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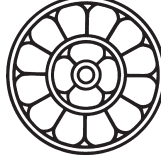
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. LXXI

No. 7

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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“TILL THAT IS REACHED OUR JOURNEYING CANNOT CEASE”

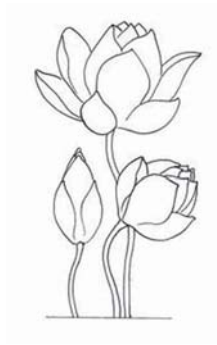
(*Savitri*, Book II, Canto 10, ‘The Kingdoms and Godheads of the Little Mind’)

This too must now be overpassed and left,
As all must be until the Highest is gained
In whom the world and self grow true and one:
Till That is reached our journeying cannot cease.
Always a nameless goal beckons beyond,
Always ascends the zigzag of the gods
And upward points the spirit’s climbing Fire.
This breath of hundred-hued felicity
And its pure heightened figure of Time’s joy,
Tossed upon waves of flawless happiness,
Hammered into single beats of ecstasy,
This fraction of the spirit’s integer
Caught into a passionate greatness of extremes,
This limited being lifted to zenith bliss,
Happy to enjoy one touch of things supreme,
Packed into its sealed small infinity,
Its endless time-made world outfacing Time,
A little output of God’s vast delight.
The moments stretched towards the eternal Now,
The hours discovered immortality,
But, satisfied with their sublime contents,
On peaks they ceased whose tops half-way to Heaven
Pointed to an apex they could never mount,
To a grandeur in whose air they could not live.
Inviting to their high and exquisite sphere,
To their secure and fine extremities
This creature who hugs his limits to feel safe,
These heights declined a greater adventure’s call.
A glory and sweetness of satisfied desire
Tied up the spirit to golden posts of bliss.
It could not house the wideness of a soul
Which needed all infinity for its home.
A memory soft as grass and faint as sleep,

The beauty and call receding sank behind
Like a sweet song heard fading far away
Upon the long high road to Timelessness.
Above was an ardent white tranquillity.
A musing spirit looked out on the worlds
And like a brilliant clambering of skies
Passing through clarity to an unseen Light
Large lucent realms of Mind from stillness shone.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Savitri*, CWSA, Vol. 33, pp. 238-39)



TRANSFORMATION OF HUMAN NATURE IN THE INTEGRAL YOGA

PART ONE — SADHANA ON THE LEVEL OF THE MIND

SECTION ONE THE MIND AND SADHANA

Chapter Three Mental Difficulties and the Need of Quietude

The Activity of the Mind

This [*restless thinking*] is what we call the activity of the mind, which always comes in the way of the concentration and tries to create doubt and dispersion of the energies. It can be got rid of in two ways, by rejecting it and pushing it out, till it remains as an outside force only — by bringing down the higher peace and light into the physical mind.

*

It is the Light or the Force which comes from beyond the mind that keeps the mind truly concentrated. Otherwise the mind is naturally restless, unfixed, constantly changing from one thing to another.

*

Then for the tumultuous activity of the mind which prevents your concentration. But that or else a more tiresome obstinate grinding mechanical activity is always the difficulty when one tries to concentrate and it takes a long time to get the better of it. That or the habit of sleep which prevents either the waking concentration or the conscious samadhi or the absorbed and all-excluding trance which are the three forms that Yogic concentration takes. But it is surely ignorance of Yoga, its processes and its difficulties that makes you feel desperate and pronounce yourself unfit for ever because of this quite ordinary obstacle. The insistence of the ordinary mind and its wrong reasonings, sentiments and judgments, the random activity of the thinking mind in concentration or its mechanical activity, the slowness of response to the veiled or the initial touch are the ordinary obstacles the mind imposes just as pride, ambition, vanity, sex, greed, grasping of things for one's own ego are the

difficulties and obstacles offered by the vital. As the vital difficulties can be fought down and conquered, so can the mental. Only one has to see that these are the inevitable obstacles and neither cling to them nor be terrified or overwhelmed because they are there. One has to persevere till one can stand back from the mind as from the vital and feel the deeper and larger mental and vital Purushas within one which are capable of silence, capable of a straight receptivity of the true Word and Force as of the true silence. If the nature takes the way of fighting down the difficulties first, then the first half of the way is long and tedious and the complaint of the want of the response of the Divine arises. But really the Divine is there all the time, working behind the veil as well as waiting for the recognition of his response and for the response to the response to be possible.

*

If the thoughts are not regarded as one's own, it should become possible to look at them from a silent mind, detached and separate from the thoughts.

*

It is more difficult to separate oneself from the mind when it is active than from the body. It is quite possible however for one part of the mind to stand back and remember the Mother and receive her presence and the force while the other is busy with the work. Meanwhile what you are doing is the right way. Remember always that whatever the difficulties the Mother's love is with you and will lead you through.

Imaginations

The first necessity is not to allow yourself to be upset by this difficulty [*of a restless mind full of imaginations*]. It is one that often occurs, for these imaginations come easily to the human mind, but they can be got rid of in time, and even in a comparatively short time if one faces them with calm resolution, detachment and patience. It is simply a habit that has taken hold of the mind — it can be dissolved and cease to recur.

It will help if you can cease to regard them as creations of your own mind — they are not, they are foreign matter thrown on it from outside. The physical mind which they attack has to learn to see and feel them as something foreign and refuse to accept them. Then they will go. For that you will receive my help and the Mother's. Keep yourself inwardly confident and open, all will be done.

*

The mind does not record things as they are, but as they appear to it. It catches parts, omits others; afterwards the memory and imagination mix together and make a quite different representation of it.

Confusion

The mind has to be remoulded and changed, but in a definite way, becoming more and more full of the Light and Truth. In that way it will begin to take on a luminous consistency and become “stronger and stronger till it is dependable”. A mere confused instability is not the right way. When the confusion comes, you should remain quiet, reject it and call in the Mother’s light and force.

*

Who does not feel the confusion or ignorance somewhere in himself so long as the full light and the true force have not come? Your mistake is to be always thinking about the confusion and struggling with it, dwelling on it, magnifying it by thinking about it, treating it as if it were the only thing real and true. When you feel the force, turn to the force and let it act — it is that force and not you or your brooding and struggles that can get rid of the confusion and darkness. What is the use of examining whether your faith and confidence are of the “true” kind or not? To feel the force, be quiet, let it act is all that is needed.

*

If you can stand back from all this [*mental commotion*] and observe calmly and clearly and precisely, this confusion of voices ought to stop.¹ It is only a part of the mind that is like that. But you get absorbed by this part and then it looks as if it were the whole mind that is confused. If you stand back from it and observe it with your *real* mind, then this small part will lose its power to confuse.

Worry

It is simply the habit of the mind when troubles come to worry about them. You must train your mind to remain calm and equal when troubles come — to do the thing that has to be done and rely on the Divine Power.

1. *The correspondent kept hearing the voices of persons who shouted abuses at him. — Ed.*

Hastiness

In the mind there is always a certain haste to seize quickly at what is presented to it as the highest Truth. That is unavoidable, but the more one is still in mind, the less this will distort things.

*

The attempt of the mind and vital to seize on the experience is always one of the chief obstacles.

*

It [*impulsive action*] is not any weakness of the will or the result of passivity, but an overhaste of decision upon a mental impulse. That is the usual movement of the mind — and it is sometimes the fruit of a certain kind of sattwic zeal. But owing to the haste there is not sufficient time taken to see the opposite side, the defects of the decision taken, or the possible objection that might be made. Peace is the basis, but into it must come the action of a certain Light from above which shows each thing in its right proportions as a whole — for the mind at its best is incomplete and usually one-sided in its perceptions without the guidance of such a higher Light.

*

It is necessary to curb the mind's impatience a little. Knowledge is progressive — if it tries to leap up to the top at once, it may make a hasty construction which it will have afterwards to undo. The knowledge and experience must come by degrees and step by step.

Slowness

It is as you say and there is a certain element of inertia in it; the slowness of the mind and the nature to seize something new to it, the non-distinction between what is true and to be held and what is not true and not to be held, is due to a certain absence of quickness of movement in the being. But each human quality has its advantages and disadvantages. A quick mind is often unstable — it catches but does not keep; or it catches but only superficially and thinks it has got everything when it has got only a little and not enough. A slow mind that takes slowly but holds on to what it has got, can be slow but sure in its movement. The disadvantage of it is obstinacy, unwillingness to admit what it should receive, unwillingness to let go what is

mistaken. Its advantage is steadiness, a firm hold when it gets the right thing. Therefore you should not mind if it takes long to absorb and hold the new consciousness — as a matter of fact, to hold takes long with everybody. Once you have got it well established, your nature is likely to hold it firmly. As for the lack of discrimination, that is only in the physical and lower vital mind — within you there is something that can discriminate, the psychic. The only thing is to get it out and keep it in front. When you had the psychic state or rather a touch of it from time to time, you saw things very clearly. When the psychic state fixes itself, that discrimination also will become a part of the nature.

Opposing Points of View

Don't accept and hug and dandle these [*conflicting*] ideas. Everybody has thoughts opposing each other — it is the very nature of mind — one has to draw back from all that and fix on the straight things alone that lead to the Divine. The rest one must treat as external rubbish.

*

Many things are bad only in the way people look at them. Things which you consider all right, other people call bad; what you think to be bad, others find quite natural.

*

As for facts each mind always arranges them in its own way. It is a well-known phenomenon which psychologists constantly emphasise that each mind arranges facts according to its own impressions, predilections, convenience and, while this may be partly done with a conscious twist, conscious omissions and additions, it is quite or as often and more often done without any wilful intentions and by a sort of subconscious selection in the mental hinterland. That is why no three witnesses of an incident can give the same account of it — unless of course they have talked it over together — each tells a different story.

Silliness

People are exceedingly silly — but I suppose they can't help themselves. The more I observe humanity, the more that forces itself upon me — the abysses of silliness of which its mind is capable.

Analysis and Dissection

What the Mother spoke of was not self-analysis nor dissection. Analysis and dissection are mental things which can deal with the inanimate or make the live dead — they are not spiritual methods. What the Mother spoke of was not analysis, but a seeing of oneself and of all the living movements of the being and the nature, a vivid observation of the personalities and forces that move on the stage of our being, their motives, their impulses, their potentialities — an observation quite as interesting as the seeing and understanding of a drama or a novel — a living vision and perception of how things are done in us which brings also a living mastery over this inner universe. Such things become dry only when one deals with them with the analytic and ratiocinative mind, not when one deals with them thus seemingly and intuitively as a movement of life. If you had that observation (from the inner spiritual, not the outer intellectual and ethical viewpoint), then it would be comparatively easy for you to get out of your difficulties; for instance you would find at once where this irrational impulse to flee away came from and it would not have any hold upon you. Of course, all that can only be done to the best effect when you stand back from the play of your nature and become the Witness-Control or the Spectator-Actor-Manager. But that is what happens when you take this kind of self-seeing posture.

*

You stick to your intellectual-ethical version of the inner self-vision? Dry? policeman? criminal? Great Lord! If it were that, it would cease to be self-vision at all — for in the true self-vision there is no policemenhip and no criminaldom at all. All that belongs to the intellectual-ethical virtue-and-sin dodge which is only a mental construction of practical value for the outward life but not a truth of real inner values. In the true self-vision we see only harmonies and disharmonies and set the wrong notes right and replace them by the true notes. But I say that for the sake of truth, not to persuade you to start the self-vision effort; for if you did with these ideas of it, you would inevitably start it on the policeman basis and get into trouble. Besides, evidently, you prefer in the Yoga to be the piano and not the pianist, which is all right but involves total self-giving and the intervention of the supreme musician and harmonist. May it be so.

I am glad to know that your vital has been frightened into acquiescence in self-giving — even if only by the imaginary horror of being obliged to become the policeman of yourself. But to explain why these contradictions existed in you one has to have recourse to this very business of harmonies and disharmonies and the inner knowledge. You were in fact a piano played on by several pianists at a time each with his own different musical piece to play! In plain words and without images, every man is full of these contradictions because he is one person, no doubt, but

made up of different personalities — the perception of multiple personality is becoming well-known to psychologists now — who very commonly disagree with each other. So long as one does not aim at unity in a single dominant intention, like that of seeking and self-dedication to the Divine, they get on somehow together, alternating or quarrelling or muddling through or else one taking the lead and compelling the others to take a minor part — but once you try to unite them in one aim, then the trouble becomes evident. One element wanted the Divine from the first, another wanted music, literature, poetry, a third wanted life at its best, a fourth wanted life — well, not at its best. Finally there was another element which wanted life not at all, but was rather disgusted with it and wanted either a better (diviner) life or something better than life. It was this element evidently that created the *vairaagya* and in the struggle between that and the life-partisans, a black element stole in (not one of the personalities, but a formation, a dark intrusion from outside), which wanted to turn the whole thing into a drama or tragedy of despair — despair of life but despair of the Divine also. That has to be rejected, the rest changed and harmonised. That is the only true explanation of the whole difficulty in your nature.

The Need of Quietude

There is no possibility of doing this Yoga, if one cannot give himself to the Divine Power and trust to its workings. If one lives only in the mind and its questioning and ideas, it is not possible. The test of capacity is to be able to quiet the mind, to feel a greater Divine Power at work in one, the Power of the Mother, and to be able to trust to it and aid its workings by the rejection of all that contradicts them in the nature.

*

To quiet your mind means to stop thinking about the things that disturb you and let the peace and power manifest themselves and work. The “living inside” will come of itself in that case — that is to say, you will feel the inner peace and the consciousness that comes with it more and more as yourself and all else as something outer and superficial.

*

How can the mind find out or decide what is the right thing to do for your sadhana? The more it is active in that way, the more confusion there will be. In sadhana the mind has to be quiet, fixed in aspiration towards the Divine — the true experience and change will come in the quietude of the mind from within and from above.

*

It is also a mistake to take quietude for callousness. If you are no longer disturbed by what people say or do, then that is a great progress. If you have no abhiman against the Mother, that also is surely very desirable. Abhiman, disturbance etc. may be signs of life, but of a vital, not of the inner life. They must quiet down and give room for the inner life. At first the result may be a neutral quiet, but one has often to pass through that to arrive at a more positive new consciousness. When the mind thus falls quiet the thoughts of the past, all sorts of repetitive or mechanical thoughts begin to rise up — these come from the physical mind or the subconscious. One has to refuse them and let them pass away, aspiring for the complete mental quietude in which the new consciousness can reveal itself little by little. Remain firm and quiet with the right will in you and let the Force do its work. That will may not bear recognisable fruit at once, but adhere to it and the fruit will come.

*

You should not belittle the inner quietness by calling it a foolish kind of quietness — quietness in itself, knowing or unknowing, is to be valued, for it means that even in the midst of confusion a basis has still been kept. The understanding is at present covered over by a remnant of the old ignorance and confusion, but if a fundamental quietude is maintained or remains of itself, that will make it easier for this recurrence to pass.

As for the thought of your mother, it is always a symbol in your consciousness of the old nature and the old life — that is why it gets force when the confusion comes.

Remain firm and the cloud will pass and the true consciousness reassert itself with more firmness and vigour.

*

Not to allow the mind to bubble up with all sorts of ideas and feelings etc. but to remain quiet and learn to think and feel only what is true and right.²

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Letters on Yoga – IV*, CWSA, Vol. 31, pp. 20-29)

² *The correspondent asked Sri Aurobindo how to “meet things without any superficial and unnecessary reaction”. — Ed.*

THE GUARDIANS OF THE LIGHT

SURYA, LIGHT AND SEER

The Rig Veda rises out of the ancient Dawn with the sound of a thousand-voiced hymn lifted from the soul of man to an all-creative Truth and an all-illuminating Light. Truth and Light are synonymous or equivalent words in the thought of the Vedic seers even as are their opposites, Darkness and Ignorance. The battle of the Vedic Gods and Titans is a perpetual conflict between Day and Night for the possession of the triple world of heaven, mid-air and earth and for the liberation or bondage of the mind, life and body of the human being, his mortality or his immortality. It is waged by the Powers of a supreme Truth and Lords of a supreme Light against other dark Powers who struggle to maintain the foundation of this falsehood in which we dwell and the iron walls of these hundred fortified cities of the Ignorance.

This antinomy between the Light and the Darkness, the Truth and the Falsehood has its roots in an original cosmic antinomy between the illumined Infinite and the darkened finite consciousness. Aditi the infinite, the undivided is the mother of the Gods, Diti or Danu, the division, the separative consciousness the mother of the Titans; therefore the gods in man move towards light, infinity and unity, the Titans dwell in their cave of the darkness and issue from it only to break up, make discordant, wounded, limited his knowledge, will, strength, joy and being. Aditi is originally the pure consciousness of infinite existence one and self-luminous; she is the Light that is Mother of all things. As the infinite she gives birth to Daksha, the discriminating and distributing Thought of the divine Mind, and is herself born to Daksha as the cosmic infinite, the mystic Cow whose udders feed all the worlds.

