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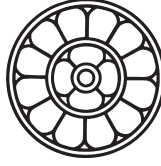
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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Vol. LXXIII

No. 3

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

CONTENTS

Sri Aurobindo

THE GUEST (Poem)	...	7
CHANGE OF CONSCIOUSNESS: THE MEANING OF YOGA	...	8
SATYAKAMA JABALA	...	11

The Mother

‘GRANT THEM THE BEATITUDE OF THY LOVE AND THE PEACE OF THY UNITY . . .’	...	15
A CONVERSATION OF 11 MAY 1951	...	16
LETTERS TO A CHILD	...	21

“Uttara Yogi”

YOGIC SADHAN	...	32
“DOCUMENTS IN THE LIFE OF SRI AUROBINDO” (Some Extracts)	...	53

Amal Kiran (K. D. Sethna)

“SHIVA” — CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO	...	60
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Nolini Kanta Gupta

THE STORY OF JABALA-SATYAKAMA	...	63
-------------------------------	-----	----

Gautam Malaker

SRI AUROBINDO, THE PERFECT GENTLEMAN —		
“LIFE OF PREPARATION AT BARODA”	...	68
1. Kindness and Compassion (Part 6)		

THE GUEST

I have discovered my deep deathless being:
Masked by my front of mind, immense, serene
It meets the world with an Immortal's seeing,
A god-spectator of the human scene.

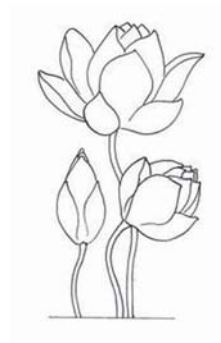
No pain and sorrow of the heart and flesh
Can tread that pure and voiceless sanctuary.
Danger and fear, Fate's hounds, slipping their leash
Rend body and nerve, — the timeless Spirit is free.

Awake, God's ray and witness in my breast,
In the undying substance of my soul
Flamelike, inscrutable the almighty Guest.
Death nearer comes and Destiny takes her toll;

He hears the blows that shatter Nature's house:
Calm sits he, formidable, luminous.

SRI AUROBINDO

Collected Poems, CWSA, Vol. 2, p. 612



CHANGE OF CONSCIOUSNESS: THE MEANING OF YOGA

Yoga is a means by which one arrives at union with the Truth behind things through an inner discipline which leads us from the consciousness of the outward and apparent to the consciousness of the inner and real. Yoga consciousness does not exclude the knowledge of the outer apparent world but it sees it with the eyes of an inner, not an outer seeing and experience, alters and sets right all its values in the light of an inner deeper greater truer consciousness and applies to it the Law of the reality, exchanging the law of the creature's Ignorance for the rule of a divine Will and Knowledge.

A change of consciousness is the whole meaning of the process of Yoga[.]

* * *

Yoga is the science, the process, the effort and action by which man attempts to pass out of the limits of his ordinary mental consciousness into a greater spiritual consciousness[.]

* * *

All yoga is in its essential [...] heightening or deepening of our consciousness so that it may become capable of something beyond our ordinary consciousness and our normal Nature. It is an entering into depths, an ascent towards heights, a widening beyond. Or it is contact with depths within, heights above, vastnesses beyond us, an opening to their greater influences, beings, movements or a reception of them into our surface consciousness and being so that the outer [is] altered, enveloped, governed by what is not our ordinary self. For the Reality which we are seeking does not lie on our surface or, if it is there, it is concealed and only a deeper, higher or wider consciousness than any to which we now have access can reach, touch or know and possess it. Even if we dive below our normal consciousness to find what is there it is some aspect of the Reality into which we enter.

* * *

By Yoga is meant — the word is not here used in the limited sense given to it in the disputations of Pandits — the use and [?] of certain processes of self-discipline [and] self-exercise or spontaneous and automatic self-intensification and self-extension of the mind and whatever in us is limited and that by which we enter into a larger deeper consciousness than is ordinarily ours.

This consciousness is aware of external things not only through the physical mind and senses but by other though often similar means of Mind, an inner sense or senses, an inner tact or feeling such as a projective or responsive awareness of things at a slight or great distance, a premonitory sense of things about to happen [or] preparing to happen, a feeling of things or persons not seen, an inner vision of physical objects and happenings not before the eye and hundreds of other phenomena not normal to the ordinary mind. These phenomena are ordinarily labelled occult or psychic or described as hallucinatory according to the point of view of the speaker, but such epithets explain nothing. This range of phenomena exists and for anyone who would know the nature and origin and possibilities of consciousness an examination of them is imperative.

This range of phenomena is however only an outer fringe of Yoga. It is more important that it admits to an inner field of experiences of the utmost import, to a growth of psyche and spirit, to deepest realities and [?finally] to the deepest of all; [. . .]

