

# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

JULY 2017

PRICE: Rs. 30.00

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

### INLAND

Annual: Rs. 200.00

For 10 years: Rs. 1,800.00

Price per Single Copy: Rs. 30.00

### OVERSEAS

#### Sea Mail:

Annual: \$35

For 10 years: \$350

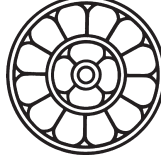
#### Air Mail:

Annual: \$70

For 10 years: \$700

All payments to be made in favour of *Mother India*, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. DD/Cheque should be sent by speed post only. For outstation cheques kindly add Rs. 15 for annual membership and Rs. 50 for 10-year subscription.

Subscribers are requested to mention their subscription number in case of any inquiry. The correspondents should give their full address in BLOCK letters, with the correct PIN CODE.



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.



All Rights Reserved. No matter appearing in this journal or part thereof may be reproduced or translated without written permission from the publishers except for short extracts as quotations.

The views expressed by the authors are not necessarily those of the journal.

All correspondence to be addressed to:

MOTHER INDIA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry - 605 002, India

Phone: (0413) 2233642

e-mail: [motherindia@sriurobindoashram.org.in](mailto:motherindia@sriurobindoashram.org.in)

Publishers: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust

Founding Editor: K. D. SETHNA (AMAL KIRAN)

Editors: RAVI, HEMANT KAPOOR, RANGANATH RAGHAVAN

Published by: MANOJ DAS GUPTA

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM TRUST

PUBLICATION DEPARTMENT, PONDICHERRY 605 002

Printed by: SWADHIN CHATTERJEE

at Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry 605 002

PRINTED IN INDIA

Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers under No. R.N. 8667/63

# MOTHER INDIA

## MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. LXX

No. 7

*“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”*

---

### CONTENTS

*Sri Aurobindo*

GOD TO THY GREATNESS (Poem)	...	7
EXPERIENCES AND REALISATIONS IN THE INTEGRAL YOGA	...	8

*The Mother*

‘IN THY HEART I HAVE NESTLED . . .’	...	23
ON THE DHAMMAPADA	...	24

*Amal Kiran (K. D. Sethna)*

DIONYSIAN AND APOLLONIAN	...	38
--------------------------	-----	----

*Manoj Das*

SRI AUROBINDO: LIFE AND TIMES OF THE MAHAYOGI		
POSTSCRIPT: I — HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATE ON SRI AUROBINDO	...	46

*Glenys Nivedita*

VISIONARY ART FOR THE SACRED KINGDOM OF GOD: THROUGH THE EYES OF THE MYSTIC ARTIST-WRITER CECIL COLLINS (1908-1989)	...	61
---	-----	----

*Narsinh Mehta*

BEHOLD HIM (Translated by Dhanavanti Nagda)	...	77
---	-----	----

*Chitra Sen*

THE MOTHER’S ROOM IN THE PLAYGROUND	...	78
-------------------------------------	-----	----



## GOD TO THY GREATNESS

God to thy greatness  
    Of utter sedateness  
Has given a name  
    That fills it with light  
    Of His sovereign might.  
He has lavished a flame  
    Of passionate fleetness  
    On thy stillness and sweetness.  
His ecstasies seven,  
    O daughter of Heaven,  
Have seized thy limbs  
    That were motionless dreams.

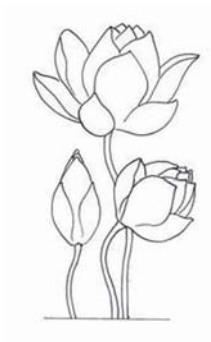
SRI AUROBINDO

*(Collected Poems, CWSA, Vol. 2, p. 675)*

Note on the text:

No title in the manuscript. March 1936. A single manuscript, written between drafts of “The Yogi on the Whirlpool” and “The Kingdom Within”, both of which are dated 14 March 1936.

*(CWSA, Vol. 2, p. 728)*



# EXPERIENCES AND REALISATIONS IN THE INTEGRAL YOGA

*(Continued from the issue of June 2017)*

## PART FOUR THE FUNDAMENTAL REALISATIONS OF THE INTEGRAL YOGA

### SECTION FOUR THE SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

#### Chapter Six Feelings and Sensations in the Process of Descent

##### Sensations in the Inner Centres

It [*a pressure felt in meditation*] is what we call the pressure of the Force (the Force of the higher spiritual or divine consciousness, the Mother's Force); it comes in various forms, vibrations, currents, waves, a wide flow, a shower like rain etc. It passes to each centre in turn, the crown of the head, the forehead centre, throat, heart, navel centres down to the Muladhara and spreads too throughout the body.

The rotatory movement is the movement of the Force when it is working and forming something in the being.

\*

Pressure, throbbing, electrical vibrations are all signs of the working of the Force. The places indicate the field of action — the top of the head is the summit of the thinking mind where it communicates with the higher consciousness; the neck or throat is the seat of the physical, externalising or expressive mind; the ear is the place of communication with the inner mind centre by which thoughts etc. enter into the personal being from the general Nature. The sternum at the point indicated<sup>1</sup> holds the psychic and emotional centre, with its apex on the spinal column behind.

1. *The correspondent wrote that she felt electrical vibrations in the backbone at a point in the chest parallel to the bottom of the sternum. — Ed.*

## Pressure

When the Force comes down one at first feels a pressure. Afterwards it begins to enter the body, when once the way is open for it. After entering the body it goes on working each time it descends, for the transformation of the nature.

\*

This pressure on the head always comes at the beginning; it is the pressure of the Force on the adhar preparing to make its way into it. The feeling lasts so long as there is a resistance in the adhar to the entrance and working of the Force. If the mind opens to the Power, it will cease and you will feel the Power working in you or within you.

\*

Tell him that the pressure on the head is a sign of the descent and working of the Force from above and of a certain resistance in the adhar which almost all sadhaks have at first. The calm is the result of the working. When the resistance disappears, the pressure is no longer felt but one becomes conscious of the working and of the calm descending into the body from centre to centre.

\*

The pressure is that of the Divine Force which he calls by his prayer descending to do its work in the Adhar, its passage being marked by the current which he feels. The pain was due to some resistance in the Adhar; it disappears as soon as the system is accustomed to the descent and grows wide enough to admit it. The first result of the descent is the calm which he experiences; for it is only in a calm mind and vital (*manah-prāṇa*) that the Divine Shakti can do her work rightly.

\*

When there is a pressure of the Force on the Adhar to work on it or enter, this [*feeling of heaviness in the head*] is often felt, especially if there is a working of the Force in the head. This heaviness disappears if the system receives and assimilates the Force and there is a free flow in the body — till then the pressure or some kind of heaviness is often felt at one centre or another where the Force is working.

\*

If it is only a weight or pressure on the head, it may be only the pressure of the Mother's Force. It comes like that to most people. Once the consciousness is open and the Force enters, there is no longer this feeling.

\*

It is the pressure of the higher consciousness (planes of blue light beyond the ordinary mind) that has come down and is pressing upon the resistances down to the body and below. At the same time the weight of the subconscious Matter is being lifted up for release. That is the sense of these experiences.

\*

A heaviness which gives strength is likely to be the indication of a descent. Sensations like a biting or pricking in the head often accompany it. It is usually a sign of some force from above trying to make its way through or to work in the physical stuff so as to prepare it for receiving.

\*

That is some obstacle in the mind breaking under the pressure of Force, and each time there is a flash and a movement of the Force.

\*

All that you note in your letter is very encouraging; it shows that the force is working in you and in the right way. There are two things that are necessary — the full connection of your mind and vital with your psychic being and the opening of the consciousness to Mother's consciousness above. Both of these are beginning. The voice that spoke was that of your soul, your psychic being; the impulse to go deep within was the movement to plunge into the depths of the psychic. The consciousness that rejected and threw away the anger and old movements was also that of the psychic.

The pressure you felt on the head comes always when there is the pressure from above of the Higher Consciousness, the Mother's consciousness, to come in and the coolness etc. you felt are also often felt at that time. The first result was the detachment from personal connections, the freedom, lightness, openness of heart, fearlessness, and also the sense of the Mother's presence. These things are signs of the true consciousness and part of the spiritual nature. They come first as experiences, afterwards they become more frequent, endure longer, settle into the nature.

\*



It is the pressure of the Divine Power which you are feeling and it is that which gives you the sense of joy and living fullness. If you keep it and allow it to work in you, it will give you the positive experience and progress in sadhana which you need.

\*

The pressure is usually felt only when the Force is acting on the consciousness in order to create an opening somewhere or for some other purpose. As soon as that is done, the pressure is not felt but instead a changed condition or else the working of the Force within but without any sense of pressure. When the condition of lightness, quietude, etc. comes, it means that something has opened to the psychic consciousness and become full of it. Emptiness is of several kinds, one when the consciousness is empty and free, which is a very good condition, another when it is empty and neutral, i. e. simply quiet without any positive power or psychic happiness, but not troubled or disturbed by anything, without any good or bad movement, and, finally, tamasic or inert emptiness. The first two conditions can be brought about by an action of the Force, and the first is a very good basis for spiritual experience and progress; the second also is not unfavourable and is often a needed stage, the consciousness becoming empty in order that it may be filled from within or from above with the true things. The third comes usually when the vital is quiescent and there is a complete inertia. It is one of the two first that must be coming in you as a result of the action of the Force.

\*

If the pressure is too great, the remedy is to widen the consciousness. With the peace and silence there should come a wideness that can receive any amount of Force without any reactions, whether heaviness or compulsion to remain withdrawn or the difficulty of the eyes etc.

\*

The action of the Force does not always create a pressure. When it does not need to press, it acts quietly.

\*

There is no necessity of feeling pressure. One feels force when something is being done or the force is flowing in or if it is there manifest in the body — but not when what is manifesting is peace and silence.

### **Perforation**

If it is a feeling of a covering being perforated, then that is a sensation one often has when the Force is opening a way for itself through some resistance — here it must be in some part of the physical mind.

Keep full reliance on the Mother. When one does that, the victory even if delayed, is sure.

### **Vibration**

An entire silence and inactivity of the mind cannot come at first — what is possible is a quietude of the mind, that is to say, a cessation of its absorption in its restless miscellaneous activity of ill-connected or unconnected thoughts and a concentration on the object of the sadhana. The imagination which the Mother recommended to you was a means of such concentration. A mental idea of the omnipresence such as comes to you is a good help for that also, especially if it brings the strong faith and reliance. The feeling of the vibration of the Mother's Force around the head is more than a mental idea or even a mental realisation, it is an experience. This vibration is indeed the action of the Mother's Force which is first felt above the head or around it, then afterwards within the head. The pressure means that it is working to open the mind and its centres so that it may enter. The mind centres are in the head, one at the top and above it, another between the eyes, a third in the throat. That is why you feel the vibration around the head and sometimes up to the neck, but not below. It is so usually, for it is only after enveloping and entering the mind that it goes below to the emotional and vital parts (heart, navel etc.) — though sometimes it is more enveloping before it enters the body. To see the light in the heart one has to go deep, but one can see light elsewhere without going in deep there. Light is often seen between the eyebrows first or in front at that level, for there is the centre of inner vision and a slight opening of it is sufficient for that — so also light is often seen round the head or above it, outside.

\*

If it was a Light, you would see the Light. Vibrations are either of a Force or a Presence.

### **Electricity**

Electricity shock always indicates a passage of dynamic Force.

\*

It [*the sensation of an electric current in the spine*] is the flowing of the force through the spine. In the Tantric system the spine is considered as the natural passage of the Force, because it is in the spine that all the six centres rest.

### **Waves**

Whatever comes from above can come like that in waves — whether it is Light or Force or Peace or Ananda. In your case it was the Force working on the mind in waves. It is true also that when it was like that, not in currents or as a rain or as a quiet flood, it is Mahakali's Force that is working. The first necessity when it is so, is not to fear.

### **Flow or Stream**

The descent of the Consciousness from above is often felt as a flow of water. Also the image of the drilling open of the head to receive it is frequent (it symbolises the opening of the mind to the higher consciousness).

\*

The stream which you feel coming down on the head and pouring into you is indeed a current of the Mother's Force; it is so that it is often felt; it flows into the body in currents and works there to liberate and change the consciousness. As the consciousness changes and develops, you will begin yourself to understand the meaning and working of these things.

\*

The quiet flow is necessary for permeating the lower parts. The big descents open the way and bring constant reinforcement and the culminating force at the end — but the quiet flow is also needed.

### **Drizzle or Shower**

I am glad to hear that these experiences are coming — they are a sign of rapid progress coming. The descent as of a drizzling rain is a very characteristic and well-known way of descent of the higher Consciousness; it brings peace but it also brings all other possibilities of the higher Consciousness too and, as you felt, the seeds of

transformation of the physical consciousness — by the coming in it of the seeds of the powers and qualities of the higher Nature.

\*

I am very glad that the experience we have been working to bring to you has come with such force and is increasing. It is the concrete descent of the higher consciousness, which once it settles marks always a definite turning-point in the sadhana. Even if it does not settle with a full stability at once, yet when it has once come with so much strength, there cannot be the least doubt that it will come more and more till it has done its work and is your permanent consciousness. The shower and drizzle, the hold<sup>2</sup> above the head and in the heart, the envelopment, the flaming of Agni within, the sense of firmness and solidity, the Peace and security and devotion, the sense of the Mother's hold are all signs of the descent — eventually it will penetrate everywhere and become something solid and stable occupying the whole consciousness and body.

### Coolness

The coolness is always a quieting force making for peace.

\*

This coolness [*felt in a passage rising from the heart to the head and then above it*] very often comes with the peace from above. If the passage is felt going up above the head, it means that there is now a direct communication with the higher Consciousness, the necessary opening having been made.

\*

The coolness comes when the Force descends with peace and harmony into the vital and the body.

\*

A sensation of coolness indicates usually some touch or descent of peace. It is felt as very cold by the human vital because the latter is always in a fever of restlessness.

\*

*2. The correspondent felt "as if held in a hand of the Power". — Ed.*

Pleasant coolness or coldness usually indicates a pacifying force bringing down calm or release. Knee to toe = the field of physical material consciousness.

\*

If the coolness passed into dullness, it may well have been only physical. But perhaps there was an inflow, only afterwards came a reaction of the lower inertia which is the physical Nature's characteristic retort to peace and quietude. When the inertia comes up the old movements which the subconscious is prepared to supply always can mechanically come up with it. In a certain sense this inertia and the peace are the bright and dark counterparts of each other, *tamas* and *śama* — the higher Nature finding repose in peace, the lower seeking it in a relaxation of energy and a return towards the subconscious, *tamas*.

\*

The coolness is a very common experience, but the cool smell is unusual. Sometimes people get a fragrance but without this close connection — perhaps they do not observe closely.

### **Stoniness**

The feeling of stoniness is very usually a first impression in the body of the stillness in the cells which comes with the downflow of the Peace.

### **Sound**

A sound<sup>3</sup> does sometimes come with a particular descent of the consciousness or force from above.

\*

Your experience while going to the lawyers was an opening to the Force from above which, if sudden, is often attended by this kind of loud sound and the sensation of the opening of the head — it is in the subtle body that this opening of the head takes place though the sensation is felt as if physical. The Force came down and went up presided over by the Mother's forms of Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati

3. *In this case the correspondent heard the faint sound of dhum . . . dhum . . . dhum. — Ed.*

and made the movement of ascent and descent (here in the spinal column which is the main channel of the Yogic force passing through the centres) which helps to join the higher with the lower consciousness. As a result came the feeling of identity with myself in your body. The cough shows probably some difficulty against concentration in the physical mind. The best is not to force concentration, but to remain quiet and call and let things work themselves out through the force of the Mother.

\* \* \*

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Difficulties Experienced in the Process of Descent**

#### **Alternations in the Intensity of the Force**

Sometimes the descent comes with great force in order to open something, afterwards it becomes more quiet and normal until the consciousness is ready for a more sustained descent.

\*

There are always alternations in the intensity of the Force at its work. It comes with great power and effects something that had to be done; then it is either concealed or retires a little or is felt but from behind a screen as you say, while something comes up that has to be prepared for illumination and then it comes in front again and does what has to be done there. But formerly while the support, help, even the deeper consciousness was always there, as you now rightly feel, yet when a veil fell, then it was all forgotten and you felt as if there was nothing but darkness and confusion. This happens to most sadhaks in the earlier stages. It is a great progress, a decisive advance if, at the time when the Force is working from behind the screen, you feel that it is there, that the help and support, the more enlightened consciousness is there still; this is a second stage in the sadhana. The third is when there is no screen and the Force and all else are always felt whether actively working or pausing during a transition.

#### **The Need of Assimilation**

When a new consciousness comes down, it is not possible at first to keep it all the time — the former consciousness has to get accustomed and receive and assimilate it, and that takes time.

\*

It [*the need to rest*] may be simply the need of assimilation in the body. To remain quiet for a time after a descent of Force is the best way of assimilating it.

\*

If the peace once becomes stable, there is no farther assimilation needed for that, as that means the whole system is sufficiently prepared to receive and absorb continuously. There may be periods of assimilation necessary for other things, but these periods need not interrupt the inner status. For instance if Force or Ananda or Knowledge begin to descend from above, there might be interruptions and probably would be, the system not being able to absorb a continuous flow, but the peace would remain in the inner being. Or there might even be something like periods of struggle on the surface, but the inner being would remain calm and still, watching and undisturbed and, if there is knowledge established within, understanding the action. Only for that the whole being vital, physical, material must have become open and receptive to the peace. Peace would then go on perhaps deepening and becoming wider and wider, but periods of interruption and assimilation would not be needed.

\*

This feeling of being able to break a stone with the hand or for that matter break the world without anything at all except the force itself, is one that comes especially when the mind and vital have not assimilated the Power. It is the feeling of something extraordinary to them and omnipotent; the idea of breaking or crushing is suggested by the rajas in the vital. Afterwards when quietly assimilated this sensation disappears and only the feeling of calm strength and immovable firmness remains.

### **Pulling Down the Force**

I mean [*by writing "let the Force come in"*] that you need not pull it down, but you should aid its entry by your full aspiration and assent.

\*

This sort of giddiness and weakness and disturbance ought not to take place. When it comes it shows that more Force is being pulled down than is assimilated by the body. At such times you ought to rest till the disturbance has passed and there is a proper balance.

\*

It is certainly a mistake to bring down the light by force — to pull it down. The supramental cannot be taken by storm. When the time is ready it will open of itself — but first there is a great deal to be done and that must be done patiently and without haste.

### **Shaking or Swaying of the Body**

That [*shaking of the body*] sometimes happens when the Force is coming down. It must be allowed to pass off as the body becomes more quiet and assimilative.

\*

The swaying motion takes place when the body is not accustomed to the descent; it tries by the movement to assimilate what is coming down.

\*

The swaying is due probably to the body not being habituated to receive the Force — it should cease as soon as the body is accustomed.

