the body in his mind and vital than any stationing of his consciousness above. The latter would have brought a calm and peace and liberation which he does not possess as yet. This kind of ascent brings a conscious contact with cosmic forces of the mental and vital planes (in his case more the vital) and some extraordinary experiences which are not altogether safe. There is great danger there of entering into and getting perplexed in the intermediate zone. I would rather see him liberated from these things than pursuing them any farther. A descent from above of the higher forces would be far more helpful to him than these ascensions.

\* \* \*

## **Chapter Three** **The Universal or Cosmic Forces**

### **The Nature of the Universal or Cosmic Forces**

Universal forces means all forces good or bad, favourable or hostile, of light or of darkness that move in the cosmos.

\*

The cosmic forces here whether good or bad are forces of the Ignorance. Above them is the Truth-Consciousness that can only manifest when ego and desire are overcome — it is the force from the Divine Truth-Consciousness that must descend — the higher Peace, Light, Knowledge, Purity, Power, Ananda must work upon the cosmic forces in the individual so as to change them and substitute the Truth-Forces in place of the ordinary working.

\*

They [*the cosmic forces*] act on everyone, according to the person's nature — and his will and consciousness.

\*

It [*knowledge of the working of the cosmic forces*] is necessary — it comes of itself as one gets more and more forward in the cosmic consciousness.

\*

They [*pain and misery*] are perhaps rather the result of the action of universal forces — but in a certain sense grief and pain may be said to be universal forces — for there are waves of these things that arrive and invade the being often without apparent cause.

\*

The universal forces move by their own force and the consciousness within them — but there is also the Cosmic Spirit who supports them and determines by his onlook and disposing will their play — although the direct action is left to the forces — it is the play of universal Prakriti with the universal Purusha watching behind it. In the individual also there is the individual Purusha who can, if he wills, not merely assent to the play of Prakriti, but accept or reject or will for its change. All that is in the play itself as we see it here. There is something above — but the action of that is an intervention rather than a moment to moment control; it can become a constant direct control only when one replaces the play of the forces by the government of the Divine.

\*

One can live in contact with the Divine even amidst the universal forces — but to live in the Divine one must be able to rise beyond the lower universal nature or to call down the Divine consciousness here. The beginnings are difficult for most — and at no time is it really easy.

### **The Universal Energies and the Divine Force**

There is only one Force or Energy here in reality; what is called the individual energy does not belong to the individual, but to the one universal Power.

In the one infinite Energy itself a distinction has to be made between the Divine Force that descends from above the mind and the inferior universal Energy with all its different forms, movements, waves and currents that come into you from outside. The inferior Energy proceeds from the Divine Shakti, but it has fallen from the truth of its source and has no longer its direct guidance.

When these universal energies come into touch with the Divine Force, rise to meet it and allow it to take hold of them and occupy and change them, then they are purified and uplifted and transformed and become a movement of the Divine Force.

When they are not in touch with the Divine Force, not obedient to it, but act for themselves, they are unenlightened, erring, impure, mixed and confused — powers of the Ignorance.

Always, therefore, keep in touch with the Divine Force. The best thing for you is to do that simply and allow it to do its own work; wherever necessary, it will take hold of the inferior energies and purify them; at other times it will empty you of them and fill you with itself. But if you let your mind take the lead and discuss and decide what is to be done, you will lose touch with the Divine Force and the lower energies will begin to act for themselves and all go into confusion and a wrong movement.

It is still worse to try to draw these lower universal energies from those around you and keep up with them a vital interchange; what gain can there be in that? On the contrary, it will lead to greater confusion and even bring in all kinds of mischief and trouble.

Often the association of these universal energies with others is a mistake of your mind. Your mind is seeking always to fix them on to somebody, and often it fixes on one or another at random or else according to old experiences which are no longer valid. For instance, what you call X's force was not his, but a universal hostile force which used X at one time and, owing to a continued association in your mind, still presents itself to you as his, but may now no longer have anything to do with him. By keeping up the old association, you simply give greater opportunity for this undesirable energy to come upon you.

Follow always the one rule, to open yourself directly to the Divine Force and not to others; if you keep in touch with it, all else will progressively arrange itself.

### **The Cosmic Force and the Overmind**

The cosmic Force is under the control of the Overmind. The Supermind does not act on it directly — whatever comes down from there is modified so as to pass through the Overmind and takes a lesser form suitable to the plane on which it acts, mental, vital or physical. But this intervention is exceptional in the ordinary play of the cosmic forces.

### **The Entry of the Universal Forces**

There is no rule for that [*the points at which the universal forces enter one*]. The human being is ordinarily conscious only on the surface — but the surface records only the results of subliminal agencies at work. It is often through the centres that the forces come in, for then they get the greatest power to act on the nature — but they can enter anywhere.



The universal forces act very often through the subconscious — especially when the force they send is something the person has been in the habit of obeying and of which the seeds, impressions, “complexes” are strongly rooted in the subconscious — or, even if that is no longer the case, of which there is a memory still in the subconscious.

### **The Universal Forces and the Individual**

Egoism is part of the machinery — a chief part — of universal Nature, first to develop individuality out of indiscriminate force and substance of Nature and, secondly, to make the individual (through the machinery of egoistic thought, feeling, will and desire) a tool of the universal forces. It is only when one gets into touch with a higher Nature that it is possible to get free of this rule of ego and subjection to these forces.

\*

Yes, certainly, there is nothing in the individual that is not in the cosmic Energy. For all ordinary purposes the individual is only a differentiated centre of the universal forces — although his soul comes from beyond.

### **Time Vision and the Cosmic Movement**

Time vision is the perception of the cosmic movement of things developing from state to state and in that the individual movements which make it up. There is also possible a sense of the All as Time in flow or of Time as a dimension interwoven with Space like warp and woof of a cloth etc.

SRI AUROBINDO

*(Letters on Yoga — III, CWSA, Vol. 30, pp. 267-91)*

## THE DEVIL'S MASTIFF

There had been a heavy fall throughout the whole of that December day. The roads were white and indistinguishable in a thick pall of moonlight and dazzling snow; here and there a drift betrayed the footing. In the sky a bright moon pursued by clouds ran timidly up the ascent of the firmament; great arms of darkness sometimes closed over it; sometimes it emerged and proceeded with its still luminous race, ran, swayed, floated, glided forward intently, unflinching. Patrick Curran, treading cautiously the white uncertain flooring of earth, stumbling into snowdrifts, scouting into temporary darkness for his right road, cursed the weather and his fortunes.

"It is not enough," he complained, "that I should be a proscribed fugitive hiding my head in every uncertain refuge from the pursuit of this devil's Cromwell, doomed already to the gallows, owing my life every day to the trembling compassion of my poor father's tenants; it is not enough that I should have lost Alicia and that Luke Walter should have her; but the very moon and the snow and the night are his allies against me. Since God is so hard on me, I wonder why the devil does not come to my help — I would sell my soul to him this moment willingly. But perhaps he too is afraid of Cromwell."

"It is hardly probable," said a voice at his side suddenly.

Patrick Curran turned with a fierce start and clutched at his dagger. He was aware in the darkness of a dim form pacing beside him with a step much quieter and more assured than his own.

"Who are you?" he cried, rigid and menacing.

"A wayfarer like yourself," said the other, "I travel earth as a fugitive."

"From whom or what?" asked Patrick.

"How shall I say?" said the shadow, "Perhaps from my own thoughts, perhaps from a too powerful enemy."

After the discovery of the recent conspiracy to murder Cromwell and restore Charles Stuart, the country was full of Royalist fugitives, hiding by day, travelling by night, in the hope of reaching a port whence they could sail for Ostende or Calais. For the inquisitions of the Republican magistrates were imperative and indiscriminating.

"I would give," he said to himself, "my soul and the rest of my allotted days as a free gift to Satan, if I might once clasp Alicia in my arms and take with me into Hell the warm sense of the joy of her body and if I might see Luke Walter dead before me or be sure he was following me. Oh if I can once be sure of that, let the brown dog of the Dacres leap on me the next moment, I care not."

"You may be sure of it," answered the voice at his side, strangely sweet, yet to Patrick's ear formidable. He turned, thrilling.

"You must be the devil himself," he almost shouted.

"I may be only one who can read your thoughts," said the other in that sweet sinister voice which made the young man fancy sometimes that a woman spoke to him. "And that I can, you will easily judge when I have told you a very little of what I know of you. You are Patrick, the second son of Sir Gerald Curran who got his estate from his wife, Margaret Dacre, his baronetcy from King James and his death from Cromwell who took him prisoner at Worcester and hanged him. You were to have married Lady Alicia Nevil, when the conspiracy of which you were one of the heads as well as the hand destined to strike down the Puritan tyrant, was discovered by the discernment, luck and ruthless skill of Colonel Luke Walter."

The young Cavalier started and uttered a furious imprecation.

"It was he;" said the other, "he has great brain-power and penetration and a resolute genius. It is even possible he may succeed Cromwell, if the God of the Puritans gives him a lease long enough."

"If I have the chance, I will shorten it," cried Patrick Curran.

"Or I;" said the unknown, "for just now I too am a Royalist. But to proceed. You were proclaimed and doomed to a felon's death in your absence; the Earl, implicated in the conspiracy, was compelled as the price of his pardon to betroth his daughter to Luke Walter, and the marriage is fixed for tonight."

"Tonight!" groaned the young man, and he smote his thigh miserably with his hand.

"At the Church of Worndale."

"But will it matter if Luke Walter perishes before he has consummated his nuptials?"

"I promise you that," said the unknown. "It does not suit you that Alicia should marry another. It does not suit me that there should be a strong successor to Cromwell. Charles Stuart is my good friend, and I wish that he should rule England. Therefore, Patrick, it is a bargain."

"Who the devil are you?" cried the young man again, marvelling.

As if to answer the moon peeped out from between two heavy angry masses of black cloud, illumining the earth's intense and inclement whiteness. He saw beside him a young man of remarkable beauty, whose face was perfectly familiar, but his name could not be remembered.

"As for your soul and your life," said the stranger, and as their eyes met, Patrick shuddered, "you need not give them to the devil whether freely or as part of the bargain, for they are already his."

He laughed a laugh of terrible and ominous sweetness, and in a moment Patrick remembered. He knew that laugh, he knew that face. They were his own.

At that moment the moon passed away into the second fragment of cloud. Patrick stood, unable to speak, looking at the dim shadow in front of him. Then it vanished.

It was some time before the young man could command himself sufficiently to pursue his way. He tried to think for a moment that it was John Dacre, the illegitimate son of Sir Gerald by his sister-in-law Matilda Dacre, who resembled Patrick strongly and was his sworn comrade and lover. But he knew it was not John. That was not John's face or John's speech or John's thinking. It must have been a vivid dream or a waking illusion. He walked forward in the darkness, greatly disturbed, but with recovered courage.