But what precisely do we mean by the word Yoga? It is used here in the most general sense possible as a convenient name including all processes or results of processes that lead to the unveiling of a greater and inner knowledge, consciousness, experience. Any psychic discipline by which we can pass partly or wholly into a spiritual state of the consciousness, any spontaneous or systematised approach to the inner Reality or the supreme Reality, any state of union or closeness to the Divine, any entry into a consciousness larger, deeper or higher than the normal consciousness common to humankind, fall automatically within the range of the word Yoga. Yoga takes us from the surface into the depths of our consciousness or it admits us into its very centre; it takes us up to the hidden topmost heights of our conscious being. It shows to us the secrets of the Self and the secret of the Divine. It gives us the knowledge, the vision, the presence of the Immanent and the Cosmic and the Transcendent Reality; that is its supreme purpose. On a lower grade it gives us the key to an inner and larger consciousness that is subliminal to us and brings out its experiences, its powers and possibilities and unless we know these things the secret of Consciousness and the knowledge of our whole being must escape us. It is through this door that we pass from a nescience of our true nature into a full light of self-knowledge.

But there are methods, schools, disciplines of Yoga that are turned towards one restricted aim, follow each a different path, win control of a separate province and by following that exclusive path we shall know that province of our being only or reach a single summit. It is by the integrality of Yoga that one can attain the integrality of consciousness. Our aim must be to embrace in this new knowledge all the planes of consciousness and all its summits. Then in the light of the knowledge brought to us and its widening and heightening of our consciousness, it is in the light of the top of things that we have to see and know all. It is then only that our

ignorance or a very partial and surface awareness of ourselves can be flooded by a light of self-revelation and turn into self-knowledge.

* * *

Yoga is in its essence a passage from the ordinary consciousness in which we are aware only of appearances into a higher wider deeper consciousness in which we become aware of realities and of the one Reality. Not only do we become aware of it, but we can live in it and act from it and according to it instead of living in and according to the appearance of things. Yoga is a passage from ignorance to self-knowledge, from our apparent to our true being, from an outer phenomenal mental vital material life-existence to an inner spiritual existence and a spiritualised nature.

By Yoga we pass from the phenomenal to the real Man, from the consciousness of our own apparent outer nature to the consciousness of our real self, Atman, an inner and inmost man, Purusha, that which we truly and eternally are. This self or true being remains constant through all the changes of our phenomenal being, changes of the mind, life or body or changes of our apparent personality; it is permanent, perpetual and immortal, a portion or manifestation of the Eternal.

By Yoga we pass also from our consciousness of the phenomenal appearance or appearances of the cosmos or world around us to a consciousness of its truth and reality. We become aware of the world as a manifestation of or in universal being who is the true truth of all that we see, hear, experience. We become aware of a cosmic Consciousness which is the secret of the cosmic Energy, a cosmic Self or Spirit, the cosmic Divine, the universal Godhead.

But by Yoga we become aware also that our own Self or true being is one with the cosmic Self and Spirit, our nature a play of the cosmic Nature; the wall between ourselves and the universe begins to disappear and vanishes altogether. We realise the selfsame Pantheos in ourselves, in others and in all universal existence.

But also by Yoga we become aware of something that is more than our individual being and more than the cosmic being, a transcendent Being or Existence which is not dependent on ours or the existence of the universe. Our existence is a manifestation of and in that Being, the cosmos also is a manifestation of and in that one Supreme Existence.

This then is the Truth or Reality to which we arrive by Yoga, a one and supreme Being or Existence and Power of Being which manifests as a cosmic Self or Spirit and a cosmic Energy or Nature and in that again as our own self or spirit which becomes aware of itself as an individual being and nature.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Essays Divine and Human*, CWSA, Vol. 12, pp. 327-31)

SATYAKAMA JABALA

The story of Satyakama Jabala occupies five sections, the third to the eighth, of the fourth chapter in the Chhandogya Upanishad. The Chhandogya seems to be the most ancient of the extant Upanishads. It speaks of Krishna, son of Devaki, and Dhritarashtra Vaichitravirya in a tone that would justify us in assuming that it regarded them not as ancient and far-off names but as men who had walked the earth in living memory. The movement of philosophic speculation of which the Upanishads are the extant record, was an attempt to pass from the old ritualistic *karma* to the freedom of the *jnanamarga*. According to the writer of the Gita, this was not a new movement, but a return to a past and lost discipline; for Sri Krishna says to Arjuna of the true or *sajnan karmamarga* he reveals to him, “This is the imperishable Yoga I declared unto Vivaswan, Vivaswan revealed it to Manu and Manu to Ixvacu told it. Thus was it known to the royal sages by hereditary transmission, till by the great lapse of time this yoga was lost, O scourge of thy foes. This is the same ancient Yoga that I have told unto [thee] today, because thou art my lover and my friend; for this is the highest of all the inner truths.”