It is this divine daughter of Daksha who is the mother of the gods. In the cosmos Aditi is the undivided infinite unity of things, free from the duality, *advaya*, and has Diti the separative dualising consciousness for the obverse side of her cosmic creation, — her sister and a rival wife in the later myth. Here in the lower being where she is manifested as the earth-principle, her husband is the lower or inauspicious Father who is slain by their child Indra, the power of the divine Mind manifested in the inferior creation. Indra, says the hymn, slays his father, dragging him by the feet, and makes his mother a widow. In another image, forcible and expressive though repugnant to the decorousness of our modern taste, Surya is said to be the lover of his sister Dawn and the second husband of his mother Aditi, and by a variation of the same image Aditi is hymned as the wife of the all-pervading Vishnu who is in the cosmic creation one of the sons of Aditi and the younger brother of Indra. These images which seem gross and confused when we lack the key to their

mystic significance, become clear enough the moment that is recovered. Aditi is the infinite consciousness in the cosmos espoused and held by the lower creative power which works through the limited mind and body, but delivered from this subjection by the force of the divine or illumined Mind born of her in the mentality of man. It is this Indra who makes Surya the light of the Truth rise in heaven and dispel the darkensses and falsehoods and limited vision of the separative mentality. Vishnu is the vaster all-pervading existence which then takes possession of our liberated and unified consciousness, but he is born in us only after Indra has made his puissant and luminous appearance.

This Truth is the light, the body of Surya. It is described as the True, the Right, the Vast; as the luminous supramental heaven of Swar — “vast Swar, the great Truth” — concealed beyond our heaven and our earth; and as Surya, the Sun, “that Truth” which dwells lost in the darkness, withheld from us in the secret cave of the subconscious. This hidden Truth is the Vast because it dwells free and manifest only on the supramental plane where existence, will, knowledge, joy move in a rapturous and boundless infinity and are not limited and hedged as in this many-walled existence of the mind, life and body which form the lower being. That is the wideness of the higher being to which we have to ascend breaking beyond the two enclosing firmaments of the mental and physical; it is described as a divine existence free and large in its unbounded range; it is a wideness where there is no obstacle nor any siege of limitation; it is the fear-free pasture of the luminous herds of the Sun; it is the seat and house of the Truth, the own home of the Gods, the solar world, the true light where there is no fear for the soul, no possibility of any wound to the large and equal bliss of its existence.

This supramental vastness is also the fundamental truth of being, *satyam*, out of which its active truth wells out naturally and without strife of effort into a perfect and faultless movement because there is upon those heights no division, no gulf between consciousness and force, no divorce of knowledge and will, no disharmonising of our being and its action; everything there is the “straight” and there is no least possibility of crookedness. Therefore this supramental plane of vastness and true being is also Ritam, the true activity of things; it is a supreme truth of movement, action, manifestation, an infallible truth of will and heart and knowledge, a perfect truth of thought and word and emotion; it is the spontaneous Right, the free Law, the original divine order of things untouched by the falsehoods of the divided and separative consciousness. It is the vast divine and self-luminous synthesis born of a fundamental unity, of which our petty existence is only the poor, partial, broken and perverted cutting up and analysis. Such was the Sun of the Vedic worship, the paradise of light to which the Fathers aspired, the world, the body of Surya son of Aditi.

Aditi is the infinite Light of which the divine world is a formation and the gods, children of the infinite Light, born of her in the Ritam, manifested in that

active truth of her movement guard it against Chaos and Ignorance. It is they who maintain the invincible workings of the Truth in the universe, they who build its worlds into an image of the Truth. They, bounteous givers, loose out upon man its floods variously imaged by the mystic poets as the sevenfold solar waters, the rain of heaven, the streams of the Truth, the seven mighty Ones of heaven, the waters that have knowledge, the floods that breaking through the control of Vritra the Coverer ascend and overflow the mind. They, seers and revealers, make the light of the Truth to arise on the darkened sky of his mentality, fill with its luminous and honey-sweet satisfactions the atmosphere of his vital existence, transform into its vastness and plenitude by the power of the Sun the earth of his physical being, create everywhere the divine Dawn.

Then are established in man the seasons of the Truth, the divine workings, called sometimes the Aryan workings; the law of the Truth seizes and guides his action, the word of the Truth is heard in his thought. Then appear the straight undeviating paths of the Truth, the road and ford of Heaven, the way of going of the gods and of the fathers; for by this path where no violence is done to the divine workings, straight, thornless, happy, easy to tread once our feet are set upon it and the manifested divinities are our guard, the luminous fathers ascended by the power of the Word, by the power of the Wine, by the power of the Sacrifice into the fearless light and stood upon the wide and open levels of the supramental existence. So must man, their posterity, exchange the crooked movements of the separative consciousness for the straight things of the truth-conscious mind.

For always the courses of the Sun, the galloping of the divine horse Dadhi-kravan, the movement of the chariot-wheels of the gods travel on the straight path over wide and level ranges where all is open and the vision is not confined; but the ways of the lower being are crooked windings beset with pits and stumbling-blocks and they crawl unvisited by the divine impulsion over a rugged and uneven ground which screens in from men their goal, their road, their possible helpers, the dangers that await them, their ambushed enemies. Travelling on the path of the Truth with the straight and perfect leading of the gods the limitations of mind and body are at length transcended; we take possession of the three luminous worlds of the higher heaven, enjoy the beatific immortality, grow into the epiphany of the gods and build in our human existence the universal formations of the higher or divine creation. Man then possesses both the divine and the human birth; he is lord of the double movement, he holds Aditi and Diti together, realises the universal in the individual, becomes the Infinite in the finite.

It is this conception that Surya embodies. He is the light of the Truth rising on the human consciousness in the wake of the divine Dawn whom he pursues as a lover follows after his beloved and he treads the paths she has traced for him. For Dawn the daughter of Heaven, the face or power of Aditi, is the constant opening out of the divine light upon the human being; she is the coming of the spiritual

riches, a light, a power, a new birth, the pouring out of the golden treasure of heaven into his earthly existence. Surya means the illumined or the luminous, as also the illumined thinker is called *sūri*; but the root means, besides, to create or, more literally, to loose, release, speed forth, — for in the Indian idea creation is a loosing forth of what is held back, a manifestation of what is hidden in the infinite Existence. Luminous vision and luminous creation are the two functions of Surya. He is Surya the creator and he is Surya the revealing vision, the all-seer.

What does he create? First the worlds; for everything is created out of the burning light and truth of the infinite Being, loosed out of the body of Surya who is the light of His infinite self-vision, formed by Agni, the seer-will, the omniscient creative force and flaming omnipotence of that self-vision. Secondly, into the night of man's darkened consciousness this Father of things, this Seer of the truth manifests out of himself in place of the inauspicious and inferior creation, which he then looses away from us, the illimitable harmony of the divine worlds governed by the self-conscious supramental Truth and the living law of the manifested godhead. Still, the name Surya is seldom used when there is question of this creation; it is reserved for his passive aspects as the body of the infinite Light and the revelation. In his active power he is addressed by other names; then he is Savitri, from the same root as Surya, the Creator; or he is Twashtri the Fashioner of things; or he is Pushan, the Increaser, — appellations that are sometimes used as if identical with Surya, sometimes as if expressing other forms and even other personalities of this universal godhead. Savitri, again, manifests himself, especially in the formation of the Truth in man, through four great and active deities Mitra, Varuna, Bhaga and Aryaman, the Lords of pure Wideness, luminous Harmony, divine Enjoyment, exalted Power.

But if Surya is the creator, he who is, as the Veda says, the self of all that moves and all that is stable, and if this Surya is also the divine, “the wide-burning Truth that is lodged in the law which upholds heaven”, then all the worlds should manifest that law of the Truth and all of them should be so many heavens. Whence then comes this falsehood, sin, death, suffering of our mortal existence? We are told that there are eight sons of the cosmic Aditi who are born from her body; by seven she moves to the gods, but the eighth son is Martanda, of the mortal creation, whom she casts away from her; with the seven she moves to the supreme life, the original age of the gods, but Martanda is brought back out of the Inconscient into which he had been cast to preside over mortal birth and death.

This Martanda or eighth Surya is the black or dark, the lost, the hidden sun. The Titans have taken and concealed him in their cavern of darkness and thence he must be released into splendour and freedom by the gods and seers through the power of the sacrifice. In less figurative language the mortal life is governed by an oppressed, a hidden, a disguised Truth; just as Agni the divine seer-will works at first upon earth concealed or obscured by the smoke of human passion and self-will, so Surya the divine Knowledge lies concealed and unattainable in the night

and darkness, is enveloped and contained in the ignorance and error of the ordinary human existence. The Seers by the power of truth in their thoughts discover this Sun lying in the darkness, they liberate this knowledge, this power of undivided and all-embracing vision, this eye of the gods concealed in our subconscious being; they release his radiances, they create the divine Dawn. Indra the divine Mind-power, Agni the Seer-Will, Brihaspati the Master of the inspired word, Soma the immortal Delight born in man aid them to shatter the strong places of the mountain, the artificial obstructions of the Titans are broken and this Sun soars up radiant into our heavens. Arisen he mounts to the supramental Truth. "He goes where the gods have made a path for him cleaving like an eagle to his goal"; he ascends with his seven shining horses to the utter luminous ocean of the higher existence; he is led over it by the seers as in a ship. Surya, the Sun, is himself perhaps the golden ship in which Pushan the Increaser leads men beyond evil and darkness and sin to the Truth and the Immortality.

This is the first aspect of Surya that he is the supreme Light of the truth attained by the human being after his liberation from the Ignorance. "Beholding a higher Light beyond this darkness we have followed it and reached the highest Light of all, Surya divine in the divine Being." This is the Vedic way of putting the idea which we find more openly expressed in the Upanishads, the fairest form of Surya in which man sees everywhere the one Purusha with the liberated vision "He am I." The higher light of Surya is that by which vision rises on our darkness and moves towards the superconscious, the highest that other greater Truth-vision which, having attained, moves in the farthest supreme world of the Infinite.

This brilliant Surya is made by the godward will of man; he is perfectly fashioned by the doers of divine works. For this light is the vision of the highest to which man arrives by the Yajna or Yoga of his being, by its union through a long labour of self-uplifting and self-giving to the powers of the concealed Truth. "O Sun, thou all-seeing Intelligence," cries the Rishi, "may we, living creatures, behold thee bringing to us the great Light, blazing out on us for vision upon vision of the beatitude, ascending to the bliss in the vast mass of thy strength above!" The Life-powers in us, the purifying storm-gods who battle for the knowledge, they who are created by the divine Mind Indra and taught by Varuna who is the divine Purity and Wideness, are to attain to their enjoyment by the light of this Surya.

The light of Surya is the form, the body of that divine vision. He is described as the pure and visioned force of the Truth which shines out in his rising like the gold of Heaven. He is the great godhead who is the vision of Mitra and Varuna; he is the large and invincible eye of that Wideness and that Harmony; the eye of Mitra and Varuna is the great ocean of vision of Surya. His is that large truth-vision which makes us give to its possessors the name of seer. Himself the "wide-seeing", "the Sun, the Seer who knows the triple knowledge of these gods and their more eternal births", he sees all that is in the gods and all that is in men; "beholding the straight

things and the crooked in mortals he looks down upon their movements.” It is by this eye of light that Indra, who has made him arise in heaven for far vision, distinguishes the Aryan powers from the Dasyu, separating the children of light from the children of darkness so that he may destroy these but raise those to their perfection.

But seerhood brings with it not only the far vision but the far hearing. As the eyes of the sage are opened to the light, so is his ear unsealed to receive the vibrations of the Infinite; from all the regions of the Truth there comes thrilling into him its Word which becomes the form of his thoughts. It is when “the thought rises from the seat of the Truth” that Surya by his rays releases into the wideness the mystic Cow of Light. Surya himself is not only “the son of Heaven who is the far-seeing eye of knowledge born of the gods”, but he is the speaker also of the supreme word and the impeller of the illumined and illuminating thought. “The truth that thou rising free from sin, O Sun, speakest today to Mitra and Varuna, that may we speak and abide in the Godhead dear to thee, O Aditi, and thee, O Aryaman.” And in the Gayatri, the chosen formula of the ancient Vedic religion, the supreme light of the godhead Surya Savitri is invoked as the object of our desire, the deity who shall give his luminous impulsion to all our thoughts.

Surya Savitri, the Creator; for the seer and the creator meet again in this apotheosis of the divine vision in man. The victory of that vision, the arising of this Light to “its own home of the truth”, the outflooding of this great ocean of vision of Surya which is the eye of the infinite Wideness and the infinite Harmony, is in fact nothing else than the second or divine creation.

For then Surya in us beholds with a comprehensive vision all the worlds, all the births as herds of the divine Light, bodies of the infinite Aditi; and this new-seeing of all things, this new-moulding of thought, act, feeling, will, consciousness in the terms of the Truth, the Bliss, the Right, the Infinity is a new creation. It is the coming into us of “that greater existence which is beyond on the other side of this smaller and which, even if it be also a dream of the Infinite, puts away from it the falsehood.”

To prepare that new birth and new creation for man by his illumination and upward voyaging is the function of Surya, the divine Light and Seer.

SRI AUROBINDO

(The Secret of the Veda, CWSA, Vol. 15, pp. 473-81)

THE CENTURY OF LIFE

(The Nitishataka of Bhartrihari freely rendered into English verse)

(Continued from the issue of June 2018)

ON WEALTH

The Prayer to Mammon

Cast birth into the nether Hell; let all
The useless tribe of talents farther fall;
Throw virtue headlong from a rock and turn
High nobleness into the fire to burn;
The heroic heart let some swift thunder rive,
Our enemy that hinders us to live;
Wealth let us only keep; this one thing less,
All those become as weeds and emptiness.

A Miracle

Behold a wonder mid the sons of men!
The man is undiminished he we knew,
Unmaimed his organs and his senses keen
Even as of old, his actions no-wise new,
Voice, tone and words the same we heard before,
The brain's resistless march too as of yore;
Only the flattering heat of wealth is gone,
And lo! the whole man changed, his praises done.

Wealth the Sorcerer

He who has wealth, has birth; gold who can spill,
Is scholar, doctor, critic, what you will;
For who has golden coin, has golden tongue,
Is glorious, gracious, beautiful and young;
All virtues, talents, fames to gold repair
And lodge in gold leaving the poor man bare.

Two Kinds of Loss

These things are deaths, ill-counsel ruining kings,
 The son by fondling spoiled, by him the race,
 Attachment, to the sage's heart that clings,
 And natural goodness marred by company base,
 The Brahman by scant study unbrahminised,
 Sweet shame by wine o'erthrown, by wandering long
 Affection waning, friendship true unprized,
 Tillage uncared, good fortune follies wrong;
 But wealth in double way men may reject,
 Nobly by giving, poorly by neglect.

The Triple Way of Wealth

Three final roads wealth takes and only three,
 To give, enjoy or lose it utterly:
 And his whose miser hand to give is slow
 Nor yet enjoys, the worst third way shall go.

The Beauty of Giving

Be not a miser of thy strength and store;
 Oft in a wounded grace more beauty is.
 The jewel which the careful gravers score;
 The sweet fair girl-wife broken with bridal bliss,
 The rut-worn tusker, the autumnal stream
 With its long beaches dry and slender flood;
 The hero wreathed with victory's diadem,
 Adorned with wounds and glorious with his blood;
 The moon's last disc; rich men of their bright dross,
 By gifts disburdened, fairer shine by loss.

Circumstance

There is no absoluteness in objects. See
 This indigent man aspire as to a prize
 To handfuls of mere barley-bread! yet he
 A few days past, fed full with luxuries,

Held for a trifle earth and all her skies.

Not in themselves are objects great or small,
But circumstance works on the elastic mind,

To widen or contract. The view is all,
And by our inner state the world's defined.

Advice to a King

He fosters, King, the calf who milks the cow,

And thou who takest of the wide earth tax,
Foster the people; with laborious brow

And sleepless vigil strive till nought it lacks.
Then shall the earth become thy faery tree
Of plenty, pleasure, fame, felicity.

Policy

Often she lies, wears sometimes brow of truth,

Kind sometimes, sometimes ravening-merciless;
Now open-handed, full of bounty and grace,

And now a harpy; now sweet honey and ruth
Flows from her tongue, now menace harsh or stern;

This moment with a bottomless desire
She gathers millions in, the next will tire,—
Endless expense takes prodigally its turn.

Thus like a harlot changes momentarily
In princes the chameleon Policy.

The Uses of High Standing

Men highly placed by six good gifts are high.

The first is noble liberality;

The second, power that swift obedience brings;

Service to holy men and holy things

Comes next; then fame; protection then of friends;

Pleasure in pleasant things the great list ends.