Again the moon shone out, this time with a clear gulf of sky just in front of her. Before Patrick the white road stretched long, straight and visible to a great distance and was marked out here by a high snow-covered hedge from the equally white indistinguishable country around.

"Come now, that is better," said Patrick Curran. As he spoke, he saw far off on the road a dark object travelling towards him; he slackened his pace and was minded to turn off the road to avoid it. But it was approaching with phenomenal speed. As it came nearer, he saw that it was only a dog. Again Patrick stood still. A dog! There was nothing in that. It was not what he had feared. But he remembered that singular conversation and the impious prayer that had arisen in his heart about the brown Dog of the Dacres, — the dog which showed itself always when a Dacre was about to die and leaped on him whenever the doom was by violence. He smiled, but a little uncertainly. Then the moonlight seemed to dwell on the swiftly-travelling animal more intensely and he saw that it was brown.

Never had Patrick seen any earthly thing master of such a terrible speed. It ran, it galloped, it bounded, and the wretched man watching the terrific charge of that phantasmal monster, — for it was a gigantic mastiff, — felt his heart stop and his warm youthful blood congeal in his veins. It was now within twenty paces; he felt the huge eyes upon him and knew that it was going to leap. He went down heavily with the ponderous frame of the animal oppressing his breast, its leonine paws on his shoulders, its hot breathing moistening his face. And then there was nothing.

That was the most terrible part of it, to have been borne down physically by a semblance, an unearthly hallucination, a thing that was this moment and the next was not. Patrick struggled to his feet, overcome by a panic terror; his nerves cried to him to run, to travel away quickly from this accursed night and this road of ghastly encounters. But he felt as if hamstrung, helpless, clutched by an intangible destruction. He sat down on the snow, panted and waited.

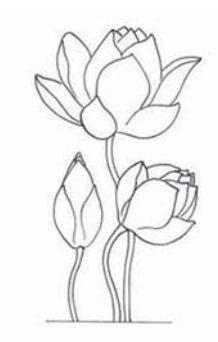
After a few minutes the blood began to flow more quietly through his veins, the pounding of his heart slackened and the sick agitation of his nerves yielded to a sudden fiery inrush. He leaped furiously to his feet. "The Dog of the Dacres," he cried, "the brown Dog, the Devil's Mastiff! And no doubt it was his master spoke to me in my own semblance. I am doomed, then. But not to the gallows. No, by God, not to the gallows. God's doom and the devil's, since I can resist neither, but not man's, not Cromwell's!" Then he paused. "Tonight!" he cried again. "At Worndale

Church! But I will see her once before I go down to Hell. And it may be I shall take Luke Walter with me. It may be that is what the Devil wants of me.”

He looked about the landscape and thought he could distinguish the trees that bordered the distant Church of Worndale. That was in front of him. Also in front, but much more to the left, was Trevesham Hall, the home of Alicia Nevil. He began walking rapidly, no longer with his first cautious and doubtful treading, but with a bold reckless stride. And it was noticeable that he no longer stumbled or floundered into snowdrifts. Patrick knew that he had only a few brief inches of his life's road left to his treading; for no man of the Dacre blood had ever lived more than twenty-four hours after the Brown Dog leaped on him. A desperate courage had entered into his veins. He would see [*incomplete*]

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Collected Plays and Stories — II*, CWSA, Vol. 4, pp. 991-95)



## **“ . . . ACCOMPLISH THE MISSION I HAVE ENTRUSTED TO THEE UPON EARTH”**

**May 16, 1914**

I was interrupted yesterday just when I was trying to formulate the experience I had. And now everything seems changed. That precise knowledge, that clear-sightedness has given place to a great love for Thee, O Lord, which has seized my whole being from the outer organism to the deepest consciousness, and all lies prostrate at Thy feet in an ardent aspiration for a definitive identification with Thee, an absorption in Thee. I implored Thee with all the energy I could summon. And once again, just when it seemed to me that my consciousness was going to disappear in Thine, just when all my being was nothing but a pure crystal reflecting Thy Presence, someone came and interrupted my concentration.

Such is, indeed, the symbol of the existence Thou givest me as my share, in which outer usefulness, the work for all, holds a much greater place even than the supreme realisation. All the circumstances of my life seem always to tell me on Thy behalf: “It is not through supreme concentration that thou wilt realise oneness, it is by spreading out in all.” May Thy will be done, O Lord.

Now I understand clearly that union with Thee is not an aim to be pursued, so far as this present individuality is concerned; it is an accomplished fact since a long time. And that is why Thou seemest to tell me always: “Do not delight in the ecstatic contemplation of this union; accomplish the mission I have entrusted to thee upon earth.”

And the individual work to be carried on simultaneously with the collective work is to become aware and take possession of all the activities and parts of the being, the definitive establishment of consciousness in the highest point, making possible both the prescribed action and the constant communion with Thee. The joys of perfect union cannot come until what has to be done is done.

First, union must be preached to all, afterwards work; but for those who have realised the union, every moment of their life must be an integral expression of Thy will through them.

THE MOTHER

*(Prayers and Meditations, CWM 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. 1, pp. 143-44)*

## KARMA

This sort of fatality that one sometimes feels weighing heavy on one's life, which is called Karma in India, is the result of past lives; indeed, it is something that has to be exhausted, something that weighs on one's consciousness.

This is how things happen: the psychic being passes from one life to another, each life on earth being the occasion and means for a further progress, for a further growth. But it can happen that the psychic takes birth with the intention of going through a certain experience, of learning a certain thing, of developing a certain faculty through a definite experience. Then, in that life, in the life in which that experience has to be gone through, for one reason or another — there may be several — the soul does not fall exactly on the spot where it should: a displacement of some kind can occur, a set of contrary circumstances — it can happen — and in that case the incarnation miscarries totally and the soul goes away to wait for a better occasion. But in other cases, the soul simply does not find it possible to do exactly what it wants and finds itself dragged into untoward circumstances — untoward not merely from the objective point of view, but untoward for its own growth. And that makes it necessary to begin the experience again, often under much more difficult conditions.

And if — anything can happen, you see — if this second attempt is also a failure, if conditions make it impossible once again for what the psychic wants to do, if, for example, it is in a body with an inadequate will or a deformation in the thought or too tough an egoism and the attempt ends in suicide, then it is something frightful. I have seen it many times; it creates a dreadful Karma which may repeat itself life after life before the soul becomes capable of conquering and doing what it wants to do. And each time the conditions become more and more difficult, each time a considerably greater effort is demanded. It has sometimes been said that one cannot get out of it. Indeed, the subconscious memory of the past creates a sort of irresistible desire to avoid the difficulty and one begins again the same stupidity or an even greater stupidity, and to the difficulty already so great is added yet another. Also, there are moments — moments or circumstances — when nobody is there to help you, to instruct you, to guide you. You are all alone, not knowing what to hang on to. The situation then becomes so terrible, the circumstances are so abominable.

But if only once the soul has made an appeal, if once it has made contact with the Grace, then in the following life, one immediately finds oneself in conditions where everything can be swept away at one stroke. At that moment you need to have a great courage, a great endurance, though at times a true love is sufficient. And if there is faith — a little, a very very little is enough — then everything is swept away. But in most cases what you need is a great stoic courage, a capacity to

endure and to hold out: the resistance, especially in the case of a previous suicide, resistance to the temptation to again begin this foolishness — because it makes a terrible formation. There is also this habit of not looking the difficulty straight in the face, which is translated by taking flight. When suffering comes, fly, fly, instead of absorbing the difficulty, instead of holding tight, that is to say, not stirring within, not yielding, yes, above all, not yielding when you feel within: “I cannot bear it any longer.” Hold your head as quiet as possible, do not follow the movement, do not obey the vibration.

That is what is needed, just that: faith in the Grace, perception of the Grace, or else, intensity of call, or better still, the response, the response, the knot opening, breaking, the response to this wonderful love of the Grace.

It is difficult without a strong will, and above all, above all, the capacity to resist the temptation which has been the fatal temptation through all the lives because of its accumulated power. Each defeat gives fresh force to it. A small victory can dissolve it.

The most terrible thing is when you do not have the strength, the courage, something indomitable. How often they come and tell me: “I want to die, I want to run away, I want to die.” They get the answer: “Well, then, die to yourself! You are not asked to let your ego survive! Die to yourself since you want to die! Have that courage, the true courage to die to your egoism.”

But because it is a Karma, you have to do something yourself. Karma is a construction of the ego; the ego must do something, everything cannot be done for it. The truth is this: Karma is the result of the actions of the ego, and it is only when the ego abdicates that Karma is dissolved. You can aid the ego, you can assist it, you can give it force and infuse it with courage, but it must use them.

There is such a gulf between what we truly are and what we are at present that it turns your head giddy at times. You must not yield to the giddiness. Do not move. Be still like a stone until the thing passes away.

Generally, when the time has come for a Karma to be conquered and absorbed by the Grace, there also comes the image or the knowledge or the experience of the exact facts that are the cause of the Karma, and then at that moment you can start the cleaning.

But it is just at the most painful point, there where the suggestions are the strongest, that you must bear the blow. Otherwise you will always have to start over again, always start over again.

One day a moment comes when the thing has to be done, when one must make the true inner gesture that liberates. To tell the truth, just now there is upon earth an opportunity which presents itself only after thousands of years, a conscious help with the necessary power. It was once believed that nothing had the power to wipe away the consequences of a Karma, that it was only by exhausting it through a series of purificatory acts that the consequences could be transformed, exhausted,

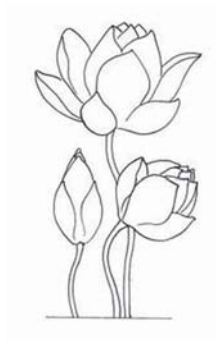


effaced. But with the supramental power, this can be done without the need of going through all the steps of the process of liberation.

22 November 1958

THE MOTHER

(*Words of the Mother — III*, CWM 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. 15, pp. 371-74)



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

Sri Aurobindo —

These lines are “inspired” by yesterday’s full moon. Are they a complete poem, and how do you find their quality?

**FULFILMENT**

Moon of my soul,  
This eve at last your lifted arms embrace  
The honeyed whole  
Of Truth’s sun-spirit — with impeccable blaze  
Your crescent life is rounded! Wane no more,  
But poise perfection, fadelessly gem-core  
With God the penury of mortal gaze!  
For ever in earth’s watchful wonder lie,  
A shadowless seed of giant joy whereby  
Each mood<sup>1</sup> may be  
A blossoming eternity!

*(Amal’s question:)*

1. Should there be an adjective to “mood” — say, “yearnful” or “yearning”?

Sri Aurobindo’s comment:

1. Yes, the epithet will make the meaning fuller. (*Sri Aurobindo underlined “yearning”.*)

It is very good.