The Dwapara Yuga was the age of Kuru preeminence and the Kurus were a great practical, warlike, ritualistic, juristic race of the Roman type, with little of the speculative temper or moral enthusiasm of the eastern Coshalas, Videhas, Kashis, Chedis. The West of India has always been noted for its practical, soldierly, commercial bent of mind in comparison with the imaginative and idealistic Eastern races and the scholastic, logical and metaphysical South. According to the Hindu theory of the Yugas, it is in the Dwapara that everything is codified, ritualised, formalised. In the Satya Vishnu descends among men as Yajna. Yajna is the spirit of adoration and sacrifice, and in the Satya yajna reigns in the hearts of men, and there is no need of external ritual, external sacrifices, elaborate law, government, castes, classes and creeds. Men follow the law by the necessity of their purified nature and their complete knowledge. The kingdom of God & the Veda are in the hearts of His people. In the Treta the old perfect order begins to break and Vishnu descends as the *chakravarti raja*, the warrior and ruler, Kartavirya, Parsurama, Rama, and the sword, the law and the written Veda are instituted to govern men. But there is still great elasticity and freedom and within certain limits men follow the healthy impulse of their nature, only slightly corrupted by the first descent from purity. It is in the Dwapara that form and rule have to take the place of the idea and the spirit as the true governors of religion, ethics and society. Vishnu then descends as Vyasa, the great codifier and systematiser of knowledge.

At the end of the Dwapara, when Sri Krishna came, this tendency had reached its extreme development, and the form tended to take the place of the idea and the

rule to take the place of the spirit not only in the outward conduct but in the hearts of men. Nevertheless an opposite tendency had already begun. Dhritarashtra himself was an earnest inquirer into the inner meaning of things. Great Vedantists were living and teaching, such as the rishi Ghora to whom Sri Krishna himself went for the word of illumination. Sri Krishna was the intellectual force that took up all these scattered tendencies and, by breaking down the strong formalism of the Dwapara, prepared the work of the Kali. In the Gita he denounces those who will not go outside the four corners of the Veda and philosophises the whole theory of the sacrificial system; he contemptuously dismisses the guidance of the set ethical systems and establishes an inward and spiritual rule of conduct. To many of his time he seems to have appeared as a baneful and destructive portent; like all great revolutionary innovators, he is denounced by Bhurisravas as a well known misleader of men and corrupter of morals. It is the work of the Kali Yuga to destroy everything by questioning everything in order to establish after a struggle between the forces of purity and impurity a new harmony of life and knowledge in another Satyayuga.

After the destruction of the conservative Kurus and Panchalas at Kurukshetra, the development of the Vedanta commenced and went on progressing till in its turn it reached its extreme & excessive development in the teachings of Buddha and Shankaracharya. But at the period of the Chhandogya it is in its early stage of development. The first sections of the Upanishad are taken up with an esoteric development of the inner meaning of certain parts of the sacrificial formulae, which in itself is sufficient to show that the work belongs to the first stratum of Vedantic formation.

The story of Satyakama is one of the most typical in the Upanishad. It is full of sidelights on early Vedantic teaching, Yogic sadhan and that deep psychical knowledge which the writer took for granted in the hearers of his work. So much knowledge, indeed, is thus taken for granted that it is impossible for anyone not himself a practiser of Yoga, to understand anything but its broad conclusions. The modern commentators, Shankara included, have approached it in order to establish particular metaphysical doctrines, not to elucidate its entire significance. I shall take the side that has been neglected; for what to the European inquirer are merely “the babblings of children”, bear to the Yogin an aspect of infinite truth, value and significance.

Chapter II

“Now Satyakama Jabala spoke unto his mother Jabala and said ‘Mother, I shall go and lead the life of the Brahmacharin; tell me what is my *gotra*.’ But she answered him, ‘This I know not, my son, of what *gotra* thou art; resorting to many as a serving woman in my youth I got thee, therefore I know not of what *gotra* thou art. But Jabala is my name and Satyakama is thine, Satyakama Jabala therefore call thyself.’

So he came to Haridrumata the Gautama and said, 'I would stay with my Lord as a Brahmacharin, let me therefore enter under thee.' And he said to him, 'My son, of what gotra art thou?' But the other answered, 'This, alas, I know not of what gotra I am; I asked my mother and she answered me, Resorting to many in my youth as a serving woman I got thee, therefore I know not of what gotra thou art, but Jabala is my name and Satyakama is thine; Satyakama Jabala therefore am I.' And he said to him, 'None who is not a Brahmin can be strong enough to say this; gather the firewood, my son, I will take thee under me, for thou didst not depart from the truth.' He admitted him and put forth four hundred cows weak and lean and said, 'These, my son, do thou follow as a herd,' and he set the cows in motion and said, 'Return not until they are a thousand.' And he fared abroad with them during the years till they were a thousand."