Whose rising with these six is unallied,

What seeks he by a mighty prince's side?

Remonstrance with the Suppliant

What the Creator on thy forehead traced
 As on a plate of bronze indelibly,
 Expect that much or little, worst or best,
 Wherever thou dwell, nobly or wretchedly,
 Since thou shalt not have less, though full of pain
 In deserts waterless mid savage men
 Thou wander sole; nor on Olympus hoar
 Ranked amid mighty Gods shalt thou have more.

Therefore be royal-hearted still and bold,
 O man, nor thy proud crest in vain abase
 Cringing to rich men for their gathered gold.
 From the small well or ocean fathomless
 The jar draws equally what it can hold.

The Rainlark to the Cloud

You opulent clouds that in high heavens ride,
 Is't fame you seek? but surely all men know
 To you the darting rainlarks homage owe!
 Hold you then back your showers, because your pride
 By our low suings must be gratified?

To the Rainlark

O rainlark, rainlark, flitting near the cloud,
 Attentive hear, winged friend, a friendly word.
 All vapours are not like, the heavens that shroud
 Darkening; some drench the earth for noble fruit,
 Some are vain thunderers wandering by with bruit:
 Sue not to each thou seest then, O bird;
 If humbly entreat thou must, let few have heard.

(To be continued)

SRI AUROBINDO

(Translations, CWSA Vol. 5, pp. 331-35)

**“AND SINCE THIS *MUST* BE DONE,
THIS WILL BE DONE”**

June 14, 1914

It is a veritable work of creation we have to do: to create activities, new modes of being so that this Force, unknown to the earth till today, may manifest in its plenitude. To this travail I am consecrated, O Lord, for this is what Thou wantest of me. But since Thou hast appointed me for this work, Thou must give me the means, that is, the knowledge necessary for its realisation. We shall unite our efforts: the entire individual being will concentrate in a constant call for the knowledge of the mode of manifestation of this Force, and Thou, Supreme centre of the being, Thou wilt emanate the Force fully so that it may penetrate, transfigure and overcome all obstacles. It is a pact Thou hast signed with the worlds of individual life. Thou hast made a promise, Thou hast sent into these worlds those who can and that which can fulfil this promise. This now demands Thy integral help so that what has been promised may be realised.

In us must take place the union of the two wills and two currents, so that from their contact may spring forth the illuminating spark.

And since this *must* be done, *this will be done*.

THE MOTHER

(*Prayers and Meditations*, CWM 2nd Ed., Vol. 1, p. 173)

Note:

The Mother often gave the children a book on their birthday. Usha R. Patel, received a copy of *Prières et Méditations* from the Mother on her 16th birthday in 1950.

This is Usha's note:

When The Mother was giving me this book [*Prayers and Meditations*] She concentrated, put a page mark in the book, it opened on this page [prayer of June 14, 1914]; then pointing to this one She said, “*This was my prayer.*”

FROM A CONVERSATION OF 10 JULY 1957

. . . It is quite difficult to free oneself from old habits of being and to be able to freely conceive of a new life, a new world. And naturally, the liberation begins on the highest planes of consciousness: it is easier for the mind or the higher intelligence to conceive of new things than for the vital being, for instance, to feel things in a new way. And it is still more difficult for the body to have a purely material perception of what a new world will be. Yet this perception must *precede* the material transformation; first one must *feel* very concretely the strangeness of the old things, their lack of relevance, if I may say so. One must have the feeling, even a material impression, that they are outdated, that they belong to a past which no longer has any purpose. For the old impressions one had of past things which have become historic — which have their interest from that point of view and support the advance of the present and the future — this is still a movement that belongs to the old world: it is the old world that is unfolding with a past, a present, a future. But for the creation of a new world, there is, so to speak, only a continuity of transition which gives an appearance — an impression rather — the impression of two things still intermingled but almost disconnected, and that the things of the past no longer have the power or the strength to endure, with whatever modifications, in the new things. That other world is necessarily an *absolutely* new experience. One would have to go back to the time when there was a transition from the animal to the human creation to find a similar period, and at that time the consciousness was not sufficiently mentalised to be able to observe, understand, feel intelligently — the passage must have been made in a completely obscure way. So, what I am speaking about is absolutely new, *unique* in the terrestrial creation, it is something unprecedented, truly a perception or a sensation or an impression . . . that is quite strange and new. (After a silence) A disconnection: something which has overstayed its time and has only quite a subordinate force of existence, from something totally new, but still so young, so imperceptible, almost weak, so to say; it hasn't yet the power to impose and assert itself and to predominate, to take the place of the other. So there is a concomitance but, as I said, with a disconnection, that is, the connection between the two is missing.

It is difficult to describe, but I am speaking to you about it because this is what I felt yesterday evening. I felt it so acutely . . . that it made me look at certain things, and once I had seen them I felt it would be interesting to tell you about them.

(Silence)

It seems strange that something so new, so special and I might say so unexpected should happen during a film-show.¹ For people who believe that some things are important and other things are not, that there are activities which are helpful to yoga and others which are not, well, this is one more opportunity to show that they are wrong. I have always noticed that it is unexpected things which give you the most interesting experiences.

Yesterday evening, suddenly something happened which I have just described to you as best I could — I don't know if I have succeeded in making myself understood — but it was truly quite new and altogether unexpected. We were shown, comparatively clumsily, a picture of the temple on the banks of the Ganges, and the statue of Kali — for I suppose it was a photograph of that statue, I could not manage to get any precise information about it — and while I was seeing that, which was a completely superficial appearance and, as I said, rather clumsy, I saw the reality it was trying to represent, what was behind, and this put me in touch with all that world of religion and worship, of aspiration, man's whole relationship with the gods, which was — I am already speaking in the past tense — which was the flower of the human spiritual effort towards something more divine than man, something which was the highest and almost the purest expression of his effort towards what is higher than he. And suddenly I had *concretely, materially*, the impression that it was another world, a world that had ceased to be real, living, an outdated world which had lost its reality, its truth, which had been transcended, surpassed by something which had taken birth and was only beginning to express itself, but whose *life* was *so intense*, so true, so sublime, that all this became false, unreal, worthless.

Then I truly understood — for I understood not with the head, the intelligence but with the body, you understand what I mean — I understood in the cells of the body — that a new world *is born* and is beginning to grow.

And so, when I saw all this, I remembered something that had happened. . . . I think I remember rightly, in 1926.²

Sri Aurobindo had given me charge of the outer work because he wanted to withdraw into concentration in order to hasten the manifestation of the supramental consciousness and he had announced to the few people who were there that he was entrusting to me the work of helping and guiding them, that I would remain in contact with him, naturally, and that through me he would do the work. Suddenly, immediately, things took a certain shape: a very brilliant creation was worked out in extraordinary detail, with marvellous experiences, contacts with divine beings, and

1. A Bengali film, *Rani Rasmani*, which describes the lives of Sri Ramakrishna and Rani Rasmani, a rich, very intelligent and religious Bengali widow, who in 1847 built the temple of Kali at Dakshineswar (Bengal) where Sri Ramakrishna lived and worshipped Kali.

2. On 24 November 1926 Sri Aurobindo withdrew into seclusion and Mother assumed charge of the running of the Ashram.

all kinds of manifestations which are considered miraculous. Experiences followed one upon another, and, well, things were unfolding altogether brilliantly and . . . I must say, in an extremely interesting way.

One day, I went as usual to relate to Sri Aurobindo what had been happening — we had come to something really very interesting, and perhaps I showed a little enthusiasm in my account of what had taken place — then Sri Aurobindo looked at me . . . and said: “Yes, this is an Overmind creation. It is very interesting, very well done. You will perform miracles which will make you famous throughout the world, you will be able to turn all events on earth topsy-turvy, indeed, . . .” and then he smiled and said: “It will be a *great* success. But it is an Overmind creation. And it is not success that we want; we want to establish the Supermind on earth. One must know how to renounce immediate success in order to create the new world, the supramental world in its integrality.”

With my inner consciousness I understood immediately: a few hours later the creation was gone . . . and from that moment we started anew on other bases.

Well, I announced to you all that this new world was born. But it has been so engulfed, as it were, in the old world that so far the difference has not been very perceptible to many people. Still, the action of the new forces has continued very regularly, very persistently, very steadily, and to a certain extent, very effectively. And one of the manifestations of this action was my experience — truly so very new — of yesterday evening. And the result of all this I have noted step by step in almost daily experiences. It could be expressed succinctly, in a rather linear way:

First, it is not only a “new conception” of spiritual life and the divine Reality. This conception was expressed by Sri Aurobindo, I have expressed it myself many a time, and it could be formulated somewhat like this: the old spirituality was an escape from life into the divine Reality, leaving the world just where it was, as it was; whereas our new vision, on the contrary, is a divinisation of life, a transformation of the material world into a divine world. This has been said, repeated, more or less understood, indeed it is the basic idea of what we want to do. But this could be a continuation with an improvement, a widening of the old world as it was — and so long as this is a conception up there in the field of thought, in fact it is hardly more than that — but what has happened, the really new thing, is that a new world is *born, born, born*. It is not the old one transforming itself, it is a *new* world which is *born*. And we are right in the midst of this period of transition where the two are entangled — where the other still persists all-powerful and entirely dominating the ordinary consciousness, but where the new one is quietly slipping in, still very modest, unnoticed — unnoticed to the extent that outwardly it doesn’t disturb anything very much, for the time being, and that in the consciousness of most people it is even altogether imperceptible. And yet it is working, growing — until it is strong enough to assert itself visibly.

In any case, to simplify things, it could be said that characteristically the old

world, the creation of what Sri Aurobindo calls the Overmind, was an age of the gods, and consequently the age of religions. As I said, the flower of human effort towards what is above it gave rise to innumerable religious forms, to a religious relationship between the best souls and the invisible world. And at the very summit of all that, as an effort towards a higher realisation there has arisen the idea of the unity of religions, of this “one single thing” which is behind all these manifestations; and this idea has truly been, so to speak, the extreme limit of human aspiration. Well, that is at the frontier, it is something that still belongs *completely* to the Overmind world, the Overmind creation and which from there seems to be looking towards this “other thing” which is a new creation it cannot grasp — which it tries to reach, feels coming, but cannot grasp. To grasp it, a reversal is needed. It is necessary to leave the Overmind creation. It was necessary that the new creation, the supramental creation should take place.

And now, all these old things seem so old, so out-of-date, so arbitrary — such a travesty of the real truth.

In the supramental creation there will *no longer be any religions*. The whole life will be the expression, the flowering into forms of the divine Unity manifesting in the world. And there will no longer be what men now call gods.

These great divine beings themselves will be able to participate in the new creation; but to do so, they will have to put on what we could call the “supramental substance” on earth. And if some of them choose to remain in their world as they are, if they decide not to manifest physically, their relation with the beings of a supramental earth will be a relation of friends, collaborators, equals, for the highest divine essence will be manifested in the beings of the new supramental world on earth.

When the physical substance is supramentalised, to incarnate on earth will no longer be a cause of inferiority, quite the contrary. It will give a plenitude which cannot be obtained otherwise.

But all this is in the future; it is a future . . . which has *begun*, but which will take some time to be realised integrally. Meanwhile we are in a very special situation, extremely special, without precedent. We are now witnessing the birth of a new world; it is very young, very weak — not in its essence but in its outer manifestation — not yet recognised, not even felt, denied by the majority. But it is here. It is here, making an effort to grow, absolutely *sure* of the result. But the road to it is a completely new road which has never before been traced out — nobody has gone there, nobody has done that! It is a beginning, a *universal beginning*. So, it is an absolutely unexpected and unpredictable adventure.

There are people who love adventure. It is these I call, and I tell them this: “I invite you to the great adventure.”

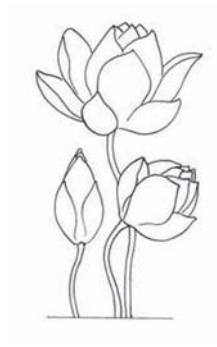
It is not a question of repeating spiritually what others have done before us, for our adventure begins beyond that. It is a question of a new creation, entirely new,

with all the unforeseen events, the risks, the hazards it entails — a *real adventure*, whose goal is certain victory, but the road to which is unknown and must be traced out step by step in the unexplored. Something that has never been in this present universe and that will *never* be again in the same way. If that interests you . . . well, let us embark. What will happen to you tomorrow — I have no idea.

One must put aside all that has been foreseen, all that has been devised, all that has been constructed, and then . . . set off walking into the unknown. And — come what may! *Voilà*.

THE MOTHER

(*Questions and Answers 1957-1958*, CWM 2nd Ed., Vol. 9, pp. 146-52)



EXPERIENCE OF 3 FEBRUARY 1958

[On 19 February 1958,] Mother reads her comments upon an experience she had on February 3:

Between the beings of the supramental world and men, almost the same separation exists as between men and animals. Some time ago I had the experience of identification with animal life, and it is a fact that animals do not understand us; their consciousness is so constructed that we elude them almost entirely. And yet I have known pet animals — cats and dogs, but especially cats — that used to make an almost yogic effort of consciousness to reach us. But usually, when they *see* us as we live and act, they do not understand, they do not *see* us as we are and they suffer because of us. We are a constant enigma to them. Only a very tiny part of their consciousness has a link with us. And it is the same thing for us when we try to look at the supramental world. Only when the link of consciousness is established shall we see it — and even then only the part of our being which has undergone transformation in this way will be able to see it as it is — otherwise the two worlds would remain apart like the animal and human worlds.

The experience I had on the third of February is a proof of this. Before that I had had an individual subjective contact with the supramental world, whereas on the third of February I moved in it concretely, as concretely as I once used to walk in Paris, in a world *that exists in itself*, outside all subjectivity.

It is like a bridge being thrown between the two worlds. Here is the experience as I dictated it immediately afterwards:

(Silence)

The supramental world exists permanently and I am there permanently in a supramental body. I had the proof of this even today when my earth-consciousness went there and remained there consciously between two and three o'clock in the afternoon. Now, I know that what is lacking for the two worlds to unite in a constant and conscious relation, is an intermediate zone between the physical world as it is and the supramental world as it is. This zone remains to be built, both in the individual consciousness and the objective world, and it is being built. When I used to speak of the new world which is being created, it was of this intermediary zone that I was speaking. And similarly, when I am on this side, that is, in the field of the physical consciousness, and I see the supramental power, the supramental light and substance constantly penetrating matter, it is the construction of this zone which I see and in which I participate.

I was on a huge boat which was a symbolic representation of the place where this work is going on. This boat, as large as a city, is fully organised, and it had certainly already been functioning for some time, for its organisation was complete. It is the place where people who are destined for the supramental life are trained. These people — or at least a part of their being — had already undergone a supramental transformation, for the boat itself and everything on board was neither material nor subtle-physical nor vital nor mental — it was a supramental substance. This substance was of the most material supramental, the supramental substance which is closest to the physical world, the first to manifest. The light was a mixture of gold and red, forming a uniform substance of a luminous orange. Everything was like that — the light was like that, the people were like that — everything had that colour, although with various shades which made it possible to distinguish things from each other. The general impression was of a world without shadows; there were shades but no shadows. The atmosphere was full of joy, calm, order; everything went on regularly and in silence. And at the same time one could see all the details of an education, a training in all fields, by which the people on board were being prepared.

This immense ship had just reached the shore of the supramental world and a first group of people who were destined to become the future inhabitants of this supramental world were to disembark. Everything had been arranged for this first landing. At the wharf several very tall beings were posted. They were not human beings, they had never been men before. Nor were they the permanent inhabitants of the supramental world. They had been delegated from above and posted there to control and supervise the landing. I was in charge of the whole thing from the beginning and all the time. I had prepared all the groups myself. I stood on the boat at the head of the gangway, calling the groups one by one and sending them down to the shore. The tall beings who were posted there were inspecting, so to say, those who were landing, authorising those who were ready and sending back those who were not and who had to continue their training on board the ship. While I was there looking at everybody, the part of my consciousness which came from here became extremely interested; it wanted to see and recognise all the people, see how they had changed and check which ones were taken immediately and which ones had to remain to continue their training. After a while, as I stood there observing, I began to feel that I was being pulled back so that my body might wake up — a consciousness or a person here — and in my consciousness I protested, “No, no, not yet, not yet! I want to see the people!” I was seeing and noting everything with intense interest. . . . Things continued in this way until suddenly the clock here began to strike three, and this brought me back violently. There was a sensation of suddenly falling into my body. I came back with a shock because I had been called back very suddenly, but with all my memory. I remained quiet, without moving, until I could recollect the whole experience and keep it.

On the boat the nature of objects was not the one we know on earth; for instance, clothes were not made of cloth and what looked like cloth was not manufactured: it formed a part of the body, it was made of the same substance which took different forms. It had a kind of plasticity. When a change had to be made, it took place, not by any artificial and external means but by an inner operation, an operation of consciousness which gave form or appearance to the substance. Life created its own forms. There was *one single* substance in everything; it changed the quality of its vibration according to need and use.