25 August 1934

(*The Secret Splendour — Collected Poems of K. D. Sethna [Amal Kiran], 1991, p. 468:*)

### FULFILMENT

Moon of my soul,  
 This eve at last your lifted arms embrace  
 The honeyed whole  
 Of Truth's sun-spirit — with impeccable blaze  
 Your crescent life is rounded! Wane no more,  
 But poise perfection, fadelessly gem-core  
 With God the penury of mortal gaze.  
 For ever in earth's watchful wonder lie,  
 A shadowless seed of giant joy whereby  
 Each yearning mood shall be  
 A blossoming eternity.

AMAL KIRAN  
 (K. D. SETHNA)

*The transformation to which we aspire is too vast and complex to come at one stroke; it must be allowed to come by stages. The physical change is the last of these stages and is itself a progressive process.*

*The inner transformation cannot be brought about by physical means either of a positive or a negative nature. On the contrary, the physical change itself can only be brought about by a descent of the greater supramental consciousness into the cells of the body. Till then at least the body and its supporting energies have to be maintained in part by the ordinary means, food, sleep, etc. Food has to be taken in the right spirit, with the right consciousness; sleep has to be gradually transformed into the Yogic repose.*

*Sri Aurobindo*

(*Letters on Yoga — IV, CWSA, Vol. 31, p. 432*)

# SRI AUROBINDO: LIFE AND TIMES OF THE MAHAYOGI

(Continued from the issue of April 2016)

## Chapter: LI

### A Great Judgment

All honour to Mr. Beachcroft! . . . He has soared beyond the passions and prejudices of the hour, and has demonstrated what a fair judge ought to be. He was not blind to the fact that the man the prosecution wanted to be convicted was Aurobindo Ghose, and but for his presence in the dock so much valuable time and money would not have been wasted. That most important person has been acquitted. Ours is the moral victory, and failure is for the prosecution. This itself speaks volumes for Mr. Beachcroft. . . .

‘A Lawyer’ in *The Bengalee*<sup>1</sup>

When the sound of the footfall of that great man was heard at the solitary prison entrance, the prayers of the entire population of the country were, as if present there in an incorporeal shape, to welcome him. The iron chains of prison could bring no disgrace on him; those iron chains have been converted into gold by having paid worship at the feet of this god-like guest; the people of the country, if they got even so little a part of it, will treasure it as a jewel for the head.

*Bangabandhu*<sup>2</sup>

Between 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 1908 and 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 1909 petitions numbering eleven were submitted to the Additional Sessions Judge on behalf of Sri Aurobindo on issues concerning denial of different privileges legitimately due to under-trial prisoners; some of which were considered and a few amends made, but they were all doings of Sri Aurobindo’s lawyers.

Sri Aurobindo never made a public statement in the Court. When asked by the Court, he said he would leave the case to his lawyers, they would speak for him; . . .<sup>3</sup>

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of February 1909 he was led to the ‘box’ before the judge but made no statement. It must have been a silent exchange of gazes — if at all Sri

Aurobindo had looked at the judge — between two brilliant Cambridge fellows. Sri Aurobindo of course refused to answer any question. The substantial part of the written statement that was filed by his lawyers and signed by both Sri Aurobindo and Mr. Beachcroft reads:

Q. Your counsel says he has advised you to answer no questions: do you not intend to do so?

A. No.

Q. You understand that inference may be drawn against you for refusal to answer questions and that I shall not put questions to your counsel?

A. I have given full instructions.<sup>4</sup>

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 1909 the Assessors, Babu Gurudas Bose and Babu Kedarnath Chatterjea announced their verdict. So far as Sri Aurobindo was concerned, their conclusion, presented at the end of eleven causes they listed, was: “There is absolutely no reason to connect him with the conspiracy.”

Needless to say, the verdict of the Assessors, legally speaking, amounted to a judicious opinion, not any judicial obligation on the part of the presiding judge to accept. In view of the confessions made by Barindra Kumar and seven of his intimate followers — the latter had no occasion to seek Sri Aurobindo’s advice — the Assessors had no opportunity to give any opinion favourable to that group. But they found twenty-eight others “not guilty”.

Mr. Beachcroft delivered his judgment on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 1909, acquitting Sri Aurobindo and sixteen others, convicting seventeen to various terms of transportation and imprisonment — but passing sentence of death on Barindra Kumar and Ullaskar Dutt. The judgment of course stated that those punished could appeal against the order at the High Court.

A study of the judgment today — a century away from the chaos, pride and prejudices of the time, clearly establishes how courageous, clean and objective a mind was at labour behind it. More than that, it was a noble mind which, when obliged to accept one of two opposite interpretations of an issue, accepted its “innocent explanation” or “innocent construction”.

An unprecedentedly large police force took position around the court complex and along the roads leading towards it, right from the morning. As stated by an eye-witness,

People thronged the court, the grounds around and the highways. They had waited for long. Their anxiety will be put to rest today. Not a word was spoken by anybody in the multitude. All waited with bated breath for Beachcroft Sahib to pronounce the judgment. Silent and with a fast-throbbing heart I took position behind the Court Inspector, Abdur Rahman. At about 10 A.M., breaking that

stillness in the atmosphere Beachcroft Sahib appeared in the court. He flipped through the thick stack of papers and said, “There is no time to read the entire long judgment (1200 foolscap pages) now. I will confine myself to reading out the names of those who are guilty of crimes and those who are not.”<sup>5</sup>

The full judgment, read out later, covered the history of the conspiracy as constructed and presented by the Crown, the evidence presented by them, the examination of men and objects, the arguments and the counter arguments by the Prosecution and the Defence, and the judge’s elaborate reflection on them, his conclusions and finally his announcement of the names of those sentenced to undergo various terms of incarceration, those to be transported for life and those to be acquitted.

While the judge justified his impression of each accused at varied length but not exceeding one to three pages for each, the bulk of this part of his observation was devoted to Sri Aurobindo. Reproduced below are just a few extracts from the thick document, with summarising comments by the present author at some places:

I now come to the case of Arabindo Ghose, the most important accused in the case. He is the accused, whom more than any other the prosecution are anxious to have convicted and but for his presence in the dock there is no doubt that the case would have been finished long ago. It is partly for that reason that I have left his case till last of all and partly because the case against him depends to a very great extent, in fact almost entirely, upon association with other accused persons.

Before dealing with the evidence against him, I shall put as shortly as possible the ideal which his counsel claims that he has always set before himself. It is the case for the prosecution as well as for the defence that he is of a very religious nature, in fact counsel for the Crown takes the line that his religious ideas combined with a desire for independence for India have turned him into a fanatic.

His counsel argues that he is a Vedantist and that he has applied the doctrines of Vedantism to mould his political views; that as the doctrine of Vedantism applied to the individual is to look for the godhead within oneself and so realise what is best within oneself, so in the case of a nation, it can only grow by realising what is best within itself, that no foreigner can give it that salvation, which it can only attain by methods indigenous to the country. His doctrines are not those of passive resistance, but of the realisation of salvation by suffering. If the law is unjust don’t obey it, and take the consequences. Do not be violent, but if the law is unjust, you are not bound morally to obey it; refuse to obey it and suffer. He has been saying to the people, you are not cowards, believe in yourselves, and attain salvation, not by assistance from

outside, but through yourselves. And this Mr. Das says is the key of his case.

A written statement was put in by the accused to which it is unnecessary here to refer at length, but I shall refer to two points because Counsel for the Crown took up a great deal of time in arguing his case as if the accused had made two statements which in fact he nowhere did make. The first assumption which he made was that Arabindo says that he had nothing to do with politics, the second is that he says that he did not know Abinash before he engaged his services in setting up a house. With regard to the first assumption I need only point out that Arabindo says while in Baroda he took no part in the politics of Bengal, with regard to the second I need only refer to the paragraph 9 of the written statement, which gives no justification at all for the assumption.

In dealing with the case of this accused I propose to take the evidence in seven groups: (1) letters that passed between Arabindo and his wife; (2) letters between Arabindo and other persons; (3) Arabindo's speeches; (4) his writings; (5) Letters between other persons; (6) Entries in documents; (7) Facts, whether depending on oral evidence or deducible from documents. Finally I shall deal with certain important documents which require consideration by themselves.

In the first group there are three letters of 1902, none of which is important. There are no more letters till 1905, then we have three. The earliest in date is . . . a long letter from Arabindo to his wife, relied on by the prosecution on account of a few phrases in it and by the defence as a whole, as setting out the principles which govern his life.

He points out that his views and mental attitude are different from those of the people of this country and goes on to say that an extraordinary man is generally looked upon as either great or mad, and then says that he had got three ideas, which he characterises as mad, in what is doubtless a play on the word used in the earlier part of the letter. The first idea is that gifts given by God should be used in the service of God and he refers more particularly to their use in works of charity. The second idea is that he is realising the teachings of Hindu religion and feeling God within himself. The third idea is the one in which occur the passages on which the prosecution lays stress. "I know I have the strength to deliver this fallen nation. I may not have bodily strength but I am not going to fight with sword or gun but with the power of knowledge." In the last paragraph but one of the letter he speaks of deliverance of the country. And in the last paragraph he speaks of all this as a secret.

Mr. Das argues that the 3<sup>rd</sup> idea is drawn from Vedantism. The idea is that the whole world is divinity; if you can't see that, it is maya, or illusion. The country should not be regarded as so many rivers, fields, etc., but as a manifestation of the divinity. And if that be the true view of the passage, it is only natural that he should speak of removing anything which stands in the way of that ideal.

Taking the letter as a whole, it is a discussion with his wife, asking her whether she is going to follow the Hindu religion, which is his religion, or some other. He points out that she has been brought up in Brahma schools, but is a Hindu none the less. Will she be a help to him in his religion, or will she follow foreign ideas? And as regards keeping the matter a secret, we find a reference to the same idea in the moral precepts in Biren Sen's book — "Do not disclose the principles of your religious faith."

If we start with the knowledge that the writer of this letter is a conspirator, we can find passages in it that are suspicious. Viewing it in an unprejudiced way, there is nothing in it that really calls for explanation.

In the next letter occurs the passage, "I have to keep some money to send to Madhav Rao, who has been sent to England for some special work. I have had to spend a lot of money on account of the swadeshi movement; and I wish to carry on another movement which requires unlimited money." The prosecution suggests that this refers to revolution; the explanation offered is that Madhav Rao was a pupil of his and he used to help his pupils when they went to England; and that the movement which he contemplated was the one specified in paragraph 2 of his written statement, a large religious movement based on the Vedanta.

The next letter is dated 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1905 . . . He refers to Baren's ill-health and his energy in going out in the service of his country. He says, "Don't tell Sarojini (his sister); she will be mad with anxiety." We know in fact what was the nature of the work which Baren was engaged on at this time, from his own confession. The question is how far Arabinda was aware of his aims. The reference to Sarojini being anxious may merely mean on account of Baren's health. There is again in this letter an indication of Arabinda's religious tendencies: "the time for evening prayers is coming".