So the story opens, and simple as it seems, it already contains several points of capital importance in understanding the ideas of the time and the principles of the old Vedantic *sadhana*. Satyakama, as we gather from other passages, was one of the great Vedantic teachers of the time immediately previous to the composition of the Chhandogya Upanishad. But his birth is the meanest possible. His mother is a serving girl, not a *dasi* attached to a permanent household whose son could have named his father and his gotra, but a *paricharika*, serving for hire at various houses, "resorting to many", and therefore unable to name her son's father. Satyakama has, therefore, neither caste, nor gotra, nor any position in life. It appears from this story as from others that, although the system of the four castes was firmly established, it counted as no obstacle in the pursuit of knowledge and spiritual advancement. The Kshatriya could teach the Brahmin, the illegitimate and fatherless son of the serving girl could be guru to the purest and highest blood in the land. This is nothing new or improbable, for it has been so throughout the history of Hinduism and the shutting out of anyone from spiritual truth and culture on the ground of caste is an invention of later times. In the nature of things the usual rule would be for the greater number of spiritual preceptors to be found in the higher castes, but this was the result of natural laws and not of a fixed prohibition. It is noticeable also from this and other instances that it was the father's position that fixed the son's, and the mother's seems to have been of very minor importance. The question about the gotra was of importance, probably, with regard to the rites and other circumstances of initiation. Satyakama must have known perfectly well that he was the illegitimate son of a serving woman, but he wished to know his father's name and gotra because he would have to tell it to his guru. Even after knowing the worst, he persisted in his intention of taking up spiritual studies, so that he can have had no fear of being rejected on account of his base origin. His guru, impressed by his truthfulness, says, "None but a Brahmin would have the moral strength to make such an avowal." It can hardly be meant by this that Satyakama's father must have been a Brahmin, but that since he had the Brahmin qualities, he must be accepted as a Brahmin. Even the

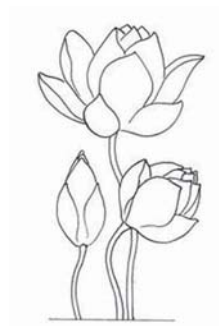
Kshatriya would have hesitated to speak so truthfully, because the Kshatriya is by nature a lover of honour and shuns dishonour, he has the sense of *mana* and *apamana*; but the true Brahmin is *samo manapamanayoh*, he accepts indifferently worldly honour and dishonour and cares only for the truth and the right. In short the Gautama concludes that, whatever may be Satyakama's physical birth, spiritually he is of the highest order and especially fitted for a sadhaka; *na satyad agat*, he did not depart from the truth.

The second point is the first action of the guru after the ceremony of initiation. Instead of beginning the instruction of this promising disciple he sends him out with four hundred miserable kine, more likely to die than prosper and increase, and forbids him to return till he has increased them to a thousand. Wherefore this singular arrangement? Was it a test? Was it a discipline? But Haridrumata had already seen that his new disciple had the high Brahmin qualities. What more did he require?

The perfect man is a fourfold being and one object of Vedantic discipline is to be the perfect man, *siddha*. When Christ said, "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect," he was only repeating in popular language the Vedantic teaching of *sadharmya*, likeness to God.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Kena and Other Upanishads*, CWSA, Vol. 18, pp. 263-67)



‘GRANT THEM THE BEATITUDE OF THY LOVE AND THE PEACE OF THY UNITY . . .’

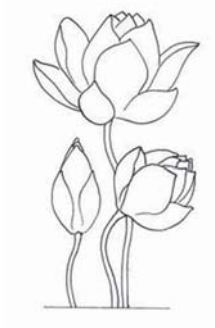
June 29, 1914

Give joy, peace and happiness to them all. . . . If they suffer, illumine their suffering and make it a means of transfiguration; grant them the beatitude of Thy love and the peace of Thy unity; may their hearts feel vibrating within them Thy eternal Presence. They are all in me, O Lord, I am in them all, and since instead of an “I”, there is now only Thy sovereign love, they are all in Thy love and will be transfigured by it.

O Lord, my sweet Master, unknowable splendour, give them joy, peace, beatitude.

THE MOTHER

(Prayers and Meditations, CWM 2nd Ed., Vol. 1, p. 189)



A CONVERSATION OF 11 MAY 1951

[Mother reads the passage about Mahakali (pp. 28-30)
from *The Mother* by Sri Aurobindo.]

Are the stories told about the image of Mahakali true?

What stories? Hundreds of stories are told, my child. Which stories are you speaking of? Which Mahakali? The images made of her, the statues? This is the human way of seeing things. She is not like that.

I believe I have already told you once that there are the original beings in their higher reality and these are of a particular kind; then, as they manifest in more and more material regions, nearer and nearer the earth, they assume different forms and also multiply in a strange way. If you like, the beings Sri Aurobindo speaks of here belong to regions quite close to the Supermind, they are still in quite a clear and conscious contact with the supramental origin. These beings manifest also in what Sri Aurobindo calls the Overmind and there the form becomes as it were more marked, a little more precise and at the same time reduced in power and capacity. Then, from the Overmind they come down into the human mind, the terrestrial mind and there . . . Take for instance this poor Mahakali; you have a multitude of Kalis, one more horrible than another; some are absolutely terrifying and horrifying, and they sometimes become quite repulsive beings who are exclusively human formations, that is, the outer form is given by human imagination, by the human mind's capacity of formation. There may be within that a vague reflection of the force of Mahakali, but it is so diminished, deformed, dwarfed, brought within the range of human consciousness, that truly she can very well deny that it is she! I have seen all possible horrors by way of images representing Mahakali. Of the images we won't speak. If great artists have made them perhaps some beauty is still left, but as they are generally daubers, nothing remains. As for the images (statues or pictures) which have to be installed in a temple, a religious ceremony is performed, and if the priest or the assistant is a man with occult powers, even limited ones, he can, with his aspiration and through the ritual, bring a supraterrrestrial consciousness into these forms. That is the principle; you are told, "This is not a piece of wood, this is not a stone, this is not a picture; there is within it a force which the religious ritual has brought down and to this you may speak." This is right, but the nature of the priest must be known, his occult knowledge and also the forces with which he has an affinity. So, there may be many things in there. . . . There is "something" (unless it is a stupid ignoramus who has performed the ceremony, one who has no power at all, has brought down nothing, made only a show — but this is rather rare; I can't