\*

Some have this swaying of the body when the peace or the Force begins to descend upon it, as it facilitates for it the reception. The swaying ceases usually when the body is accustomed to assimilate the descent.

The peace comes fully at the meditation time because the Mother's concentration at that time brings down the power of the higher consciousness and one can receive it if one is able to do so. Once it begins to come, it usually increases its force along with the receptivity of the sadhak until it can come at all times and under all conditions and stay longer and longer till it is stable. The sadhak on his side has to keep his consciousness as quiet and still as possible to receive it. The Peace, Power, Light, Ananda of the higher spiritual consciousness are there in all veiled above. A certain opening upwards is needed for it to descend — the quietude of the mind and a certain wide concentrated passivity to the descending Influence are the best conditions for the descent.



### Headaches Due to Resistance

What you saw was indeed a sun, — the sun of blue light which is the light of a higher mind than the ordinary human mind. The sun is the symbol of Light and Truth. This higher spiritual Mind is trying to wake in you, but at the beginning there is always a difficulty because the consciousness is not habituated to receive, so there is the sense of pressure deepening sometimes into a feeling of headache or this feeling of the head preparing to split. It is nothing but a sensation in the physical created by the inner mind (this part of the head is the seat of the inner mind) trying to open under the touch from above.

\*

Headaches “produced by a pressure from above”, as you put it, are not due to the pressure or produced by it, but produced by a resistance. X’s headaches have nothing to do with Yoga or sadhana.

\*

The pressure [*from above*] does not “bring” a resistance. “If there were no resistance there would be no headache” is the proper knowledge, not the reverse. So long as you think that it is the pressure that brings the resistance, the very idea will create the resistance. X’s case is not an example either of headache due to resistance or of headache due to pressure — it is due to ordinary physical and psychological causes.

\*

To make people ill in order to improve or perfect them is not Mother’s method. But sometimes things like headache come because the brain either tries too much or does not want to receive or makes difficulties. But these Yogic headaches are of a special kind and after the brain has found out the way to receive or respond, they don’t come at all.

\*

Headache is not a sign of the force descending, it is only a result sometimes of some difficulty in receiving it. If there is no difficulty in receiving, there is no headache. The signs of the force coming are the pressure to be quiet, the sense of peace coming or wanting to come and many others, such as a feeling in the head or body of something coming in like a stream or a current or shower etc.

\*

Pain in the head and physical strain are due to resistance, but pressure and throbbing and electric sensation are only signs of the Force working, not of resistance. The sensation of coolness is a very good sign.

### **Talking Loudly**

The sensations you describe in the crown of the head and the upper part of the forehead are such as one often gets when the higher consciousness or Force is trying to make an open passage through the mind for itself. So it is possibly that that is happening. As for the uneasiness or feebleness there when you talk loudly etc., that also happens at such times. It is because the concentration of energy which is necessary for the inner work is broken and the energies thrown out, exhausting the parts by two inconsistent pullings. It is better when any working is going on inside to be very quiet in speech and as sparing as possible. At other times it does not so much matter.

### **Fear of the Descending Force**

The first condition of progress in sadhana is not to fear, to have trust and keep quiet during an experience. What happened was simply that the Force came down and tried to quiet the mind and hold the body still so that it might work. If you had not feared, that would have happened. But your terror made the mind and body resist and get the impression that they were being tortured or in danger. The feeling of the tough body and great force like a hand upon it is quite usual in this kind of experience and does not terrify the sadhak, but brings a great joy and release. In future you must try to be quiet and not have any fear or imagination of danger. Naturally when you thought that you could not bear it, the Force withdrew as you are not ready to receive.

### **Desires and Descent**

The descent of Light etc. is always impermanent at first. First the Peace and Force and Light have to be settled in the mind, then in the vital (heart, navel and below) and the physical. The desires etc. will then have been pushed out into a kind of environmental consciousness from which they try to return and must be driven out from there also. This will create a firm basis for the rest of the sadhana.

\*

He is to be congratulated on the victory in the matter of sex — it is very important to have that when the intense definitive experiences are beginning. For if once the actual penetrative descent is felt, the less the higher consciousness is met by the sex force the better, for then a dangerous mixture may take place or else a struggle which is better avoided.

The description of the Power he feels — which is obviously the true thing — is very accurate — it is so, like rain or a fall of snow, that it often comes at first. I take it from his use of the word “around”, that it is an enveloping power that he feels. It does not begin for all in the same way — some only feel it above their heads occasionally descending on them and entering.

### **Tiredness, Inertia and Sleep**

It [*feeling tired and heavy*] is probably a passing symptom of the attempt of peace to come down. I have heard from several in the first stages that the body was disinclined or felt unable to move about. It is of course an unnecessary reaction — the body wants to translate the pressure for inner immobility into an outward immobility.

\*

There is no connection between the descent of Peace and depression. Inertia there may be if the physical being feels the pressure for quietude but turns it into mere inactivity — but that cannot be called exactly a descent — at least not a complete one, since the physical does not share in it.

\*

By the descent the inertia changes its character. It ceases to be a resistance of the physical and becomes only a physical condition to be transformed into the true basic immobility and rest.

\*

You need not worry about that [*the body's tendency to sleep*]. When there is a strong inward tendency, the body not being yet conscious enough to share the experience in a waking state tries to assimilate the descending forces through sleep. This is a common experience. When it has assimilated enough, it will be more ready.

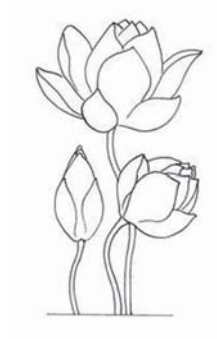
### Mixing with the World

That [*problem of “mixture”*]<sup>4</sup> might apply to a sending out of the new waves upon the old sea, i.e. an attempt to transform the world. But the problem here is of self-transformation. Mixture comes by the old waves pressing in again; one has to prevent or get rid of the mixture. But the decisive movement is the descent of the things from above — when that becomes complete, then the being depends on the Above not on the Around. If the waves from the Around try to get in, it is they who are transformed (or rejected automatically), the roles are reversed.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Letters on Yoga – III*, CWSA, Vol. 30, pp. 469-86)

4. *The correspondent wrote that a person seeking transformation is different from others, like a red wave in the midst of the ordinary blue waves of the sea. Would such a wave, he asked, be dissolved and mixed with the ordinary waves or would it remain separate and transform them? — Ed.*



## ‘IN THY HEART I HAVE NESTLED . . .’

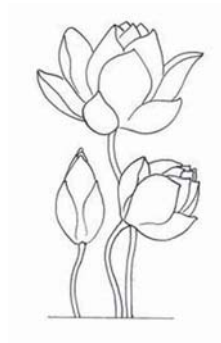
**May 28, 1914**

Thou settest in motion, Thou stirrest and churnest the innumerable elements of this world, so that, from their primal darkness, their primeval chaos, they may awaken to consciousness and the full light of knowledge. And Thou usest Thy supreme love to churn all these elements in this way. And it is from Thy infinite, unfathomable heart that these inexhaustible torrents of love spring forth. Thy heart is my dwelling-place, Thy heart is the reality of my being. In Thy heart I have nestled and I have become Thy heart.

Peace, peace upon all beings.

THE MOTHER

*(Prayers and Meditations, CWM 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. 1, p. 160)*



## ON THE DHAMMAPADA

### Pleasure

*One who gives himself entirely to what is unprofitable, who does not give himself to what is profitable, who sacrifices true knowledge for the sake of pleasure, will envy those who have chosen the path of self-knowledge.*

*Therefore do not seek after pleasure, much less what is unpleasant, for it is painful to be deprived of what is pleasing and equally painful to see what is unpleasant.*

*Therefore one should hold nothing dear, for the loss of what one loves is painful. No bondage exists for those who have neither love nor hatred.*

*What is pleasing gives rise to grief; what is pleasing gives rise to fear. One who is freed from what is pleasing, who feels no grief, what has he to fear?*

*Affection gives rise to grief; affection gives rise to fear. One who is freed from affection, who feels no grief, what has he to fear?*

*Attachment gives rise to grief; attachment gives rise to fear. One who is freed from attachment, who feels no grief, what has he to fear?*

*Desire gives rise to grief; desire gives rise to fear. One who is freed from desire, who feels no grief, what has he to fear?*

*Craving gives rise to grief; craving gives rise to fear. One who is freed from craving, who feels no grief, what has he to fear?*

*One holds dear a man who acts rightly, possesses intuition, who is righteous and knows the Truth, who fulfils his duty.*

*One who aspires to the ineffable Peace, one whose mind is awakened, whose thoughts are not entangled in the net of desire, that one is said to be "bound upstream" (towards perfection).*

*Just as, after a long absence, a man returning safely home is received by his kinsmen and friends who welcome him, even so it is with one who acts rightly;*

*when he passes from this world to the other, his own good actions welcome him like a kinsman.*

It always seems to me that the reasons usually given for becoming wise are poor reasons: “Don’t do this, it will bring you suffering; don’t do that, it will give birth to fear in you” . . . and the consciousness dries up more and more, it hardens, because it is afraid of grief, afraid of pain.

I think it would be better to say that there is a certain state of consciousness — which one can acquire by aspiration and a persistent inner effort — in which joy is unmixed and light shadowless, where all possibility of fear disappears. It is the state in which one does not live for oneself but where whatever one does, whatever one feels, all movements are an offering made to the Supreme, in an absolute trust, freeing oneself of all responsibility for oneself, handing over to Him all this burden which is no longer a burden.

It is an inexpressible joy not to have any responsibility for oneself, no longer to think of oneself. It is so dull and monotonous and insipid to be thinking of oneself, to be worrying about what to do and what not to do, what will be good for you and what will be bad for you, what to shun and what to pursue — oh, how wearisome it is! But when one lives like this, quite open, like a flower blossoming in the sun before the Supreme Consciousness, the Supreme Wisdom, the Supreme Light, the Supreme Love, which knows all, which can do all, which takes charge of you and you have no more worries — that is the ideal condition.

And why is it not done?

One does not think of it, one forgets to do it, the old habits come back. And above all, behind, hidden somewhere in the inconscient or even in the subconscious, there is this insidious doubt that whispers in your ear: “Oh! if you are not careful, some misfortune will happen to you. If you forget to watch over yourself, you do not know what may happen” — and you are so silly, so silly, so obscure, so stupid that you listen and you begin to pay attention to yourself and everything is ruined.

You have to begin all over again to infuse into your cells a little wisdom, a little common sense and learn once more not to worry.

*30 May 1958*

\*

### **Anger**

*One should cast away anger, one should reject pride, one should break all bonds. One who is not attached to name or form, who possesses nothing, is delivered from suffering.*

*Whosoever masters rising anger, as one who controls a moving chariot, that one indeed is worthy of being called a good charioteer. Others merely hold the reins.*

*Oppose anger with serenity, evil with good; conquer a miser by generosity and a liar by the truth.*

*Speak the truth; do not give way to anger; give the little you possess to one who asks of you; by these three attributes, men can approach the gods.*

*The sages who are void of violence, who are always in control of their senses, attain that imperishable state where pain is no more.*

*Those who are always vigilant and who discipline themselves day and night, whose minds are always turned towards Nirvana, will see their impurities disappear for ever.*

*Not only today but since ancient times, they have always been criticised, those who remain silent, those who speak much and those who speak little. None here below escapes criticism.*

*There has never been and never will be, nor is there now, one who receives only blame or only praise.*

*If a man is praised by the sages, who have observed him day after day, for being intelligent, without reproach, endowed with knowledge and virtue, who then would dare to blame him who is as pure as gold? Even the gods and Brahma praise him.*

*Be on your guard against the wrath of the body. Control your actions, and leaving behind wrong ways of acting, practise perfect conduct in action.*

*Be on your guard against wrath in speech. Control your words, and leaving behind wrong ways of speaking, practise good conduct in speech.*

*Be on your guard against wrath of mind. Control your thoughts, and leaving behind wrong ways of thinking, practise good conduct in thought.*

*The sages whose actions are controlled, whose words are controlled and whose thoughts are controlled, they in truth are perfectly controlled.*



I suggest that every one of you should try — oh! not for long, just for one hour a day — to say nothing but the absolutely indispensable words. Not one more, not one less.

Take one hour of your life, the one which is most convenient for you, and during that time observe yourself closely and say only the absolutely indispensable words.

At the outset, the first difficulty will be to know what is absolutely indispensable and what is not. It is already a study in itself and every day you will do better.

Next, you will see that so long as one says nothing, it is not difficult to remain absolutely silent, but as soon as you begin to speak, always or almost always you say two or three or ten or twenty useless words which it was not at all necessary to say.

I give you this as an exercise till next Friday. We shall see how you succeed. You may, at the end of the week, on Friday, give me a brief note telling me how far you have succeeded — those who have tried. That's all.

6 June 1958

\*

### Impurity

*Now you are like a withered leaf; the messengers of Yama await you. It is the eve of your departure, and you have made no provision for your journey!*

*Quickly make for yourself an island of refuge, strive hard and become wise. When you are cleansed and purified of all impurity, you will enter the heavenly home of the Noble Ones.*

*Now your days are numbered, you are in the presence of the God of death. You have no resting-place on the road, no provision for the journey.*

*Quickly make for yourself an island of refuge, strive hard and become wise. When you are cleansed and purified of all impurity, you will be reborn no more, you will no more be subject to decay.*

*Just as the smith refines the silver, so also, little by little from moment to moment, the wise man purifies himself of his impurities.*

*When rust appears on iron, the iron itself is corrupted by it. So also, a man's evil actions corrupt him and lead him to his doom.*

*Lack of repetition impairs the effect of mantras. Neglect impairs the solidity of houses. Indolence impairs the beauty of the body. Lack of attention is the downfall of one who watches.*

*Misconduct is the taint of a woman. Meanness is the taint of one who gives. Wrong-doing is a taint in this world and the other.*

*The greatest of all taints is ignorance. Cleanse yourselves of that taint alone and you will be free of all taints, O Bhikkhus.*

*Life is easy for one who is impudent as a crow, malicious, boastful, presumptuous and corrupt.*

*Life is hard for the modest one who seeks purity, who is detached, unassuming and whose judgment is correct.*

*Already in this world he is uprooted, the one who destroys life, who lies, who takes what he has not been given, who covets the wife of another and who is addicted to drink.*

*Know that evil things are difficult to master. Let not cravings and wickedness subject you to endless suffering.*

*Each one gives according to his faith or his liking; if you are discontented with the food and drink offered by another, you will not achieve concentration by night or by day.*

*But the one who uproots and destroys in himself the very root of such a feeling of resentment, achieves concentration by night and by day.*

*There is no fire like the fire of craving, no grip like that of hatred. There is no snare like that of delusion, no torrent like desire.*

*It is easy to see the faults of others, but difficult to perceive our own shortcomings. We winnow the faults of others like chaff, but we hide our own like the wily gambler concealing his foul throw.*

*One who always criticises the faults of others and is irritated by them, far from becoming free of faults, increases his own vices.*

*There is no track in the sky, no Samana outside the true path. Man delights in vanity. The Tathagatas have overcome these obstacles.*

*There is no track in the sky, no Samana outside the true path. No conditioned thing can last, but the Buddhas remain for ever immutable.*

I have read your notes on the control of speech. Some have tried very seriously. I am happy with the result. I believe it will be good for everyone if you continue.

Someone has written me something which is very true: that when one begins, one has no reason to stop, one begins with one hour a day, but this becomes a kind of necessity, a habit and one continues quite naturally.

If your exercise truly has this result, then it will be an excellent thing.

We can select three things from what I have read this evening. The first is that you must persist in what you do if you want to get a result. The Dhammapada tells us, for example, that if you have a mantra and do not repeat it sufficiently, there is no use in having it and that if you are inattentive, you lose the benefit of vigilance, and that if you do not continue in the good habits that you acquire, they are useless — that is to say, you must persevere. As for example, with the exercise which I asked you to do last time; I asked you to do it with the idea that if you form the habit of doing it, that will help you much in overcoming your difficulties.

Already someone has told me, quite rightly, that while practising this half-silence, or at any rate this continence of speech, one achieves quite naturally the mastery of numerous difficulties in one's character and also one avoids a great many frictions and misunderstandings. This is true.

Another point to remember from our reading concerns impurity and the Dhammapada gives the example of bad will and wrong action. Wrong action, says our text, is a taint in this world as well as in others. In the next verse it is said that there is no greater impurity than ignorance, that is to say, ignorance is considered as the essential, the central fault, which urgently needs to be corrected, and what is called ignorance is not simply not knowing things, not having the superficial knowledge of things, it means forgetting the very reason of our existence, the truth that has to be discovered.

There was a third thing? . . . Yes, you must not cherish the illusion that if you want to follow the straight path, if you are modest, if you seek purity, if you are disinterested, if you want to lead a solitary existence and have a clear judgment, things will become easy. . . . It is quite the contrary! When you begin to advance towards inner and outer perfection, the difficulties start at the same time.

I have very often heard people saying, "Oh! now that I am trying to be good, everybody seems to be bad to me!" But this is precisely to teach you that one should not be good with an interested motive, one should not be good so that others will be good to you — one must be good for the sake of being good.

It is always the same lesson: one must do as well as one can, the best one can, but without expecting a result, without doing it with a view to the result. Just this attitude, to expect a reward for a good action — to become good because one thinks that this will make life easier — takes away all value from the good action.

You must be good for the love of goodness, you must be just for the love of justice, you must be pure for the love of purity and you must be disinterested for the love of disinterestedness; then you are sure to advance on the way.

13 June 1958

\*

### **The Just Man**

*A man is not just if he judges arbitrarily. The wise man is one who distinguishes the just from the unjust, who judges others in full knowledge according to law and equity; this guardian of the Law is called a just man.*

*The sage is not the man who speaks most. The man who is compassionate, friendly, fearless, is called a sage.*

*It is not by much speaking that the Doctrine is upheld; but he who has studied the Doctrine, even a little, and mentally realised it, he alone upholds it. He does not neglect it.*

*A man is not a Thera because his hair is grey. He is ripe in years but he has aged fruitlessly.*

*But one who possesses the truth, virtue, non-violence and self-mastery, who is free from all impurity, who is wise, is indeed a Thera.*

*Neither eloquence nor a beautiful appearance grace a man who is jealous, selfish, deceitful. But one in whom such faults are completely uprooted and destroyed, that wise man is fully graced by them.*

*As for the man who is undisciplined and untruthful, his shaven head does not make him an ascetic. Full of desire and greed, how can he be a Samana?*

*He who is purged of all evil, both great and small, can be called a Samana, for he is purified of all evil.*

*A man is not a Bhikkhu simply because he takes alms for his food. The observance of vows is not enough to make him a Bhikkhu.*

*But he who is above both good and evil, who leads a pure life, who walks with understanding in this world, he can be called a Bhikkhu.*

*One who observes silence does not by that become a sage, if he is ignorant and foolish; but he who can weigh good and evil as in a balance and make his choice, him one can call a sage.*

*He who by contemplation measures this world and the other, he is a sage.*

*A man who does harm to living creatures does not become a Noble One. One who practises non-violence towards all creatures is called a Noble One.*

*It is neither by moral precepts and observances, nor by a wide knowledge, nor by practising meditation, nor by a solitary life, nor by thinking, "I have attained the bliss of liberation which is unknown to those who live in the world", that one can be called a Bhikkhu. Be on your guard, O Bhikkhus, until you have attained the extinction of all desire.*

We shall take the last text. It is an interesting one.