. . . Another indication of his religious ideas is shown in his having given up meat and fish.

The judge hereafter analytically reflects on Sri Aurobindo's other letters to Mrinalini Devi and then observes:

The result of the letters taken together is to show that he was a man of strong religious convictions and that he wanted his wife to share those convictions. There are some passages which may be suspicious, but which are also capable of an innocent explanation.

With regard to letters passing between Arabindo and others, a large number refer to arrangements for, and questions to be discussed at the Congress. I do not propose to refer to these in detail, as they do not seem to me to carry the case much further. There is evidence of much jealousy between various



prominent persons, but the main question appears to have been whether the Congress programme for the year was to be on lines advocated by the moderates or not, the so-called extremists contending that to do so would be to go back on previous Congress resolutions.

In Exhibit 293–9, dated 5<sup>th</sup> September 1906, Deshpande writes that he will be able to push on the movement in Baroda. “I have found two good workers at Godhra.” This is capable of an innocent construction.

Exhibit 293–9 refers to the effect of Arabindo’s writings in the *Bande Mataram*. The letter is quite capable of an innocent explanation. As I have pointed out, nothing that can be called revolutionary, in the bad sense, has been shown to me from the columns of that paper.

The judge then deals with some documents deposited by the police to drive home a theory that Barin — spelt Baren in the prosecution submissions — tried to use the services of Lele the Maharashtrian Yogi who, the documents showed, was known to Raja Subodh Mallik. The yogi was expected to give a religious orientation to the revolutionary mission. Since Subodh Mallik was a friend of Sri Aurobindo the latter must have been involved in the plan. The judge dismisses the far-fetched surmise and observes, with a slight touch of sarcasm:

Of course, it does not necessarily follow that if Lele was a conspirator and a friend of Subodh’s and if Subodh was a conspirator, that Arabindo also was because of his acquaintance or friendship with both; but each time contact is proved with a fresh conspirator an additional link is added in the chain of evidence.

The judge then shows his unwillingness to accept that two persons named Sudhir and Abinash whom the police tried to show to be in close association with Sri Aurobindo were beyond doubt the same persons who were in custody. Then he says:

In Arabindo’s speeches there is not much of importance. Evidence was given of his itinerary during January and February 1908 in the Bombay Presidency and reports of speeches made there. The whole of this evidence might very well have been omitted; as it proved nothing beyond the fact that he was received with acclamation wherever he went — a fact which the defence have never attempted to deny. So far as these speeches went, they help the defence more than the prosecution. From them we get an idea of the stress that he laid on national education, on lines other than those laid down in Government schools, and this is in accordance with what is claimed as the ruling thought in his policy, that India is to find her salvation from within and not from without. The

only passage that can be construed as at all inflammatory is the concluding sentence of one of his speeches, “live for your swadeshi or die for your swadeshi,” which may well be excused as a mere piece of hyperbole.

More violent remarks are those which he is said to have used at a meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1908, when he proposed a resolution of sympathy for the Tinnevely rioters. The meeting was as usual attended by volunteers carrying lathis. From the short note made by the police officer who reported the proceedings, he appears to have spoken in support of swadeshi and used the expression, “now is the time when the brain is to be prepared for devising plans, the body for working hard, and the hand for lighting the country’s cause.” The explanation given for this is that what he meant was it was too late merely to write and speak, the people must now be ready to put their whole heart into the cause. It is pointed out, with truth, that Arabindo constantly uses metaphors and figures of speech.

The speech as reported is compressed into very small compass; in fact, except for this phrase, the gist of his speech is given in four short sentences, it would not be right to lay too much stress on an isolated phrase in a speech very scantily reported, and while it must not be forgotten that the effect on his hearers might not be that which he himself intended, we must also not lose sight of the fact that the words do not accord with the usual tone of the *Bande Mataram*.

His writings are more important. I do not propose to refer to his writings in the *Bande Mataram*. I have already referred to the character of those, but to two documents that were found in his house. They are Exhibits 283 and 299-9. They appear to be articles written for some paper or review; in fact, in the latter he speaks of “A former article in this review,” but whether they were ever published, in this or not we don’t know. In the absence of evidence of publication or the intention for which they were written, they can only be treated as showing the trend of his ideas. The first, exhibit 283, is headed, “The Morality of Boycott.” There are passages in it which, taken by themselves, certainly indicate support of the use of violent methods and suggest that his line was that revealed by this conspiracy — first inspire your followers with religious enthusiasm and then get them to take up arms. He writes; “The Gita is the best answer to those who shrink from battle as a sin and aggression as a lowering of morality.” Another question is the use of violence in the furtherance of boycott. “This is in our view purely a matter of policy and expediency. An act of violence brings us into conflict with the law, and such conflict may be inexpedient for a race circumstanced like ours. But the moral question does not arise.” Then he points out that the law is an interference with personal liberty. “The right to prevent such use of personal liberty as will injure the interest of the race, is the fundamental law of society. From this point of view the nation is only using its

primary rights when it restrains the individual from buying or selling foreign goods.”

“The morality of the Kshatriya justifies violence in times of war, and boycott is a war. Nobody blames the Americans for throwing British tea into Boston Harbour, nor can anybody blame similar action in India on moral grounds. It is reprehensible from the point of view of law, of social peace and order, not of political morality.” But then he says: “It (i.e., violence) has been eschewed by us because it is unwise and carried the battle on to a ground where we are comparatively weak, from a ground where we are strong.” Again he says: “Aggression is unjust only when unprovoked; violence unrighteous when used wantonly or for unrighteous ends.”

The argument of the whole article shortly is this: “to drive out that which is evil, violence is justifiable. We don’t hate the English, but we object to their exploiting the country, for the interests of the two nations must be different; and we can stop that exploitation by boycott. Boycott is not morally wrong, for the ends at which it aims are the interests of the people. . . . that being so, we should be morally justified in using force, if we were strong enough to do so.”

As a mere piece of philosophic writing there is no special harm in this. The danger is the state of feeling in the country at the time, and the suggestion that violence is justifiable if the nation wishes for a particular thing: the fact that in the circumstances the nation should not use violence is relegated to the background; equally so the question who is to decide what are the best interests of the nation. It is left for the reader to come to the conclusion that those who can make their voices heard most are to decide what are the interests of the nation and impose on the inarticulate masses a tyranny far worse than that which they themselves condemn.

Exhibit 299-9 is a still more extraordinary article. I shall not quote from it, as the omission of any sentences would affect the whole. The gist of it is that the object of the nationalist is to build up the nation. The nationalist has a deep respect for the law, because without it the nation cannot attain proper development. But the law must be in accordance with the wish of the nation. If it is not, it is utilitarian and not moral, and if immoral it should be broken. The nationalist is not afraid of anarchy and suffering. He welcomes them if the result is the building up of the nation.

Mr. Das argues that the real point of the passage dealing with anarchy and suffering lies in the three questions which the nationalist puts to himself with regard to a method: (1) whether it is effective, (2) is it consistent with the traditions of the people, (3) is it educative of national strength, and he admits that Arabinde’s views are that if violence answers those tests, it is a method to be adopted: that when strong enough to fight, the nationalist will fight, but at

present he must merely disobey the law, if he thinks it wrong, and suffer. He puts this supposition: suppose the people refused to pay taxes, their lands would be seized and put up to sale, no one would buy, then shooting by the English would begin to compel them to pay taxes, and that would be the suffering contemplated. . .

At this point the judge became critical of C. R. Das's hypothesis that "shooting by the English" could follow so easily. It seemed to him that C. R. Das's was an unwarranted comment on the English rule! He observed:

One cannot but regret that Mr. Das should attribute such a character to the British race. He forgets the intermediate stage, and that shooting would not begin till rioting had begun and that rioting would be the inevitable result of fields lying fallow and the means of sustenance gone; and who would be responsible for the intermediate stage?

Mr. Das also argues that the idea is the same that has been elaborated by European philosophers, that Government cannot exist against the will of the people, and that fact has been the explanation of all revolutions in Europe. The difference is that in Europe rulers and ruled have been of the same race, here they are not.

As an essay this article is a splendid piece of writing. The danger lies in the effect that it might have on ill-balanced and impressionable minds. And that, it is argued, is perhaps the reason why it was not published. The fact that neither of the articles was published is again a point in Arabindo's favour. For though philosophic reflections may show the trend of a man's mind, it very much affects the question whether he is a conspirator or not, if he does not publish writings which, doing no harm to a careful reader, might be misinterpreted by those of less mature understanding.

Mr. Norton lays great stress on the passage where he refers to the other papers, including the *Yugantar* and *Sandhya*, wrongly, I think, as the next sentence shows. The writer says the methods advocated are different, though all have the same ideal, and it is conceded that there is no harm in independence as an ideal: the offence lies in the methods by which it is sought to be attained.

Exhibit 292-8 is a violent piece of writing, written apparently on partition day. It is, however, not Arabindo's, but is in a woman's hand, by the same hand apparently as that which wrote the two accounts, exhibits 287-1 and 292-9. Arabindo's name is on both these accounts; they appear to be for the supply of bazar articles to his mother at Rohini. It would be rather far-fetched to say that the contents of every piece of paper kept by Arabindo reflected his own ideas. If this paper was written by his sister, it must be remembered that she was living with him.

Possibly the most dangerous piece of evidence against Arabindo that comes under this head is to be found in exhibit 239. In the entries under 11<sup>th</sup> January and onwards we find three which may refer to Arabindo. They are “J.B. to be informed of A.G.’s movement.” “A.G.’s rules to be got out of him.” “Dr. Dhude to be kept in the garden and Ullas and A.G. and B.G. informed.” If A.G. refers to Arabindo, this is a most damaging piece of evidence. The Defence says it is not proved that A.G. stands for Arabindo. It could not be proved. The only person who could and was willing to speak, is Narendra Gossain. He is dead. . . .

\* \* \*

Arabindo’s association with Subodh is capable of a perfectly innocent explanation. He was much interested in national education, a scheme in which the prosecution admits there was nothing of itself harmful, and we find that Subodh contributed Rs. 1,00,000 to the establishment of the National College.