say it happens frequently, it is quite rare), generally there is something, but then the nature, the quality of this something, you know . . . this varies infinitely and it is sometimes a little disturbing. I gave the example of Mahakali, because the conception of Mahakali in the human consciousness is especially horrible. When one goes to other divinities like Mahasaraswati, for instance, to whom all kinds of artistic, literary and other capacities are ascribed, it is no longer so terrible. But Mahakali particularly . . . Their conception of power, force, warlike energy is so terrible that what they bring down is indeed a little dangerous for those who worship it. I have heard innumerable stories since my coming to India. I have been put in touch with innumerable images and have known many people who had in their homes a Kali they worshipped and to whom, sometimes, quite dreadful things had happened. I always put them on their guard, I told them, “Don’t think at all that Mahakali is responsible for your misfortunes, for she is not responsible for them. But it is likely that the Kali you have in your home must be harbouring some vindictive being, probably one very jealous, extremely wilful and with a very strong spirit of vengeance, and as you have faith and as it is generally a vital power, there may be truly dangerous consequences.” I have known people who, after having had all kinds of unfortunate experiences, have taken the statue of Mahakali and thrown it into the Ganges. If at the same time they could acquire a certain freedom of spirit, all the damage would disappear, but some of them are so frightened of what they have done that the bad effects continue.

These things should never be touched unless one has at least the first elements of occult knowledge. Unfortunately, in religions — all religions, not only here but everywhere — knowledge is never given to the faithful. Sometimes the priests have it (I don’t say always), but when they have it they take good care not to give it to the faithful, for that would deprive them of their authority and power, and that really is the evil behind all religious institutions.

Anyway, this is a digression. Let us come back to our subject. In the earth atmosphere there is indeed a Kali who deals with earthly things and is somewhat, one cannot say independent, yet not quite the expression of Mahakali; but she is altogether obedient to her and has her major qualities. They are diminished in power and efficacy, but they exist, and the beauty of her nature is there. Perhaps some of you have had relations with that Mahakali. She does not avenge herself, she never does harm to those who love her, she does not strike with epidemics the countries which do not show her sufficient respect and consideration. But she likes violence, she likes war and her justice is crushing.

Now, another question.

What is the difference between an Avatar and a Vibhuti?

We said the other day that “Vibhutis” are aspects, qualities (what are called in

occultism emanations) of a being. They are like certain forces, powers, qualities, attributes which are put in contact with an outer form — a physical form, for instance — and which manifest themselves through this form. This may be a human form. The Avatar (at least when understood in the true sense) is the incarnation upon earth of the supreme Truth. Now, many meanings are given to this word. There is even a word *avatar* in French which has a very special meaning! It is said that an adventurer has many *avatars*, that is, he changes his appearance, personality, occupation. . . . But originally (as it is said in the Gita, for example) when the Supreme decides to manifest himself upon earth for a particular reason and takes an earthly body, it is said that he is an Avatar. He may take many successive bodies according to the needs and circumstances, but it is always what could be called the “central being” which takes an earthly body. That is what is called an Avatar. I thought you knew that. Sri Aurobindo has explained this in many places.

“Imperial Maheshwari is seated in the wideness above the thinking mind and will. . . .”¹ Is there a plane of will, as there is a mental plane, a vital plane, etc.?

I have explained that to you in connection with Sachchidananda. Sachchidananda exists at the very origin of the worlds, but there is a Sachchidananda behind all the other states of being. You could make a diagram (though that does not explain much, it is quite an erroneous idea, but it makes things more easily understandable), you arrange the states of being according to a scale. Then, you have the earth below and the Supreme above (it is not at all like that, I hasten to tell you! But anyway, it is easy to understand), you put the earth at the bottom and the Supreme at the top, and you divide that into lots of little parts each of which represents a state of being; that makes a kind of ladder. And then, you have as though behind it, behind your ladder, something which supports it, against which it leans. It is not a wall but it is something which supports your ladder. And that is precisely the first principle of the universal form. In Hindu terminology it is called “Sachchidananda”. It is there, everything leans upon that; without that nothing could exist. It is that which upholds and allows existence. Then, if you enter a certain state of consciousness and find yourself, for instance, in the higher mind (for generally it is more easily there that this happens; you have started from the physical and climbed slowly, rung by rung, as far as the higher mind), but instead of continuing your ascent on the ladder you enter into a kind of interiorisation and try to go out of the form, you pass into a kind of silence outside the form. You pass in between the bars of your ladder and enter straight into Sachchidananda which supports everything from behind. And then you can have mentally the experience of Sachchidananda. I have known people who had it and thought they had reached the heights of the Supreme. For there is a

1. Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, p. 26.