Those who were sent back for fresh training were not of a uniform colour, it was as if their body had greyish, opaque patches of a substance resembling earthly substance; they were dull, as if they had not been entirely permeated with light, not transformed. They were not like that everywhere, only in places.

The tall beings on the shore were not of the same colour, at least they did not have that orange tint; they were paler, more transparent. Except for one part of their body, one could only see the outline of their form. They were very tall, they seemed not to have any bones and could take any form according to their need. Only from the waist down had they a permanent density, which was not perceptible in the rest of their body. Their colour was much lighter, with very little red, it was more golden or even white. The parts of whitish light were translucent; they were not positively transparent but less dense, more subtle than the orange substance.

When I was called back and while I was saying “Not yet”, each time I had a brief glimpse of myself, that is, of my form in the supramental world. I was a mixture of the tall beings and the beings aboard the ship. My upper part, particularly the head, was only a silhouette whose contents were white with an orange fringe. Going down towards the feet, the colour became more like that of the people on the boat, that is, orange; going upwards, it was more translucent and white and the red grew less. The head was only a silhouette with a sun shining within it; rays of light came from it which were the action of the will.

As for the people I saw on board the ship, I recognised them all. Some were from here, from the Ashram, some came from elsewhere, but I know them too. I saw everybody but as I knew that I would not remember them all when I returned, I decided not to give any names. Besides, it is not necessary. Three or four faces were very clearly visible, and when I saw them, I understood the feeling I had here on earth when looking into their eyes: there was such an extraordinary joy. . . . People were mostly young, there were very few children and they were about fourteen or fifteen, certainly not below ten or twelve — I did not remain long enough to see all the details. There weren't any very old people, apart from a few exceptions. Most of the people who went ashore were middle-aged, except a few. Already, before this experience, some individual cases had been examined several times at a place where people capable of being supramentalised were examined; I had a few surprises and noted them; I even told some people about it. But the ones whom I put

ashore today, I saw very distinctly; they were middle-aged, neither young children nor old people, apart from a few rare exceptions, and that corresponded fairly well with what I expected. I decided not to say anything, not to give any names. As I did not remain until the end, it was not possible for me to get an exact picture; the picture was not absolutely clear or complete. I do not want to say things to some and not to others.

What I can say is that the point of view, the judgment, was based *exclusively* on the substance of which the people were made, that is, whether they belonged completely to the supramental world, whether they were made of that very special substance. The standpoint taken is neither moral nor psychological. It is probable that the substance their bodies were made of was the result of an inner law or inner movement which at that time was not in question. At least it is quite clear that the values are different.

When I came back, simultaneously with the recollection of the experience I knew that the supramental world is permanent, that my presence there is permanent, and that only a missing link was necessary for the connection to be made in the consciousness and the substance, and it is this link which is now being forged. I had the impression — an impression which remained for quite a long time, almost a whole day — of an extreme relativity — no, not exactly that: the impression that the relation between this world and the other completely changed the standpoint from which things should be evaluated or appraised. This standpoint had nothing mental about it and it gave a strange inner feeling that lots of things we consider good or bad are not really so. It was very clear that everything depended on the capacity of things, on their aptitude in expressing the supramental world or being in relation with it. It was so completely different, sometimes even altogether contrary to our ordinary appraisal. I recollect one little thing which we usually consider to be bad; how strange it was to see that in truth it was something excellent! And other things we consider to be important have in fact absolutely no importance at all: whether a thing is like this or like that is not at all important. What is very obvious is that our appraisal of what is divine or undivine is not right. I even laughed to see certain things. . . . Our usual feeling of what is anti-divine seems artificial, seems based on something that's not true, not living — besides, what we call life here did not seem living to me compared with that world — anyway, this feeling should be founded on our relation between the two worlds and on how things make the relation between them easier or more difficult. This would make a great difference in our appraisal of what brings us nearer to the Divine or what separates us from Him. In people too I saw that what helps them to become supramental or hinders them from it, is very different from what our usual moral notions imagine. I felt how . . . ridiculous we are.

(End of the experience of February 3)

(*Mother speaks to the children:*)

There is a continuation of this, a kind of consequence in my consciousness of the experience of third February, but it seemed a little premature to read it now. It will appear later in the April issue,¹ following this.

One thing — I must insist on this — seems to me at the moment to be the most essential difference between our world and the supramental world — and it is only after having gone there consciously, with the consciousness which normally operates here, that this difference has become apparent to me in all its enormity, so to say — everything here, except what goes on within, very deep within, seemed to me absolutely artificial. None of the values of the ordinary physical life are based on truth. And just as to clothe ourselves we have to obtain some cloth and sew clothes to put on when we want to wear them, so too to feed ourselves we need to take things from outside and put them inside our bodies in order to be nourished. In everything our life is artificial.

A true, sincere, spontaneous life like the one in the supramental world, is a springing forth of things from the action of the conscious will, a power over substance which makes it harmonise with what we decide should be. And one who has the power and the knowledge can obtain what he wants, whereas one who does not have them has no artificial means of getting what he desires.

In ordinary life, *everything* is artificial. According to the chance of birth or circumstance, you have a higher or lower position or a more or less comfortable life, not because it is the spontaneous, natural, sincere expression of your way of being and your inner need, but because chance circumstances in life have brought you in contact with these things. An absolutely worthless man may be in a very high position and a man with a marvellous ability to create and organise may find himself toiling in an absolutely limited and inferior situation, whereas he would be a completely useful person if the world were sincere.

This artificiality, this insincerity, this complete lack of truth became so shockingly apparent to me that . . . one wonders how, in so false a world, we can have any true evaluations.

But instead of making you sad, morose, rebellious, dissatisfied, there is rather the feeling of what I was saying at the end, of something so laughably ridiculous that for several days I was seized with uncontrollable laughter when I saw things and people! — an uncontrollable laughter, absolutely inexplicable except to myself, at the ridiculousness of things.

When I invited you to a journey into the unknown, a journey of adventure, I did not know I was so close to the truth, and I can promise those who are ready to attempt the adventure that they will make very interesting discoveries.

1. *Bulletin*: April 1958. The text is given in an appendix to this talk.

APPENDIX

A few days after the experience of February 3, Mother had other experiences which were a kind of continuation of the first one:

Each person carries with himself in his atmosphere what Sri Aurobindo calls the “Censors”; they are in a way permanent delegates of the adverse forces. Their role is to criticise mercilessly every act, every thought, the slightest movement of the consciousness, and to bring you face to face with the most hidden springs of your actions, to bring to light the slightest vibration of a lower kind accompanying what seem to be your purest and highest thoughts and acts.

This is not a question of morality. These gentlemen are not moralising agents although they know very well how to make use of morality! And when they are dealing with a scrupulous conscience, they can harass it without mercy, whispering to it at every minute, “You should not have done this, you should not have done that, you should have done this thing instead, said that thing; now you have spoilt everything, committed an irreparable mistake; see how everything is irretrievably lost now through your fault.” They may even take possession of some people’s consciousness: you chase away the thought, and there! it comes back two minutes later; you chase it away again and it is still there, all the time hammering away at you.

Every time I meet these gentlemen I welcome them, for they compel you to be absolutely sincere, they track down the most subtle hypocrisy and make you at every moment face your most secret vibrations. And they are intelligent! — their intelligence infinitely surpasses ours: they know everything, they know how to turn against you the least thought, the least argument, the least action, with a truly wonderful subtlety. Nothing escapes them. But what gives a hostile tinge to these beings is the fact that they are first and foremost defeatists. They always paint the picture for you in the darkest colours; if need be they distort your own intentions. They are truly instruments of sincerity. But they always forget one thing, deliberately, something that they cast far behind as if it did not exist: the divine Grace. They forget prayer, that spontaneous prayer which suddenly springs up from the depths of the being like an intense call, and brings down the Grace and changes the course of things.

And each time you have made some progress, have passed on to a higher level, they make you face once again all the acts of your past life, and in a few months, a few days or a few minutes, they make you go through all your exams once again at a higher level. And it is not enough to brush the thought aside and say, “Oh! I know”, and throw a little cloak over it so as not to see. You must face it and conquer, keep your consciousness full of light, without the least tremor, without a word, without the slightest vibration in the cells of the body — and then the attack melts away.

But our ideas of good and evil are so ridiculous! So ridiculous is our notion of what is close to the Divine or far from the Divine! The experience I had the other day, on the third of February, was for me revelatory, I came out of it completely changed. I suddenly understood very many things from the past, actions, parts of my life which had remained inexplicable — in truth, the shortest way from one point to another is not the straight line that men imagine it is!

And all the time the experience lasted, one hour — one hour of that time is long — I was in a state of extraordinary joyfulness, almost in an intoxicated state. . . . The difference between the two states of consciousness is so great that when you are in one, the other seems unreal, like a dream. When I came back what struck me first of all was the futility of life here; our little conceptions down here seem so laughable, so comical. . . . We say that some people are mad, but their madness is perhaps a great wisdom, from the supramental point of view, and their behaviour is perhaps nearer to the truth of things — I am not speaking of the obscure mad men whose brains have been damaged, but of many other incomprehensible mad men, the luminous mad: they have wanted to cross the border too quickly and the rest has not followed.

When one looks at the world of men from the supramental consciousness, the predominant feature is a feeling of strangeness, of artificiality — of a world that is absurd because it is artificial. This world is false because its material appearance does not at all express the deeper truth of things. There is a kind of disconnection between the appearance and what is within. In this way, a man with a divine power in the depths of his being may find himself in the position of a slave on the external plane. It is absurd! In the supramental world, on the other hand, it is the will which acts directly on the substance and the substance is obedient to this will. You want to cover yourself: the substance you live in immediately takes the form of a garment to cover you. You want to go from one place to another: your will is enough to transport you without needing any conveyance, any artificial device. Thus, the boat in my experience had no need of any mechanism to move it; it was the will which modified the substance according to its needs. When it was time to land, the wharf took shape of itself. When I wanted to send the groups ashore, those who were to land knew it automatically without my having to say a word, and they came up in turn. Everything went on in silence, there was no need to speak to make oneself understood; but the silence itself on board the ship did not give that impression of artificiality it does here. Here, when one wants silence, one must stop talking; silence is the opposite of sound. There the silence was vibrant, living, active and comprehensive, comprehensible.

The absurd thing here is all the artificial means one must use. Any idiot at all has more power if he has more means to acquire the necessary artifices; whereas in the supramental world, the more conscious one is and the more in touch with the truth of things, the more authority does the will have over substance.

The authority is a true authority. If you want a garment you must have the

power to make it, a real power. If you do not have this power, well, you remain naked. No device is there to make up for the lack of power. Here, not once in a million times is authority an expression of something true. Everything is formidably stupid.

When I came down again — “came down”, it’s a way of speaking, for it is neither above nor below, neither inside nor outside; it is . . . somewhere — it took me some time to readjust myself. I even remember saying to someone, “Now we are going to fall back into our usual stupidity.” But I have understood many things and come back from there with a definitive force. Now I know that our way of evaluating things down here, our petty morality, has no relation with the values of the supramental world.

*

These surface things have nothing dramatic about them. They seem to me more and more like soap-bubbles, especially since the third of February.

There are people who come to me in despair, in tears, in what they call terrible psychological suffering; when I see them like this, I slightly shift the needle in my consciousness which contains you all, and when they go away they are completely comforted. It is just like a compass needle; one shifts the needle a little in the consciousness and it is all over. Of course, it comes back later, out of habit. They are nothing but soap-bubbles.

I have known suffering also, but there was always a part of myself which knew how to stand behind, apart.

The only thing in the world which still seems intolerable to me now, is all the physical deterioration, the physical suffering, the ugliness, the inability to express that capacity for beauty which is in every being. But that too will be conquered one day. There too the power will come one day to shift the needle a little. Only, we must rise higher in consciousness: the deeper one wants to go down into matter, the higher is it necessary to rise in consciousness. That will take time. Sri Aurobindo was surely right when he spoke of a few centuries.

THE MOTHER

(Questions and Answers 1957-1958, CWM 2nd Ed., Vol. 9, pp. 271-83)

EXPERIENCE OF 5 NOVEMBER 1958

New Year Message for 1959

At the very bottom of the inconscience most hard and rigid and narrow and stifling I struck upon an almighty spring that cast me up forthwith into a formless limitless Vast vibrating with the seeds of a new world.

Here is the origin of this message:

Last evening in the class,¹ I noticed that the children, who had a whole week to prepare questions on the text we are reading, did not find a single one. A terrible somnolence! A total lack of interest! When I had finished my reading, I said to myself, “But what is there in these brains that does not take interest in anything but their small personal affairs? After all, what is happening inside there, behind these forms?”

Then during the meditation, I began going down into the mental atmosphere of the people around me, in order to find there the small light, the thing that responds. And I was literally dragged down to the bottom, as if into a hole.

In this hole I saw what I am still seeing. I went down into a fissure, as it were, between two steep rocks, rocks made of something harder than basalt, black, metallic at the same time, with edges so sharp that you had the impression that were you simply to touch them, you would be flayed. It was something that seemed to have no bottom and no end, and it became narrower and narrower like a funnel, so narrow that there was almost no room left even for the consciousness to pass. The bottom was invisible, a black hole, and that went down and down and down, without air, without light, only a kind of glimmer, like a reflection at the peak of the rocks, a glimmer that came from beyond, from something that could be the heavens, but something invisible. I continued to slide down the fissure and I saw the edges, the black rocks, cut with scissors, as it were, shining like a fresh cut, the edges so sharp that they were like knives. Here was one, there another, there another, everywhere, all around. And I was dragged, dragged, dragged down, — I went down, down, down and there was no end to it, it became more and more oppressive, stifling, suffocating.

Physically, the body followed, it participated in the experience. The hand that was on the arm of the chair slipped down, then the other hand, then the head bent down in an irresistible movement. Then I said to myself, “But this must stop, for if it continues, my head will be down on the ground!” (The consciousness was

1. Mother's weekly “Wednesday class”, held at the Ashram Playground.

elsewhere, but I was looking at my body from outside.) And I asked myself, “But what is there at the bottom of this hole?”

Hardly had I formulated the question when it was as if I had touched a spring that was there at the very bottom of the hole, a spring I had not noticed yet, which acted at once with a tremendous force and at one bound shot me up straight into the air; I was cast out of the fissure into a limitless, formless vast which was infinitely comfortable — not exactly warm, but it gave a comfortable impression of inner warmth. After this painful enough descent, it was a kind of super-comfort, an ease, an ease at its maximum. And my body immediately followed the movement, the head at once became straight again. And I lived all this without objectifying it at all; I was not taking stock of what it was, I did not look for any explanation of what was happening; it was what it was, I lived it and that was all. The experience was absolutely spontaneous.

It was all-powerful, infinitely rich; it had no form at all, no limit — naturally I was identified with it and that is why I knew that it had neither limit nor form. It was as if — I say “as if” because it could not be seen — as if this vast was made up of countless imperceptible points, points that did not occupy any place in space (there was no space, you see), points that were a deep warm gold; but this was only an impression, a translation. And all that was absolutely *living*, living with a power that seemed infinite. And yet it was immobile, with an immobility so perfect that it gave a feeling of eternity, but with an unbelievable inner intensity of movement and life — it was inner, self-contained — and immobile, immobile in relation to the outside, if there was an outside. And it had a boundless life — it may be spoken of as infinite only by way of image — and an intensity, a strength, a force, a peace, the peace of eternity, a silence, a calm, a power capable of everything.

And I did not think it, I did not objectify it, I lived it comfortably, very comfortably. This lasted for a very long time — for the rest of the meditation.

It was as if that contained all the wealth of possibilities. And all that though it had no form, had the power to become forms.

After a moment I asked myself, “What is this, to what does it correspond?” Naturally I found out afterwards, and finally this morning I told myself, “Well, it is just to give me my message for the coming year.” Then I transcribed it — naturally, you cannot make a description, it is indescribable. It was a psychological phenomenon and the forms were nothing but a way of describing the psychological state to oneself. And this is what I noted, obviously in a mental way. I have described nothing, I have only stated a fact:

“At the very bottom of the inconscience most hard and rigid and narrow and stifling I struck upon an almighty spring that cast me up forthwith into a formless limitless Vast vibrating with the seeds of a new world.”

Generally the inconscience gives the impression of something amorphous, inert, formless, neutral and grey — formerly, when I entered into the zones of inconscience, that was the first thing that I met; but in my experience yesterday, it was an inconscience hard, rigid, coagulated, as if coagulated for a resistance. It was a mental inconscience; all efforts make no impression on it, nothing can penetrate it. And this inconscience is much worse than a purely material inconscience. It was not the original inconscient; it was, if one may say so, a mentalised inconscient. All this rigidity, hardness, narrowness, fixity, opposition come from a mental presence in the creation: this is what the mind has brought into the inconscient. When the mind had not manifested, the inconscient was not like that: it was formless and had the plasticity of formless things. That plasticity has disappeared.