\* \* \*

I now come to deal with what are the really important documents as against Arabindo. Most important of all is exhibit 295, which is known as the “sweets” letter. It purports to have been written on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1907, the second day of the Congress, and runs as follows: — “Dear brother, now is the time. Please try and make them meet for our conference. We must have sweets all over India ready made for imergencies (sic.) I wait here for your answer. Your affectionate Barindra K. Ghose.” This was found in Arabindo’s room. An envelope was also found with “A. Ghosh, confidential,” written on it, apparently in Baren’s writing. The Defence say the letter is a forgery: if it is, it is a splendid specimen of the forger’s art. The suggestion of the prosecution is that “sweets” means bombs. The term would be a not unnatural one to use; and in view of Exhibit CL, in which apparently Mr. Kingsford is spoken of as the bridegroom, and the accounts in Exhibit 239, in which under the heading “marriage expenditure” is the item (Riv), Rs. 52, that being abbreviation in the vernacular for “revolver,” there is reason in the suggestion. The prosecution argues that the Extremists, having won a victory on the first day of the Congress, were so elated that Baren sent this letter to Arabindo to have immediate action all over the country on the lines followed in the garden. . . .

Here the judge takes the Defence Counsel to task for looking with suspicion at every document found during the search and as if the damaging ones were all subsequently planted. The judge defends the inability of the police to get each item

taken numbered and initialed. That, the judge says, could be practical if the number of items was limited, not when they were in hundreds and the searches went on throughout the night. One would have the impression that the judge was taking a line which could conclude in favour of accepting the letter as genuine, for he did not find anything wrong in one writing a letter to his brother while both were at the same place — even on such a serious and secret matter! But his observation takes a different turn. After making elaborate comments on some other documents and the arguments between the Prosecution and the Defence regarding their trustworthiness, the judge returns to the “Sweets Letter” and observes:

It is suggested that the document is a forgery . . . . to my mind the letter could not have been written to Arabindo by Barin . . . I judge from the internal evidence of the letter. Baren is the youngest of five brothers; Arabindo is the third. The Assessors say that in such a case Baren would not have intended Arabindo by “Dear Brother”; that expression could only have meant the eldest brother: if meant for Arabindo, it would have been “Dear Sejda”. That is a point on which I cannot question their opinions. But speaking for myself, I cannot understand Baren signing his name in full if writing to Arabindo. In letters between Arabindo and other relations Baren is spoken of as Bari. The brothers were on friendly terms . . . and it is highly improbable that Baren would sign in this way writing to Arabindo.

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In his favour we have the fact that he has in the columns of the *Bande Mataram* deprecated violence; there is such an article dated 28<sup>th</sup> May 1907. And so late as 10<sup>th</sup> April 1908, there is an article saying that the national movement cannot be allowed to be driven inward and made an affair of a secret society as it would if outward expression were stopped. His connection with the conspiracy can only be considered established if we find that while writing one thing he has been doing another.

Of course it is possible that a man might join a conspiracy to deprive the King of the sovereignty of British India, in which his share would be to preach discontent with the existing order of things, and that he might be entirely ignorant of that branch of the conspiracy which concerned the collection of arms and ammunition. It is possible that Arabindo may have been in that position in this case, but in such a case it must be clearly shown that his preachings were part of such a conspiracy, and in the present case it would be difficult to do that without showing some connection with the part which the garden plays in the case. Considering the circumstances of India, it may be dangerous for a man to publish doctrines inconsistent with the existing order of things: in certain

circumstances it might justify a charge of sedition. Whether such a charge could be laid at Arabindo's door does not now concern me. The point is whether his writings and speeches, which in themselves seem to advocate nothing more than the regeneration of his country, taken with the facts proved against him in this case, are sufficient to show that he was a member of the conspiracy. And taking all the evidence together, I am of opinion that it falls short of such proof as would justify one in finding him guilty of so serious a charge.

In dealing with this case generally, I have endeavoured to work on broad lines rather than to elaborate petty details, which would have confused the real issue in a judgment which has already grown to excessive length. . . .

One word with reference to his connection with the meeting to welcome Bepin Chandra Pal on his release from jail. Whether his views agree with Bepin's or not, there is nothing calling for comment in the fact that he joined in welcoming a man imprisoned for refusing to give evidence in a case in which Arabindo was the accused.<sup>6</sup>

The judge then gave his reasons for awarding different degrees of punishment to different groups of the accused and ends thanking the Assessors, the Counsels and some others.

Let us read an eye-witness account of the scene left by Upendrachandra, younger brother of Abinash Bhattacharya who was to undergo the punishment of transportation for life:

Sri Aurobindo was in meditation while Mr. Beachcroft read the judgment. Only a few could realise that he was far above all that was around him — the court, the case, the judge and the crowd — entranced in some world of his own. Those convicted shouted *Bande Mataram* and were handcuffed and strings of rope were tied around their waists. Those set free stood sad and silent.

One by one the young convicts came near Sri Aurobindo and bowed down to him.

"You will not be hanged," he told Barin. To my elder brother he said, "You will not be detained for more than seven years."<sup>7</sup>

Recollects Sudhir Kumar Sarkar who too was awarded transportation for life:

Getting the chance, I asked Sri Aurobindo, "How will I be able to bear the days in prison at this young age? If I become weak and falter, what should I do?" Sri Aurobindo replied, "Think of me. I shall always be with you." How deeply touching were these words! Later, during our life in exile, whenever the tyranny of the British Government tried to oppress us, we noticed how Sri Aurobindo's Grace was always there to protect us. In the midst of endless



abuses and suffering a heavenly cheerfulness wrapped us in its warm embrace, shielding us, comforting us.

Out of jail, whenever in difficulty and danger, whenever in my helplessness I have been able to remember him, always I have seen that the difficulty has become a blessing, or if I have had to face it boldly, someone has always delivered me out of danger.<sup>8</sup>

*(To be continued)*

MANOJ DAS

### References and Notes

1. *The Bengalee* (8 May 1909), the prominent daily English newspaper edited by Surendranath Bannerjee. The paper also published an editorial echoing the public sentiment on Sri Aurobindo's acquittal on the same day.
2. *Bangabandhu* (Bengali).
3. Sri Aurobindo: *Autobiographical Notes*, CWSA, Vol. 36, p. 85; Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.
4. The Alipore Conspiracy Case Records, The National Archives; New Delhi, Sri Aurobindo Ashram Archives and other sources.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. Upendrachandra Bhattacharya: *Amar Elomelo Jibaner Kayekti Adhyay* (Bengali); Modern Book Agency, Kolkata.
8. *A Spirit Indomitable: Lights on the Life of Sudhir Kumar Sarkar*: Edited by Mona Sarkar.

*The self which we have to perfect, is neither pure atman which is ever perfect nor the ego which is the cause of imperfection, but the divine self manifested in the shifting stream of Nature.*

*Sri Aurobindo*

*(Essays Divine and Human, CWSA, Vol. 12, p. 194)*



## SONGS FROM THE SOUL

(Continued from the issue of April 2016)

(The Mother made this selection from Anilbaran's prayers offered to her. She termed the collection a "Spiritual dictionary".)

### DIFFICULTIES AND OBSTACLES

All difficulties and obstacles can be so used as to be of great help to us in our *sadhana*. We are tested by difficulties, they point out the defects and imperfections in us; they rouse us from the inert passivity and lethargy into which we are constantly apt to fall; they exercise and strengthen the powers of self-conquest in us.

If our work brings failure or disaster on us, we have only to thank ourselves; for the Divine Mother is always there to help us, to guide us, and it is entirely our own fault if we turn away from her and obey our egoistic whims and desires.

If we suffer from doubts and misgivings, we can be sure that there are still obscure and dark corners in us, where the divine light has not been brought in, and we should open these more and more to the Divine Mother.

If we ever feel dull or dry, if sorrow or misery overtake us, we can be sure that there are still parts in us which hanker after the lower joys of life, and thus, cut us off from the perennial stream of *ananda* that is flowing all around us.

Thus, our difficulties and obstacles are our great aids; they can always be utilised as stepping stones in our upward march, and they are often intended to be such by our Divine Friend and Guide, by the kind and graceful Mother.

\* \* \*

One of the first things necessary in our *sadhana* is that we must have absolutely no anxiety, no fear. Thou hast decided to give us a higher life, Mother; there is nothing which can stand against Thy will.

Very little we know of Thy powers, Mother; very little of Thyself Thou hast shown to us. But the little that has been revealed to us has filled our heart with wonder, gratitude, and unassailable faith and hope. Whatever be the dangers and difficulties that may come upon us, we are always assured of Thy divine protection. Whatever be the trials and failures through which we may have to pass, we know that they will only help us to go forward. Thou hast given us sufficient light to know our path; Thou hast given us a taste of Thy divine love, which will sustain us in our

onward march, however difficult and strenuous it may be.

Our progress is limited only by our defect in faith and reliance on Thee. The more I succeed in emptying myself of all thoughts and desires, the more Thou fillest me with Thy own self; the more I give up my own initiative and efforts, the more Thou takest up all my work in Thy own way. We need have absolutely no anxiety, no fear; we have only to perfect our faith and reliance on Thee, Mother.

\* \* \*

Through the touch of Thy grace, Mother, difficulties turn into opportunities, and the very obstacles and defects in our nature turn into aids and virtues.

The inertia of our nature is a great obstacle to our progress; but by sincere aspiration this inertia is turned into deep peace and firmness, established in which we can remain undisturbed by all events and circumstances in life, and can refuse to be moved by anything else but a direct impulse from Thyself.

The hankering in our nature for activity and struggle is a great obstacle to our progress; but by the touch of Thy grace, it turns into strength of will and alertness and a determination to conquer absolutely all defects, all falsehood in our nature.

The movements of our thought and reasoning are a great obstacle to our progress and hide the Truth from us; but when dedicated to Thy service, they serve as a test, as a solvent which will continually help us to distinguish between truth and falsehood.

Thus, if we can sincerely dedicate all our powers and activities to Thy service and turn our whole being towards Thyself, Mother, all our defects will turn into virtues, all obstacles into aids.

### SMALL DETAILS

It is through small acts and little details that the true nature of a man is revealed. When conscious that other people will know and judge, men take particular care to hide their defects. When roused by the seriousness or the importance of the occasion, men often show powers and virtues which are not at all characteristic of them. But in the small things of life, unknown and unnoticed by others, men allow their nature to have its own way.

We negligently do small acts which are not of much importance to us; we carelessly omit to know details which seem to be insignificant; we easily yield to temptations which, we think, cannot lead to any serious consequences. But it is these small things, apparently unimportant and insignificant, that ultimately determine our life. It is through these little lapses that the evil forces find a strong hold in us and gradually overtake our whole nature. Those who will not take care of the smallest details in life, can never hope to reach perfection.

It is not sufficient that in our inmost being we have an aspiration for the divine life; the superficial, the outermost parts also must aspire after perfection. We must remember, Mother, that Thou art always wide awake and art observing the minutest detail in our conduct. We must turn to Thee and seek Thy aid even in the smallest and the most insignificant matters of our life; only then can we hope to have our nature completely changed and transformed.

### **WASTE**

The manner in which we waste our time and energy is astounding. Every moment of our life, every particle of our energy can be harnessed to the cause of the Divine and can advance us towards the divine life.