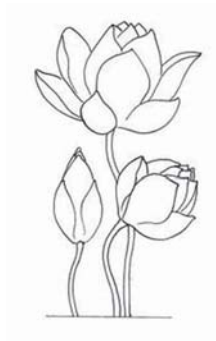
similarity in the experience, a very great likeness, only it is limited to the mind, the mind alone participates in it. Well, for the will it is the same thing. Instead of being the support of the ladder it is a kind of force, a very powerful current which passes through all these states, starting from above — it is the supreme Will — and coming down into the physical manifestation. Hence, if you get into affinity with this vibration or this force, you can enter “the state of will”; that is, whatever state of being you may find yourself in — physical, vital, mental, etc. — if you enter a certain state of consciousness and force, you come into contact with this power of will: it penetrates into you and you can use it for any purpose. If your reception is free from all egoism, if you are pure, completely surrendered and accept only what comes from the Divine, and if you don’t mix anything with it, egoism or desires or limitations . . . well, it is a state a bit difficult to attain, but if you attain it, you receive this force of will in its original state, pure (for it comes down pure, it is only in its reception that it gets deformed), then, instead of being your will it becomes an expression of the divine Will. And this happens *without your leaving the physical body* — you can receive the force of the divine Will without leaving the physical. Only, you see, you must not change it and deform it, spoil it in the receiving. When you feel within you a kind of indomitable energy to realise something, when you tell yourself, “I shall do this whatever the cost, I shall go to the end and shall use all *my* will” (for you always say *my* will), well, you cannot be in that state unless you have come into contact with this current of will-force. Only, with your little personal reaction, naturally you deform it and use it all wrongly, and then you come into conflict with other elements. But if you are truly a yogi, you receive the current and nothing can stop the *élan* of your action, even physically.

There are other things like that, other states, other forces, there are many of these. Fundamentally, if one studies very attentively, one perceives that there is nothing in the individual being which is not the expression or the deformation or diminution, reduction and lessening of something which has its origin in the Supreme and is of a universal nature. So, you see, all these ideas of “pulling”, “calling”, are not quite right. Essentially, the only thing one should do is to prepare oneself, make oneself worthy of this contact and, when one has had it, not deform it. And this excludes nobody. Even a very small child can, at certain moments in his life, come into touch with one of these great universal forces of divine origin, and use it for its childish needs. Unfortunately, there are added to it so many limitations, so much egoism, ignorance, stupidity, that it is often completely disfigured. It cannot be recognised, it is unrecognisable. But the origin of the force is the same, and that is why when one attains a certain state of consciousness, one perceives that if these forces were not there, one would be nothing, would not exist. And instead of saying with the usual self-complacency, “I do this, I do not do that, I have decided that, I want that thing, I shall succeed . . .”, all this goes away from you in such a way that you can never again think like that; it seems to you so ridiculous — so ridiculous.

As soon as the little “I” comes in, that means a deformation, a limitation, a degradation. In fact, all that you do not value comes with your “I” — you remove the “I” and all that disappears at the same time.

THE MOTHER

(*Questions and Answers 1950-51*, CWM 2nd Ed., Vol. 4, pp. 395-401)



LETTERS TO A CHILD

(Continued from the issue of January 2020)

[To one of the first children admitted to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram; he came at the age of ten. Interested as a youth in music, painting and poetry, he later became a teacher of music in the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education. He began writing to the Mother at the age of twelve.]

Mother,

I have a pain in my head. I am very tired.

My child, all my love is always with you; do not push it away.

1 September 1934

*

My dear child,

I have been informed from the dining-room that you did not eat either yesterday evening or the whole day today. Why? If you are sick, you must be taken care of. I shall send the doctor to you. But if you are not sick, you must eat; if you do not eat regularly, your brain will waste away and you will lose your intelligence, and then?

It grieves me when you do not eat regularly. Do you want to grieve your mother who loves you and wants only your own good?

September 1934

*

My dear mother,

I won't be irregular from today. You know very well that I am not sick; it was a cloud, you know. Now I am going to the dining-room. My mother, I want to be good. Everything has gone now. I want to be your little child.

My dear child,

You are a very nice child, and I am very pleased that you had your meal yesterday evening and that all the clouds have gone. Now you must not allow them

to come back and for that the best thing is to remain always cradled in my arms, protected by my love which never leaves you.

7 September 1934

*

My dear mother,

Have I done something that has displeased you? My head hurts. I feel tired.

You are quite mistaken, I am not at all displeased with you. Only I am worried because you always have a headache and because you are tired.

I want all that to go away and I want you to be perfectly healthy. For that, you must follow a physical discipline: sleep regularly, eat regularly, exercise regularly, etc., etc. And unfortunately you refuse all discipline. This makes my task very difficult.

With all my love.