"It is neither by moral precepts and observances, nor by a wide knowledge, nor by practising meditation, nor by a solitary life, nor by thinking", that one attains the true bliss; it is by getting rid of all desires. Certainly it is not easy to get rid of all desires, it sometimes needs a whole lifetime. But to tell the truth, it seems to be a very negative way, although at a certain stage of development, it is a discipline which it is very useful, even indispensable to practise, if one does not want to deceive oneself. Because at first you begin by getting rid of the major desires, those that are most obvious and trouble you so much that you cannot even have any illusions about them; then come subtler desires that take the form of things that have to be done, that are necessary, even at times of commands from within, and it requires time and much sincerity to discover and overcome them; at last it seems as if you had done away with these wretched desires in the material world, in external things, in the world of feelings, in the emotions and sentiments, in the mental world as regards ideas, and then you find them again in the spiritual world, and there they are far more dangerous, more subtle, more penetrating and much more invisible and covered by such a saintly appearance that one dare not call them desires.

And when one has succeeded in overcoming all that, in discovering, dislodging and getting rid of them, even then one has done only the negative side of the work.

The Buddha said or has been made to say that when one is free from all desire,

one necessarily enters into infinite bliss. This bliss may be a little dry and anyway it does not seem to me to be the quickest way.

If at the outset one were to seize the problem bodily, jump into it with courage and determination and, instead of undertaking a long, arduous, painful, disappointing hunt after desires, one gives oneself simply, totally, unconditionally, if one surrenders to the Supreme Reality, to the Supreme Will, to the Supreme Being, putting oneself entirely in His hands, in an upsurge of the whole being and all the elements of the being, without calculating, that would be the swiftest and the most radical way to get rid of the ego. People will say that it is difficult to do it, but at least a warmth is there, an ardour, an enthusiasm, a light, a beauty, an ardent and creative life.

It is true that without desire nothing much remains to sustain the ego and one has the impression that the consciousness becomes so hardened that if the ego crumbles into dust, then something of one's self also falls into dust and one is ready to enter into a Nirvana which is annihilation pure and simple.

But what we consider here as the true Nirvana is the disappearance of the ego into the splendour of the Supreme. And this way is what I call the positive way, the self-giving that is integral, total, perfect, without reserve, without bargaining.

In the mere fact of not thinking of oneself, not existing for oneself, referring nothing to oneself, thinking only of what is supremely beautiful, luminous, delightful, powerful, compassionate and infinite, there is such a profound delight that nothing can be compared to it.

This is the only thing that deserves . . . that is worthy of being attempted. All the rest is only marking time.

The difference is between climbing a mountain by going round and round, slowly, laboriously, step by step, for hundreds of years, and spreading invisible wings and soaring straight to the summit.

20 June 1958

\*

### **The Path**

*The best of all paths is the Eightfold Path; the best of all truths is the Fourfold Truth; the best of all states is freedom from attachment; the best among men is the One who sees, the Buddha.*

*Truly, this is the Path; there is no other which leads to purification of vision. Follow this Path and Mara will be confounded.*

*By following this Path, you put an end to suffering. This Path I have made known, since I learned to remove the thorns (of life).*

*The effort must come from oneself. The Tathagatas only point out the Path. Those who meditate and tread this Path are delivered from the bondage of Mara.*

*“All conditioned things are impermanent.” When one has seen that by realisation, he is delivered from sorrow. That is the Path of purity.*

*“All conditioned things are subject to suffering.” When one has seen that by realisation, he is delivered from sorrow. That is the Path of purity.*

*“All things are insubstantial.” When one has seen that by realisation, he is delivered from sorrow. That is the Path of purity.*

*He who though young and strong, does not act when it is time to act, is given to indolence, and his mind is full of vain thoughts; one who is so indolent will not find the Path of wisdom.*

*Moderation in speech, control of the mind, abstention from evil actions, thus these three modes of action are to be purified first of all, to attain the Path shown by the sages.*

*From meditation wisdom springs, without meditation wisdom declines. Knowing the two paths of progress and decline, a man should choose the Path which will increase his wisdom.*

*Cut down all the forest (of desires) and not one tree alone; for from this forest springs fear. Cut down this forest of trees and undergrowth, O Bhikkhus. Be free from desire.*

*As long as one has not rooted out of oneself entirely the desire of a man for a woman, the mind is captive, as dependent as a suckling on its mother.*

*Root out self-love, as one plucks with his hand an autumn lotus. Cherish only the Path of the peace of Nirvana that the Sugata has taught us.*

*Here shall I live in the rainy season; I shall stay there in the winter and elsewhere in the summer. Thus thinks the fool and knows not what may befall him.*

*And this man who is attached to his children and his cattle, is seized by death and carried off, as a sleeping village is swept away by torrential floods.*

*Neither children, nor father, nor family can save us. When death seizes us, our kinsmen cannot save us.*

*Knowing this perfectly, the intelligent man, guided by good conduct, does not delay in taking up the path which leads to Nirvana.*

Here are some very useful recommendations: moderation in speech, control of the mind, abstention from evil actions. This is very good.

Here is something radical, but it is also very good: “As long as one has not rooted out of oneself entirely the desire of a man for a woman, the mind is captive, as dependent as a suckling on its mother.”

And finally: “Root out self-love, as one plucks with his hand an autumn lotus.” These are good subjects for meditation.

These recommendations seem to have been meant for people who are just at the beginning of the Path from the intellectual point of view. We can easily imagine a gathering of country people, people with simple minds, to whom one has to say, “Listen carefully, it is no use making plans, for you do not know what will happen to you tomorrow. You are amassing wealth, you are taking your ease among your family, you are making schemes for tomorrow and for the day after, and you are not aware that death is on the watch and that at any moment it can fall on you.”

All the same, there is a slightly more advanced stage of intellectual development in which these things need not be said — one must live them! Live in the consciousness that things are altogether impermanent, never become attached, if you are to be free to progress with the universe and grow according to the eternal rhythm. This one understands. But what is important is to practise it. Here one has the impression that these things were told to people who had never thought of them before and so they had the full power of an active force.

After all, in spite of all appearances, humanity progresses; it has progressed particularly in the mind. There are things that no longer need to be said. . . . Or else one must go to countries that are at a very primitive stage, and even so . . . ideas have spread everywhere, the mental light has spread everywhere and in the most unexpected places one finds instances of receptivity and understanding.

One really has the impression that during the last century a light came and spread upon the earth with the result that certain ideas, which were once idea-forces, new ideas with the power to stir up the consciousness in men, have lost their relevance, they are now old. A new light is at work.

In practice, the progress is not very great, even in some respects perhaps there has been a retrogression, but in the mind, in the understanding, in the intellectual



vision of things, there has truly been a great change.

It seems we are marching on the way at an accelerated pace and these things which used to be of the first importance are becoming almost commonplace in the light of new discoveries. Life as it is is bad, disorder is everywhere, suffering is everywhere, confusion is everywhere, chaos is everywhere, ignorance is everywhere — we all know it, don't we? It seems so hackneyed.

But that one can emerge from it through a total realisation, a total transformation, through a new light that will establish order and harmony in things, is a message of hope that has to be given. This is the true, the dynamic message.

A new life must be built.

Then all these difficulties that seemed so unsurmountable — oh! they fall of themselves.

When you can live in light and joy, are you going to cling to shadow and suffering?

27 June 1958

\*

### Miscellany

*If renouncing the slightest happiness enables him to realise a greater one, the intelligent man should renounce the lesser for the sake of the greater.*

*If he seeks his own happiness by harming others, bound by hate, he remains the slave of hatred.*

*To neglect what should be done and to do what should be neglected is to increase in arrogance and negligence.*

*To be constantly mindful of the true nature of the body, not to seek what is evil, to pursue with perseverance what is good, is to have right understanding; thus, all one's impurity disappears.*

*Having killed his father (ego), his mother (desire) and the two warrior kings (wrong views), having destroyed the kingdom (of the senses) and all its dependencies, the Brahmin lives free from evil.*

*Having killed father, mother, the two warrior kings and the tiger (mental hindrances), the Brahmin lives free from evil.*

*The disciples of Gautama are alert and truly awakened, for, day and night, their attention is turned to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha.*

*The disciples of Gautama are alert and truly awakened, for, day and night, their attention remains fixed on the Doctrine.*

*The disciples of Gautama are alert and truly awakened, for, day and night, their attention remains fixed on the Sangha.*

*The disciples of Gautama are alert and truly awakened, for, day and night, they remain aware of the true nature of the body.*

*The disciples of Gautama are alert and truly awakened, for, day and night, they delight in compassion.*

*The disciples of Gautama are alert and truly awakened, for, day and night, they take pleasure in meditation.*

*It is hard to renounce the world; it is equally hard to enjoy the world. Difficult and sorrowful is household life. It is painful to be with those who are not our equals and it is painful to wander in the cycle of births. Therefore, do not follow after sorrow nor be a wanderer without a goal.*

*The man who is full of faith and goodness, who possesses glory and wealth, is revered wherever he goes.*

*Men of goodness shine afar like the snowy peaks of the Himalayas. Whereas wicked men are no more visible than arrows shot in the night.*

*The man who eats alone, sleeps alone, walks alone untiring in his self-mastery, will delight in the solitary life of the forests.*

Still you should not be mistaken. For I believe all these are images rather than material facts, because it is quite certain that eating alone, sleeping alone, living in the forest all alone is not enough to give you freedom of spirit.

It has been noticed that most people who live alone in the forest become friendly with all the animals and plants around them; but it is not at all the fact of being all alone that gives you the power of entering into an inner contemplation and living in communion with the Supreme Truth. Perhaps it is easier, when by force of circumstance you have nothing else to do, but I am not convinced of it. One can always invent occupations and it seems to me, according to my experience of life, that if

one succeeds in subduing one's nature in the midst of difficulties, if one endeavours to be all alone within oneself with the eternal Presence, while keeping the same surroundings which the Grace has given us, the realisation which one obtains then is infinitely more true, more profound, more lasting.

To run away from difficulties in order to conquer them is not a solution. It is very attractive. In those who seek the spiritual life, there is something which says, "Oh! to sit down under a tree, all alone, to remain in meditation, not to have the temptation to speak or act, how fine it must be!" It is because there is a very strong formation in this direction, but it is very illusory.

The best meditations are those that one has all of a sudden, because they take possession of you as an imperative necessity. You have no choice but to concentrate, to meditate, to look beyond the appearances. And it is not necessarily in the solitude of the forest that it seizes you, it happens when something in you is ready, when the time has come, when the true need is there, when the Grace is with you.

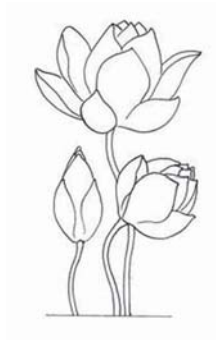
It seems to me that humanity has made some progress and the true victory must be won in life itself.

You must know how to live alone with the Eternal and Infinite in the midst of all circumstances. You must know how to be free, with the Supreme as your companion, in the midst of all occupations. That is indeed the true victory.

14 July 1958

THE MOTHER

(*Questions and Answers 1929-1931*, CWM 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. 3, pp. 255-76)



## DIONYSIAN AND APOLLONIAN

Dionysian and Apollonian have been a fashionable antithesis, following upon Nietzsche's use of the terms. After Nietzsche they are always opposed roughly as Romanticism and Classicism, instinct and reason, natural state and civilisation, myth and rationalism, music and the plastic arts, the dithyrambic and the reflective as exemplified in the chorus and the dialogue respectively of a Greek tragedy.<sup>1</sup> Recently the antithesis *à la* Nietzsche has come into special literary prominence in connection with the life-vision and soul-attitude of Nikos Kazantzakis. In an excellent exposition of Kazantzakis's synthesis of the two in what that great Greek poet calls "the Cretan Glance", we find Kimon Friar speaking of "the Apollonian or classical ordered vision of life" in one place and of "the eye of Hellenic Greece (or Apollo)" in another.<sup>2</sup>

Sri Aurobindo's *Illion*, which time and again brings in the Gods of Greece, throws, in passing, a shaft of new light on the real meaning of the contrasted concepts. We may prepare our vision of this shaft by noting some remarks of Sri Aurobindo's apropos of the pre-Socratic thinker Heraclitus. Sri Aurobindo puts a stress on a period of Mystics preceding that of the philosophers and takes up the issue often discussed: Was Heraclitus a mystic or a rationalist? Sri Aurobindo agrees that Pfeleiderer's view of Heraclitus as a pure mystic is exaggerated, but he discerns a certain truth behind this misconception. He<sup>3</sup> opines: "Heraclitus' abuse of the Mysteries of his time is not very conclusive in this respect; for what he reviles is those aspects of obscure magic, physical ecstasy, sensual excitement which the Mysteries had put on in some at least of their final developments as the process of degeneration increased which made a century later even the Eleusinian a butt for the dangerous mockeries of Alcibiades and his companions. His complaint is that the secret rites which the populace held in ignorant and superstitious reverence 'unholily mysticise what are held among men as mysteries'. He rebels against the darkness of the Dionysian ecstasy in the approach to the secrets of Nature; but there is a luminous Apollonian as well as an obscure and sometimes dangerous Dionysian mysticism, a Dakshina as well as a Vama Marga of the mystic Tantra. And though no partaker in or supporter of any kind of rites or mummary, Heraclitus still strikes one as at least an intellectual child of the Mystics and of mysticism, although perhaps a rebel son in the house of his mother. He has something of the mystic style, something of the intuitive Apollonian inlook into the secrets of existence."

We may pause over the expressions: "a luminous Apollonian . . . mysticism", "the intuitive Apollonian inlook". Surely, in Sri Aurobindo's eyes, "Apollonian" cannot be equated with "the classical ordered vision of life". The post-Nietzschean usage must appear to him as mixing up the light of reason and reflection with a

supra-intellectual and intuitive luminosity. And, when we turn to his poetry, the two Greek powers mixed up emerge distinctly. They are Athene and Apollo. Apollo, God of the Sun, Leader of the Muses, Inspirer of Poetry, Lord of the Delphic Oracle, cannot be the voice of Reason. Thinker also he could be, as we gather from some lines in *Iliad*<sup>4</sup> but it is with a seer-thought that he comes, as these very lines attest:

Miracled, haloed,  
Seer and magician and prophet who beholds what the thought cannot witness,  
Lifting the godhead within us to more than a human endeavour,  
Slayer and saviour, thinker and mystic, leaped from his sun-peaks  
Guarding in Iliad the wall of his mysteries Delphic Apollo.

Athene, not Apollo, is the clear and tempered light of the thinking mind, though still not without the breath of inspiration that always works when this mind is not all on its own but knows a *rapport* with a greater illumination, the intuitive Truth-Consciousness beyond the intellect. Not Apollo, but Athene is the divinity of mental Wisdom. Even as far back as the drama *Perseus the Deliverer*<sup>5</sup> of Sri Aurobindo's Baroda days we have those lines on Athene:

A noble centre of a people's worship,  
To Zeus and great Athene build a temple  
Between your sky-topped hills and Ocean's vasts:  
Her might shall guard your lives and save your land.  
In your human image of her deity  
A light of reason and calm celestial force  
And a wise tranquil government of life,  
Order and beauty and harmonious thoughts  
And, ruling the waves of impulse, high-throned will  
Incorporate in marble, the carved and white  
Ideal of a young uplifted race.  
For these are her gifts to those who worship her.

Here we have Classical Greece hit off to a nicety. But the typical spirit of the Greece of Pericles and Phidias and Sophocles — “the inspired reason” and the “enlightened and chastened aesthetic sense”, as Sri Aurobindo's *The Future Poetry*<sup>6</sup> has it — is developed not only when a crude vitalism is overpassed: it is developed also when a mighty supra-intellectualism is left behind. This latter aspect is shown magnificently in “The Book of the Gods” in *Iliad*.

Zeus summons all the Gods to assembly and declares the divine will that Troy should perish and be razed to the ground, however heart-rending the event may

prove to many of the deities, for only by the perishing of one culture and the arising of another can man progress: the hour is ripe now for the advent of the rule of Reason and there must be for its sake the subdual of three powers — Aphrodite, Ares and Apollo. After addressing several of the Gods, far-seeing Zeus says to “the brilliant offspring born of his musings”:<sup>7</sup>

“What shall I say to the thought that is calm in thy breasts, O Athene?  
 Have I not given thee earth for thy portion, throned thee and armoured,  
 Darkened Cypris’ smile, dimmed Hera’s son and Latona’s?  
 Swift in thy silent ambition, proud in thy radiant sternness,  
 Girl, thou shalt rule with the Greek and the Saxon, the Frank and the Roman.  
 Worker and fighter and builder and thinker, light of the reason,  
 Men shall leave all temples to crowd in thy courts, O Athene.  
 Go then and do thy will, prepare man’s tribes for their fullness.”

A little before this speech, Zeus addresses Apollo, and the Sun-god makes an outburst which etches most tellingly the true nature of the Apollonian. No doubt, it has certain lines of communication with what we may term “the Atheneian”, yet it differs with it from its own level just as much as does the Dionysian from another. It hardly represents the godhead “of peace and leisure and repose, of aesthetic emotion and intellectual contemplation, of logical order and philosophic calm”<sup>8</sup> and it would be incorrect to contrast “the restless masculine power of Dionysus and the quiet feminine beauty of Apollo”.<sup>9</sup> Sri Aurobindo’s Apollo cries to the Father of the Immortals:<sup>10</sup>

“Zeus, I know that I fade; already the night is around me.  
 Dusk she extends her reign and obscures my lightnings with error.  
 Therefore my prophets mislead men’s hearts to the ruin appointed,  
 Therefore Cassandra cries in vain to her sire and her brothers.  
 All I endure I foresee and the strength in me waits for its coming;  
 All I foresee I approve; for I know what is willed, O Cronion.  
 Yet is the fierce strength wroth in my breast at the need of approval  
 And for the human race fierce pity works in my bosom;  
 Wroth is my splendid heart with the cowering knowledge of mortals,  
 Wroth are my burning eyes with the purblind vision of reason.  
 I will go forth from your seats and descend to the night among mortals  
 There to guard the flame and the mystery; vast in my moments  
 Rare and sublime to sound like a sea against Time and its limits,  
 Cry like a spirit in pain in the hearts of the priest and the poet,  
 Cry against limits set and disorder sanities bounded.  
 Jealous for truth to the end my might shall prevail and for ever  
 Shatter the moulds that men make to imprison their limitless spirits.