We have only to keep up a ceaseless flame of aspiration and earnest call; but through our lethargy and ignorance we constantly allow this flame to be obscured by idle, senseless thoughts and desires, which lead us nowhere, but continually involve us in worry and anxiety and darkness. Turning away from the perennial stream of nectar and sweetness that is flowing before us, we continually drink from the dirty poisoned pool of the lower life. Such is our ignorance, our foolishness; such is the inertia and incompetence of our will.

Then, the opportunities Thou hast created for us here, Mother, are so potent, so helpful! Yet through sheer ignorance and inertia we fail to take full advantage of them, though always complaining that we are not making any progress. All this is such a foolish waste.

But the saving grace is that in spite of all our foolishness and incompetence and lethargy, we have been allowed to live under Thy direct influence, inside Thy own divine atmosphere. So there is hope that some day we shall make our surrender perfect, our aspiration ceaseless and pure.

### **SELF-DISCIPLINE**

One who has not controlled his own self and has not conquered his own defects, cannot expect to conquer and control the forces of the world. It is by practising self-conquest that we learn how to conquer the world.

As long as we have not removed our imperfections and transformed our instruments, our work in the world is bound to be full of mistakes and failures. The intuitions we receive from above will be confused by the wanderings of our mind; the impulses we receive from Thy will, Mother, will be distorted by our egoistic desires and attachments; and though Thy divine force descends into us, through our own obstruction and rigidity it may lead to disasters instead of victory. So we must

not meddle with the affairs of the world, until by practice and discipline we have made ourselves free, pure and plastic instruments of the divine will; we must confine ourselves only to such work under Thy direct guidance, Mother, as will serve to mould and transform us.

Before we venture to work upon the world, we have plenty of work and more to do within ourselves. We can easily recognise the false and lower movements in us, and can constantly invoke Thy will and force and light, Mother, in order to correct and transform them. It is thus that we can practise our union with Thee and steadily turn ourselves into perfect instruments in Thy hands for the victorious performance of Thy will in the world. It is by practising self-control under Thy guidance and help, Mother, that we learn how to conquer the world.

### **OBEDIENCE**

It is by obedience to Thee, Mother, that we hope to discipline our lower nature. By resolving to obey Thee instead of our desires and attachments, we really start on the path to a higher divine life.

Desires and passions hold a tyrannical sway over us, and it seems well nigh impossible to subdue or control them by our unaided will. But the consciousness that we are obeying the Mother gives us great strength, and we can easily conquer them supported by her will and her force. We must constantly seek to know her will and obey it; there is no other way of getting out of our bondage.

A forced obedience, an obedience from hope of gain or reward, or from fear of loss or punishment, is of little use. We must consciously and willingly offer our obedience to Thee, Mother, knowing Thee to be our higher self, and with the faith that only by obedience to Thee we shall rise to the divine life. And our obedience must be enthusiastic and joyful, an expression of our love and devotion to Thee as the Divine Mother. By a free and willing and joyful obedience to Thee, Mother, a harmony will be gradually established between Thy will and ours; all our desires and passions will be controlled and vanquished; no impulse will rise in us unless it be directly from Thee. Thus, we shall grow into Thy own self, and our obedience will be ultimately merged in a blissful harmony and identification with Thee.

### **THE POWER OF WORDS**

Words have a great creative power. When spoken in sincere faith and aspiration, they never go in vain. The words we speak to Thee, Mother Divine, in prayer, act as a great power for our inner transformation.

We do not realise the great power that is in words, and in our ignorant

recklessness allow them to be wasted and abused; we thus dissipate their force and bring trouble on others as well as on ourselves. In order to organise our life, it is essentially necessary that we should first be able to control and regulate our speech.

Words are the symbols of all our outward expressions and activities; words give concrete form to our thoughts and sentiments; spoken in the silence of our heart, words exercise an immense influence upon the lives of ourselves as well as of others. If we can learn the right use of words, we shall learn the right use of life.

Give this right use of words and speech to me, Mother. Let not a single idle or unnecessary word pass out of my mouth; let me not utter anything impure or false even in the silence of my heart; let all my words be pure and true, let all my speech be wholly dedicated to Thy praise and Thy service.

When my words and speech, thus controlled and purified, will be used directly by Thee, Mother Divine, as Thy instrument, as a vehicle for the expression of Thy will, only then the creative power of words will be fully realised in me.

### **DIVINE HELP**

Wonderful are the ways of divine help and guidance, Mother, never failing, never asking for anything in return, with infinite patience always ready to forgive and uplift.

When we think that we have lost all, actually we gain all; when we think that we have made ourselves utterly helpless, we find the greatest possible help; when we give up all our old props and supports in response to the divine call, we find the Divine coming forward to hold and support us. Never will one have to suffer by following the Divine in life.

Often the path lies through thorns, but they are of our own making. We have formed and bound ourselves in such a manner that the divine Will cannot work in us for our good without breaking those forms and tearing asunder those bonds. The Divine opposes and baffles us only when we would go downward. And when we can place our entire reliance on the Divine, the shock and the pain becomes the least and soon turns into an ingredient of intense joy. Those who sincerely follow the Divine can have no real suffering in life.

Wonderful is the manner in which Thou art shaping us into divinity, Mother, with infinite love and power and wisdom. The little that we can know and appreciate of Thy ways with us makes us full of wonder and gratitude and firmly establishes us in faith and surrender and aspiration.

\* \* \*

I have no excuse, Mother, to go against Thy will. With reference to me Thou canst have no will, no command which is beyond my knowledge to see or beyond my

power to follow. Thy will is always on the side of the right, the good, the true, and the beautiful; I can always know it if I keep myself open and alert, and can always follow it if I seek the aid of Thy force. Any conflict that arises in me against Thy will, however small or insignificant, shows the defect of my surrender and the perversion of my ego.

I have no excuse to be fidgety or restless. There is no situation in life out of which there is no way. I have only to wait in silence, and everything will be done for me at the right moment and in the right way. If I do not do this, that only shows the defect of my faith and the dependence on my ego.

I have no excuse to allow any lower movement to continue in me. I have only to dissociate myself from it and offer it to Thee, and it will inevitably be conquered and controlled. If I do not do this, that only shows the defect of my aspiration and the continued attachment to my lower life.

Thou art always there with outstretched hands, ever ready to help me, to protect me, to embrace me in Thy infinite love. If I do not turn towards Thee, that is solely my own weakness, my own fault. Yet Thou dost never forsake me, Mother, such is Thy grace and love; and therein lies my hope of salvation.

### **TRUE ATTITUDE**

Everything will be done for us by the Mother, if only we can keep the true and right attitude.

All our attention is now turned towards the thoughts and feelings and works that go on in us; we regard them as our own, as essential parts of ourselves; we remain absorbed in them and think that our life will become dry and empty without them. But in truth, they are the movements of the lower nature carried on in her blind and groping fashion; they are imperfect and perverted expressions of our higher nature, and it is only in this higher nature that we can find our true life.

We think that if we turn away from these lower movements we shall cease to be, but the truth is that by such dissociation the lower play will cease, making room for the higher. It is always nature which works in us, though we ignorantly regard ourselves as the doer; we have only to replace the lower play of nature by the higher by dissociating from the one and aspiring for the other.

It is sheer ignorance to think that if our mind becomes still and does not enter into the lower play, all our life will cease to be. As we keep our mind constantly engaged in the lower movements, the higher truth cannot manifest in us. We must turn away our mind from everything else and keep it constantly fixed on Thee, divine Mother; thus will it become calm and pure, and using it as a free channel or instrument, Thou wilt bring about our transformation.

Every bondage to the lower life that I cut asunder, every attachment, however small, that I renounce gives me such a relief, such a sense of freedom and joy! And the consciousness of the persisting bonds makes me so miserable!

It is good, Mother, that all my latent weaknesses and defects should be thus brought out and placed before Thee; as Thy light falls on them, they will be corrected and transformed. It is not really a divided life that I am living, my whole life is forming round Thyself; nothing else can have any real allegiance from me. The old movements that still persist, besides those purely mechanical, are suffered to have their play on account of their supposed insignificance, or they come in plausible disguises as being sanctioned or originated by Thee. With more light, more alertness, they are bound to disappear leaving Thy sway absolute in me.

My allegiance to Thee, Mother, rises spontaneously from the depths of my being, and it has given me the taste of the truest love and joy. I am weak, ignorant and impure, but I have dared to love Thee with all my heart and soul, and therein lies my hope. In Thy grace Thou wilt correct all my defects, raise me out of human manners and impurities and make me worthy of Thy divine love and affection. With all my faults I entrust myself entirely into Thy hands, Mother.

### SECRET OF WORK

I was a passionate lover of work, Mother, and thought that I was a great worker. Work for the sake of work, the greatest amount of work, was regarded by me as the greatest good, and I always sought opportunities where I would find the greatest scope for my energy and activity.

I did not know then that I was labouring under a great delusion, that what I regarded as my work was not really mine, but Nature's play in me; that when I regarded myself as being most active, I was really a helpless tool in the hands of the forces of Nature. In ignorance, I identified myself with these activities of Nature in me, I took an absorbing interest in the results, thinking them to be my own, and so the play went on indefinitely, and I lived the life of an enchanted slave.

At last, in Thy Grace, Thou hast opened my eyes, Mother, and shown me the true way of escape, and given me the taste of true liberty. Still the attachment is not wholly gone, still I lose myself in the mechanical play of Nature. Even when Thou workest through me, Mother, I think that it is the work of my ego, and I judge the results from the egoistic standpoint.

Remove this egoism and attachment completely from me, Mother, let me dissociate myself completely from the lower nature. I shall be really a free agent and a great worker only when my identification with Thee becomes complete.



Whatever we may do, great or small, can be done in a perfect manner; there is a right way of doing everything. But in our egoistic ignorance we do things most clumsily; we grope and stumble and seem to arrive at success merely by chance.

We are open to all sorts of forces, which continually pull us in all directions. Our mind is ever restless, and cannot remain fixed to anything for a long time. Our body is bound by fixed habits and instincts, and does not allow a free movement. We rely on our own power, we think that the results solely depend on our own exertions; we seek the satisfactions of our personal ends and desires, we are agitated by egoistic passions and emotions; we are impatient, fidgety, restless, sometimes excited, sometimes depressed, often indifferent. It is no wonder that our greatest efforts produce such mean results, and our works leave behind such unpleasant reactions and bondage.

The secret is to rise above the ego and to work always for Thee, Mother, with the aid of Thy force and Thy will. We must leave the consequences entirely in Thy hands. We must see only what we have to do and do it with all our heart and soul. Working, thus, always in union with Thee, and for Thy sake, keeping our heart full of Thee, Mother, we can never go wrong, can never come to grief. At last a time will come when Thou wilt take up all our work, and directly use us as the instrument of Thy Will. Only then will all our work be perfect and divine.