The beginning of the experience is a very expressive image of the action of mind in the inconscient; it has made the inconscient aggressive — it was not like that before — aggressive, resisting, obstinate. That was precisely the starting-point of my experience. I was in fact trying to look into the mental inconscience of people, and this mental inconscience *refuses* to change, while the other did not; the purely material inconscience has no mode of being, it does not exist, it is not organised in any way. While this one is an organised inconscience, organised through the beginning of a mental influence — and it is a hundred times worse! It has now become a much greater obstacle than before. Before, it did not even have the power to resist, it had nothing, it was truly inconscient. Now it is an inconscience organised in its refusal to change! So I wrote, “most hard and rigid and narrow” — the idea is of something which presses you, presses you — “most stifling”.

Then I wrote, “I struck upon an almighty spring”. That means precisely this: in the deepest depths of the inconscient, there is a supreme spring that enables us to touch the Supreme. Because at the very bottom of the inconscience there is the Supreme. It is the Supreme who enables us to touch the Supreme. This is the “almighty spring”.

It is always the same idea that the highest height touches the deepest depth. The universe is like a circle; it is represented by a serpent that bites its own tail. That means that the supreme height touches the most material matter without any intermediary. I have said this many times, but here it was an experience of the thing as I had it.

Finally I said, “a formless limitless Vast vibrating with the seeds of a new world”. This does not refer to the primordial creation, but to the supramental creation; so this experience does not correspond to a return to the supreme origin of all. I had altogether the impression that I was projected into the origin of the supramental creation: it is something of the Supreme that has already been objectified precisely for the sake of the supramental creation.

There was in fact this entire impression of power, of warmth and of gold. It was not fluid, but like a powdery mist. And each one of these things (they cannot be

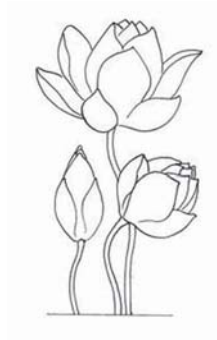
called particles or fragments or even points, unless point is taken in the mathematical sense, a point that does not occupy any place in space) was like living gold, a powdery mist of warm gold — one cannot call it bright, nor can one call it dark; neither was it light: a multitude of small points of gold, nothing but that. One could say that they touched my eyes, my face . . . and with a tremendous force! At the same time, there was the feeling of a plenitude, of an all-powerful peace — it was rich, it was full. It was movement at its maximum, infinitely more swift than anything that one can imagine, and at the same time it was absolute peace, perfect stillness.

And this almighty spring was a perfect image of what happens, is bound to happen and will happen *for everybody*: all at once you shoot up into the vast.

The experience that I have just described was followed by another which was also noted down at the time.

THE MOTHER

(*Words of the Mother – III*, CWM 2nd Ed., Vol. 15, pp. 361-65)



EXPERIENCE OF 13 NOVEMBER 1958

To tell the truth, you are never freed from hostile forces until you come out for good into the Light, above the lower hemisphere. And there the phrase “hostile forces” loses its meaning; only the forces of progress are there in order to compel you to progress. But you must come out of the lower hemisphere in order to see things in that way; because below, they are very real in their opposition to the divine plan.

It was said in the old traditions that one could not live more than twenty days in that higher state without leaving one’s body and returning to the supreme origin. Now that is no longer true.

It is precisely this state of perfect harmony, beyond all attacks, that will become possible with the supramental realisation. It is that which will be realised for all who are destined for the supramental transformation. The adverse forces know quite well that in the supramental world they will automatically disappear: having no more use, they will be dissolved without the need to do anything, simply through the presence of the supramental force. That is why they rush about in a rage, negating everything, everything.

But the link between the two worlds has not yet been built — it is in the course of being built. That was the meaning of the experience of February third, namely, to establish a link between the two worlds. For the two worlds are there in fact — not one above the other: one within the other, in two different dimensions — but there is no communication between the two. They overlap each other without being joined together. In the experience of February third, I saw some of those from here and elsewhere who already belong to the supramental world in one part of their being; but there is no connection, no junction. The moment has come just now in the history of the universe when that link must be established.

The experience of November fifth was a new step in the construction of the link between the two worlds. I was indeed projected into the very origin of the supramental creation: all that warm gold, that living tremendous power, that sovereign peace. I saw once again that the values which govern in this supramental world have nothing to do with our values here below, even the values of the wisest, even those values which we consider most divine at the time we live constantly in the divine Presence. It is altogether different.

Not only in our state of worship and surrender to the Lord, but even in our state of identification, the quality of the identification is different depending on whether we are on this side, progressing in this hemisphere below, or have passed over to the other and emerged into the other world, the other hemisphere, the higher hemisphere.

The quality or the kind of relation that I had with the Supreme at that moment

was quite different from that which we have here, and even the identification had a different quality. With regard to the lower movements one understands very well that they are different, but that was the summit of our experience here, that identification by which it is the Supreme who rules and lives. Well! He rules and lives quite differently when we are in this lower hemisphere and when we are in the supramental life. And at that moment what gave intensity to the experience was that I came to perceive, vaguely, these two states of consciousness at the same time. It is almost as if the Supreme himself is different, that is to say, the experience we have of him. And yet in both cases there was contact with the Supreme. Well, probably what differs is what we perceive of him or the way in which we translate it; but the quality of the experience is different.

There is in the other hemisphere an intensity and a plenitude which expresses itself through a power different from the one here. How to explain it? You cannot. The quality of the consciousness itself seems to change. It is not something higher than the summit to which we can rise here, it is not one step *more*: here, we are at the end, at the summit. It is the quality that is different, the quality, in the sense that there is a plenitude, a richness, a power. This is a translation, in our manner, but there is something that escapes us — it is truly a new reversal of consciousness.

When we begin to live the spiritual life, a reversal of consciousness takes place which is for us the proof that we have entered the spiritual life; well, another reversal of consciousness occurs when one enters the supramental world.

Besides, perhaps each time that a new world opens up, there will again be a new reversal of this kind. Thus even our spiritual life — which is such a total reversal in relation to ordinary life — is and appears to be, in relation to the supramental consciousness, the supramental realisation, something so totally different that the values of the two are almost opposite.

One can put it in this way (but this is very imprecise, more than diminished — deformed): it is as if our entire spiritual life were made of silver whereas the supramental is made of gold, as if the whole spiritual life here below were a vibration of silver, not lustreless, but merely a light, a light that goes up to the summit, a light quite pure, pure and intense; but in the other life, the supramental life, there is a richness and a power that makes all the difference. This whole spiritual life of our psychic being and our present consciousness, which appears so warm, so full, so wonderful, so sparkling to the ordinary consciousness, well, all this splendour appears poor in relation to the splendour of the new world.

The phenomenon can be very well explained in this way: a series of reversals bringing about, step by step, an ever new richness of creation so that whatever has preceded it appears poor in comparison. What for us, in relation to our ordinary life, is a supreme richness, appears a poverty in relation to this new reversal of consciousness. This was my experience.

Last night when I tried to understand what was lacking so that I might be able

to bring you completely, truly out of your difficulties, the effort reminded me of what I told you the other day about the Power, the power of transformation, the true power of realisation, the supramental power. Once you enter there, rise into that state, then you see that it is truly the All-Power in relation to what we are here. So once more I perceived, I felt the two states at the same time.

But as long as this realisation is not an accomplished fact, it will still be a progression — a progression, an ascension: you gain, you gain ground, you climb up and up; as long as it is not the new reversal, it is as if everything needed to be done over again. It is the repetition of the experience here below — it is reproduced up there.

And each time, you have the impression that you have lived on the surface of things. It is an impression that is repeated and repeated. At each new conquest you have the impression: “Until now I had lived only on the surface of things — on the surface of things — on the surface of realisation, the surface of surrender, the surface of power — it was merely the surface of things, the surface of experience.” Behind the surface there is a depth, and it is only when you enter into the depth that you touch the true thing. And each time it is the same experience: what appeared as a depth becomes a surface, a surface with all that it means, something inaccurate, artificial, an artificial transcription, something that gives one the impression that it is not truly living: it is a copy, an imitation — it is an image, a reflection, not the thing itself. You pass into another zone and you have the impression that you have discovered the Source and the Power, the Truth of things; and then, this source, this power and this truth become in their turn an appearance, an imitation, a transcription in relation to the new realisation.

Meanwhile, we must indeed recognise that we have not got the key yet; it is not within our hands. Or rather we know quite well where it is, and we have only one thing to do: the perfect surrender of which Sri Aurobindo speaks, the total self-giving to the Divine Will, whatever happens, even in the midst of the night.

There is the night and there is the sun, the night and the sun, again the night, many nights; but one must cling to this will to surrender, cling to it as in a tempest, and give up everything into the hands of the Supreme Lord, until the day when the Sun will come for ever, the total victory.

THE MOTHER

(Words of the Mother – III, CWM 2nd Ed., Vol. 15, pp. 366-70)

A NEW EDUCATION FOR A NEW CONSCIOUSNESS

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education

(Continued from the issue of June 2018)

*(The short notes preceding each section are by the editors of the compilation.
This compilation was published in 1992.)*

*Now mind is all and its uncertain ray,
Mind is the leader of the body and life,
Mind the thought-driven chariot of the soul
Carrying the luminous wanderer in the night
To vistas of a far uncertain dawn,
To the end of the Spirit's fathomless desire,
To its dream of absolute truth and utter bliss.
There are greater destinies mind cannot surmise
Fixed on the summit of the evolving Path
The Traveller now treads in the Ignorance,
Unaware of his next step, not knowing his goal.
Mind is not all his tireless climb can reach,
There is a fire on the apex of the worlds,
There is a house of the Eternal's light,
There is an infinite truth, an absolute power.
The Spirit's mightiness shall cast off its mask;
Its greatness shall be felt shaping the world's course:
It shall be seen in its own veillless beams,
A star rising from the Inconscient's night,
A sun climbing to Supernature's peak.
Abandoning the dubious middle Way,
A few shall glimpse the miraculous Origin
And some shall feel in you the secret Force
And they shall turn to meet a nameless tread,
Adventurers into a mightier Day.
Ascending out of the limiting breadths of mind,
They shall discover the world's huge design
And step into the Truth, the Right, the Vast.*

(S34: 704)

It is fascinating for a child to witness the flowering of his mental faculties: there is an eagerness to discover, to understand. A stream of questions gushes forth. The powers of the intellect unfold their petals and knowledge blossoms. Curiosity keeps the child alive. He learns to observe, to discriminate, to judge. And sometimes, a radiant guest comes — imagination, whose magic wand disturbs, or illumines, the conclusions of logic.

But for those who really want to know, to go beyond appearances, mental development, after a while, might be found disappointing and insufficient. Pursued for its own sake, it does not lead very far.

This disappointment is in fact a kind of blessing. It gives a fresh élan to the inner exploration and leads to the awareness that “mind is not an instrument of knowledge”.

Here silence can open hidden doors and reveal the ways to the higher regions of knowledge above.

Adventure beckons us to explore the most secret recesses of our being. We begin to realise that the mental consciousness too can be changed.

The True Role of the Mind

. . . the true role of the mind is the formation and organisation of action. The mind has a formative and organising power, and it is that which puts the different elements of inspiration in order, for action, for organising action. And if it would only confine itself to that role, receiving inspirations — whether from above or from the mystic centre of the soul — and simply formulating the plan of action — in broad outline or in minute detail, for the smallest things of life or the great terrestrial organisations — it would amply fulfil its function.

It is not an instrument of knowledge.

But it can use knowledge for action, to organise action. It is an instrument of organisation and formation, very powerful and very capable when it is well developed.

One can feel this very clearly when one wants to organise one's life, for instance — to put the different elements in their place in one's existence. There is a certain intellectual faculty which immediately puts each thing in its place and makes a plan and organises. And it is not a knowledge that comes from the mind, it is a knowledge which comes, as I said, from the mystic depths of the soul or from a higher consciousness; and the mind concentrates it in the physical world and organises it to give a basis of action to the higher consciousness.

One has this experience very clearly when one wants to organise one's life.

Then, there is another use. When one is in contact with one's reason, with the rational centre of the intellect, the pure reason, it is a powerful control over all vital impulses. All that comes from the vital world can be very firmly controlled by it and

used in a disciplined and organised action. But it must be at the service of something else — not work for its own satisfaction.

These are the two uses of the mind: it is a controlling force, an instrument of control, and it is a power of organisation. That is its true place. (M8: 189)

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The intellect is an organ composed of several groups of functions, divisible into two important classes, the functions and faculties of the right hand and the functions and faculties of the left hand. The faculties of the right hand are comprehensive, creative and synthetic; the faculties of the left hand critical and analytic. To the right hand belong Judgment, Imagination, Memory, Observation; to the left hand Comparison and Reasoning. The critical faculties distinguish, compare, classify, generalise, deduce, infer, conclude; they are the component parts of the logical reason. The right-hand faculties comprehend, command, judge in their own right, grasp, hold and manipulate. The right-hand mind is the master of knowledge, the left-hand its servant. The left hand touches only the body of knowledge, the right hand penetrates its soul. The left hand limits itself to ascertained truth, the right hand grasps that which is still elusive or unascertained. Both are essential to the completeness of the human reason. (S1: 387)

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Not only Science but Art, not only book-knowledge and information but growth in culture and character are parts of a true education; to help the individual to develop his capacities, to help in the forming of thinkers and creators and men of vision and action of the future, this is a part of its work. (S36: 502)

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Mental education . . . but where does it begin? First, the child must develop his power of attention and concentration, and a correct and minute judgment.

. . . whatever you may want to do in life, one thing is absolutely indispensable and at the basis of *everything*, the capacity of concentrating the attention. If you are able to gather together the rays of attention and consciousness on one point and can maintain this concentration with a persistent will, *nothing* can resist it — whatever it may be, from the most material physical development to the highest spiritual one. But this discipline must be followed in a constant and, it may be said, imperturbable way; not that you should always be concentrated on the same thing — that's not what I mean, I mean learning to concentrate.

And materially, for studies, sports, all physical or mental development, it is absolutely indispensable. And the value of an individual is proportionate to the value of his attention.

And from the spiritual point of view it is still more important. There is *no* spiritual obstacle which can resist a penetrating power of concentration. For instance, the discovery of the psychic being, union with the inner Divine, opening to the higher spheres, *all* can be obtained by an intense and obstinate power of concentration — but one must learn how to do it.

There is nothing in the human or even in the superhuman field, to which the power of concentration is not the key. (M9: 360-61)

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Undeniably, what most impedes mental progress in children is the constant dispersion of their thoughts. Their thoughts flutter hither and thither like butterflies and they have to make a great effort to fix them. Yet this capacity is latent in them, for when you succeed in arousing their interest, they are capable of a good deal of attention. By his ingenuity, therefore, the educator will gradually help the child to become capable of a sustained effort of attention and a faculty of more and more complete absorption in the work in hand. All methods that can develop this faculty of attention from games to rewards are good and can all be utilised according to the need and the circumstances. But it is the psychological action that is most important and the sovereign method is to arouse in the child an interest in what you want to teach him, a liking for work, a will to progress. To love to learn is the most precious gift that one can give to a child: to love to learn always and everywhere, so that all circumstances, all happenings in life may be constantly renewed opportunities for learning more and always more.

For that, to attention and concentration should be added observation, precise recording and faithfulness of memory. This faculty of observation can be developed by varied and spontaneous exercises, making use of every opportunity that presents itself to keep the child's thought wakeful, alert and prompt. The growth of the understanding should be stressed much more than that of memory. One knows well only what one has understood. Things learnt by heart, mechanically, fade away little by little and finally disappear; what is understood is never forgotten. Moreover, you must never refuse to explain to a child the how and the why of things. If you cannot do it yourself, you must direct the child to those who are qualified to answer or point out to him some books that deal with the question. In this way you will progressively awaken in the child the taste for true study and the habit of making a persistent effort to know. (M12: 25-26)

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The first qualities of the mind that have to be developed are those which can be grouped under observation. We notice some things, ignore others. Even of what we notice, we observe very little. A general perception of an object is all we usually carry away from a cursory half-attentive glance. A closer attention fixes its place, form, nature as distinct from its surroundings. Full concentration of the faculty of observation gives us all the knowledge that the three chief senses can gather about the object, or if we touch or taste, we may gather all that the five senses can tell of its nature and properties. [. . .] The first thing the teacher has to do is to accustom the pupil to concentrate attention.