Dire, overpowering the brain I shall speak out my oracles splendid.  
 Then in their ages of barren light or lucidity fruitful  
 Whenso the clear gods think they have conquered earth and its mortals,  
 Hidden God from all eyes, they shall wake from their dream and recoiling  
 Still they shall find in their paths the fallen and darkened Apollo.”

Apollonian and Dionysian are really the two poles of a single phenomenon — an illuminating force stronger than the intellect’s, a direct intuition supra-rational in the one and infra-rational in the other. The latter is inferior in quality, but both are necessary if the “numinous” is to become established in embodied life: the Dionysian is the support of the Apollonian, it is the power of response below to the grandeur above. But it can be aligned to this grandeur only if the rational receives full growth: “for humanity at large” says Sri Aurobindo,<sup>11</sup> “the mind and intellect must develop to their fullness so that the spirituality of the race may rise securely upward upon a broad basis of the developed lower nature in man, the intelligent human being.” And when the intellect comes into play, it may try to put everything else into the background, lest its own free total flowering should be impeded. “Therefore we see” remarks Sri Aurobindo, “that the reason in its growth either does away with the distinct spiritual tendency for a time, as in ancient Greece, or accepts it but spins out around its first data and activities a vast web of the workings of the intelligence, so that, as in India, the early mystic seer is replaced by the philosopher-mystic, the religious thinker and even the philosopher pure and simple.” Ultimately, however, the intellect has to realise its basic function and pave the path of the superior intuition and effect for it a successful rendezvous with the inferior. When in “The Book of the Gods”, the turn arrives for Athene to speak, Sri Aurobindo makes her closing words to Zeus ring thus:<sup>12</sup>

“This too I know that I pass preparing the paths of Apollo  
 And at the end as his sister and slave and bride I must sojourn  
 Rapt to his courts of mystic light and unbearable brilliance.  
 Was I not ever condemned since my birth from the toil of thy musings  
 Seized like a lyre in my body to sob and to laugh out his music,  
 Shake as a leaf in his fierceness and leap as a flame in his splendours!  
 So must I dwell overpowered and so must I labour subjected  
 Robbed of my loneliness pure and coerced in my radiant freedom,  
 Now whose clearness and pride are the sovereign joy of thy creatures.”

This is not a direct reference to a final stage of Greek cultural history: it states only the inevitable culmination of the history of the human mind.

Perhaps we shall be asked: “What about the two maxims inscribed on the temple of Apollo at Delphi: *gnothi seauton* and *meden agan*? Do not ‘Know thyself’

and ‘Nothing in excess’ prove the poised and prudential reign of the intellect in the Apollonian? How would Sri Aurobindo’s thesis hold face to face with them?”

Those maxims would contradict Sri Aurobindo’s thesis if there were not the need to reconcile them with the prophetic transport of insight which the Delphic priestess exemplified. She was after all the mouthpiece of one who declares:

“Dire, overpowering the brain I shall speak out my oracles splendid” —

one about whom Sri Aurobindo again writes:

Master of Truth who sits within Delphi fathomless brooding  
Sole in the caverns of Nature and hearkens her underground murmur . . .<sup>13</sup>

Nature’s secrets, whether directly grasped from beyond the mind or raised up from the subliminal depths where they may lie reflected and echoed, are the priestess’s province, and they cannot be disclosed by mere rational processes. In Virgil we have the vividest account of what happened to her in her oracular moods. Day Lewis<sup>14</sup> has translated this passage on the Sibyl of Cumae:

The Sibyl cried, ‘for lo! the god is with me.’ And speaking,  
There by the threshold, her features, her colour were all at once  
Different, her hair flew wildly about; her breast was heaving,  
Her fey heart swelled in ecstasy; larger than life she seemed,  
More than mortal her utterance: the god was close and breathing  
His inspiration through her.

Of course, a sheerly intellectual colour can be given to the Delphic maxims, and such colour came to be accepted when the mystical tradition grew fainter and fainter. But, undivorced from their background and taken in the proper context, they must carry a deeper sense. H. D. F. Kitto<sup>15</sup> informs us that “Know thyself” means only: “remember what you are — a man, and subject to the conditions and limitations of mortality.” A less humbling interpretation might be: “analyse your nature by observation and introspection and ratiocination and realise your weaknesses on the one hand and your excellences on the other.” The second half of this interpretation would join up with Pindar’s “Become what you really are”, Protagoras’s “Man is the measure of things”, Sophocles’s

Many marvels there are,  
But none so marvellous as Man.

It also looks forward to Plato’s “Knowledge” which is “Nous”, the intuitive insight



crowning the work of the intelligence. The most adequate reading would be wholly in terms of such insight: the Apollonian self-knowledge was to be won by a burst of inner light on the receptive mind — it would be part of a process such as Sri Aurobindo<sup>16</sup> has described, with a pointer at the Delphic priestess, in the course of a long passage on the workings of the goddess Inspiration:

The inspiring goddess entered a mortal's breast,  
 Made there her study of divining thought  
 And sanctuary of prophetic speech  
 And sat upon the tripod seat of mind:  
 All was made wide above, all lit below.

As for the Apollonian moderation, to see it correctly we must understand the religious cosmic perception from which the maxim about it took birth. Sri Aurobindo<sup>17</sup> has formulated this perception very effectively:

“... there is something subtle, inscrutable and formidable that meets us in our paths, a Force of which the ancient Greeks took much notice, a Power that is on the watch for man in his effort at enlargement, possession and enjoyments and seems hostile and opposite. The Greeks figured it as the jealousy of the gods or as Doom, Necessity, Ate. The egoistic force in man may proceed far in its victory and triumph, but it has to be wary or it will find this power there on the watch for any flaw in his strength or action, any sufficient opportunity for his defeat and downfall. It dogs his endeavour with obstacle and reverse and takes advantage of his imperfections, often dallying with him, giving him long rope, delaying and abiding its time, — and not only of his moral shortcomings but of his errors of will and intelligence, his excesses and deficiencies of strength and prudence, all defects of his nature. It seems overcome by his energies of Tapasya, but it waits its season. It overshadows unbroken or extreme prosperity and often surprises it with a sudden turn to ruin. It induces a security, a self-forgetfulness, a pride and insolence of success and victory and leads on its victim to dash himself against the hidden seat of justice or the wall of an invisible measure. It is as fatal to a blind self-righteousness and the arrogations of an egoistic virtue as to vicious excess and selfish violence. It appears to demand of man and of individual men and nations that they shall keep within a limit and a measure, while all beyond that brings danger; and therefore the Greeks held moderation in all things to be the greatest part of virtue.”

Sri Aurobindo<sup>18</sup> explains further: “This is really a resistance of the Infinite acting through life against the claim of the imperfect ego of man to enlarge itself, possess, enjoy and have, while remaining imperfect, a perfect and enduring happiness and complete felicity of its world-experience.”

So we may say that the *meden agan* of the Delphic temple is simply a decree against human egoism, against the aggrandisement of imperfect manhood: it

emphasises the necessity of checking the littleness of man from straining towards greatness without first purifying the selfish motive in him. It is no mere reasonable doctrine of the golden mean: it takes account of secret cosmic forces, the mysterious gods. And it can be seen as directed actually against a Dionysian upsurge in mental man to drown his supra-intellectual possibilities: what is to be restrained is the desire revelling in a magnification of the crude stuff of our being which needs *katharsis*, purgation, and which on its own would blur our intellectual nature and prevent this nature's opening to the sun of truth-knowledge, the Apollonian lustre revealing the god-self in us that has to be known.

Possibly the maxim of moderation taught in part that even the fiery inspiration from above the intellect was not safe outside a certain measure for the unregenerate human and also that a bit of the Dionysian was required to save one from an excess of the Apollonian. That may be why it was reported that for three months in the year Apollo allowed Dionysus to work in his temple. Further, remembering that the supra-intellectual and the infra-intellectual are pole and pole of a single phenomenon of intuition we may guess a frequent if not constant contact between Apollo and Dionysus: a sign of it may be discerned in the physical disposition of the priestess during her oracular moments, the poise over a cavern, the breathing of fumes from below. Has not Sri Aurobindo himself once pictured Apollo as seated brooding in Nature's caverns and hearkening to her underground murmur and do we not have in his lines about the sanctuary of prophetic speech and the tripod seat of mind a reference to the mystic result in a double-directioned phrase

All was made wide above, all lit below?

However, considered in regard to origins and fundamentals, *meden agan* as well as *gnothi seauton* may be linked to Apollo's supra-intellectual purpose. Neither of them proves the Apollonian to be the pure intellect.

Finally, we must not mistake the famous calm face of Apollo for the poise of reason, nor his harmonious function as a concern for logical *ordonnance*. All the gods have a wideness of being, a cosmic air, which can hold in a comprehensive calm the most intense outbreaks of energy. And the supra-intellectual is always a harmonising power, keeping all things in step and capable of order and organisation by a direct insight into them.

AMAL KIRAN  
(K. D. SETHNA)

(*Sri Aurobindo — The Poet*, second edition 1999, pp. 290-301)

## References

1. *Dictionary of World Literature*, edited by Joseph T. Shipley (New York, 1942), p. 40, col. 2.
2. *The Odyssey: A Modern Sequel* by Nikos Kazantzakis, translated into English Verse, Synopsis and Notes by Kimon Friar (Simon & Schuster, New York, 1958), p. xix.
3. *Heraclitus* (Calcutta, 1947), pp. 3-4.
4. *Ilion*, pp. 4-5.
5. *Collected Poems and Plays*, Vol. I, p. 305.
6. *The Future Poetry*, p. 63.
7. *Ilion*, p. 119.
8. Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy: "Friedrich Nietzsche"* (Pocket Books Inc., New York), p. 407.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ilion*, p. 116.
11. *The Human Cycle*, p. 234.
12. *Ilion*, pp. 119-20.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
14. *The Aeneid of Virgil*, p. 120, lines 46-51.
15. *The Greeks* (Pelican, Harmondsworth, 1951), p. 111.
16. *Savitri*, Book One, Canto One, p. 48.
17. "Mind, Nature and Law of Karma", *The Problem of Rebirth* (Pondicherry, 1952), p. 168.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 169.

*A poem may pre-exist in the timeless as all creation pre-exists there or else in some plane where the past, present and future exist together. But it is not necessary to presuppose anything of the kind to explain the phenomena of inspiration. All is here a matter of formation or creation. By the contact with the source of inspiration the creative Power at one level or another and the human instrument, receptacle or channel get into contact. That is the essential point, all the rest depends upon the individual case.*

*Sri Aurobindo*

(Letters on Poetry and Art, CWSA, Vol. 27, p. 7)

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

*(Continued from the issue of June 2017)*

## **Postscript: I**

### **THE HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATE ON SRI AUROBINDO**

Parliamentarism, the invention of the English political genius, is a necessary stage in the evolution of democracy, for without it the generalised faculty of considering and managing with the least possible friction large problems of politics, administration, economics, legislation concerning considerable aggregates of men cannot easily be developed. It has also been the one successful means yet discovered of preventing the State executive from suppressing the liberties of the individual and the nation.

— Sri Aurobindo  
*(The Ideal of Human Unity)*<sup>1</sup>

The age of classical oratory, with accent on flair and histrionics, had passed. (The World Wars, of course, would alter the situation and the exchange would become lively again.) Consolidated colonies was of common interest for the Hon'ble Members of both the Houses: those of Commons as well as of Lords! However, to appreciate the following debate on Sri Aurobindo, obviously the very first of its kind and unique too, that concerned a single Indian leader, we should remember two developments in the world of British politics. First, a party originally known as "Labour Representative Committee" won 29 seats in the House of Commons in 1906 and changed its name to Labour Party, led by two distinguished politicians, Keir Hardie (1856-1915) of Scotland and Ramsay MacDonald (1866-1937), the latter to become the first Labour Prime Minister of Britain. Second, the slow realisation by a sensitive section in British politics that the discontent in India was no longer confined to feudal lords or any other group that could be identified with any vested interest; it emerged from a deeper source, a nation-wide urge for freedom, pioneered by intellectuals some of whom were more than a match for the brains running the colonial government. It was time to think of means other than the primitive brute force to deal with this new national aspiration.

The debate took place when the Liberal Party (no longer in existence now) was in power with Lord Herbert Henry Asquith as the Prime Minister.

It was not for the first time that Sri Aurobindo featured in the House of Commons

in the said debate that took place on the 28<sup>th</sup> April 1910. On August 5, 1909, Mr. J. D. Rees had asserted that although deporting without trial was autocratic, the Government should deport Sri Aurobindo as he commanded a great sway on the youths. "In order to make the people of the East realise that their rulers had power, it was essential to use it autocratically in grave and critical situations."<sup>2</sup>

But Sri Aurobindo had become an object of unusual interest as well as of a deep feeling of admiration among a few of the most notable personalities in Britain of the time including Parliamentarians. On the 5<sup>th</sup> October 1909, on behalf of Sir Henry Cotton, Mr. Keir Hardie, the celebrated founder of the Labour Party, asked the Under Secretary of State whether his attention had been called to the fact that the speeches of Sri Aurobindo (referred to as Mr. Arabindo Ghose) "were laid before the court as evidence against him in the Alipore Conspiracy Case; that the judge who tried that case took those speeches into his consideration and declared in his judgment that those speeches in themselves seemed to advocate nothing more than the regeneration of his country, and that Mr. Ghose was acquitted; and whether having regard to these facts His Majesty's Government will direct the release of Mr. Kohalatkhar, who has been sentenced to 15 months' hard labour for republishing the speeches of Mr. Ghose in his newspaper."<sup>3</sup>

*The Master of Elibank:* The charge against the person referred to was that he disseminated seditious matter. It was tried by an Indian judge. The sentence was taken on appeal to the highest Court of Appeal in the province. That court upheld the conviction but reduced the sentence. An *obiter dictum* by the Sessions Judge in the Alipore Conspiracy Case who was careful to state that he was not concerned with the question whether a charge of sedition could be laid at Mr. Ghose's door in respect of his speeches, is not relevant in regard to the decision of a judge of equal rank in Nagpur, upheld, so far as the establishment of the charge of sedition was concerned, by the highest tribunal of the province.

*Mr. Mackarness:* Is it not a fact that the sedition referred to consists solely of perpetuating certain speeches which have been held to be non-seditious?

*Mr. Rees:* May I ask the Hon'ble Member whether the gentleman who made that speech is not a notorious enemy of the British rule and the British administration?

But these references may be looked upon as a prelude to the powerful observations made and questions raised by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald during April, 1910.

### 7 APRIL 1910

Mr. MacDonald asked the Under Secretary of State for India “whether he can confirm or otherwise the report in this morning’s *Times* that a warrant has been issued against Mr. Aurobindo Ghose for an article which appeared in the *Karmayogin* on 25<sup>th</sup> December, and whether, if the report be accurate, a copy of the paper can be placed in the Library for the information of Members?”

*The Under Secretary of State for India (Mr. Montagu):* “The Secretary of State has seen the announcement in *The Times*, but has no official information on the subject. He has telegraphed to India for a full report.”

### 14 APRIL 1910

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald asked the Under Secretary for India if a warrant has been issued against Mr. Aurobindo Ghose for an article which appeared in the *Karmayogin* on 25<sup>th</sup> December; whether warrants have been issued against the publishers of the paper as well; if so under what law these warrants have been issued; and whether a copy of the paper containing the offending article can be placed in the Library for the information of Members?

*Mr. Rees:* Before the Hon. Gentleman answers, may I inquire if the seatless syndicate which supplies these questions has not shown that it has no desire that seditious persons should be brought to justice?

*Mr. Ramsay MacDonald:* Quite apart from the meaning of the adjective, the offensiveness of the question is perfectly apparent, and I want to know whether any Hon. Member is allowed to characterise the questions of another Hon. Member in this way?

*Mr. Rees:* I withdraw the word ‘seatless’ if it gives offence. I meant, of course, that they had no seats in the House.

*The Under Secretary of State (Mr. Montagu):* The answer to the first part of my Hon. Friend’s question is in the affirmative. The Secretary of State is not aware of the issue of any other warrants in this matter, and he is informed that the warrant for the arrest of Mr. Ghose has been issued under Section 124a, Indian Penal Code. I may add that considerable delay occurs just now in obtaining information, and I must ask my Hon. Friend to exercise some patience in the matter while the fullest information is being procured. At the present time the

Secretary of State would rather not commit himself to the undertaking asked for in the last part of the question.

*Mr. Rees:* Whether the Secretary for India will consider the propriety of placing in the Library copies of the Last Will and Testament of still-surviving Aurobindo Ghose for whose arrest a warrant is said to have been issued in India and copies of the numerous issues of the newspaper, for which he is responsible, containing articles hostile to British rule and British officials in India and encouraging sedition?

*Mr. Montagu:* The Secretary of State cannot accede to my Hon. Friend's request. He must not, however, be taken to accept his description of writings the character of which is a subject for trial.

Mr. MacDonald asked the question on Sri Aurobindo on 26<sup>th</sup> April, again. Mr. Montagu replied: "The Secretary of State is not yet in a position to add anything to the answer given" on 14 April. Mr. MacDonald repeated his question on 28<sup>th</sup> April.

## 28 APRIL 1910

*Mr. Montagu:* I have already informed the Hon. Member that proceedings are being taken against Mr. Ghose by the Government of Bengal, under Sec. 124a of the Indian Penal Code. We have no knowledge of any proceedings against the printer of his paper. The full text of the subject matter of the prosecution has not yet reached the Secretary of State. To act on my Hon. Friend's suggestion would not only mean a departure from the practice of avoiding the advertisement of literature alleged to be seditious, but would almost inevitably lead to a result which, I am sure, my Hon. Friend would be the first to deprecate — the prejudging, one way or the other, of a case that must be decided in an Indian court of law.

*Mr. MacDonald:* I rise to draw the attention of the House to a matter which seems to me of considerable public importance. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of this month a statement appeared in *The Times* that a warrant had been issued against Mr. Aurobindo Ghose for an article which he wrote in *Karmayogin* on the 25<sup>th</sup> December last. I immediately approached the India Office to allow me to put a question without notice, in order to get information, but I was told by the Under Secretary at that time that they had no information. I was requested to repeat the question. I have done so 3 times and today it having been put for the 4<sup>th</sup> time all the information I have been able to get is that this warrant has been



issued under Section 124a of the Indian Penal Code.

My Hon'ble Friend, in answering my question today, said he could state nothing in regard to the case because that would be to pre-judge it. I respectfully differ from that opinion and I ask whether it would be possible for the India Office to put in the Library a copy of this paper for the information of the Members. I have never asked the India Office to express any opinion on the issue of the warrant. I have never asked for even any expressions of opinion in regard to that article. I have never suggested that the India Office should in any way take sides either with the officials in India or with Mr. Aurobindo Ghose.