11 September 1934

*

Dearest mother,

I feel so tired, and my head hurts. Mother, what shall I do?

My dear child,

You know that my love is always with you and my will is that you should get well; my force is with you to give you health. I take you into my arms, I take you to my heart.

20 September 1934

*

My dear child,

I don't want you to be ill and always I am with you to cure you — but you too must want to be cured. Do not torment yourself and always nestle in my arms so as to receive my love and force.

23 September 1934

*

My dear little child,

I fully agree with you that egoism, vanity and jealousy must disappear; they are indeed ugly, mean and ignorant things that stop all progress.

My force is with you to conquer these things. And my love never leaves you.

25 September 1934

*

My dear mother,

I am not unhappy. All that is a falsehood.

Mother, stay with your little child.

My dear child,

Always, always I am with you and the quieter and happier you are, the more you will feel it.

With all my love.

3 October 1934

*

My little mother,

Give me peace. Give me joy in work. Make me your instrument.

My dear child,

I am very happy to know that you want to be my instrument. To be able to be my instrument, you must be regular, energetic, courageous, enduring and always good-tempered. I have no doubt that you can acquire these qualities.

With you always.

25 October 1934

*

My little mother,

I want peace. I feel that everything is unquiet. Mother, give me peace.

My child,

I envelop you always in peace and force, but most of the time you close yourself and refuse what I give you.

How will you feel my help and take advantage of it if you do not even trust in me? Yet my love is always with you.

1 November 1934

*

*My dearest mother,
Won't you forgive me? Mother, take me into your arms.*

My child,

Certainly I forgive you, but you, on your side, must sweep your mind clean of all these bad thoughts which are harmful to you.

My love is with you.

2 November 1934

*

*My dear little mother,
Forgive the faults I have committed. Give me peace. Remain always in my heart.*

Yes, my dear child, I forgive you; but how I would like you to become quieter, more reasonable, more studious!

Don't you think it is high time for you to develop these qualities, which are absolutely indispensable if you want to do anything in life?

5 December 1934

*

*Dearest mother,
Stay with me always. You know everything.*

Yes, I know everything and that is why I know that my little child is not always reasonable and that is why he has a headache and a stomachache.

22 December 1934

*

*My dear mother,
I want to feel you near to me always. I want peace.*

My little child,

I am always with you, bringing you peace and tranquillity, calm and force. But to feel my presence, you know what you must do and especially what you must *not* do.

Love from your mother.

1 February 1935

*

My dear child,

The best thing for your headache is to take plenty of physical exercise (such as gardening for example).

25 February 1935

*

My sweet mother,

Fill my thoughts with you. Stay always with your little child. Give me a deep and lasting peace.

My dear child,

I am putting peace in your heart; but to become conscious of it, you should repeat, as often as possible, mentally turning to me: "You have put Peace in my heart; make me aware of its presence."

With all my love.

27 February 1935

*

My dear child,

Do not forget that *I am always with you* and do only what you could do in front of me without feeling ashamed. I mean that you must *never do* what you would not dare to do in my physical presence, for I am always with you.

Love.

6 March 1935

*

My sweet mother,

I don't know why something in me is sad. Even when I am very happy, truly happy, this part is still sad. Mother, which part in me is like this? Is it the heart, the vital, or is it something very superficial and insignificant?

My dear child,

It is in fact something very superficial, but still it should be cured. It is your body that does not feel very strong and is sad because it does not have a sound balance of health. The best cure is plenty of open-air exercise and abundant food.

16 March 1935

*

My dear mother,

I don't know why I have lost all my happiness and peace. I don't know when it will come back to my heart. My sweet mother, what shall I do?

My dear child,

When one's attention is always turned towards oneself, one is never happy. When one allows oneself to be ruled by every passing impulse, one is never peaceful.

It is through work and self-mastery that one can find happiness and peace.

23 March 1935

*

Sweet mother,

I want to be happy, but how? Sadness comes during my work; I cannot forget it. My dear mother, be with me always.

My dear child,

This causeless sadness may also come while you work, but if you didn't work it would be far worse. It is in work that one finds balance and joy.

I am always with you to help and support you.

Love from your mother.

12 June 1935

*

My sweet mother,

I feel very tired; some part in me is not happy. I don't know whether it is inside me or outside; something feels completely lost and lifeless. You know everything, my mother. Will you tell me what it is?

It is something in your vital that cannot bear any vexation, even the slightest. This part of the vital must learn to become stronger and more enduring.

4 August 1935

*

My dear mother,

I feel very tired. I also have a slight headache.

My dear child,

I don't need to tell you where your headache comes from; I suppose you know. Only when you become absolutely regular in your material life will you be able to have good health.

Love from your mother.

6 September 1935

*

My sweet mother,

For three days I have been feeling sad in the evening. This morning I felt sad too. I don't know exactly why it comes. For two days I felt a great joy, but now the joy has gone. When will all these things go away?

My dear child,

You must not worry about these alternations. When the psychic being comes to the surface, it brings its own joy with it; but when the mind or the vital comes, then the joy seems to withdraw, though it is always there, behind, ready to manifest again. But above all you must not believe the suggestions of incapacity and failure; they come from an adverse source and ought not to be given any credence. Certainly there are difficulties on the path, but with perseverance the victory is sure.