We may take the instance of a flower. Instead of looking casually at it and getting a casual impression of scent, form and colour, he should be encouraged to know the flower — to fix in his mind the exact shade, the peculiar glow, the precise intensity of the scent, the beauty of curve and design in the form. His touch should assure itself of the texture and its peculiarities. Next, the flower should be taken to pieces and its structure examined with the same carefulness of observation. All this should be done not as a task, but as an object of interest by skilfully arranged questions suited to the learner which will draw him on to observe and investigate one thing after the other until he has almost unconsciously mastered the whole.

Memory and judgment are the next qualities that will be called upon, and they should be encouraged in the same unconscious way. The student should not be made to repeat the same lesson over again in order to remember it. That is a mechanical, burdensome and unintelligent way of training the memory. A similar but different flower should be put in his hands and he should be encouraged to note it with the same care, but with the avowed object of noting the similarities and differences. By this practice daily repeated the memory will naturally be trained. Not only so, but the mental centres of comparison and contrast will be developed. The learner will begin to observe as a habit the similarities of things and their differences. The teacher should take every care to encourage the perfect growth of this faculty and habit. At the same time the laws of species and genus will begin to dawn on the mind and, by a skilful following and leading of the young developing mind, the scientific habit, the scientific attitude and the fundamental facts of scientific knowledge may in a very short time be made part of its permanent equipment. The observation and comparison of flowers, leaves, plants, trees will lay the foundations of botanical knowledge without loading the mind with names and that dry set acquisition of informations which is the beginning of cramming and detested by the healthy human mind when it is fresh from nature and unspoiled by unnatural habits. In the same way by the observation of the stars, astronomy, by the observation of the earth, stones, etc., geology, by the observation of insects and animals, entomology and zoology may be founded. A little later chemistry may be started by interesting observation of experiments without any formal teaching or heaping on the mind of formulas and book knowledge. There is no scientific subject the perfect and natural

mastery of which cannot be prepared in early childhood by this training of the faculties to observe, compare, remember and judge various classes of objects. It can be done easily and attended with a supreme and absorbing interest in the mind of the student. Once the taste is created, the boy can be trusted to follow it up with all the enthusiasm of youth in his leisure hours. This will prevent the necessity at a later age of teaching him everything in class. (S1: 404-06)

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The judgment will naturally be trained along with the other faculties. At every step the boy will have to decide what is the right idea, measurement, appreciation of colour, sound, scent, etc., and what is the wrong. Often the judgments and distinctions made will have to be exceedingly subtle and delicate. At first many errors will be made, but the learner should be taught to trust his judgment without being attached to its results. It will be found that the judgment will soon begin to respond to the calls made on it, clear itself of all errors and begin to judge correctly and minutely. The best way is to accustom the boy to compare his judgments with those of others. When he is wrong, it should at first be pointed out to him how far he was right and why he went wrong, afterwards he should be encouraged to note these things for himself. Every time he is right, his attention should be prominently and encouragingly called to it so that he may get confidence.

While engaged in comparing and contrasting, another centre is certain to develop, the centre of analogy. The learner will inevitably draw analogies and argue from like to like. He should be encouraged to use this faculty while noticing its limitations and errors. In this way he will be trained to form the habit of correct analogy, which is an indispensable aid in the acquisition of knowledge. (S1: 406)

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The mental faculties should first be exercised on things, afterwards on words and ideas. Our dealings with language are much too perfunctory and the absence of a fine sense for words impoverishes the intellect and limits the fineness and truth of its operation. The mind should be accustomed first to notice the word thoroughly, its form, sound, sense; then to compare the form with other similar forms in the points of similarity and difference, thus forming the foundation of the grammatical sense; then to distinguish between the fine shades of sense of similar words and the formation and rhythm of different sentences, thus forming the foundation of the literary and the syntactical faculties. All this should be done informally, drawing on the curiosity and interest, avoiding set teaching and memorising of rules. The true knowledge takes its base on things, *arthas*, and only when it has mastered the thing, proceeds to formalise its information. (S1: 406-07)

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To develop our memory is very helpful, but it is important to remember that “consciousness is a much higher memory than mechanical brain memory”.

Why do we forget things?

Ah! I suppose there are several reasons. First, because one makes use of the memory to remember. Memory is a mental instrument and depends on the formation of the brain. Your brain is constantly growing, unless it begins to degenerate, but still its growth can continue for a very, very long time, much longer than that of the body. And in this growth, necessarily some things will take the place of others. And as the mental instrument develops, things which have served their term or the transitory moment in the development may be wiped out to give place to the result. So the result of all that you knew is there, living in itself, but the road traversed to reach it may be completely blurred. That is, a good functioning of the memory means remembering only the results so as to be able to have the elements for moving forward and a new construction. That is more important than just retaining things rigidly in the mind.

Now, there is another aspect also. Apart from the mental memory, which is something defective, there are states of consciousness. Each state of consciousness in which one happens to be registers the phenomena of a particular moment, whatever they may be. If your consciousness remains limpid, wide and strong, you can at any moment whatsoever, by concentrating, call into the active consciousness what you did, thought, saw, observed at any time before; all this you can remember by bringing up in yourself the same state of consciousness. And that, that is never forgotten. You could live a thousand years and you would still remember it. Consequently, if you don't want to forget, it must be your consciousness which remembers and not your mental memory. Your mental memory will be wiped out inevitably, get blurred, and new things will take the place of the old ones. But things of which you are conscious you do not forget. You have only to bring up the same state of consciousness again. And thus one can remember circumstances one has lived thousands of years ago, if one knows how to bring up the same state of consciousness.

(M6: 20-21)

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How can memory be increased?

Widen your consciousness and your memory will increase.

Consciousness is a much higher memory than the mechanical brain memory. [. . .] the mechanical brain memory can forget — can mix up and deform things —

but if you are able to establish in you once again the state of consciousness in which you were at a given moment, you have exactly the same experience. And that is the only true memory. And this depends entirely on the development of your consciousness. (M5: 268-69)

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Attention, observation, judgment, memory help us to forge a clearer picture of the world. They also provide us with a foundation for reasoning well.

The first support Nature has given to our groping intelligence is reason. Reason is our first reference, our safest guide as we proceed on the path of self-discovery and self-realisation.

[. . .] the first thing which should be taught to every human being as soon as he is able to think, is that he should obey reason which is a super-instinct of the species. Reason is the master of the nature of mankind. One must obey reason and absolutely refuse to be the slave of instincts. And here I am not talking to you about yoga, I am not talking about spiritual life, not at all; it has nothing to do with that. It is the basic wisdom of human life, purely human life: every human being who obeys anything other than reason is a kind of brute lower than the animal. That's all. And this should be taught everywhere; it is the basic education which should be given to children.

The reign of reason must come to an end only with the advent of the psychic law which manifests the divine Will. (M9: 102-03)

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One can begin very young; even a child of five can already make use of reason to control himself; I know it. There is enough mental organisation in the being in these little tots who look so spontaneous and irresponsible; there is enough cerebral organisation for them to organise themselves, their life, their nature, their movements, actions and thoughts with reason.

There are some little ones here of this kind. They are not all like that but there are some. There are some like that here, I know them. So if these were taught how to use their reason properly while still very young, they would be ready to start on the great adventure. They would gain much time. (M7: 177)

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The mind, if not controlled, is something wavering and imprecise. If one doesn't have the habit of concentrating it upon something, it goes on wandering all the time. It goes on without a stop anywhere and wanders into a *world* of vagueness. And then, when one wants to fix one's attention, it hurts! There is a little effort there, like this: "Oh! how tiring it is, it hurts!" So one does not do it. And one lives in a kind of cloud. And your head is like a cloud; it's like that, most brains are like clouds: there is no precision, no exactitude, no clarity, it is hazy — vague and hazy. You have impressions rather than a knowledge of things. You live in an approximation, and you can keep within you all sorts of contradictory ideas made up mostly of impressions, sensations, feelings, emotions — all sorts of things like that which have very little to do with thought and . . . which are just vague ramblings.

But if you want to succeed in having a precise, concrete, clear, definite thought on a certain subject, you must make an effort, gather yourself together, hold yourself firm, concentrate. And the first time you do it, it literally hurts, it is tiring! But if you don't make a habit of it, all your life you will be living in a state of irresolution. And when it comes to practical things, when you are faced with — for, in spite of everything, one is always faced with — a number of problems to solve, of a very practical kind, well, instead of being able to take up the elements of the problem, to put them all face to face, look at the question from every side, and rising above and seeing the solution, instead of that you will be tossed about in the swirls of something grey and uncertain, and it will be like so many spiders running around in your head — but you won't succeed in catching the thing. [. . .]

Well, it is to avoid this that you are told, when your brain is in course of being formed, "Instead of letting it be shaped by such habits and qualities, try to give it a little exactitude, precision, capacity of concentration, of choosing, deciding, putting things in order, try to use your reason."

Of course, it is well understood that reason is not the supreme capacity of man and must be surpassed, but it is quite obvious that if you don't have it, you will live an altogether incoherent life, you won't even know how to behave rationally.

(M8: 181-83)

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The training of the logical reason must necessarily follow the training of the faculties which collect the material on which the logical reason must work. Not only so but the mind must have some development of the faculty of dealing with words before it can deal successfully with ideas. The question is, once this preliminary work is done, what is the best way of teaching the boy to think correctly from premises. For the logical reason cannot proceed without premises. It either infers from facts to a conclusion, or from previously formed conclusions to a fresh one, or from one fact

to another. It either induces, deduces or simply infers. I see the sun rise day after day, I conclude or induce that it rises as a law daily after a varying interval of darkness. I have already ascertained that wherever there is smoke, there is fire. I have induced that general rule from an observation of facts. I deduce that in a particular case of smoke there is a fire behind. I infer that a man must have lit it from the improbability of any other cause under the particular circumstances. I cannot deduce it because fire is not always created by human kindling; it may be volcanic or caused by a stroke of lightning or the sparks from some kind of friction in the neighbourhood.

There are three elements necessary to correct reasoning, first, the correctness of the facts or conclusions I start from, secondly, the completeness as well as accuracy of the data I start from, thirdly, the elimination of other possible or impossible conclusions from the same facts. The fallibility of the logical reason is due partly to avoidable negligence and looseness in securing these conditions, partly to the difficulty of getting all the facts correct, still more to the difficulty of getting all the facts complete, most of all, to the extreme difficulty of eliminating all possible conclusions except the one which happens to be right. No fact is supposed to be more perfectly established than the universality of the law of gravitation as an imperative rule, yet a single new fact inconsistent with it would upset this supposed universality. And such facts exist. Nevertheless, by care and keenness the fallibility may be reduced to its minimum.

The usual practice is to train the logical reason by teaching the science of Logic. This is an instance of the prevalent error by which book knowledge of a thing is made the object of study instead of the thing itself. The experience of reasoning and its errors should be given to the mind and it should be taught to observe how these work for itself; it should proceed from the example to the rule and from the accumulating harmony of rules to the formal science of the subject, not from the formal science to the rule, and from the rule to the example.

The first step is to make the young mind interest itself in drawing inferences from the facts, tracing cause and effect. It should then be led on to notice its successes and its failures and the reason of the success and of the failure; the incorrectness of the fact started from, the haste in drawing conclusions from insufficient facts, the carelessness in accepting a conclusion which is improbable, little supported by the data or open to doubt, the indolence or prejudice which does not wish to consider other possible explanations or conclusions. In this way the mind can be trained to reason as correctly as the fallibility of human logic will allow, minimising the chances of error. The study of formal logic should be postponed to a later time when it can easily be mastered in a very brief period, since it will be only the systematising of an art perfectly well known to the student. (S1: 408-09)

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The golden rule of true communication! . . .

Words are not good and useful unless through a special grace they put you into contact with the Thing, but in themselves they have no value.

In fact, the ideal condition — which has already been partially realised by some people — is to transmit the essential idea and even something that is higher than the idea: the state — the state of consciousness, of knowledge, of perception — directly through the vibration. When you think, the mental substance vibrates in a certain way in accordance with the form your consciousness gives to your thought, and it is this vibration which should be perceived by the other mind if it is well attuned.

Indeed, words serve only to draw the attention of the other consciousness or the other centre of consciousness, so that it may be attentive to the vibration and receive it; but if it is not attentive and doesn't have the capacity to receive in comparative silence, you may pour out miles of words without making yourself understood in the least. And there comes a time when the brain, which is very active in emanating certain vibrations, can only receive vibrations which are clear and precise, otherwise it is a kind of vague mixture of something confused, imprecise, which gives the impression of a cloudy, woolly mass and doesn't evoke any idea. So one speaks, the sound is clearly heard, but it conveys nothing — it is not a question of sound, it is a matter of precision in the vibrations.

If you can emanate your thought in a very precise way, if it is something living and *conscious* emanating from your consciousness and going to meet the other consciousness, if, so to speak, you know what you want to say, then it arrives with the same precision, it awakens the corresponding vibration and with the corresponding vibration comes the corresponding thought or idea or state of consciousness, and you understand each other; but if what is emanated is woolly, imprecise, if you do not know very well what you want to say, if you yourself are trying to understand what you want to say, and if, on the other hand, the attention of the hearer is not alert enough or he is busy and active somewhere else, well then, you may talk to each other for hours, you will not understand each other at all!

And in fact this is what happens most often. When you are able to see in the consciousness of others the result of what you have tried to communicate, it always gives you the feeling of . . . you know what distorting mirrors are? Have you never seen distorting mirrors? Mirrors which make you look taller or fatter, which enlarge one part and reduce another, you are faced with a grotesque caricature of yourself — well, this is exactly what happens: in the other person's consciousness you have an altogether grotesque caricature of what you have said. And people imagine that they have understood each other because they have heard the sound of words, but they haven't communicated.

So, if you want to exercise the least effect on the mental substance, the first

thing is to learn how to think clearly, and not a verbal thought which depends on words but a thought which can dispense with words, which can be understood in itself without words, which corresponds to a *fact*, the fact of a state of consciousness or a fact of knowledge. Just try to think without words, you will see where you stand. (M9: 287-88)

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Imagination is an invaluable help in developing the formative capacity of the mind. It will stimulate the child's faculties of creation, of invention.

Why do we so rarely find a story that is beautiful from the first word to the last? Why do we so often imagine ugliness, misery, failure? We ought to urge the child to conquer the future by the power of his imagination. We can make friends with birds and flowers — why not with light and beauty?

The Mother speaks of the “imagination of Truth” and Sri Aurobindo says that the inner realisations we imagine may bring us closer to the total realisation.

[*Imagination*] is a most important and indispensable instrument. It may be divided into three functions, the forming of mental images, the power of creating thoughts, images and imitations or new combinations of existing thoughts and images, the appreciation of the soul in things, beauty, charm, greatness, hidden suggestiveness, the emotion and spiritual life that pervades the world. This is in every way as important as the training of the faculties which observe and compare outward things.

(S1: 406)

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[. . .] one must have a lively power of imagination, for — I seem to be telling you stupid things, but it is quite true — there is a world in which you are the supreme maker of forms: that is your own particular vital world. You are the supreme fashioner and you can make a marvel of your world if you know how to use it. If you have an artistic or poetic consciousness, if you love harmony, beauty, you will build there something marvellous which will tend to spring up into the material manifestation.

When I was small I used to call this “telling stories to oneself”. It is not at all a telling with words, in one's head: it is a going away to this place which is fresh and pure, and . . . building up a wonderful story there. And if you know how to tell yourself a story in this way, and if it is truly beautiful, truly harmonious, truly powerful and well co-ordinated, this story will be realised in your life — perhaps not exactly in the form in which you created it, but as a more or less changed physical expression of what you made.

That may take years, perhaps, but your story will tend to organise your life.

But there are very few people who know how to tell a beautiful story; and then they always mix horrors in it, which they regret later.

If one could create a magnificent story without any horror in it, nothing but beauty, it would have a *considerable* influence on everyone's life. And this is what people don't know.

If one knew how to use this power, this creative power in the world of vital forms, if one knew how to use this while yet a child, a very small child . . . for it is then that one fashions his material destiny. But usually people around you, sometimes even your own little friends, but mostly parents and teachers, dabble in it and spoil everything for you, so well that very seldom does the thing succeed completely.

But otherwise, if it were done like that, with the spontaneous candour of a child, you could organise a wonderful life for yourself — I am speaking of the physical world.

The dreams of childhood are the realities of mature age. (M8: 117-18)

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Indeed, in education, both tendencies should be encouraged side by side: the tendency to thirst for the marvellous, for what seems unrealisable, for something which fills you with the feeling of divinity; while at the same time encouraging exact, correct, sincere observation in the perception of the world as it is, the suppression of all imagination, a constant control, a highly practical and meticulous sense for exact details. Both should go side by side. Usually, you kill the one with the idea that this is necessary in order to foster the other — this is completely wrong. Both can be simultaneous and there comes a time when one has enough knowledge to know that they are the two aspects of the same thing: insight, a higher discernment. But instead of a narrow, limited insight and discernment, the discernment becomes entirely sincere, correct, exact, but it is vast, it includes a whole domain that does not yet belong to the concrete manifestation.