Mr. MacDonald then expressed his deep concern about the type of the official mind that is dealing with the exceedingly delicate situation in India. He continued:

I have myself received, in the ordinary course of my Indian post, during at least the last three weeks, newspapers, each one of which stated that Mr. Aurobindo Ghose was at a certain place and each one of the statements agreed. It is perfectly well known, he has left what we call in this country the public life. He has left the cares and concerns of the material affairs of the universe and has gone into retirement to make his peace with the Eternal.

It is known what he is doing, and yet this warrant, issued, according to *The Times*, on 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> April, is still undelivered. Nothing apparently has happened.

Mr. MacDonald then traces the birth of the Section 124a, analyses it and then explains how the term sedition has a very broad meaning for the officials. In the course of his speech, he is obliged to retort Mr. Rees twice.

Then he presents an outline of Sri Aurobindo's life, as he had understood it!

Mr. Aurobindo Ghose is practically an Englishman. . . . When he was still a baby almost, he was brought over into this country, and he was educated in Manchester. From Manchester he came to St. Paul's School in London and from there he went to Cambridge, and whilst he was at that place he passed into the Indian Civil Service, but was disqualified because he could not ride. He then went to India and from the Gaekwar of Baroda he received an appointment at the High School of Baroda, an admirable institution which anybody who goes to Baroda will see and examine with the greatest satisfaction.

Mr. MacDonald (who mistakes the Maharaja's College as High School) then tries to present a brief analysis of the development of Sri Aurobindo's ideas, in the course of which he observes:



He goes back to India and makes several reflections on the Indian Government and makes criticism on its action and is immediately put down in the black-books of the Indian officials, and is regarded either as a sedition-monger or as a man who ought to be watched. I am giving currency to no secret; it is a current report that as a matter of fact this man after having been tried on an accusation that might have cost his life and having been acquitted by a judge who uses language which he who runs may read — this man having been brought before the court and acquitted, according to common and self-informed reports, it was actually discussed whether his name should be put among the list of men to be deported without trial under the Section of which we heard so much last session.

I am speaking what is common report in India, but of course, the proceedings are never published. I wish, they were, and I should be very glad if my Hon. Friend today were going, in answer to anything I have said, to tell me that what took place on the consideration of the report of the nine deportees, plus the case of Mr. Aurobindo Ghose, was going to be published. I should be the most delighted man in this House. But there it is, he has been put in the suspected list, and there is not a single thing that he does but is twisted and misrepresented. Even as a matter of fact — and this is my own version of the issue of the warrant — when he retires from public life to private life, although that again was known, and although all his friends said it was imminent, and although he himself practically told me when I saw him that he would not be very much longer in the affairs of the world and engaged in journalistic work — when that step was taken, and he did retire, it was apparently regarded by the Government of Bengal as a move in some deep-seated hidden political plot, and that was the thing which causes the issue of the warrant — at any rate that is my theory.

What is this article about which so much has been said? My Hon. Friend has not been able to furnish me with a copy. I have it myself. The *Karmayogin* is a paper published once a week, and up till quite recently Mr. Aurobindo Ghose edited it. I have the complete article, but I only propose to read two main sections of it. They indicate what was in Mr. Aurobindo Ghose's mind, and they indicate the character of his offence, so far as it was an offence. This is the key sentence in the whole article: 'If the nationalists stand back any longer, either the national movement will disappear or the void created will be filled up by a sinister and violent activity. Neither result can be tolerated by men desirous of their country's development and freedom.'

Surely, to any man who reads this article as it was meant to be read the meaning of that sentence is perfectly clear, and Mr. Aurobindo Ghose, as is perfectly well known by those who have followed his action and his writings, sincerely believes that the nationalist movement of which he is the head for the

time being at any rate, or was till quite recently, is the one guarantee that there shall be no violence done in India and he blames the officials who have suppressed the free expression of Nationalist sentiment for the unfortunate circumstances which have led to murder and death and executions which everyone deploras.

*Mr. J. King:* May I ask in a friendly way whether this article is published in Bengali, and whether Mr. Aurobindo Ghose is not a Bengali?

*Mr. Ramsay MacDonald:* The article is in the most excellent English. There is not a line of Bengali in the whole of it except the date of this issue and its own title. Mr. Aurobindo Ghose could no more write an article in Bengali than I could.

The second extract which will give an idea of the article is this: 'Fear of the law is for those who break the law. Our aims are great and honourable, free from stain and reproach. Our methods are peaceful though resolute and strenuous. We shall not break the law, and therefore we need not fear the law.'

Then he turns to comment on certain things on which comments have been made again in the official Blue Books. 'But if a corrupt Police, unscrupulous officials or a partial judiciary' — that, of course is not justified by the Blue Books, but it is a matter of common discussion in India — 'make use of the honourable publicity of our political methods to harass the men who stand in front by illegal ukases, suborned and perjured evidence or unjust decisions, shall we shrink from the toll that we have to pay on our march to freedom? Shall we cower behind a petty secrecy of dishonourable inactivity? We must have our associations, our organisations, our means of propaganda and if these are suppressed by arbitrary proclamations we shall have done our duty by our Motherland and not on us will rest any responsibility for the madness which crushes down open and lawful political activity in order to give a desperate and sullen nation into the hands of those fiercely enthusiastic and unscrupulous forces that have arisen among us inside and outside India.'

There is a strong, sincere and effective criticism and condemnation of the practices which have been disgracing the extreme left movement in India during the last year or so. The gentleman of infamous associations<sup>4</sup> who lodges in Paris and tries to stir up the youth of this country and India has had no stronger opponent and no more effective counteracting influence than Mr. Aurobindo Ghose in his attempt to say honestly and fearlessly, but yet lawfully and fairly, what he feels about the administration of our officials in India. As I said at the commencement I had no desire to raise this question. I know perfectly well that the state of India at present moment is very difficult and a very dangerous one, and those who are best qualified to form a judgment about what may

happen are perhaps more pessimistic than those who are less qualified to form that judgment. But I feel perfectly certain that unless the India Office will insist upon its officials administering India with some generosity, some catholicity of sentiment and some serious attempt to associate with themselves men like Mr. Aurobindo Ghose, the future is going to be very much darker than it at present is. . . .

Mr. MacDonald proceeds to give an account of the Indian situation as he reads it.

*Mr. Keir Hardie:* My Hon. Friend has dealt so fully with Mr. Aurobindo Ghose that the matter need not be farther dwelt upon, but the House may be reminded once again that Mr. Aurobindo Ghose has already been the victim of one very exhaustible trial. It came to a close on the 6<sup>th</sup> May of last year, when Mr. C. P. Beachcroft who tried the case, delivered a very lengthy judgment. One of the difficulties in India is the paucity of information supplied to the public of the country concerning Indian affairs and the acts of the Indian Administration. Everything that tells against the Indian people is blazed forth, and matters which might tell in their favour do not receive anything like the same publicity. Mr. Beachcroft, after a very lengthy and exhaustive trial, found that Mr. Aurobindo Ghose has not been guilty of any offence known to the law of India. The law of India casts its net now-a-days at least very wide indeed. Mr. Beachcroft described Mr. Aurobindo Ghose as ‘a man who seems to have an extraordinary hold over the affections of his countrymen.’ And he added these words: ‘It is freely admitted for Mr. Aurobindo Ghose that his ideal is independence but the attainment of it is to be reached by passive resistance and by educating the people to stand by themselves; and counsel for the crown admits that there is nothing wrong in cherishing such an ideal, provided it is not sought by violent methods.’

Counsel was forced to admit on that occasion that the ideal of national independence which Mr. Aurobindo Ghose advocated was in itself neither seditious nor wrong, provided the methods taken to attain the idea were not in themselves violent or criminal. The judge proceeded, after hearing all the evidence to say: ‘Now not a single article has been pointed to me —’ And this applied to the written articles and speeches made by Mr. Aurobindo Ghose, ‘which suggests the use of violence.’

Because of that Mr. Aurobindo Ghose was acquitted. My Hon. Friend, the Member for Leicester (Mr. MacDonald) has quoted several statements from the articles on which, we understand, the fresh warrant is being issued, but there is one quotation which I should like to read to the House because it appears to be the real gravamen of the charge which the Government of India

is now about to make against Mr. Aurobindo Ghose. After describing the ideals of the Nationalist Party and the movement against the present regime, Mr. Aurobindo Ghose proceeds:

‘These are the objects for which we have to organise the national strength of India. On us falls the burden, in us alone there is the moral ardour, faith and readiness for sacrifice, which can attempt and go far to accomplish the task. But the first requisite is the organisation of the Nationalist Party. I invite that party in all the great centres of the country to take up the work and assist the leaders who will shortly meet to consider steps for the initiation of Nationalist activity. It is desirable to establish a Nationalist Council and hold a meeting of the body in March or April of the next year. It is necessary also to establish Nationalist Associations throughout the country. When we have done this, we shall be able to formulate our programme and assume our proper place in the political life of India.’

Here we have a movement which is admitted not to be associated with violence, which admittedly is animated by a high patriotic and moral ideal — a movement which claims the attention of the young enthusiasts of India to prevent them from being led into those devious courses into which some of them, unfortunately, have lately been tempted, and the Government, seeing the growth of this movement, apparently wish to stifle it, or, by threatening the prosecution of Mr. Aurobindo Ghose, to hint to others like-minded with himself that every attempt to carry out a conference and to organise that force will be encountered with all the rigours of the law.

After a little while during which the House was counted, Mr. Keir Hardie continued:

I hope the Under Secretary of State for India when he comes to make his statement, will be able to assure us this organisation and the Nationalist conference on the line of Mr. Aurobindo Ghose’s teaching will not be prevented by means taken to intimidate Mr. Aurobindo Ghose.

Mr. Keir Hardie then gave illustrations of some Police atrocities in India and then returned to the theme of his address:

A more recent case, which has a direct bearing upon that of Aurobindo Ghose is that of Mr. A. B. Kohalatkhar, who held degrees from the University of Madras, and was editor of a paper which published some reports and speeches by Mr. Aurobindo Ghose and translations of his articles. This man was charged with

the dissemination of sedition, and was sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment for the offence. The interesting fact to be borne in mind here is that when Mr. Aurobindo Ghose was being tried for his speeches the judges decided that they were not seditious, and yet this man who was simply charged with publishing the speeches which the judges had declared not to be seditious, was convicted of sedition and was actually sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment. He was kept in Nagpur gaol for five and half months in a solitary cell. I understand that the I.P.C. lays it down that no one can be kept for longer than seven days at a time in a solitary cell; but this man was kept in one for five and half months, and during that period his weight went down from 135 lbs. to 103 lbs. He was loaded with chains, and on one occasion was seen by some medical men being removed from one prison to another, and he was so weak and his chains were so heavy that he had to stoop at every step and lift the chains from the ground to enable him to make any step forward at all. I want to ask why it is that political prisoners are treated in this fashion? In this country it is admitted that the political prisoner is entitled to and he receives better treatment and only the other day the Home Secretary, to the great pleasure of most of the members of this House announced that in future further special privileges would be granted to all prisoners who were not guilty of sordid crimes. If that be the case, surely we are entitled to ask that a similar law should be applied to political prisoners in India.

Mr. Keir Hardie thereafter described the Midnapore case where four youths were arrested for their involvement in bombs and the Police resorted to wrongful treatment of them and ultimately they were released and brought cases against the Police. He then asked why the Congress Conferences at Faridpur, Mymansingh and Barisal have been banned.

*The Under Secretary of State (Mr. Montagu):* This is, I think, the first occasion on which this Parliament has had to discharge one of its most important duties, namely, the discussion of Indian affairs. It would appear that both the attack and the defence of the Government of India came from this side, the only part of the House which appears eager to discharge that duty. When I look upon the row of eager, interested faces opposite me I find it difficult to realise the Imperial mission of the Conservative Party. . . .

I should be, I think my Hon. Friends will believe, the last to deprecate a discussion such as that which has taken place now. It is absolutely essential that the Assembly which forms the only link between the Government of India and the people of this country, upon whom in the last resort the responsibility for the government of that country lies — I refer to the link afforded by this

House of Commons and the House of Parliament — should always be ready to criticise, to question and to defend the action of those officials who represent it in India. I do not complain of most of what the two Hon. Members who have spoken on this side have said, but, if they will both forgive me for saying it, I like their perorations better than their facts. But I do find ground for complaint in the precise moment which my Hon. Friend, the Member for Leicester (Mr. Ramsay MacDonald) has chosen to launch upon the treatment of sedition in India and his basing it upon the case of Aurobindo Ghose. I had occasion to refer this morning to an occurrence in this House when the Hon. Member for Louth put a question on the paper dealing with the trial of a noble Lord for bigamy. The trial had not yet been begun, and on being called on to put his question, the Hon. Member said: — ‘I understand, Mr. Speaker, you have expressed a view adverse to the putting of this question, as the trial is pending; therefore I do not propose to put it.’

*Mr. Speaker* replied: — ‘I am glad that the Hon. Member has taken that course, because, I think, it is a question calculated to prejudice the trial.’ I hope my Hon. Friend will forgive me for saying . . .

*Mr. Ramsay MacDonald*: I consulted the Speaker on this point.

*Mr. Montagu*: I hope the Hon. Member for Leicester will forgive me for saying that I think a large part of his arguments, referring to Mr. Aurobindo Ghose, is likely, one way or the other, to prejudice the proper administration of justice under the Indian law. Let me recite to the House, shortly the facts in relation to this case. On 25 December an article was published in a newspaper called the *Karmayogin* and the tone of that article was brought to the notice of the law officers of the Government of Bengal, the Advocate General, the legal Remembrancer and Standing Counsel, who is an Indian lawyer. The opinion of those law officers was that the article was of such a nature as to render the writer liable to prosecution under Section 124a of the I.P.C. The Hon. Member for Leicester did not read it. I propose to read the Section to the House:

‘Whoever by word either spoken or written, or by signs or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards His Majesty or the Government established by law in British India, shall be punished with transportation for life or any shorter term, to which a fine may be added, or by imprisonment which may extend to three years, to which a fine may be added, or by a fine.’

The law officers of the Government of Bengal considered that the tone of the article was such that it came within the meaning of the words of that Section. The Code of Criminal Procedure, Section 196 lays it down that no prosecution under this section may be instituted without the sanction of the local government. The Government of Bengal, having the sanction of their law officers before them, accepted it, and sanctioned the prosecution of Mr. Aurobindo Ghose who was believed to be the writer in question.

*Mr. Ramsay MacDonald:* It was signed.

*Mr. Montagu:* There were certain difficulties in obtaining legal and technical proof of the authorship, and so the issue of the warrant for Mr. Ghose's arrest was delayed until the beginning of this month. That warrant has not yet been executed, because Mr. Ghose's whereabouts are unknown. The Hon. Member for Leicester, on private information of his own, culled, I gather, from newspapers, has been more fortunate than the police officers who are called upon to execute the warrant.

*Mr. Ramsay MacDonald:* May I remind the Hon. Member that I have put all the information at his disposal.

*Mr. Montagu:* Precisely. I presume the same information is available to the Government of India. At the same time it is not always possible to effect the arrest of somebody wanted by the police. I have no doubt that every effort is being made and that at any moment Mr. Ghose may be arrested; but the latest information I have is that Mr. Ghose has at present succeeded in evading arrest. Anyhow, a warrant in the name of the King Emperor for the arrest of Mr. Ghose has been issued by the Chief Presidency Magistrate in Bengal, with the consent and the advice of the Government of Bengal and their Law Officers. Immediately that warrant is issued, I contend that the question whether it should or should not have been issued, whether the article was or was not seditious, rests entirely with Courts of Justice in India. It is not a matter for this House to decide. It is not a matter for any Member of this House to express an opinion upon at this moment. If the Hon. Member for Leicester is wrong, Mr. Ghose, having been tried by the Chief Presidency Magistrate in Calcutta, with full rights of appeal to the two judges of the High Court of Justice, will be properly punished. If, on the other hand, my Hon. Friend is right and the article is not seditious, Mr. Ghose will be acquitted and then will be the Hon. Member's opportunity for challenging the action of the Government of Bengal, and, if he likes, of the Imperial Government and, if he likes, the Secretary of State for India. But when an action is being tried, when a charge is pending, not only



would it be improper to express an opinion on the article forming the subject, but, I submit, it will be highly improper to place before this House any information merely intended to give an opportunity for expressing an opinion about a subject in which I suggest, with all humility, it has no right to interfere at the moment, and to interfere in which would be for the House to do that very thing Hon. Members below the Gangway are always asserting we should not do, namely, calling in the Executives to interfere with the Judicial in India. . . .

If I may ask the House to leave Mr. Ghose where he is and not to usurp the functions of the Indian Courts of Justice, I would only pause to say in conclusion one other word as to the difficulty of discussing matters of this kind. I do not desire to follow the Hon. Member for Leicester or the Hon. Member for Merthyr Tydvil (Mr. Keir Hardie) in exonerating from all blame a gentleman who has still to stand his trial by a judicial court, nor do I desire to say anything derogatory to a man whom my Hon. Friend has rightly described as having great influence in India and being well known for his high education, and eloquent writings, a sample of which my Hon. Friend read to the House. But no sooner does a case like this come up for discussion, than my Hon. Friend, quoting a statement relating to the gentleman in question, allows the House to assume that such quotations are correct and accurate and then I am saddled with the choice either of leaving that impression on the House, or running the risk of saying something, which I desire to avoid, to the detriment of Mr. Ghose. I will give the House an example. Once again the judgment of Mr. Beachcroft for trial, not for sedition at all, but for conspiracy to use bombs, has been quoted as showing how innocent of all evil effort and intention Mr. Ghose must be taken to be. Mr. Ghose was acquitted of any share in any conspiracy to use bombs or of any charge to wage war against the King; but he was not on trial for sedition, and Mr. Beachcroft definitely and deliberately refused, in words which I could quote, to express any opinion as to whether a charge for sedition could or could not be based upon some of Mr. Ghose's teachings and writings. Therefore the whole argument of the Hon. Member for Merthyr Tydvil about the punishment of a man for publishing speeches which had been declared by a Judge of the Sessions Court to be innocent falls absolutely to the ground. I venture to say with all respect that that conclusion and that inaccuracy are only an example of many others in the long speech which the Hon. Member made to the House.

Thereafter Mr. Montagu went on to defend the prohibition of meetings and referred to the Midnapore episode. Mr. Keir Hardie intervened at times. Then Mr. J. D. Rees belonging to the Conservative Party stood up and after expressing his surprise that sensible men like Mr. MacDonald should place more trust on his Indian informations than on what his own countrymen say, observed:



*Mr. Rees:* I was amused at the suggestion that because Aurobindo Ghose has become religious that therefore he has washed his hands free of mundane affairs, and no longer persists in his former work. Had the Hon. Member for Leicester the most elementary acquaintance with the elements of Indian conditions, he would know that there is no better platform for carrying out an intrigue than the platform that Aurobindo Ghose has now chosen. I do not speak positively, but I think that another Indian, Sivajee, who really made something like an Indian nationality, became a religious mendicant, and I have no doubt that during that time he was as busy with his post as my Hon. Friend the Member for Leicester is with the letters he receives from members of Indian societies. I do not consider it proper to comment upon what was written by Aurobindo Ghose for the good reasons given by the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, but I say this, that Aurobindo Ghose was distinguished not only for his literary ability, but distinguished above all things for his hostility to British rule in India, and to our fellow countrymen and that has been sufficient to secure for him the sympathy in certain quarters which has led some Members to espouse his cause.