\* \* \*

Work is a great force through which we can establish our union with Thee, Mother; there is nothing wrong in work itself; it is the false attitude behind our work and our ignorant handling of it that makes work a bondage.

We act for personal gains and ignorantly think that the results of our actions depend on our personal efforts, and that our life, our very existence depends on such work. Hence we are perturbed by hope and fear, we are disturbed by success and failure; and work done in this restless, ignorant, egoistic way becomes most imperfect and stumbling, and inevitably by its reactions forges the chains, which keep us bound to the lower life. Egoistic desires and personal motives have a validity only in the lowest scale in life. When we want to rise and fulfil the true mission of our life, they become great obstacles, and hide the Truth from us.

It is ignorance to think that, unless we act from egoistic motives, there can be no action. Everyone has a mission to fulfil in life, a divine mission, and the impulse we feel for work rises from this fundamental need of our nature. If we can free ourselves from the perturbations of the lower nature, our higher nature will spontaneously express itself in the right work in the right way. Instead of wasting ourselves in blind, useless efforts, we should calmly aspire to know the work which Thou demandest from us, Mother, and do it with all our heart and soul. Through such impersonal and dedicated work, we shall gradually realise our union and identity with Thee.

\* \* \*



Work is of value to us as a part of our *sadhana* only when it serves to bring us closer to Thee, Mother; otherwise, it is an obstacle, a waste of time and energy, a mere concession to the ignorant hankering of our vital nature.

As long as we are attached to our work, and feel interested in the egoistic play of our energies, it keeps us hopelessly bound to the lower life, and obscures the Divine from our view. But if it can be turned to the service of the Divine, at once it ceases to be a bondage, and becomes itself a great force of liberation.

As work is an inevitable necessity of our nature, we should use it for our uplift by making it more and more selfless and devoted to the service of the Mother. Thus purified, we begin to get the direct touch of the Mother, to hear her voice within us, to receive direct guidance and inspiration from her; work, then, becomes a great joy and a great force of transformation.

Gradually, we shall feel that we are only instruments in the hands of the divine Mother, mere channels for her manifestation in the world. In our work, we shall see the play of her forces; instead of being ignorantly attached to our work, we shall through it be attached to the Mother. Our work will make our devotion more deep; our devotion will make our work more perfect and joyous; thus, through devoted work and active devotion, we shall grow in light and power and joy, and ultimately become one with the consciousness of the Divine Mother.

\* \* \*

We think that unless we act constantly with the mind, all our actions will cease and our whole life will be disorganised. This is an ignorance which we must get rid of before we can make any progress towards a higher life.

As a matter of fact our mind is only used as an instrument in the hands of Nature for her own ends. The simple activities of the body are carried on instinctively and automatically, and the mind only creates confusion, when it interferes with its thoughts, prejudices and beliefs. The body has a consciousness of its own, and if left to itself can carry on its activities perfectly within certain limits. The mind is used for more complex actions; but here also it proceeds in a halting and imperfect manner. Our work will be perfect when we shall rise above these lower activities of Nature and give up all our work to be directly initiated and guided from above by the supramental power. The body must be made more and more conscious and open, so that it may receive impulses from above and carry them out, the mind only serving as a free and open channel of communication.

So we must make our body and mind calm and free, open them to the Truth and allow the Truth to use them as plastic instruments; only then will our work be perfect, will be an expression of the divine will in and through us.

*(To be continued)*

ANILBARAN

## VEDIC SYMBOLS AND IMAGES

(Continued from the issue of April 2016)

### 4

#### (i) *The Seven-Headed Thought*

It is the knowledge of the divine existence with its seven heads or powers, the seven-rayed knowledge of Brihaspati, *saptagram*. It is said to be held in thought in the divine Waters, the seven rivers. The seven forms of divine consciousness, the Rishis envision, are held in the seven forms or movements of the divine Being. The Veda also speaks of the seven seers who personify these seven rays of the knowledge, *sapta viprāḥ*. These rays again are the seven horses of the sun, *sapta haritaḥ*. The full union of these seven rays, Sri Aurobindo observes, constitutes the seven-headed thought by which the lost Sun is recovered. Again, this thought is established in the seven rivers, the seven principles of being, human and divine, the totality of which founds the perfect spiritual existence. “The winning of these seven rivers of our being withheld by Vritra and these seven rays withheld by Vala, the possession of our complete divine consciousness delivered from all falsehood by the free descent of the truth, gives us the secure possession of the world of Swar and the enjoyment of mental and physical being lifted into the godhead above darkness, falsehood and death by the in-streaming of our divine elements.”<sup>1</sup>

#### (ii) *The Seven Rivers*

The Veda uses the image of water, a river or an ocean in a figurative sense. It speaks of two oceans, the upper and the lower, the ocean of the Superconscient and that of the Inconscient; the life of man is between the two. Adri, the hill, or rock, as mentioned elsewhere, is a symbol of formal existence, and of the physical existence and physical nature. It is out of this rock that the herds of the Sun, the streams of *madhu* or *soma* are released. The stroke of the Horse’s hoof on the rock releases these waters of inspiration. Horse, here, is the symbol of the great dynamic force of Life, the great Energy behind all existences. The seven rivers are released together by the stroke of Indra when he smote the Python who lay coiled across their fountains and sealed up their outflow.

1. Sri Aurobindo, *SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 174.

*Yo hatvāhimariṇātsapta sindhūn  
yo gā udājadapadhā valasya.  
yo aśmanorantaragniṁ jajāna  
saṁvṛksamatsu sa janāsa indraḥ.*<sup>2</sup>

The supreme resplendent Lord destroyed the dragon and set free the seven rivers, and drove the cattle out of Vala's cavern. He brought forth the secret Fire from between the rocks, ever victorious, the great Lord.

The number seven plays an important part in the Vedic vision of Reality. It recurs constantly as the seven delights — *sapta vatnāni*, the seven flames of Agni — *sapta jvālāḥ*, the seven forms of thought principle — *sapta dhitayam*, the seven cows — *sapta gāvaḥ* and the seven rivers or mothers — *sapta mātaraḥ*. This is the Vedic classification of the fundamental principles of existence, *tattvas*. These are representative of the seven psychological principles:

- (a) The threefold divine principle — Sachchidananda,
- (b) The threefold phenomenal principle — Mind, Life, and Body,
- (c) The link-principle of Truth-Consciousness — *satyam ṛtam bṛhat*, Vijnana or Mahas.

The seven thoughts are Mind applying itself to each of these seven planes of existence — matter-mind, nervous-mind, pure-mind, Truth-mind, *sat*-mind, *chit*-mind, and *ānanda*-mind.

The seven rays or cows are Aditi, the Infinite Mother, or the Infinite Consciousness, taking form on the seven planes of her world-action as the Energy of the Conscious Being. The seven rivers are the conscious currents corresponding to the sevenfold substance of the ocean of being which appears to us formulated in the seven worlds. It is the full flow of these seven rivers in the human consciousness that constitutes the perfect and integral activity of the human being.

Saraswati is one of these seven rivers that springs from the Truth-principle, the *ṛtam* or *mahas*. The seven rivers are the seven Waters, the seven Mothers or the seven fostering Cows, the seven waters of Being — the Mothers from whom all forms of existence are born. They are the seven principles of conscious being in their divine fulfilment in the Truth and Bliss. They are the celestial rivers that flow down into the earth-nature and represent the descent of the superconscient into human life. These are the waters of knowledge, waters that know, the waters of Swar, the seven mothers of Agni. These, when they are released and descend from Truth, discover for man the road to the great Heavens, the world of Truth-Conscious-

2. *Rg Veda*, II.12.3.

ness, the home of Immortality. These cosmic waters are created by Varuna who inspires them to flow unceasingly upon the thirsty earth:

*Pra sīmādhityo asṛjadvidhartān  
ṛtaṁ sindhavo varuṇasya yanti.  
na śrāmyanti na vi mucantyete  
vayo na paptū raghuyā parijman.*<sup>3</sup>

(iii) *Soma*

Soma sometimes called *amṛta*, *madhu*, is a figure for the divine *ānanda*, the very substance of immortality.

*Apāma somamamṛtā abhūmāganma  
jyotiravidāma devān.  
kiṁ nūnamasmān kṛṇavadarātīḥ  
kimu dhūrtiramṛta martyasya.*<sup>4</sup>

We have drunk the elixir of divine love and become immortal! We have attained the divine light and know the divine forces (the *devas*). Now, no malice of mortal men can harm us, O thou immortal Soma.

It is the principle of Bliss from which, according to the Vedas, the very existence of man is drawn. This secret delight is not only the base of all existence but its very substance.

*Sanā jyotiḥ sanā svarviśvā ca soma saubhagā.  
athā no vasyasaskṛdhi.*<sup>5</sup>

O Lord of divine delight, give us light, the light celestial, give us pure bliss and make us perfect and prosperous.

The Taittiriya Upanishad speaks of Bliss as that without which nothing could remain in being.

*Yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha.  
ānandaṁ brahmaṇo vidvān na bibheti kutaścana.*<sup>6</sup>

3. *Ibid.*, II.28.4.

4. *Ibid.*, VIII.48.3.

5. *Ibid.*, IX.4.2.

6. *Taittiriya Upanishad*, II.9.1.

“The Bliss of the Eternal from which words turn back without attaining and mind also returns baffled: who knows the Bliss of the Eternal, he fears not for aught in this world or elsewhere.”<sup>7</sup>

(iv) *Swar*

The word ‘Swar’ literally means ‘luminous’, and points to the third of the Vedic *vyahrtis* which is the world of pure Mind. There are seven principles of existence: these are Pure Existence, Pure Consciousness, Pure Bliss, Knowledge of Truth-Consciousness, Mind, Life, and Matter. Corresponding to these, the seven Puranic worlds are Satyaloka, Tapoloka, Janaloka, Maharloka, Swar, Bhuvan, and Bhur. Sri Aurobindo elucidates them as being respectively the worlds of the highest truth of being, of infinite Will or Consciousness-Force, of the creative delight of existence, of Vastness, of light, of various becoming and the material world.

Swar is that plane of consciousness which receives directly the solar illumination. It is not the same as that of Surya, though Surya and Swar are often found linked together in the Veda.