From the point of view of education, this would be very important: to see the world as it is, exactly, unadorned, in the most down-to-earth and concrete manner; and to see the world as it can be, with the freest, highest vision, the one most full of hope and aspiration and marvellous certitude — as the two poles of discernment.

The most splendid, most marvellous, most powerful, most expressive, most total things we can imagine are nothing compared to what they can be; and at the same time our meticulous exactitude in the tiniest detail is never exact enough. And both must go together. When one knows this (*downward gesture*) and when one knows that (*upward gesture*), one is able to put the two together. (M10: 162-63)

*

Suppleness, richness and wideness of mind have also to be developed. To prepare it for a more comprehensive synthesis.

You will gradually show the child that everything can become an interesting subject for study if it is approached in the right way. The life of every day, of every moment, is the best school of all, varied, complex, full of unexpected experiences, problems to be solved, clear and striking examples and obvious consequences. It is so easy to arouse healthy curiosity in children, if you answer with intelligence and clarity the numerous questions they ask. An interesting reply to one readily brings others in its train and so the attentive child learns without effort much more than he usually does in the classroom. By a choice made with care and insight, you should also teach him to enjoy good reading-matter which is both instructive and attractive. Do not be afraid of anything that awakens and pleases his imagination; imagination develops the creative mental faculty and through it study becomes living and the mind develops in joy.

In order to increase the suppleness and comprehensiveness of his mind, one should see not only that he studies many varied topics, but above all that a single subject is approached in various ways, so that the child understands in a practical manner that there are many ways of facing the same intellectual problem, of considering it and solving it. This will remove all rigidity from his brain and at the same time it will make his thinking richer and more supple and prepare it for a more complex and comprehensive synthesis. In this way also the child will be imbued with the sense of the extreme relativity of mental learning and, little by little, an aspiration for a truer source of knowledge will awaken in him. (M12: 26-27)

*

The child must organise the random thoughts of his mind around a central idea, luminous and powerful enough to act as a “seer” on the path of life.

. . . as the child grows older and progresses in his studies, his mind too ripens and becomes more and more capable of forming general ideas, and with them almost always comes a need for certitude, for a knowledge that is stable enough to form the basis of a mental construction which will permit all the diverse and scattered and often contradictory ideas accumulated in his brain to be organised and put in order. This ordering is indeed very necessary if one is to avoid chaos in one's thoughts. All contradictions can be transformed into complements, but for that one must discover the higher idea that will have the power to bring them harmoniously together. It is always good to consider every problem from all possible standpoints so as to avoid partiality and exclusiveness; but if the thought is to be active and creative, it must, in every case, be the natural and logical synthesis of all the points of view

adopted. And if you want to make the totality of your thoughts into a dynamic and constructive force, you must also take great care as to the choice of the central idea of your mental synthesis; for upon that will depend the value of this synthesis. The higher and larger the central idea and the more universal it is, rising above time and space, the more numerous and the more complex will be the ideas, notions and thoughts which it will be able to organise and harmonise.

It goes without saying that this work of organisation cannot be done once and for all. The mind, if it is to keep its vigour and youth, must progress constantly, revise its notions in the light of new knowledge, enlarge its frame-work to include fresh notions and constantly reclassify and reorganise its thoughts, so that each of them may find its true place in relation to the others and the whole remain harmonious and orderly. (M12: 27)

*

The formative capacity of the mind has to be developed . . . “All that one thinks, one can be” — this is a very important key for the development of the being.

. . . learning is only one aspect of mental activity; the other, which is at least equally important, is the constructive faculty, the capacity to form and thus prepare action. This very important part of mental activity has rarely been the subject of any special study or discipline. [. . .]

And yet control over this formative activity of the mind is one of the most important aspects of self-education; one can say that without it no mental mastery is possible. As far as study is concerned, all ideas are acceptable and should be included in the synthesis, whose very function is to become more and more rich and complex; but where action is concerned, it is just the opposite. The ideas that are accepted for translation into action should be strictly controlled and only those that agree with the general trend of the central idea forming the basis of the mental synthesis should be permitted to express themselves in action. This means that every thought entering the mental consciousness should be set before the central idea; if it finds a logical place among the thoughts already grouped, it will be admitted into the synthesis; if not, it will be rejected so that it can have no influence on the action. This work of mental purification should be done very regularly in order to secure a complete control over one's actions.

For this purpose, it is good to set apart some time every day when one can quietly go over one's thoughts and put one's synthesis in order. Once the habit is acquired, you can maintain control over your thoughts even during work and action, allowing only those which are useful for what you are doing to come to the surface.

(M12: 27-28)

*

What he [Sri Aurobindo] says is that in order to progress one must break up old constructions, buffet, demolish all preconceived ideas. Preconceived ideas are the habitual mental constructions in which one lives, and which are fixed, which become rigid fortresses and cannot progress because they are fixed. Nothing that is fixed can progress. So the advice is to break down, that is, destroy all preconceived ideas, all fixed mental constructions. And this is the true way to give birth to new ideas or to thought — active thought — thought which is creative.

And a little further on Sri Aurobindo says that you must first be conscious of yourself, *then* think, and *then* act. The vision of the inner truth of the being must precede all action; first the vision of the truth, then this truth formulating itself into thought, then the thought creating the action. That is the normal process.

And this is what Sri Aurobindo gives as the process of creation. In the Unmanifest a thought began to play, that is to say, it awoke and became active; and because thought became active, the world was created.

And in conclusion Sri Aurobindo declares that thought is not essential to existence, it is not the cause of existence, but is just the process, the instrument of becoming, for thought is a principle of precise formulation which has the power of creating forms. And as an illustration Sri Aurobindo says that all that one thinks one is, one can, by the very fact of that thinking, become. This knowledge of the fact that *all* that one thinks one can be, is a very important key for the development of the being, and not only from the point of view of the possibilities of the being, but also from that of the control and choice of what one will be, of what one wants to be. (M8: 395-96)

*

The child cannot but be fascinated by this age of rapid changes. Those changes ought to make him conscious that book-knowledge is short-lived. Truth remains ever beyond our mental grasp, because truth is not a safe haven to be reached, but the call of the Infinite.

Our aim is to change things. The scientist says that whatever is, is natural and cannot be changed at heart. But, really speaking, the laws of which he usually speaks are of his own mental making; and because he accepts Nature as it is as the very basis, things do not and cannot change for him in any complete sense. But, according to us, all this can be changed, because we know that there is something above, a divine truth seeking manifestation. There are no fixed laws here; even Science in its undogmatic moments recognises that the laws are mere mental constructions.

(M3: 161)

*

All studies, or in any case the greater part of studies consists in learning about the past, in the hope that it will give you a better understanding of the present. But if you want to avoid the danger that the students may cling to the past and refuse to look to the future, you must take great care to explain to them that the purpose of everything that happened in the past was to prepare what is taking place now, and that everything that is taking place now is nothing but a preparation for the road towards the future, which is truly the most important thing for which we must prepare.

It is by cultivating intuition that one prepares to live for the future. (M12: 168)

*

The mind is ordinarily never at rest. We must learn to concentrate it in a receptive silence. Then, from the higher planes of consciousness, a light can manifest itself and open up new horizons to us.

[. . .] if you have continued to cultivate the power of concentration and attention, only the thoughts that are needed will be allowed to enter the active external consciousness and they then become all the more dynamic and effective. And if, in the intensity of concentration, it becomes necessary not to think at all, all mental vibration can be stilled and an almost total silence secured. In this silence one can gradually open to the higher regions of the mind and learn to record the inspirations that come from there.

But even before reaching this point, silence in itself is supremely useful, because in most people who have a somewhat developed and active mind, the mind is never at rest. During the day, its activity is kept under a certain control, but at night, during the sleep of the body, the control of the waking state is almost completely removed and the mind indulges in activities which are sometimes excessive and often incoherent. This creates a great stress which leads to fatigue and the diminution of the intellectual faculties.

The fact is that like all the other parts of the human being, the mind too needs rest and it will not have this rest unless we know how to provide it. The art of resting one's mind is something to be acquired. Changing one's mental activity is certainly one way of resting; but the greatest possible rest is silence. And as far as the mental faculties are concerned a few minutes passed in the calm of silence are a more effective rest than hours of sleep.

When one has learned to silence the mind at will and to concentrate it in receptive silence, then there will be no problem that cannot be solved, no mental difficulty whose solution cannot be found. When it is agitated, thought becomes confused and impotent; in an attentive tranquillity, the light can manifest itself and open up new horizons to man's capacity. (M12: 28-29)

*

When you have a question to solve, whatever it may be, usually you concentrate your attention here (*pointing between the eyebrows*), at the centre just above the eyes, the centre of the conscious will. But then if you do that, you cannot be in contact with intuition. You can be in contact with the source of the will, of effort, even of a certain kind of knowledge, but in the outer, almost material field; whereas, if you want to contact the intuition, you must keep this (*Mother indicates the forehead*) completely immobile. Active thought must be stopped as far as possible and the entire mental faculty must form — at the top of the head and a little further above if possible — a kind of mirror, very quiet, very still, turned upwards, in silent, very concentrated attention. If you succeed, you can — perhaps not immediately — but you can have the perception of the drops of light falling upon the mirror from a still unknown region and expressing themselves as a conscious thought which has no connection with all the rest of your thought since you have been able to keep it silent. That is the real beginning of the intellectual intuition.

It is a discipline to be followed. For a long time one may try and not succeed, but as soon as one succeeds in making a “mirror”, still and attentive, one always obtains a result, not necessarily with a precise form of thought but always with the sensations of a light coming from above. And then, if one can receive this light coming from above without entering immediately into a whirl of activity, receive it in calm and silence and let it penetrate deep into the being, then after a while it expresses itself either as a luminous thought or as a very precise indication here (*Mother indicates the heart*), in this other centre. (M9: 358-59)

*

There are higher ranges of mind overtopping our normal mind and leading to the Overmind and to the Supermind — successive levels or graded powers of being, degrees of spiritual consciousness and experience hidden in our super-conscious parts.

The first gradation of this spiritualised mind is the “higher mind”. It is something loftier, purer, vaster, more powerful than the reason or logical intelligence. It is a luminous thought-mind whose instrumentation is through an elevated thought-power and comprehensive mental sight. Above Higher Mind there are still more luminous reaches of spiritual mind, including intuition.

Intuition, the Mother said, is one of the regions which are intermediary between the higher mind and Overmind.

It is something which takes place without any reasoning, any analysis, any deduction. Suddenly one knows a thing, without having reasoned, without having analysed, without deducing, without having reflected, without having made use of one’s brain, without having put together the elements of the problem and tried to resolve them — it is not like that. All of a sudden it comes like a light in the consciousness; it can

be in the head, it can be lower down, elsewhere; it is a light in the consciousness which brings a precise knowledge on a particular point and it is not at all a result of analyses and deductions. In fact, it is the first manifestation of the knowledge by identity. Knowledge by identity — you understand clearly what that means?

If one succeeds in identifying oneself with something, well, one becomes this thing for a time, and becoming this thing one knows all that is in it, without needing either to guess or to construct. (M6: 423-24)

*

One can learn how to identify oneself. One must learn. It is indispensable if one wants to get out of one's ego. For so long as one is shut up in one's ego, one can't make any progress.

How can it be done?

There are many ways. I'll tell you one.

When I was in Paris [. . .] once I was invited to meet a young lady [. . .] who had found a method of knowledge, exactly a method for learning. And so she explained it to us [. . .] : "It's like this, you take an object or make a sign on a blackboard or take a drawing — that is not important — take whatever is most convenient for you. Suppose, for instance, that I draw for you . . . (she had a blackboard) I draw a design." She drew a kind of half-geometric design. "Now, you sit in front of the design and concentrate all your attention upon it — upon that design which is there. You concentrate, concentrate without letting anything else enter your consciousness — except that. Your eyes are fixed on the drawing and don't move at all. You are as it were hypnotised by the drawing. You look (and so she sat there, looking), you look, look, look. . . . I don't know, it takes more or less time, but still for one who is used to it, it goes pretty fast. You look, look, look, you *become* that drawing you are looking at. Nothing else exists in the world any longer except the drawing, and then, suddenly, you pass to the other side; and when you pass to the other side you enter a new consciousness, and you know."

We had a good laugh, for it was amusing. But it is quite true, it is an excellent method to practise. Naturally, instead of taking a drawing or any object, you may take, for instance, an idea, a few words. You have a problem preoccupying you, you don't know the solution of the problem; well, you objectify your problem in your mind, put it in the most precise, exact, succinct terms possible, and then concentrate, make an effort; you concentrate only on the words, and if possible on the idea they represent, that is, upon your problem — you concentrate, concentrate, concentrate until nothing else exists but that. And it is true that, all of a sudden, you have the feeling of something opening, and one is on the other side. The other side

of what? . . . It means that you have opened a door of your consciousness, and instantaneously you have the solution of your problem.

It is an excellent method of learning “how” to identify oneself. (M5: 217-19)

*

All of a sudden, a door opens wide to the splendour of a truth beyond our ordinary perceptions. Before closing again, it will admit a ray to caress us.

That is how Sri Aurobindo speaks of intuition, which leads us to other dimensions of consciousness, to the first glimpses of true knowledge.

. . . intellectual thought is in itself inadequate and is not the highest thinking; the highest is that which comes through the intuitive mind and from the supramental faculty. So long as we are dominated by the intellectual habit and by the lower workings, the intuitive mind can only send its messages to us subconsciously and subject to a distortion more or less entire before it reaches the conscious mind; or if it works consciously, then only with an inadequate rarity and a great imperfection in its functioning. In order to strengthen the higher knowledge-faculty in us we have to effect the same separation between the intuitive and intellectual elements of our thought as we have already effected between the understanding and the sense-mind; and this is no easy task, for not only do our intuitions come to us incrustated in the intellectual action, but there are a great number of mental workings which masquerade and ape the appearances of the higher faculty. The remedy is to train first the intellect to recognise the true intuition, to distinguish it from the false and then to accustom it, when it arrives at an intellectual perception or conclusion, to attach no final value to it, but rather look upward, refer all to the divine principle and wait in as complete a silence as it can command for the light from above. [. . .]

(S23: 315-16)

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[. . .] Intuition is a power of consciousness nearer and more intimate to the original knowledge by identity; for it is always something that leaps out direct from a concealed identity. It is when the consciousness of the subject meets with the consciousness in the object, penetrates it and sees, feels or vibrates with the truth of what it contacts, that the intuition leaps out like a spark or lightning-flash from the shock of the meeting; or when the consciousness, even without any such meeting, looks into itself and feels directly and intimately the truth or the truths that are there or so contacts the hidden forces behind appearances, then also there is the outbreak of an intuitive light; or, again, when the consciousness meets the Supreme Reality

or the spiritual reality of things and beings and has a contactual union with it, then the spark, the flash or the blaze of intimate truth-perception is lit in its depths. This close perception is more than sight, more than conception: it is the result of a penetrating and revealing touch which carries in it sight and conception as part of itself or as its natural consequence. A concealed or slumbering identity, not yet recovering itself, still remembers or conveys by the intuition its own contents and the intimacy of its self-feeling and self-vision of things, its light of truth, its overwhelming and automatic certitude. (S22: 981-82)

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For Sri Aurobindo, true knowledge is precisely Knowledge by identity, and wisdom is the state one achieves when one is in this true knowledge. He says it here: Wisdom looks behind the veil of false appearances and sees the reality behind it. And Sri Aurobindo emphasises that when one defines something with the superficial, outer knowledge, it is always in opposition to something else; it is always by means of a contrast that one explains what one sees, feels, touches — and does not understand.

Reason always sets one thing against another and compels you to make a choice. People whose thought and reason are clear see all the differences between things. It is rather remarkable that reason can only work through differences; it is because one perceives the difference between this and that, one act and another, one object and another, that one makes decisions and that reason works.

But it is precisely true Knowledge, Knowledge by identity and the wisdom which results from it that always see the point where all apparently contradictory things harmonise, complement each other, form a perfectly coherent, coordinated whole. And naturally that changes entirely the point of view, the perception, and the consequences in action. (M10: 17-18)

*

For people who exercise their intelligence, the more intelligent they are, the more do they grow aware that they know nothing at all and that with the mind one can know nothing. One may think in a particular way, judge and see in a particular way, but one is never sure of anything — and never will be sure of anything. One can always say, “Perhaps it is like that” or “Perhaps it is like this” and so on, indefinitely, because the mind is not an instrument of knowledge.