I was also astonished to hear the Hon. Member for Leicester lay down so crudely that the British Government, in ruling 300,000,000 people, . . . , itself be governed by a small band of English-educated Hindus. I have never heard that position so boldly stated, and I hope Members of the House have not failed to notice it. . . .

## 21 FEBRUARY 1911

Mr. O'Grady asked whether the publisher of the *Karmayogin* was prosecuted for issuing the article by Mr. Aurobindo Ghose, for writing which a warrant was issued against Mr. Ghose; whether that trial resulted in the acquittal of the publisher on the ground that the article was not seditious; and whether the Government has now withdrawn the warrants issued in connection with this article?

*Mr. Montagu:* The answer to the first part of my Hon. Friend's question is, Yes; to the second, Yes; and to the third, Yes.

*(To be continued)*

MANOJ DAS

## References and Notes

1. *The Human Cycle, The Ideal of Human Unity, War and Self-Determination*, CWSA, Vol. 25, pp. 472-73.

2. All the words quoted and speeches reproduced in this chapter were culled by the author from the Old India Office Library, London.

3. Achyutrao Kohalatkhar (1879-1931) of Nagpur, a distinguished Marathi author and journalist who edited the *Deshsevak*, was accused of sedition because he translated and published the speeches of Sri Aurobindo. He was a strong and stubborn nationalist and he refused to apologise for such publications. His was a classic case of brutality by the police and the local judiciaries of the time. In 'Facts and Comments' column of the *Karmayogin* of 21 August 1909, Sri Aurobindo wrote, "We find it difficult to believe that the newspaper report of speeches from which the police could extract nothing that was not in the speaker's favour, could be at all seditious. Be that as it may, Mr. Kohalatkhar was convicted and perhaps, according to the "strong man" code of ethics, forfeited claim to generous treatment by his refusal to apologise. We have heard rumours of treatment being meted out to him which can only be described as studied brutality and the evidence of eye-witnesses who have seen the condition to which he was reduced, do not encourage us to reject these reports of fabrications. Finally, the refusal of the Central Provinces Government to face independent medical inspection and so dispose of the serious allegations publicly preferred put a very ugly aspect on this case. If the allegations are proved, they amount to a treatment which would evoke the loudest indignation and reprobation in England, if applied under the same circumstances in another country.

4. The reference is most probably to Mr. Shyamji Krishnavarma.

*It is when the soul awakens that a nation is really alive, and the life will then manifest itself in all the manifold forms of activity in which man seeks to express the strength and the delight of the expansive spirit within. It is for ananda that the world exists; for joy that the Self puts Himself into the great and serious game of life; and the joy which He sees is the joy of various self-expression. For this reason it is that no two men are alike, no two nations are alike. Each has its own separate nature over and above the common nature of humanity and it is not only the common human impulses and activities but the satisfaction and development of its own separate character and capacities that a nation demands.*

*Sri Aurobindo*

(*Karmayogin*, CWSA, Vol. 8, p. 61)

## **VISIONARY ART FOR THE SACRED KINGDOM OF GOD: THROUGH THE EYES OF THE MYSTIC ARTIST-WRITER CECIL COLLINS (1908-1989)**

Metaphysical knowledge teaches that man is a mirror to reflect divine reality. This mirror is dusty and cannot reflect it. The problem of life is the cleansing of this mirror and the transmission of the divine sun. The artist is regarded as the professional who can paint the images reflected in this divine mirror, which people perpetually forget, and of which we need perpetual reminding.

— Cecil Collins

*(All quotes in this article are from Cecil Collins unless otherwise specified.)*

### **Voices of the Occident: The English Mystical Tradition**

Man has the voices of all the Kingdoms in him.

I remember with crystal clear clarity the day I received a letter from a friend nearly 40 years ago introducing me to the Visionary Artist-Writer Cecil Collins. My friend had watched the BBC documentary film about him called 'Fools and Angels', and shared with me the profound feelings it had evoked in her, even sketching a little drawing of an Angel hovering over a mountain in the spirit of Cecil Collins. I was captivated.

At that time he was still largely 'a prophet unrecognised in his own country', but when I heard that he'd designed the tapestry altar-front at Chichester Cathedral called 'The Icon of Divine Light', based on a personalised image of the Sun with a face, I made a pilgrimage to the Cathedral to see it and was entranced by its primordial solar spiritual energy.

There were no books in print on this practically unknown Mystic-Artist and no Internet available then for research. So I made no further connection with him until over a decade later, when I unexpectedly found myself in front of a large painting of his in the Tate Gallery in London called: 'The Divine Land'.

I had no inkling that his work was shown in the Tate Gallery so the shock of that first encounter with an original painting of his, humming with Divine vibrations, was a spiritual and artistic epiphany of great delight. I was on Cloud Nine (clouds incidentally featuring frequently in the paintings of Cecil Collins as Symbols of the Divine) for a long time afterwards, and wrote these words in my journal dated 9 February 2000:

All the exhibits in the Tate are being rotated at the moment creating new and different experiences — juxtapositions of styles and periods which is exciting. Hence, for the first time, I unexpectedly came face to face with a Cecil Collins painting called, *The Divine Land*. I was blown away: An ORIGINAL Cecil Collins!

The write-up next to the painting said:

From the 1960's onwards Collins painted grand images of Angels as spiritual messengers of Light and Love. This picture depicts an Angel flying over a mountain, which has the form of a transparent curtain. The suggestion is that the Angel's movement will cause the curtain to blow aside. For Collins, curtains represent a kind of gateway to the treasures of childhood or a Divine state.

Unknown to me Cecil Collins had departed the Earth Plane a decade earlier in June 1989 aged 81, at the time of his Major Retrospective Exhibition at the Tate Gallery. Afterwards many of his unpublished sketches and manuscripts were collected and published revealing his true stature, so that he is now widely regarded as England's greatest Visionary Artist since William Blake.

What is more beautiful than the artist living and seeking with courage the imagination of God.

### **Art and the Transformation of Consciousness**

I began to be aware that there was in us a potential of transformation of consciousness, that we were lazy and let this thing lie . . . and I became conscious in myself that this fact was the purpose of life, the real purpose . . . this was the object throughout all great civilisations.

My next meeting with Cecil Collins came one year later through his book: *Cecil Collins — Meditations, Poems, Pages from a Sketchbook* which leapt out at me from the shelves of a bookshop whilst on holiday. I copied the following Meditation into the pages of my journal:

The Love! The Love! I see it in the movement of the clouds, the moving of the grass; in the dust of the roads, the leaves and branches of the trees, in the globules of the rain.

Cecil Collins became my companion on that holiday, and has remained one of my soul companions ever since. Like all Mystics, he expresses the spiritual world

within and declares that “art is a metaphysical activity” because “man is a metaphysical being”. His paintings have titles like ‘The Quest’, ‘The Joy of the Worlds’, ‘The Music of Dawn’, ‘The Invocation’, ‘The Dream of the Angel’. He believed that artists have a sacred responsibility to be a bridge, an intermediary, between Man and the Divine Realms because Art is the lifeblood between them.

In his paintings and contemplative Essays, Meditations and Poems he documents the path of his inner pilgrimage, commenting on the sacred role of Art as the Language of Transformation of Consciousness, and setting out a Vision for the future Divine Kingdom upon Earth.

The Poet, the Artist, the Saint and the Fool are outlawed by this society because they desire the unknown, the marvellous, the poetic. Because they desire with passion those elements in the universe which they know to be the most magnetic attributes of God.

### **Guardian of the Secret Inner Life**

What place is there for the Artist, for the Fool, the Poet, or for any human being, in a society based on the depersonalisation, deindividualising of life by the ideal of mechanical efficiency? There is no place, the human and creative are in danger of dying out.

Cecil Collins lived and worked in relative obscurity as one of the great outsiders of European modernism, remaining faithful to his own unique vision of Art inspired by the Divine, to open our inner Soul to the beauty of the Eternal Invisible Worlds. Courageously he swam alone against the tide of modern anarchic painting styles devoid of spirituality and tending towards Abstract Art, convinced that Art belonged to the Divine dimension, the Secret Inner Life. Though exiled and scorned he made no compromise, staying true to his vocation as a Divine Awakener even if it meant living in great poverty.

He struggled with some of the faculty at the Central School of Art and Design in London (now called Central Saint Martins) where he taught, because they disliked and derided his type of Art and tried to get him dismissed. But his students, with whom he created a mutual love and respect both as a Guide for Art and a Guide for the Soul, stood staunchly by him and his detractors never succeeded.

He was a lone figure for decades, a voice in the wilderness (of secularism and materialism which gives no place of honour to the Mystic) until the 1970’s when the artistic climate changed towards a more spiritual and poetic life, and his vision began to be recognised.

The great struggle of the modern artist is to preserve and keep alive for us and for society the sense of wonder. In other words to preserve life itself, for the sense of wonder in a person is God.

### **Painting of the Heart, not Abstract Art of the Mind**

This abstraction, which is mental abstraction, is very masculine, whereas the feminine feels experience through the particulars. We are suffering from abstraction, suffering from living in a mental world. Wholeness comes from a very human need, the human heart.

Cecil Collins believed profoundly that Abstract Art was an inadequate visual means for communicating spiritual truths and contacting the Divine, man's true purpose upon Earth. He found that it led to arid intellectualism and life-denying puritanism. In fact, it is to find oneself on the path of disintegration, where the ultimate destination is a life-denying nothingness.

Abstract Art is only partial and the greatest need of humanity is for Wholeness. Abstraction is one-dimensional leaving man bereft of the rich complexity of his total being for which he finds no outer expression in modern Art and Architecture.

The human heart wants a wholeness of experience, and I feel the human heart can find no satisfaction in a mental abstraction representing the Divine Reality. It must have wholeness because it must have something that it can relate to, that it can recognise, and the heart recognises, right away, this wholeness.

### **The Importance of Angels in a Mechanised Society: Transmission of Love and Beauty**

Angels exist to help transform our consciousness, to open our awareness — and contemplation of their beauty purifies us.

My fourth outer encounter with Cecil Collins came with the discovery of his book: *Angels*, which opened a door into the Celestial Realms and inspired me to paint my first series of Angels. Using these images to create sets of Angel Affirmation Cards they became an important vehicle for communicating Universal Spirituality since Angels do not belong to any one religion or tradition but to everyone.

Cecil Collins began painting Angels in his twenties. They came to represent the Unknown, which gives fresh inspiration to a dull mechanical life. Angels are Messengers from the Divine who are here to help with the Great Transformation of Human Consciousness and whose flow of Love brings them very close to the Earth

and to Humanity. Cecil Collins called them “the Vision of God, the winged thoughts of the Divine Mind” and they were very real and alive for him.

The Angels represent many things including the Friendship between us and the Divine World, the New Dawn of Consciousness and the Transmission of Light and Beauty.

We must regain the idea of the Person, the more real a thing is the more Person it is. The personality of the elements, the sea, the world, the earth, stars, trees, people. The Mythos of Person in everything.

As a child Cecil Collins spent a lot of time outdoors in Nature wandering in a nearby woodland. There he learned the language of stones and grass and trees and especially clouds. One day the sight of a dazzling white cloud had a profound mystical effect upon him, appearing to him as a Gateway to Paradise.

Later he was fascinated to discover in the scriptures that God had spoken out of a cloud:

While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.

— St Matthew’s Gospel 17:5

It was this experience of clouds as an image of Paradise which became a Gateway to the Invisible Realms and later influenced his painting where symbolic white clouds appear often in his imaginative landscapes.

The purpose of Art is to worship and praise life through wonder and magic.

### **Inner Landscapes: Remembering what is Lost**

Cecil Collins’s paintings are of inner landscapes inhabited by Angels, Fools and Sibyls, oracles of Feminine Wisdom:

. . . visions of certain functions of the feminine soul — prophetic, oracular, sometimes coming out of caves, guardians of altars, uttering prophesies — guarded in my paintings, I think, seldom by a man but practically always by a woman or an angel.

They represent an interior country of the human imagination where rivers and mountains and oceans, sun and moon and stars, trees and flowers and birds are painted not as copies of Nature but as inner symbolic experiences.

It is our tendency to forget, and Art is a necessary reminder of the Invisible

Realms of the Divine, the true Reality. Cecil Collins believed in the legend of a Lost Paradise, but that the second re-discovered Paradise would be richer and more beautiful than the original one. He called it 'The Great Happiness'. It is the vocation of the Artist to put us back in touch with this Paradise through the Visionary Art of the Imagination and of the Symbols of the Soul.

It is the loss of the original Paradise which is the cause of man's longing for the Eternal Beauty. We only recognise the true worth of something after we've lost it; and our Quest to re-find it is, he said, the stimulus of all creativity.

### **The Divine Feminine: Love, Care, Nurture and Friendship**

In Hinduism the divine reality is split up into many different facets of gods and goddesses. . . . The feminine is pluralistic psychology where you learn that life is really creative, it is pluralistic as well as particular. Again, in Hinduism as well as other religions, you get this marvellous feminine aspect all the way through. You could say that all quarrels come from this monotheism, this one and only one god, which is a male idea.

According to Cecil Collins the lack of Feminine values in the world is due to the dominance of Masculine Aristotelian reasoning or analytical knowledge which is at the core of modern education and thus cultural conditioning. The education of the Inner Life, the Emotions and the Imagination are totally neglected.

But the Feminine knowledge of the Soul and the Inner Life is crucial for the balance and wholeness of Humanity and for totality of experience. The Feminine Consciousness belongs to both men and women so is not a matter of gender but a matter of consciousness.

One of the main crises in our civilisation . . . is the lack of the Feminine principle from our education, the Feminine psychology: the loving, caring, affectionate and nourishing; the Feminine genius for relationship, which is deep in the psychology of the Feminine.

### **The Healing Heart of the Fool: Artist, Poet, Saint**

The Fool is the symbol of the lost ones of this world who are destined to inherit eternal life. The Fool is not a philosophy, but a quality of consciousness of life, an endless regard for human identity; all this lives in the fun of the Fool. The Fool is the essential integrity of life itself, clear and naked, overflowing in cosmic fun; not the product of intellectual achievement, but a creation of the culture of the heart. It is a continuous wisdom and compassion that heals with fun and magic.



In 1942, aged 34, Cecil Collins began his essay, 'Vision of the Fool', an Archetype which would become increasingly central to his spiritual vision of Art and the healing of Humanity. Archetypes are intermediaries between humanity and the Absolute Divinity, states of consciousness which help us to make direct contact with God through their subtle vibrations. Cecil Collins used a Trinity of Archetypes: Angel, Fool and Woman as Sybil or Anima. Aptly, the inspiration for the Fool came from a Feminine source, his own muse and wife the artist Elisabeth Collins, who painted the first Fool which awakened the Fool in her husband.

Since true Reality is beyond the Mind and cannot be totally understood, it is represented by Symbols, and the Symbol of the Fool stands for the State of Consciousness of the Saint, the Artist and the Poet transcending the lower consciousness of the modern world's exploitative systems.

The Fool has no agenda and is devoid of the arrogance of intellectual cleverness. The Fool symbolises Poetic Imagination and belief in the Invisible Presence and the Sacred Kingdom of God, essential to the Wholeness of Humanity.

Now that the civilised world has almost been destroyed by the illness of uncontrolled, merciless animal forces at work in most of mankind; now that abstraction, utilitarianism, and mechanisation have brought forth death and sterility, the ruins of society may yet prove more fertile than the barren days of its so-called progress and splendour.

For poetic imagination is only born when mankind is ready for it, ready to receive it, when men are hungry for its gifts, when they reach the supreme point of realising that they are actually starving in spirit, and are empty . . . it is then that the Fool will appear among us, to be received and revered in all men, and the nature of true freedom understood.

### **The Return of Child-Like Innocence: Openness and Receptivity**

It was the great Indian saint Ramakrishna who said, speaking of those dark periods that you find in the civilisations of the world, which the Hindus call Kaliyuga, I quote: In those periods one does not hear the voice of God except in the mouth of a child, a madman, a fool or some such person.

The Fool also represents the Innocence of the Child within each person, which has been practically destroyed by the abstract mechanisation of contemporary society:

Anyone who will not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child will not enter it.

— Gospel of Saint Luke 18:17

Cecil Collins believed that Humanity needed to recover the lost Innocence of the Child within who alone is capable of direct perception of the Divine Realms. Yet, such Openness and Receptivity means vulnerability demanding true Courage, because it is easily exploited and harmed by others. Only the brave few are willing to risk such Child-like Openness, because all Creation comes from this Receptive Openness.

He (the Fool) is interested in love and its manifestation in that harmony and wholeness which we call beauty. He is therefore in a state of creative vulnerability and openness and he is easily destroyed by the world. I have painted a picture of an Angel comforting a Fool who has been broken by the world. . . . The Angel is, as it were, deeply concerned with the Fool — in fact Christ Himself says that anyone who should injure one of these little ones it would be better that a millstone were tied around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.

### **Modern Architecture: Maker of Man's Environment**

Most modern architects are better trained to design buildings for machines than for human beings. Man is not a machine but a richly complex living being.

Cecil Collins spoke about the inhumanity of most modern architecture of his day. It was the product of an abstract puritanical and rational minimalistic Masculine mind, completely ignoring the flowing Feminine poetic, organic nature of relatedness and thus creating a feeling of separateness and alienation in modern cities.

It reflects the outer external nature but not Man's Inner Being, preventing the psyche from forming a total relationship — a friendship — with the environment. Man's Inner Being remains unloved, unappreciated, suppressed and unfulfilled. Cecil Collins attributed the increase in modern mental illnesses to this unhealthy imbalance of Masculine and Feminine values and therefore lack of Wholeness.

Man has an inner nature as well as an exterior one, and this inner nature must be awakened, nourished, developed and expanded so that he grows. Man's inner nature must have a world and an environment to live in as well as an exterior one, and art is an instrument for building that world for his inner nature, for building his archetypal home.

One can feel this oppressive bleakness and emptiness in many modern minimalist buildings, where one's humanity almost spoils the 'purity' of the ruler-straight angular white-washed interior, devoid of Feminine flowing curvaceous organic

rhythm. He noted that all great civilisations, except our own, were based on a metaphysical reality making modern civilisation abnormal because metaphysical civilisation is normal and not otherwise.

The real artists and craftsmen who made Chartres and the Buddhist temples would have understood the great statement that: “Only God is” . . . Today, instead of a temple or building dedicated to the destiny of all of us we have the art dealer, the man who keeps an artistic brothel for buying and selling beauty. . . . In our civilisation there is nothing to remind us of a destiny which transcends our small personal life. Hence our feeling of loneliness. Hence our sense of alienation.