*Irāvati dhenumatī hi bhūtaṁ  
sūyavasiniṁ manuṣe daśasya.  
vyastabhna rodasī viṣṇavete  
dādhartha pṛthivīmabhito mayūkhaiḥ.*

*Urum yajñāya cakrathuru lokam  
janayantā sūryamuṣāsamagniṁ.  
dāsasya cid vṛṣaśiprasya māyā  
jaghathurnarā pṛtanājyeshu.*<sup>8</sup>

“Thou didst support firmly, O Vishnu, this earth and heaven and uphold the earth all around by the rays (of Surya). Ye two created for the sacrifice (i.e. as its result) the wide other world (*urum u lokam*), bringing into being the Sun, the Dawn and Agni.”<sup>9</sup>

Swar is ‘the wide other world’ of pure light, *bṛhad dyau* beyond heaven and earth, made out of the very substance of the superconscient. “. . . this supra-celestial wideness, this illimitable light is a supramental heaven, the heaven of the supramental Truth, of the immortal Beatitude, and that the light which is its substance and constituent reality, is the light of Truth.”<sup>10</sup> And it is into this wide and vast heaven of

7. Sri Aurobindo’s translation, *SABCL*, Vol. 12, p. 336.

8. *R̥g Veda*, VII. 99.3,4.

9. Sri Aurobindo’s translation, *SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 144.

10. Sri Aurobindo, *SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 145.

supernal light that man is called upon by the Vedic Rishis to ascend after successfully slaying the Adversary, the Concealer and the Coverer, with the help of Maruts and Indra.

*Uruṃ no lokamanu neṣi vidvān  
tsvarvajyotirabhayaṃ svasti.  
ṛṣvā ta indra sthavirasya bāhū  
upa stheyāma śaraṇā brhantā.*<sup>11</sup>

“Thou in thy knowledge leadest us on to the wide world, even Swar, the Light which is freedom from fear, with happy being.”<sup>12</sup>

One can enter into the world of Swar after the initial initiation by Dawn into the world of illumination. The Angirasas hew the path to it, and Sarama leads the seeker into it. It is the path to Immortality.

*Ā ye visvā svapatyāni tasthuḥ  
kṛṇvānāso amṛtatvāya gātum.  
mahnā mahadbhih pṛthivī vi tasthe  
mātā putrairaditirdhāyase veḥ.*<sup>13</sup>

It is imperative, says the Rishi, that all those who aspire to walk on the path of Immortality should perform good deeds. The indivisible Mother Earth upholds all the worlds for their help and spiritual sustenance.

Swar is constituted of the triune supreme world, *tisrah paravatah*, as Sri Aurobindo describes it. It is the higher world of the superconscient which is the home of the *devas* and ‘the foundation of Immortality’. As man proceeds from his ‘obscure material mentality’ towards the Light, he passes through the animal-human consciousness and the nervous mentality. It is the Maruts who help him in the conversion of the animal propensities into the shining herds of the Light. And, finally, Indra the Lord of luminous intelligence liberates the limited mind into the world of Truth-Consciousness. It is thus that man is led up progressively to his own innate truth-nature through the many successive stages of mentality, — “. . . the sensational, aesthetic and emotional mind, the pure intellect and the divine intelligence.”<sup>14</sup>

11. *Ṛg Veda*, VI.47.8.

12. Sri Aurobindo’s translation, *SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 144.

13. *Ṛg Veda*, I.72.9.

14. Sri Aurobindo’s translation, *SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 275.

(v) *Sūrya*

Swar and Surya, though they constitute one movement, are two different conceptions for the Vedic Rishis. Surya is recovered from its concealment in the womb of Darkness by the Angirasas. Sri Aurobindo brings out their subtle distinction by his observation — “It is clear therefore that the substance of Swar is a great light and that that light is the light of Surya, the Sun.”<sup>15</sup> The attainment of Swar depends “on the birth of the Dawn, the rising of the Sun, the upsurging of the Solar Herds out of their secret cave.”<sup>16</sup>

The human mentality, being of the nature of a physical, nervous-mind, is not a self-luminous truth. At best it can receive and understand Truth but cannot become totally one with it. It has to be purified, perfected and sublimated and progressively led up to realise the supreme truth of its own nature. In this it is helped by Surya. Surya is the light of Truth as well as its seat and field of functioning. It dispels and dissolves the limitations of the separative mentality and makes it fit to receive the luminous Truth-Consciousness. Surya, as Sri Aurobindo puts it, “is the Master of Truth, Surya the Illuminator, Savitri the Creator, Pushan the Increaser. His rays in their own nature are supramental activities of revelation, inspiration, intuition, luminous discernment, and they constitute the action of that transcendent principle which the Vedanta calls Vijnana, the perfect knowledge, the Veda Ritam, the Truth. But these rays descend also into the human mentality and form at its summit the world of luminous intelligence, Swar, of which Indra is the lord.”<sup>17</sup>

(vi) *Waters*

The Waters are symbolic of the streams of Life and Light that flow from the solar world into the physical world. This is effected by the *devas* with the help of the seeker-sacrificers. The *devas* are constantly endeavouring to make available to the human hero-warriors the waters of higher existence, the herds of light and the Immortality of the solar world. They are locked up in a relentless war with *asuras* — the Vritras and Panis, as the Veda puts it, to flood the earth with the divine Waters so that man may attain Immortality. These are symbolic of the streams of divine consciousness and not physical waters.

*Samudrajyeṣṭhāḥ salilasya madhyāt  
punānā yantyanivīśamānāḥ.  
indro yā vajrī vṛṣabho rarāda  
ta āpo devīriha māmavantu.*

15. *Ibid.*, p. 143.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 274.

*Ya āpo divyā uta vā sravanti  
khanītrimā uta vā yāḥ svayaṁjāh.  
samudrārthā yāḥ śucayaḥ pāvakāstā  
āpo devīriha māmavantu.*

*Yāsām rājā varuṇo yāti madhye  
satyanṛte avapaśyañjanānām.  
madhuścutaḥ śucayo yāḥ pāvakāstā  
āpo devīriha māmavantu.*

*Yāsu rājā varuṇo yāsu somo  
viśve devā yāsūrjam madanti.  
vaiśvānaro yasvagniḥ praviṣṭastā  
āpo devīriha māmavantu.<sup>18</sup>*

“May those divine waters foster me, the eldest (or greatest) of the ocean from the midst of the moving flood that go purifying, not settling down, which Indra of the thunderbolt, the Bull, clove out. The divine waters that flow whether in channels dug or self-born, whose movement is towards the Ocean, — may those divine waters foster me. In the midst of whom King Varuna moves looking down on the truth and the falsehood of creatures, they that stream honey and are pure and purifying, — may those divine waters foster me. In whom Varuna the king, in whom Soma, in whom all the Gods have the intoxication of the energy, into whom Agni Vaishwanara has entered, may those divine waters foster me.”<sup>19</sup>

These are the waters which Indra cleaves out of the rock of Inconscience and makes them flow upon the earth and in which Varuna moves to help the earth to move out of its falsehood and limitation. These are “the waters that rise from the ocean and flow into the ocean, the honeyed wave that rises upward from the sea, from the flood that is the heart of things, streams of the clarity, *ghṛtasya dhārāḥ*. They are the floods of the supreme and universal conscious existence in which Varuna moves looking down on the truth and the falsehood of mortals . . .”<sup>20</sup> These are the waters of sweetness and light, of consciousness and energy and ecstasy, which the gods enjoy and strive to bring them to the earth.

18. *R̥g Veda*, VII.49.1-4.

19. Sri Aurobindo's translation, *SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 106.

20. *Ibid.*



*Āpo yaṃ vaḥ prathamam devayanta  
indrapānamūrmimakṛiṇvateḥ.  
tam vo vayan śucimaripramadya  
ghṛtapruṣam madhumantam vanema.*

*Tamūrmimāpo madhumattamam vo'pām  
napādavatvāsūhemā.  
yasminnindro vasubhirmādayāte  
tamaśyama devayanto vo adya.*

*Śatapavitrāḥ svadhayā madantīrdevīr-  
devānamapi yanti pāthaḥ.  
tā indrasya na minanti vratāni  
sindhubhyo havyam ghṛtavajjuhota.*

*Yāḥ sūryo raśmibhirātātāna  
yābhya indro aradad gātumūrmim.  
te sindhavo varivo dhātanā no  
yūyam pāta svastibhiḥ sadā naḥ.<sup>21</sup>*

“O Waters, that supreme wave of yours, the drink of Indra, which the seekers of the Godhead have made for themselves, that pure, inviolate, clarity-streaming, most honeyed (*ghṛtapruṣam madhumantam*) wave of you may we today enjoy. O Waters, may the son of the waters (Agni), he of the swift rushings, foster that most honeyed wave of you; that wave of yours in which Indra with the Vasus is intoxicated with ecstasy, may we who seek the Godhead taste today. Strained through the hundred purifiers, ecstatic by their self-nature, they are divine and move to the goal of the movement of the Gods (the supreme ocean); they limit not the workings of Indra: offer to the rivers a food of oblation full of the clarity (*ghṛtavat*). May the rivers which the sun has formed by his rays, from whom Indra clove out a moving wave, establish for us the supreme good. And do ye, O Gods, protect us ever by states of felicity.”<sup>22</sup>

The Veda speaks of the sevenfold Waters; these are the seven streams of eternal energies — the multiple, universal energies, that flow from the supreme Truth fertilising and dynamising all the seven planes of existence. These Waters help man in his march toward the world of Immortality.

21. *Ṛg Veda*, VII.47.1-4.

22. Sri Aurobindo's translation, *SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 107.

(vii) *The Word*

The Word is symbolic of the inspired speech which expresses most profoundly the highest illuminations of the Rishis. It has its birth in the flaming soul of the seers, nourished and formed in their heart and given a mantric expression by their luminous intellect. It comes to them out of the Vast and Vibrant Truth.

“The Word,” as Sri Aurobindo says, “is the power that expresses, *śāstram*, *gīh*, *vacas*. But it has to be protected and given its right effect by the divine Powers.”<sup>23</sup> It not only expresses but manifests ‘a conscious power of the soul’ and creates new worlds of light and energy necessary for the evolution of the seeker-sacrificer. It is the very ‘cry of the soul’ that creates ‘ever-new perceptions and formations’.

The Rishis speak of ‘the seven Words’, *sapta vāñih*, which are the basic and essential expressions of the Supreme Consciousness. It is the nature and function of the supreme-Word to manifest ‘different world-planes’ in the conscient seeker, culminating finally in the manifestation of the triple world of highest Truth, Consciousness and Bliss. The Word helps the Rishi to realise the consciousness and power which are necessary for the great transformation of humanity and the earth-nature. It is of the nature of cosmic-sacrifice that sets creation in motion toward the big change — the spiritual transformation.

(Concluded)

V. MADHUSUDAN REDDY

(*The Vedic Epiphany*, Volume One,  
Institute of Human Study, Hyderabad, 1991, pp. 66-74)

23. Sri Aurobindo’s translation, *SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 300.

*Veda . . . is the creation of an age anterior to our intellectual philosophies. In that original epoch thought proceeded by other methods than those of our logical reasoning and speech accepted modes of expression which in our modern habits would be inadmissible.*

*Sri Aurobindo*

(*The Secret of the Veda*, CWSA, Vol. 15, p. 10)



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