Above the thoughts, there are pure ideas; thoughts serve to express pure ideas. And Knowledge is well above the domain of pure ideas, as these are well above thought. One must hence know how to climb from thought to pure idea, and pure idea is itself nothing but a translation of Knowledge. And Knowledge can be obtained only by a total identification. So, when you put yourself in your small human

mentality, the mentality of the physical consciousness which is at work all the time, which looks at everything, judges everything from the height of its derisive superiority, which says, "That is bad, it should not be like that", you are sure to be always mistaken, without exception. The best is to keep silent and look well at things, and little by little you make notes within yourself and keep the record without pronouncing any judgment. When you are able to keep all that within you, quietly, without agitation and present it very calmly before the highest part of your consciousness, with an attempt to maintain an attentive silence, and wait, then perhaps, slowly, as if coming from a far distance and from a great height, something like a light will manifest and you will know a little more of truth.

But as long as you excite your thoughts and cut them up into little bits, you will never know anything. I shall repeat this to you a hundred times if necessary, but I can assure you that so long as you are not convinced of this you will never come out of your ignorance. (M4: 46-47)

*

A new humanity means for us the appearance, the development of a type or race of mental beings whose principle of mentality would be no longer a mind in the Ignorance seeking for knowledge but even in its knowledge bound to the Ignorance, a seeker after Light but not its natural possessor, open to the Light but not an inhabitant of the Light, not yet a perfected instrument, truth-conscious and delivered out of the Ignorance. Instead, it would be possessed already of what could be called a mind of Light, a mind capable of living in the truth, capable of being truth-conscious and manifesting in its life a direct in place of an indirect knowledge. Its mentality would be an instrument of the Light and no longer of the Ignorance. At its highest it would be capable of passing into the supermind and from the new race would be recruited the race of supramental beings who would appear as the leaders of the evolution in earth-nature. [. . .] The first gleamings of the new Light would carry in themselves the seed of its highest flamings; even in the first beginnings, the certainty of their topmost powers would be there; for this is the constant story of each evolutionary emergence: the principle of its highest perfection lies concealed in the involution which precedes and necessitates the evolution of the secret principle.

(S13: 585-86)

(To be continued)

(A New Education for a New Consciousness,
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“DAY NOR NIGHT” — CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

Sri Aurobindo —

Any stuff in this? Even such stuff as dreams are made on?

’Twas day nor night:
In a borderland of hues,
Facing each other
We sat a-muse.

Wing-sails were gone —
Air-waves forgot to rush;
With bodies of twilight
And souls of hush

We sat in a dream,
Yearning to vanish and be
A single-hearted
Eternity.

The swooning skies
Mingled our thoughts afar:
From the deep purple
Broke one great¹ star!

[Amal’s question:]

1. Should I omit “great”?

Sri Aurobindo’s comment:

1. On the whole it might be better to omit.

It is very fine.

23 June 1935

AMAL KIRAN
(K. D. SETHNA)

PREFACE TO 50 POEMS FROM AUROVILLE

This is an anthology of 50 poems written in the last 50 years, as a gift and tribute to Auroville on the 50th anniversary of its founding on 28th February 1968.

The poems are by Aurovilians, former Aurovilians and those involved with or who have been in some way touched by Auroville or The Mother and Sri Aurobindo. The selection includes poems previously published in various Auroville and private collections together with poems recently submitted in response to a request in *Auroville News and Notes*.

In his book, *Sri Aurobindo or The Adventure of Consciousness*, Satprem, describing the Illumined Mind, remarks that it is interesting to note the number of poets of all languages — Chinese, Indian, English, etc. amongst Sri Aurobindo's disciples, as if poetry and art were the first practical results of his yoga.

I have seen both in myself and others a sudden flowering of capacities in every kind of activity come by the opening of consciousness . . . It is a question of the right silence in the mind and the right openness to the Word that is trying to express itself — for the Word is there ready formed in those inner planes where all artistic forms take birth, but it is the transmitting mind that must change and become a perfect channel and not an obstacle.

Not all the poems in this anthology are the product of openness to higher planes of consciousness, or are even necessarily 'spiritual'. Some express a deep yearning for a life to be lived in oneness with the consciousness of the truth of things and the spirit. Some have been included because they convey vividly a sense of truth or honesty or strongly evoke a sense of connection with the place or scene we may have experienced, or tell us something about the Auroville experience. Or they simply have an appealing poetic quality.

My good friend and mentor Sonia Dyne has pointed out that so-called 'spiritual poetry' does not have to deal specifically with 'spiritual' themes: it can be a celebration of nature, an expression of religious belief, or simply a deeply felt outpouring of emotional response without any intellectual quality as in purely devotional poetry. The essential thing is recognition, overt or implied, of a hidden oneness uniting all human life with the life around us in Nature and the poet's response of wonder and awe or delight or gratitude.

VIKAS VICKERS
for AVI UK, with editorial assistance from Sonia Dyne.

EARLY ONE MORNING

The sun got up; so did I,
 slow and cosy, half in sleep.
 Stumbling out, I sat upon the step:
 receiving nothing from the night
 I expected nothing from the day.
 There was a tree in flower,
 A scratching dog,
 the sun was shining on the sea.
 But then, at half-past by the clock,
 the world turned over . . . flip! . . .
 and changed all that.
 And when it all had settled down,
 resplendently I saw:
 a tree in flower,
 a scratching dog,
 and the sun O shining on the sea.

WITH STUMP OF CANDLE

What do I leave
 Behind me on this pilgrimage?
 Frail towers pitted as if by shot,
 pale faces at the windows
 Too drained by all the frightfulness
 For pleasure at the sudden quiet.
 For have I not ravished them?
 In more ways than one
 diminished them,
 and acquired their name?

What do I leave
 behind me on this pilgrimage?
 I leave no one still loving me.
 Neither do I take with me
 on this pilgrimage
 someone who loves me still.

It is the dark world
I leave behind me on this pilgrimage . . .

Yet . . . He who meets me
greets me not with scorn
as I deserve, but with his grace.
It is almost too much for me to bear.

THE EXPERIENTIAL PLOY

I in my apprentice-wisdom draped,
have things to say about things,
things that belie the conspiracy that goes on
in search of the Reasonable Other.

I have things to say about the thingness of things
and about the nothingness of nothing,
and about the termination of things seen
at the many-splendoured tumult of the lone.

For at the moment when blessed things
take on all that has become so clearly cursed
and profane things become at last redeemed
the very nature of belief is gathered
with all things in, dispersed with all things wide.

All in this new and holy stance
old things lose the very thingness of old things,
become things new, things clear,
things newly uttered; all things,
otherwise opaque, brighten, are lifted up
into being; all things turn innocent, experiential.

Times change and thingness changes with it.
Even when nothing moves
and no thing changes place
the parts stay incommensurate with the whole . . .

O the air is pungent with my foolishness
as I strive to speak of what I only know.

My knowledge is all empty, lost in words; only
 my foolishness recognises what makes things things
 and nothing nothing.

1987

NAVODITTE (NORMAN THOMAS)

THE INDIAN SHAWL

How blue! And deepening
 You flow, O dusk, seeping
 Through interstices
 Filling empty spaces.
 The rich scent of flowers
 Beginning to bloom
 At night, is still light
 The essence of mildness.
 You blur harsh outlines
 And blot out ugliness.
 O merciful, how soft
 Your touch when you meet pain.
 Now darkness falls like rain
 And the hands of shadow
 Throw over the shoulders
 Of even the poorest
 A shawl studded with stars.

FOR ANITA

The river of life
 Was flowing between us,
 From the other bank
 I saw him, half in light
 And half in shadow.
 An invisible bird
 Sang out, our reflections
 Met in the water,
 I loved the light in him
 And hated the shadow.
 The river of time

Is flowing at our feet,
A sorrowful face
Smiles out of the water.
The sun and the moon
Look on in wonder,
The people and the earth
Ask me — don't you know,
Only God is all love,
We are half in light
And half in shadow.

MARTA GUHA

IN DARKNESS

When we search
so many locks appear
to which the keys seem lost.
O mountain with no path
The trails of footsteps, lost
so far apart
are yet all yearning
for thy one translucent peak
that soars invisibly
above the night.
We peer like blind men at the sky,
waiting for the dawn
holding the Sun
prisoner in our hearts.

BY THE SAMADHI

Petals opening inside my head.
All left behind, the desert
where dew falls barren
on the pastures of the dead.
Corpuscles jostle in the veins like wine
and I am confounded that
this harmony should burst
out of such muddy earth as mine.

WHERE IS THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW PATH?

Passion is my master.
 The trees will not admit me
 To their silent company.
 The sun has sunk a ray
 Inside my flesh
 And trapped by bone and skin
 It roars in deep frustration
 Like some impotent volcano
 Yearning underneath its tons
 Of rock to turn again
 Into a living star and throw
 Its arms around the Sun.

KEVIN MYERS

THAT TENDER PULSING

There is a tender pulsing in the heart of life
 A hidden meaning that escapes our mind,
 That hums and glows in great and littlest things but for which
 The tongue no words can find;
 Within us is an ageless spring
 That sends it forth in myriad ways.
 Behind it lies a power
 That emanates a thousand rays.
 All hidden mystic from our sight
 Which make our hearts take flight,

It chimes at root of rock and sea
 Of earth and sky, it sings in flower, fern and fire,
 Is working to transmute us all,
 And thus fulfil the world's desire.

No brain has wrought it that has sought.
 No hand takes it apart.
 No instrument avails
 For it is whole or it is naught.
 It winks at you a moment

Only to depart.
 It is both bold and very shy,
 As indeterminate as the sky.
 Nothing can bind it.
 Not even life itself
 But the thing behind it.
 And were it not
 We would all fall to pieces.
 The world would rot
 For it is this
 The secret bliss
 That upholds the universes.

1973

MAGGI LIDCHI

HOMAGE TO SRI AUROBINDO

Perhaps my thought was a deeper seeing
 When the mind fell still and the inner being
 Seemed to hear his voice from the silent page
 Speak softly of the coming age.

My heart attuned, my body heard
 From the Lord of Life the mantric Word
 Of life transformed, earth by His kiss
 Re-wed to beauty, man to bliss.

A sweetness descending from realms above
 Borne earthward on the wings of love
 Envelopes our lives and, immortal, brings
 The Godhead's touch to mortal things.

Slowly the golden light draws near
 And the children of the dawn appear.

2003

NARAD (RICHARD EGGENBERGER)

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DYUMAN-BHAI

When I came to the Ashram in 1971, Dyuman-bhai was a constant presence, for he lived in the heart of the Ashram, in a room only a few metres from the Samadhi. Always coming and going with a smile on his face, he couldn't be missed. In the mid-seventies, a closer contact between us emerged. I started working in the Fruit Room early mornings, and one of my duties was to take Dyuman-bhai's fruit bag to his room and leave it on top of his food-safe. Normally I got there a few minutes after six, just when *The Hindu* newspaper arrived. Soon, I was browsing through the newspaper every day.

Donors

As I read the paper, Dyuman-bhai would usually be seated at his desk, signing receipts for donors to the Ashram. Light from a table lamp flooded the desk, and on it were piled the receipts of the day before, a stack of small white envelopes, and a letter pad with 'Sri Aurobindo Ashram' printed on top. Dyuman-bhai would sign each receipt, put it in an envelope, and write the donor's address on the front; sometimes he added a note of thanks. He knew who sent money and how much; his personal touch let the donor know that the contribution had reached the Mother and was appreciated. I liked the fact that he wrote the donor's address himself.

Now and then Dyuman-bhai would speak to me. I listened happily to whatever he said and sometimes I asked questions. Once I asked him which State gave the most money to the Ashram. "At first it was the Bengalis," he told me, "but now it is the Tamils. They have a custom of offering, and most of them give something when they come, maybe not much but it all adds up. The Tamils are now the top donors."

"And of those who give," I said, "how many give out of love for the Mother and how many give to obtain favours from her?"

"I suppose most give for favours," he replied, "only some, out of devotion. But it is not for us to judge — Mother knows why they give and how to help them." He accepted people as they were.

Trouble-shooter

Dyuman-bhai was one of the Mother's trouble-shooters. She often turned to him when she needed money. He would ask people to donate, and they would give because they knew their money went straight to the Mother and nowhere else. He himself needed little. His toilet kit consisted of a soap-dish with soap, a toothbrush, a razor and a shaving brush; no shaving cream: he used soap. His standard attire was a dhoti, a thin cotton shirt without buttons or collar, and an old pair of shoes. He ate well, but only because the ladies in Mother's kitchen looked after him.

Dyuman-bhai was an effective worker, one who didn't get lost in mental complications. Millie-di of 'Art House' explained his approach this way. When the Mother asked a certain disciple to do something, he would often reply, "Yes, Mother, but . . ." That 'but' was some question in his mind. When she asked Dyuman-bhai to do something, he simply said, "Yes, Mother." When Mother asks you to do something, she gives you the power to do it — that was his faith. If he needed to know more, he would ask later.

Glorialand

Dyuman-bhai's greatest joy was Glorialand, the hundred-acre farm he bought for the Ashram sometime in the early sixties. One day he invited me for a visit. Mid-afternoon we climbed into the back seat of an old Ambassador and headed out to Gloria, a half-hour drive. There I met Manindra, the effervescent manager of the farm. We got on together from the start. Like most Bengalis, Manindra was a natural-born storyteller. Walking along the inner roads of Gloria, he regaled me with enchanting tales of life on the farm. Over several visits he chronicled the growth of Gloria from a large weedy wasteland without a well into the lush farmland we saw around us. Dyuman-bhai usually trailed behind, listening to Manindra's stories or musing on thoughts of his own. The daily dose of fresh air must have done him good — time in the open to clear his mind. Dyuman-bhai did not have his usual sun-cap on his head; he kept it simple.

After our round of the farm we would head to the dining table for a sumptuous farmer's tea — a strong cup of Darjeeling tea, fresh fruits and salty snacks. By sunset, tired and happy, Dyuman-bhai and I would pile into the Ambassador and ride back to Pondy. Sometimes we talked. Once I said, "Dyuman-bhai, you have so many responsibilities — some days must really be tough. What do you do when things go wrong and you get downhearted?" He pondered a moment and said, "Well, I find that if I just go to sleep, things are usually okay when I wake up." Vintage Dyuman.

Shouldering Burdens

Dyuman-bhai had a quiet radiating energy that he shared with everyone. Strong inside, he didn't need to lean on others. He knew how to shoulder the burdens of life. Loaded with responsibilities, he never seemed unduly weighed down by them. Far from trudging around doing good works, he clearly enjoyed doing them.

Dyuman-bhai easily got filled with enthusiasm. When a happy thought popped into his head, he would break out in a beaming smile. Here was a responsible elder who could light up like a child! One day he got excited about Sri Aurobindo's return to earth. "It won't be as we think," he said. "When Sri Aurobindo comes back, what will he do? Is he going to write *Savitri*? No, of course not!" he exclaimed. "He will write something else, if he writes anything at all." And he laughed.

Sometimes his enthusiasm got the better of him. One year he was very proud that Gloria was producing a record amount of milk. “Soon there will be a pipeline running from Gloria to the Dining Room,” he gushed. “We will be able to deliver the milk direct.” Whether he really thought this was possible I don’t know.

Generosity

When Dyuman-bhai was around, there was an air of happiness and prosperity. He loved celebrations. On special days, he went all out. For any commemorative occasion, he arranged something to make the event festive. And once or twice a year we had ‘napkin distribution’. Standing outside his room, he would hand out sturdy little cotton napkins, pink or green or blue, made by our Weaving Department. When Dyuman-bhai was there, one felt in the air a spirit of generosity. And this from a man who, in other respects, insisted on economy and discipline. In the early 1930s, he incurred the wrath of the Dining Room workers by disciplining them strictly. For this he was roundly abused, but it didn’t faze him — he had the Mother’s support and that was enough.

Care for Others

Dyuman-bhai had warmth. Like any good administrator he looked after the needs of people, but beyond that he really cared. He liked people, understood their concerns and worked from his heart. People liked him.

People also trusted him; they felt comfortable in his presence. One morning I dropped by his room as usual at six and found him seated deep in his canvas easy-chair, quiet and indrawn. Beside him on the floor sat an elderly lady with a flushed face; she had obviously been crying her heart out. Dyuman-bhai said nothing and stared straight ahead, but on his face there was a look of tenderness: he was there for her. In the evenings too I have seen him seated on the doorstep of his room, with someone who had come to him for help, both looking at the Samadhi. No words, but he was there.

The Last Few Years

During the last few years of his life, we didn’t talk much. I visited his room each morning to deliver his fruit-bag and read the paper; he sat at his desk and signed receipts. Twice a year we drove out to Gloria. Manindra would take me around, with Dyuman-bhai plodding behind; we would walk a stretch and then wait for him. On the way back to Pondy he would doze off with a contented look on his face. Gradually with the years he lost the earlier dynamism, fell sick more often and spent more time in the Nursing Home. He passed away there without any fuss, active till the end. I heard that his going was good and I don’t doubt it; I imagine he died as he lived, happy in the Mother’s service.

BOB ZWICKER



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