### **Painted Pictures for Inner Contemplation versus Mechanical Digital Reproductions for Outer Looking**

The prime need of our age is contemplation. We live in a secondhand world of reproduction — television, cinema, magazine photographs — and our view of the world is becoming secondhand. We need the contemplation of the wrought image of the artist to orientate us towards Reality.

With the advent of photography and digital technology some considered that the painted image might become obsolete and irrelevant. But Cecil Collins made a clear distinction between the created image of the painter and the mere reproduction or copy of the photographer which lacks the depth of consciousness of the imaginative picture wrought by hand.

The experience of art — painting, music, poetry — belongs to the contemplative life, and one of the main tasks of our education and our culture is the re-educating of people in the contemplative life. Again, the feminine mode of bringing the dimension of stillness and inner space back into life.

### **Everyone is an Artist: Imagination is a Power**

I have found that the so-called ordinary person, if freed from the fear of competition and other people’s opinions, and also if freed from the idea of copying nature, will create very interesting pictures. Better to have a whole society painting such pictures than just a few specialised artists. For what we really all want is more life — life abundantly.

There is a saying that the artist is not a special kind of person but that every person is a special kind of artist. Before the age of the machine when things were made by

hand most members of society could be regarded in general as arts and crafts people of one kind or another. But the Machine Age (today we might call it the Screen Age) has robbed us of our skills, individuality, sense of independence and fulfilment as creators. Being an artist has become specialised and set apart from the ordinary person, whereas in truth everyone has a secret artist within.

I invented nothing really, the word original after all doesn't mean what it does to modern life . . . it means returning to the origins of images and the whole of my art is a return to the original world of creativity as manifest in universal images.

Cecil Collins loved to share his painting skills, philosophy and creative experiences with others more as a Friend than as a formal Teacher. He loved his students and they responded with unswerving loyalty.

He was a prophet ahead of his time and his teaching was progressive. "You become what you contemplate" was one of his refrains. True creativity was about Transformation of Consciousness and not merely self-expression; and a work of Art was an unveiling of what is hidden rather than the creation of a product.

He used sound and movement in his classes: music or recordings of Nature such as the sound of the ocean or a singing bird or passages from Plato. He had a great love for music and believed it had a deep capacity for awakening the sleeping spirit in people. He described his painting as a form of music which could be read like a musical score. Musicality, he said, was at the very root of matter.

He valued highly the discipline of drawing with concentration and taught the skills of mixing colours and how to harmonise them. He encouraged the wide use of traditional tools such as brushes and coloured inks, pens, chalk, charcoal and pencil, but also fingers and hands. Sometimes he taught his students to paint with their eyes closed to bypass the lower intellectual mental mind and access the inner images of the Soul. He taught Empathic Identification with the subject, through opening the heart (not scrutinising with the analytical mind) and emptying the small self of its conditioning.

He wanted his students to look with Fresh Eyes as if seeing the subject for the first time, just as the Fool views life with the wide-eyed Innocence of the Child capable of marvel and wonderment. He called it 'seeing through the eye of the heart'. In this way he opened a door to the Spontaneity and Living Consciousness of the Invisible Realms.

The Poet and the Artist both need solitude in order to carry out this highly concentrated intense work of revealing and distilling the essence of life to the world of man. . . . Solitude is therefore a sacred thing, a thing to be revered, and if the society of man is to grow and not perish in the incessant work mania

of a machine-ridden insect mentality, we must bring back if not reverence, at least respect for the solitude of any human being.

### **Painting as Revelation (not Rationalisation): Touching the Heart**

There is in all human beings a secret, personal life — untouched — protected — and it is this sensitive life which my art is created to feed and sustain, this real life deep in each person. Thus my art is truly functional.

When creating his own work Cecil Collins would wait until some outer trigger inspired him to paint, never knowing exactly what would take shape from within. More accurately he was the sensitive, receptive and honed instrument through which the Vision within painted itself.

He described painting as a special kind of birthing process, a revelation: something is born from within and revealed, not rationalised. But it is not a necessarily easy nor enjoyable birth because it is difficult to translate a Vision onto a canvas using the limitations of the material realms.

Yet, life is a process of making the impossible, possible. It is only the pursuit of the impossible, the unknown, which stimulates us to strive to expand the possible. If we ask too little of ourselves and our culture we will stagnate and degenerate.

Art is concerned with vibrations and the contemplation of vibrations. All existence is vibrations, feelings. My work gives off certain sensations. Every symbol gives off a different vibration.

His drawing skills and draughtsmanship were highly accomplished. His lines flow in a meditative rhythmic, lyrical way and he painstakingly built up his paintings with many thin layers of paint and varnish which give them a magical luminosity. The result is not simply a painted image but a living quality of vibrating consciousness which touches the heart and soul of the viewer, opening a window onto new Divine vistas. The archetypal images herald the coming of a New World, a New Dawn, a Second Paradise: the Great Happiness.

My own art is concerned to give man peace and joy and harmony and to orientate his consciousness that he may have some experience of that great happiness which is forever, through the transmission of the mystery of love, through the mystery of beauty.

### **Be Ye Perfect: Respond as a Whole Being**

These words of Christ, “Be ye perfect”, have traditionally been misinterpreted in a one-dimensional way to mean a judgmental, sterile, puritanical, static kind of perfectionism (not a relative best according to circumstances and capacity) which fosters feelings of shame, and crippling anxiety and despair. Not only do we judge ourselves harshly but also others, blocking compassion both ways for self and the other.

But the Greek word for perfect, ‘*teleios*’, is closer in meaning to ‘fulfilment’: to complete one’s Transformation of Consciousness upon Earth and realise one’s unique divine potential, just as the tiny acorn becomes the magnificent oak tree. The true meaning of ‘perfection’ is therefore ‘wholeness’ and ‘integration’.

The one-dimensional rational Masculine interpretation of ‘*teleios*’ as ‘perfectionism’ rather than ‘fulfilment’ kills creativity; and it robs us of the Playfulness of the Inner Child. It is a symptom of a civilisation based on predominantly competitive Masculine reductionist principles which divide and separate rather than integrate.

Beyond reason, beyond logic we feel there is a mysterious movement in the air. I am reminded of Christ’s words, “Be ye perfect”, which means this: be whole, respond as a whole being.

### **Kathleen Raine and *Temenos*: Sacred Art of East and West**

I had one final significant encounter with Cecil Collins when I spotted his personalised Sun image on the cover of a mysterious-looking journal called *Temenos*, a review dedicated to the Arts of the Imagination. Inside was an article by Kathleen Raine (about Thetis Blacker’s *Birds of the Soul*), whose poetry I’d come to know through Winifred Nicholson’s book *Unknown Colour*, another favourite artist. I bought this issue 4 of *Temenos* and later five more editions, of which number 11 contains an article about Cecil Collins by Brian Keeble alongside previously unpublished sketches and paintings.

Another article by Kathleen Raine appears in this eleventh edition entitled Poetry as Prophecy, plus several articles by Indian authors on India’s ancient arts and culture. I had no idea that Kathleen Raine had co-founded *Temenos* and published it from her home at Paulton’s Square London, where Cecil Collins occupied the top flat with his wife Elisabeth. Neither did I have any clue about her connections with India and her collaboration with Amal Kiran at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, nor that 25 years later I would be living in India and writing this essay.

Cecil Collins and Kathleen Raine shared the same birth year of 1908 and collaborated on the *Temenos* (a Greek word meaning ‘sacred precinct’) journal co-

founded by Kathleen Raine in 1980 with HRH The Prince of Wales as its patron, a great champion of the Arts and of Architecture.

Later it developed into the universal Temenos Academy, dedicated to philosophy and the arts in the light of the sacred traditions of both East and West. Eastern authors represented in *Temenos* include Ananda K. Coomaraswamy (largely responsible for introducing ancient Indian Art to the West), Rabindranath Tagore, Jay Parini, Kapila Vatsyayana, H.H. The Dalai Lama, Ravi Ravindra.

In her seventies Kathleen Raine visited India which had a profound effect upon her. She came to view India as the last true civilisation, or what she called 'The India of the Imagination', based on its ancient Arts and Spiritual Culture. As a world-renowned scholar on William Blake whom she regarded as her master, she corresponded with Amal Kiran over a two-year period on Blake's Tyger Poem, which Amal was writing about for his book *Blake's Tyger: A Christological Interpretation*. Two volumes based on this correspondence were published: *The English Language and the Indian Spirit* and *Indian Poets and English Poetry*.

In 1979 Kathleen Raine published a book called *Cecil Collins: Painter of Paradise*. Of her friend she said:

His paintings are icons, for they are informed by spiritual presence, he has penetrated into a luminous world of archetypal forms. The purpose of Cecil Collins's work is anamnesis, the awakening of imaginative reflections: he is a painter of the lost paradise.

### **Santiniketan-Inspired Dartington Hall**

The first Temenos Conference 'Art and the Renewal of the Sacred' was held at Dartington Hall, Totnes, Devon in 1986 to re-affirm and re-define the function of the arts as a mirror of the human spirit. Cecil Collins taught Art at the progressive Dartington Hall in Devon, England from 1939-43, where he came in contact with spirituality from the Far East.

The school was founded in 1925 by Leonard Elmhirst and his American heiress wife and modelled on Rabindranath Tagore's Santiniketan in West Bengal after an inspirational visit to the school. The American artist Mark Tobey, head of Dartington's Art department, was a committed member of the Bahai Faith (as was the world-renowned pioneering potter Bernard Leach who also taught at Dartington) and he befriended and encouraged Cecil Collins.

Another influential artist was Rudolf Laban (founder of the Laban School of Dance in London), a dancer and choreographer who came to Dartington in 1940 as a Hungarian refugee to escape the Nazis. He taught movement as a form of knowledge, a special kind of choreographic language. All creation is a dance and a drawing is a dance where the empty page is the stage. Hence the musical quality of



Cecil Collin's fluid lines and his use of sound and movement in his classes to contact what he called 'the flowing God in us'.

Life is not either/or, but is some mysterious flow that goes on all the time. One must be in contact with that flow and keep the bounds between crystallisation and openness and flowingness — to know that to fix a thing permanently is to bring it to an end.

### **Universal Consciousness: Accessible to All Men in All Places**

We are entering the period of the free-flowing, universal, creative spirit of life, the unlocalised god, accessible to all men in all places. This is the age of Holy Spirit, this is the age of the universal principle — the open, flexible field of consciousness, the understanding of the unity of life in the multiplicity of human experience.

Some critics accused Cecil Collins of being too subjective, too personal, but as with any True Artist he was a personal vehicle only for the Universal, articulating for Humanity the inner issues which concern everyone.

I believe that we live in a completely universal age now. We've got to grow up and accept universality. Universality is maturity and the Holy Spirit is one of the great images of universality.

In vocational service to the spiritual needs of the community the Artist creates symbolic images to awaken man to the Eternal. These images are not to be understood intellectually but contemplated, meditated upon. This inner contemplation actualises the life of the Soul which remembers its true purpose and man's real life which is Eternal, since all else is transient.

The artist is the eternal advocate of life. Fanaticism and intolerance, no matter for what cause, is a blight upon human activity. The artist is the direct expression of the genius of life and the genius of life cannot live in the iron-clad society of intolerance. I am not making any extravagant claim for the artist because I believe that the artist is in every man and woman, and it is the artist in them that is the God in them.

### **Friendship with Matter**

This is the task of Art, to give back to man that wonderful experience which the French poet René Char has called: the friendship of created things. . . . The artist, like the woman, has a genius for and demands relationship. We cannot



have a relationship with a (scientific) mechanical description of the universe. When we have this friendship of created things our experience of matter undergoes a change . . . we have communion with it; it becomes consecrated and is sacramental. Sacramental, what a word! I think we would hesitate to use it to describe our civilisation, where matter is something to be analysed, exploited and thrown aside without friendship.

As a prophet Cecil Collins saw the future need to divinise Matter in a Unity of the Spirit and the Earth. As much as we have neglected the Spirits of the Higher Worlds, so also have we denied the Spirit of the Earth.

He sensed that much of our pain comes from living in a Transitional World where the old civilisation is dying out to make way for a New World yet to be born. Meanwhile,

we are living in a transitional period created by scientific thinking which is too sterile for the human heart with its great capacity for imaginative riches.

He felt that there were generally two types of artists: those who portray the dying civilisation, and those who paint visions and intimations of the coming Sacred Kingdom of God.

Radiant with your waves,  
Flowing again with your waters of light,  
O world heart,  
O fountain of dawn.

He took things seriously but was not a pessimist and was known for his jokes and sense of fun. He sensed a New Consciousness entering the World, which would find its response in this Friendship with Matter, with the Earth and also with Man's Inner Nature. This is why the Sun is so important in his paintings, especially the Rising Sun at Dawn heralding a New Birth.

Relationship is the key because all creativity is concerned with relationship: the relationship of the stars to the sun, the sea with the shore. In our education we now need to re-discover our relationship and friendship with nature, with organic life, our friendship with all created things . . . with the divine world.

GLENYS NIVEDITA

## References

*The Vision of the Fool and Other Writings: Enlarged Edition* — Cecil Collins, edited by Brian Keeble, Golgonooza Press, Ipswich, UK. 2002

*Angels*: Cecil Collins, compiled & edited by Stella Astor, Fool's Press, London, UK. 2003

*Cecil Collins — Meditations, Poems, Pages from a Sketchbook*: Golgonooza Press, Ipswich, UK. 1997

*Eye of the Heart: The Paintings of Cecil Collins*: Stephen Cross Ltd — online transcript; Arts on Film Archive, University of Westminster. 1978

*Yoga, as Swami Vivekananda has said, may be regarded as a means of compressing one's evolution into a single life or a few years or even a few months of bodily existence. A given system of Yoga, then, can be no more than a selection or a compression, into narrower but more energetic forms of intensity, of the general methods which are already being used loosely, largely, in a leisurely movement, with a profuser apparent waste of material and energy but with a more complete combination by the great Mother in her vast upward labour. It is this view of Yoga that can alone form the basis for a sound and rational synthesis of Yogic methods. For then Yoga ceases to appear something mystic and abnormal which has no relation to the ordinary processes of the World-Energy or the purpose she keeps in view in her two great movements of subjective and objective self-fulfilment; it reveals itself rather as an intense and exceptional use of powers that she has already manifested or is progressively organising in her less exalted but more general operations.*

*Yogic methods have something of the same relation to the customary psychological workings of man as has the scientific handling of the force of electricity or of steam to their normal operations in Nature. And they, too, like the operations of Science, are formed upon a knowledge developed and confirmed by regular experiment, practical analysis and constant result.*

Sri Aurobindo

(*The Synthesis of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 23, pp. 6-7)

## BEHOLD HIM

Lift your eyes to the celestial vault and watch  
Who is the wanderer exclaiming: "I am That, That am I."  
I aspire to dissolve myself at the feet of *Shyam*.  
For down here there is none equal to *Krishna*.

Limitless is the beauty of *Shyam*,  
Totally beyond the grasp of human mind  
Lost in the rituals of sacred festivity.  
Should you taste of the sap that flows through the worlds  
Both animate and inert, get hold of the *sanjivan muli*, Love.

Of the brilliance of a myriad suns  
What we view is but a golden rim.  
There, *Sachchidanand* is, amusing Himself  
Lilting in a cradle made of gold.

Behold Him now: this constant immobile flame,  
It burns without a lamp, without wick or oil.  
You must see Him without your eyes,  
You must recognise and feel Him even in His formless state,  
You must savour the nectar of His Love even without a tongue.

Indestructible, He is the mystery no brilliance of the brain can ever solve.  
Down here, up there He moves about, rejoicing everywhere.  
The Lord of *Narasaiya*, He is the all-pervasive One  
Flowing freely through the fabric of pure love.

NARASINH MEHTA

(Translated by Dhanavanti Nagda)

## THE MOTHER'S ROOM IN THE PLAYGROUND

This article is based on conversations with Gauri-di (Bhattacharya) on different occasions in 1991, and the points were noted down immediately in my diary. In 1946-47 Gauri-di, who lived in a house situated to the south of the Playground, had been given the charge of attending to the Mother when she came to the Playground. Later, in 1952, when the school classes were shifted from the Playground to their present location, Gauri-di was given one of the rooms in the adjacent house for her residence.

The Mother would come to the Playground with Pranab-da after her game, at first of table-tennis in 1947, and later from 1948 of tennis. Pranab-da would then supervise the activities of the groups there. Gauri-di would be present at the main gate to receive the Mother; she would take the Mother's handbag from her and accompany her to the little store room where the Mother remained for a little while before coming out for her various activities again.

This store room was the last room at the west of the building, on the southern side of the Playground. It was a small, not very wide room, with two doors. One of them, opened on the north of the room into the Playground. The other door, almost on the opposite side, opened to the courtyard of the old school building. Its floor was made of a mix of compressed lime mortar, as was usual in the old buildings of Pondicherry.

A small table was kept in one corner where the captains of the younger groups could keep their notebooks and also sit and work. Later, this was replaced by a somewhat larger table with two drawers. In one of these, Gauri-di would keep the small items such as chit pads, pencils, pens etc. that the Mother would use. The other one was used by Pranab-da. A small *malkhamb* pillar was fixed at the centre of the room. A fairly large box made of ordinary deal wood was also kept against the western wall of this room on which the Mother would sit for a while when she came after her games. There was also a big bass drum, used only once a year when the group of young men went out for the route march of 13<sup>th</sup> July. (14<sup>th</sup> July, the French Republic day, was traditionally observed with this march through the town by the French citizens of Pondicherry. Other groups also joined in.) Some other small items, such as hand pumps for the balls, grease, a First-Aid box, were also kept there. There was a hammock hanging over the box where balls were kept. Everyday, the captains of the groups would collect the required type and number of balls, take out the hand pump and inflate the balls. These were then put in string bags and were taken to the different places where they were needed.

If someone was hurt, he would be made to sit on the box and a red-coloured medicine, 'Mercuriochrome', from the First-Aid box was applied quite casually.

The balls, after grease was applied on them, were also placed on this same box. As all these things were done on the box itself, they left their traces on the lid, and no one bothered to wipe and clean the surface and so Mother's dress was often stained when she sat on the box. Gauri-di tried quite a few times to correct this bad habit of the boys, but to no avail. In 1947-48 Biren-da had ordered some items from Madras for the Playground. This packet was kept in a corner of the room. As Pranab-da was unpacking the contents of the packet, Gauri-di asked him if he could give her the cloth which came with the items. Pranab-da wondered what she would do with an old table cloth! However, he readily agreed when he was told that she wanted it for the Mother's use. Gauri-di got it washed and ironed in our laundry and spread this cloth on the box for the Mother to sit on. Now Mother did not have to sit on a bare wooden box, and this also protected her dress somewhat from further stains. One day, as the Mother stood up, Gauri-di took the cloth, casually folded it and kept it again on the box. The Mother asked for the cloth, and herself folded it neatly following the folds of the ironed lines as it was done in the laundry, and gave back the cloth to Gauri-di to place it on the box. While recounting the incident, Gauri-di commented, "That was the Mother's way of making us aware of our mistakes and showing us the right way to do anything. No unconscious haphazard movements were approved by her."

When Gauri-di started her work, this room was almost bare and there were hardly any of the things needed to serve the Mother. Gauri-di gradually started collecting a few such items for her work. She had an iron stand made on which was placed an enamel basin, filled with water, in which she added a few drops of eau de cologne. The Mother washed her hands in it when needed. Gauri-di purchased a small ordinary towel for Mother to wipe her hands with. It is quite unthinkable for us now, that an old table cloth was used for the Mother, or that a very ordinary towel bought from the market was given to her for her use! Again, we find that as there were no flower vases in that room, Gauri-di brought a bowl or a bottle from her house for keeping the flowers offered to the Mother by the children. The Mother always appreciated these simple flower arrangements.

Before starting her regular activities, the Mother sometimes played for a while some games, such as throwing tennis balls into a basket etc. with the few persons present there. Gauri-di kept ready all the things that might be required so that she could supply them whenever the Mother needed them.

Once, for Pranab-da's birthday, the children and some captains under Tejen-da's guidance decorated the Playground beautifully with flower garlands. Gauri-di wanted to decorate the Mother's small room also. She got the hammock removed, placed the small table in a different position, brought some of her old saris from her home and hung them on the walls of the room; she then got some long flowering stems of the creeper with beautiful flowers named by the Mother 'Harmony' (*Antigonum*), hung them on the saris and decorated the room for the Mother. When

the Mother entered the room, she appreciated the arrangement very much and said, "Oh, this is a salon!" (a drawing room). One day Pranab-da told Mother, "Mother, ask Gauri-di to decorate once again this room, as she had done on my birthday." So the room was arranged that way. The Mother asked her to call Albert-da, the sadhak in charge of the tailoring section of the Ashram, and she asked him to stitch whatever was needed. Gauri-di again got her old saris, had them dyed green and this cloth was used by Albert-da. He made the covers wherever needed. He also made a beautiful cushion for the Mother. This was placed on the packing box for her. We already know that Mother used to sit on this box with a hammock full of greased balls hanging over her head. What a smell indeed! "But," Gauri-di said, "the Mother never expressed any discomfort or passed any comments about it. That was her greatness." After some time the hammock was removed. The room was now free of that smell! Both Pranab-da and Gauri-di were satisfied that they could now make the place a little more comfortable for the Mother.

One day, the Mother entered the room when only Gauri-di was present. The Mother stood facing her and placing both her hands on Gauri-di's shoulders, looked intently into her eyes. Gauri-di felt that the Mother wanted something. "Oh! What could it be? Oh Lord! Make me understand," were her anxious thoughts. And then she knew that the Mother wanted a separate bathroom for her use. "Yes, Mother," Gauri-di answered, "I have understood." That was all she said. At that time the school building, where the Kindergarten classes were held, was to the south of the Mother's room in the Playground. There was a small room adjacent to and just behind the room used by the Mother. Gauri-di went to Pavita, the lady who was in charge of the whole section and told her, "I want this room." "How can that be? Jayantibhai teaches there!" But Gauri-di repeated again, "I want this room." Pavita perhaps understood something. A table-tennis table was in one of the rooms of the school where children played after school hours. Pavita said, "If you can get this table-tennis table shifted somewhere else, then Jayantibhai can shift his class there and we can vacate the room you require." Gauri-di informed Pranab-da about the whole incident and he said, "Leave the matter to me." The next day, when the Mother came to the Playground, Pranab-da told her, "Mother, we have moved ahead in the matter." Then the Mother gave Gauri-di instructions regarding her requirements, how she wanted the bathroom to be made, details about the fixtures etc. and Gauri-di on her part passed these instructions to her brother, Manoranjan-da (Ganguli), who was to construct the bathroom. This happened perhaps in 1949.

We are told that prior to the construction of this bathroom, the Mother would go back for a short while to the Ashram main building after her game of tennis, freshen up and then come to the Playground. Her car passed by the road to the east of the Ashram building, François Martin Street, turned left on Duplex Street, passed in front of the Governor's Residence, turned left again and stopped in front of the Playground on Saint Louis Street. She would sometimes stop at the Governor's

Residence to meet Monsieur Baron, the French Governor at that time who was also a devotee of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

Years later, when the Mother's room on the second floor of the Ashram main building was being constructed, she wanted the bathroom there to be done exactly as it was in the Playground. So Viswanath-da, Udar-da and Prodyot-da came to the Playground, took measurements and noted other details of the bathroom prior to the construction of the new bathroom for the Mother in the Ashram main building.

Once the Mother asked Gauri-di if maid servants came to work in the room. On getting the answer in the affirmative, she forbade her from bringing maids in the room. But Gauri-di needed helpers for some of her work. Who would do that? At that time Bhavatarini Pantulu, a young girl of the ladies' group, was doing some activity in the Playground. The Mother pointed to her and said, "She will do the work!" What a Grace indeed. Since then (about 1950) Bhavatarini was Gauri-di's main helper.

After Sri Aurobindo's Mahasamadhi on December 5, 1950, the Mother did not come out of the Ashram main building for twelve days. When the Mother came again to the Playground, on December 17, 1950, Gauri-di noticed that she was holding something very carefully with both her hands. When she entered the room, she gave it to Gauri-di. It was a framed photograph of Sri Aurobindo. She told Gauri-di to place the photo on top of the cupboard in the small room.

The Mother would leave the Ashram main building by 4 p.m. She returned at 8.30 p.m. or sometimes even later. When the Mother came to the Playground, she would sit on the wooden box for a while, have a little refreshment before going out for her other activities. Every day Gauri-di would bring a little refreshment prepared by her mother which could be offered to the Mother. Gauri-di recollected a few incidents regarding this. The Mother had once told Gauri-di to request her mother, Sarala-di, to prepare some fried cashewnuts for her. Every evening as soon as Gauri-di's mother, who lived very near to the Playground, heard the Mother's car arriving at the Playground gate, she would quickly fry some cashewnuts, put them in a clean hanky and send this to Gauri-di in the Playground. On entering the room the Mother would first wash her hands in the water of the basin kept in the corner of the room for this purpose. She would then sit down on the box and Gauri-di would give her the kerchief containing the cashewnuts. The Mother put one nut in her mouth at a time, and ate a few nuts. Sometime later, she told Gauri-di that she had gained 2 kg in weight after taking these nuts!

On another occasion, the Mother wanted some rasagullas to be prepared for her that evening. (It seemed rather strange, to Gauri-di, as there was hardly any sweet dish in her regular diet.) That evening, the Mother sat surrounded by the few lady-inmates who would be present near her during the Playground hours. She cut a piece of the sweet with a spoon and put it in her mouth. Then she used the same spoon and cut a new piece from the sweet and put it in the mouth of one of her



attendants. This she repeated for each one of them. Five of them were present there: Priti, Violette, Gauri, Millie and Minnie. After she had fed all of them she cut out a piece of the sweet again with the same spoon and put it in her mouth. Gauri-di says, "In this way she was showing the greatness of her divinity, she was as if telling us that she was one of us!"

At that moment Pavitra-da entered the room for some work. The Mother called out to him, "Pavitra, would you like to have some sweet?" Then she added an aside, "He is a mental person; will he eat?" "No, Mother!" was his answer and he went for his work. The Mother looked at the ladies with a mischievous smile and all of them laughed aloud enjoying the Mother's gesture and comment! After taking her frugal refreshments, the Mother would go out to give interviews to people or to take classes.

In 1949-1950 she started to take French classes for the highest section of the School. Already the large room on the eastern side of the Mother's room was used as a classroom and was arranged with a number of desks and benches. Thrice a week, before the class was held, the place was cleaned and prepared for the Mother. The teacher's table and chair would be removed to one side, a mat spread on the wooden platform, one small table, one chair and other accessories needed for the Mother's work would be placed there by Gauri-di.

Once Shankar Gauda (father of Paru Patil) got a chair made especially for the Mother's class. He brought it on his birthday as an offering to the Mother. The very first thing the Mother wanted to know was whether Gauri-di would be able to carry it, shifting it from one place to the other. She accepted the chair only on being assured that it was very light and that Gauri-di would surely be able to shift it.

The Mother granted interviews to some people. Gauri-di kept a list of the names of the persons who would come for interviews. Interviews took place in the eastern corner of the building, where we have now the main entrance to the body-building gymnasium. This particular room was the class-cum-laboratory where Pavitra-da took his science classes. Gauri-di told us that initially, the Mother had to stand all through the interviews which would sometimes be rather long. But after receiving the chair, things changed. Before the Mother's arrival in the Playground in the evening, Gauri-di would clean the interview room, spread a mat on the floor and place the Mother's chair on it. A few flowers on a dish were also kept on a small table beside the chair. Sometimes the Mother would give flowers from this dish to persons meeting her.

Before the school classes were shifted to the present location in 1952, the big room just to the east of the small store room was used for storing all the items needed for the physical education activities and was always kept locked. When this room was vacated, the Mother expressed her wish to get this room as her sitting room. Gauri-di impressed on Pranab-da that this room should be properly done, the old walls of the room, the floor of compressed lime mortar etc. should be fully redone. Manoranjan-da took up the work and the room took its present form.



The doors of this room till then were always kept closed. When the renovation was over and the doors were opened, we saw a fairly large room beside the previous small store room. This new room henceforth was used by the Mother and is the room in the Playground known to all as the Mother's Room. Its main door and two fairly large windows open on the Playground to the north. A door on the west connected it to the small store room which was being previously used by the Mother. Now this old room was used for the Mother's work. The new room was furnished with elegant furniture. The centre of attraction in the room was the small table against the southern wall on which was placed Sri Aurobindo's photo, the one the Mother had brought on December 17, 1950. The photo is still there, with a few artistically arranged flower vases near it.

Against the eastern wall was a big wall-almirah. We were attracted to it as the Perspex shutters were beautifully painted with pink lotuses. This painting was done by Sanjiban-da, one of the Ashram artists. On the northern wall, below the window was kept a long sofa for the Mother. There were also a few other items in the room.

The opening of this room has left a special stamp on my consciousness. It has as if made me aware of how any outer development in the Ashram should take place. No fanfare, no gathering of people. It has to be a simple, organic growth, like the spontaneous blooming of a flower. The Mother, almost for seven years, used a small dark, dingy room situated on the south-west corner of the building in the Playground, without ever expressing any inconvenience. Incredible indeed. And when the time came, this beautiful room took form out of an inconspicuous store room!

On the narrow door of the little store room opening to the north into the Playground was written in white paint 'CAPTAINS ONLY', obviously meaning that all and sundry were not to get in the room. When the Mother returned from the Guest House after distributing groundnuts to the children there, she stopped before the door and enquired how was she to get in? This was for the Captains only! Pranab-da answered immediately, "Mother, Gauri-di is your captain. So Gauri-di will take you!"

Gauri-di remembered that when André-da, the Mother's son came to the Playground, the Mother introduced Gauri-di as, "She is my Captain."

Every evening the Mother took the salute of the groups participating in the gymnastic marching. After that, if the Mother had some free time, she would enter her room again and rest as long as the marching continued. She would recline on the long sofa, stretch her feet on the long cushion prepared by Albert-da for this purpose, but this was not sufficient for resting her back. Pranab-da took cotton rolls wrapped in a cloth and placed them under her back. But it did not work well so Albert-da made some round cushions for her. Later, the Mother herself brought a feather cushion; she could now stretch her body more with the cushion placed under her lower back. As soon as the marching was coming to an end, Gauri-di would peep in. The Mother understood that the marching was ending and she would come out for the general

concentration held by the groups after the marching was over; this concentration lasted for about ten minutes. After concentration, the Mother would come back to the room for a minute or two. She sometimes drank a little water.

We went to the Mother every morning to receive her blessings. At that time, Gauri-di would receive a few beautiful roses from the Mother. Once Gauri-di arranged those roses and kept them in one corner of the room. Mother appreciated very much the arranged roses when she saw them that evening. One of the Ashram gardens, 'Nandanam', managed by Abhay Singh Nahar, grew a large number of beautiful roses; these were offered to the Mother. The Mother loved this flower and would herself arrange the roses in the main Ashram building. From then on, after the arrangement of roses in the Mother's room was over, hundreds of roses would be sent to Gauri-di from the Mother to be kept in the room in the Playground. I remember her sitting with many roses around her, arranging them in different vases. I also remember how I admired her arrangements. When the bathroom was ready, most of the roses were kept in this room. The beautiful fragrance of the roses permeated the little room.

The Mother's room was always tastefully arranged with flower vases. However, one evening, when I entered the Mother's room in the Playground, what a pleasant surprise I got on seeing jasmine flowers on the floor just below Sri Aurobindo's photo, arranged in the shape of a white swan flying upwards. We always admired Gauri-di's flower arrangements. But this was something new and beautiful. Gauri-di told me later that the Mother had pointed out to her the inaccuracies in her attempt and explained the corrections needed. Every evening now, designs were made on the floor. Not only white jasmines but quite a few other flowers of different colours were used for this purpose. These designs were made every day. As fresh flowers in the quantity required were not available every day, a different method was found. Designs made of dried flower petals dyed in different colours. Fresh flowers were given to Bhavatarini's mother who would dry the petals. These were dyed in different colours and very beautiful designs were created. This continued for quite some time. Later, a further change was made and the designs were painted on the floor. These could be kept longer. Some young artists of that time, Usha Raojibhai, Dhanavanti Nagda, Mita Chakrabarty, Chanda Poddar, Prabhakar (Batti) and perhaps some others too who would do the painting by turns. This method continues till date and the Mother's room is decorated with excellent designs.

We quote here a note by the Mother written to Vasudha-ben:

Vasudha,

Would you bring me a waistcoat to the Playground at about 6 o'clock in the evening? It is really too hot to put it on before I leave the house and without it at sunset I would feel cold. I am asking you to bring it instead of taking it myself in the car, because I need you to pin the veil (the *chunni*) properly on it.

I hope it will not inconvenience you.  
With all my affection and blessings.

January 10, 1949

*(Letters to My Little Smile, p. 119)*

In cooler seasons Gauri-di used to put a cape on the Mother's shoulders. It was Priti-di's (Das Gupta) idea of getting a good quality cape for the Mother. She felt that in cooler seasons it would be comfortable for the Mother if she could have some light covering over her shoulders. Hence, she with her uncle Himanshu Neogy got a beautiful white one made in Calcutta and offered it to the Mother. They were overjoyed when she accepted it. Once people saw the Mother was using a cape, they started offering capes to the Mother. These were kept in the Mother's room under Gauri-di's care. So many capes were offered that the almira where capes were kept was inadequate for storing them all and a bigger one had to be made.

When Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the then prime minister of India, visited the Playground, the Mother wanted Gauri-di to offer him a glass of tender-coconut water. After this, the Mother was given a bouquet of red roses which she presented to him. Gauri-di says that a bouquet of pink roses was presented to Smt. Indira Gandhi.

People used to go to the Mother for special blessings on their birthdays. As a rule, this used to be held in the main building of the Ashram. But, in the years 1956 and 1957, many of them were asked to come to the Playground to meet the Mother there. After the activities of the groups, when the general concentration was over, Gauri-di would give Gangaram a list of the names of the 'birthday people'. He stood at the door of the Mother's room, and called out one by one the names from the list, so that people entered the room only when they were called.

They offered their pranam to the Mother and received her blessings. This practice of seeing people on their birthdays continued most probably till 1958, when she stopped coming to the Playground.

February 29, 1956, is an important day in the history of the Ashram. Here we quote a few very interesting observations from an article written by Gangaram, a senior member of the Physical Education Office. He used to switch off the lights before the meditation in the evenings in the Playground and switch them on after the meditation was over. In his article, 'Glimpses of the Playground', he writes:

29.2.1956. The Mother was taking her Wednesday class for Group B. Suddenly she went into a trance. All of us waited and waited. My duty was to turn off the lights in the Playground. That day I was in a fix . . . had the Mother started the meditation suddenly? I waited for five minutes, ten minutes. Twenty minutes had passed. There was no sign. I was hesitating: should I turn off the lights? After thirty minutes, I took courage and put off the lights for the meditation. The Playground was completely silent — and there was a beautiful atmosphere.

Naturally I was watching the Mother. During that time I had a strong feeling that the Mother was engaged in some extremely important work. After quite some time the Mother opened her eyes and I immediately switched on all the lights. She quietly got up from the chair and went into her room. I picked up her chair and took it inside.

After some days the Mother announced the importance of that day. It was the day of Supramental Descent.

When we asked her about that special day, Gauri-di said that on the day of the Supramental Descent, on 29-2-1956, when the Mother entered the room after the evening meditation, only Pranab-da and Gauri-di were present. The Mother told them simply: "I have felt it today," and immediately after this remark, the Mother sat at her table in the room and wrote about her experience then and there.

This was her message she wrote that day:

This evening the Divine Presence, concrete and material, was there present amongst you, I had a form of living gold, bigger than the universe, and I was facing a huge and massive golden door which separated the world from the Divine.

As I looked at the door, I knew and willed in a single movement of consciousness, that "the time has come", and lifting with both hands a mighty golden hammer I struck one blow on the door and the door was shattered to pieces.

Then the supramental Light and Force and Consciousness rushed down upon earth in an uninterrupted flow.

Nirod-da writes:

. . . Her intensive concentration at the Playground made people remark that the Supermind would descend there first. When Sri Aurobindo was told about it, he commented, "I won't get the Supermind then?" It is of interest to note that the Supramental Manifestation did take place during a meditation in the Playground on February 29, 1956.

*(Twelve Years with Sri Aurobindo, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., p. 113)*

This room is now an important landmark of the Playground. People come to its opened door to pay their homage to the Mother and the Lord. Many reverently bow down on the threshold of the door. This Playground is a very special place indeed. It is hallowed by her presence which still pervades the atmosphere of the whole of the Playground.

CHITRA SEN



*an honest business for honest people*

*With Best Compliments from:*

## **S. N. Sunderson & Co.**

**1, Deshbandhu Gupta Road  
Post Box No. 5713  
New Delhi - 110 055**

E-mail: [contact@snsunderson.com](mailto:contact@snsunderson.com) Telephone: 23612728, 23612776  
Fax: 011-23620632

### *Our Lines of Business:*

- *Limestone and Dolomite*
- *Coal Handling Agents*

### *Branches at:*

**Kolkata, Dhanbad, Katni, Jukehi, Niwar, Varanasi, Singrauli,  
Asansol, Ranchi, Bilaspur, Nagpur, Ramgarh, Khelari,  
Manendragarh, Guwahati and Puducherry**

**Completed 91 years on Basant 2017**



# **Karnataka Plascom engineers private limited**

**Injection Moulding of Industrial Components  
from Engineering Plastics**

Works: #235 T, Bommasandra Indl. Area  
3rd Phase, Hosur Road  
Bangalore - 560 099

Phone: 91-80-7831289, 7832567