Love from your mother.

16 December 1936

*

Sweet mother,

You told me that I am making progress. Did you want to console me by telling me this? When I look within myself, not just now but over the past two years, I find nothing. Sometimes I feel: "Why all these efforts? They will be fruitless." You told me to open my heart and all will be well; but you know, mother, nothing stays in me.

My dear child,

No, it is not to console you that I told you that you have made progress. The progress is undeniable even though it may not be apparent. Certainly the path of yoga is a very difficult one, and you should not expect to reap its fruits after only three or four years. It takes much longer than that. But you are young, you have all of life before you; you need not be impatient.

You say that you are often depressed. It is the vital being that gets depressed when its desires are not satisfied.

In ordinary life, one has to struggle to satisfy one's desires; here one struggles not to do so. Actually, whatever path one follows, success always comes to those who are strong, courageous, enduring. And you know that here our force and our help are always available to you; you have only to learn to make use of them.

Love from your mother.

26 July 1937

*

My dear mother,

No, I cannot do all those things. Why did you think that? Is there any special reason? Will you tell me one thing: why are you now so far away from me?

My dear child,

I don't know at all what *things* you mean. All I told you was that to develop your artistic faculties you are much better off here than anywhere else. I added that only if you wanted to marry would you have to leave the Ashram.

But you know that I never advise anyone to marry; it is a terrible bondage.

I have never thought that you really wanted to marry, but now and then it is good that I remind you that you are free and that it is for you to make the decision; that's all.

I don't feel that you are far from me; for me you are always in my arms. So if you feel that you are far away, it is a false feeling which does not conform to the truth.

Love from your mother.

28 July 1937

*

My sweet mother,

You told me that you saw two things while I was playing: "Garuda", and the palace and river. What do they mean?

The palace and river were the image of a moment from one of your past lives.

The great bird "Garuda" standing immobile behind you with outspread wings is the vehicle of Vishnu, the destroyer of serpents. He seemed to be standing behind you to protect and inspire you.

Love from your mother.

28 August 1937

*

The moon is the symbol of the spiritual light, one in its origin, multiple in its manifestation. There is only one moon and yet each reflection of the moon is different. This is what I wanted to say in a poetic form.

Love from your mother.

9 September 1937

*

What I meant yesterday is that all people very sensitive are opened to many influences and that is why it is difficult for them to be steady.

But with discrimination one can distinguish the bad from the good influences and reject persistently the bad ones.

Love from your mother.

13 September 1937

*

My dear child,

I understand your difficulty very well. It is very common and can only be solved with much endurance in the will and much patience.

For on the one hand you want to consecrate yourself to the Divine and take your place in the divine life in the making.

On the other hand you want the satisfactions of ordinary life and the pleasures of the vital — without considering, however, that these pleasures can only be obtained through much struggle and effort and that always they go hand in hand with worry and suffering.

On the first path, there is no question of personal incapacity, since our help and protection are always there. Indeed, you must open yourself to this help and protection and learn to use them to conquer the adversary who is trying to draw you towards the lower animal consciousness.

Love from your mother who never leaves you.

15 May 1938

*

My sweet mother,

These last few days I felt that I was going down step by step — everything seemed to be gradually closing in against me, against my heart. I feel, even now, that I am suffocated.

Are you making me feel life without you in order to see whether I want this life or not? Mother, if you don't know what my path is, then who does?

My dear child,

I know very well what the true life for you is, and what your destiny is. But it is *you* who must become aware of it and understand it so that you can realise it. In what way do you feel yourself going down? Are desires becoming stronger in you? Whatever happens, you can always rely on my help; do not hesitate to ask for it.

Love from your mother.

29 May 1938

*

My sweet mother,

I feel completely suffocated. The struggle has become fiercer. How many days must I go on like this?

My dear child,

Do not lose heart and do not be impatient; these things take a long time to disappear. You know, don't you, that our force, our help and our blessings are always with you?

Keep your interest in the work — this too will help you to pass through the difficult moments.

Love from your mother.

28 June 1938

*

Mother,

This inner condition is getting worse and worse instead of better. You said to be patient, but as it is I am becoming like a stone, without energy, inert, and more and more closed. I feel your light and your force around me, but I cannot receive them. I am not asking you to tell me what to do — you have told me to be patient and I will be patient. I am only telling you about my condition, that's all.

You are right to tell me, my dear child; it helps you to open yourself. I know that it is troublesome to feel this resistance in yourself; but persist in your will to overcome it and it will suddenly give way.

Love from your mother.

10 July 1938

*

My sweet mother,

I want to ask you something concerning my poetry. It has stopped now. Is there some inner preparation at work and is it waiting for the descent of a higher inspiration?

My dear child,

Yes, I think in fact that your poetry has stopped so that you can prepare yourself for a higher inspiration. You were going round and round in the same forms; something new had to come.

Of course, if you feel that something wants to express itself, you must try.

I am always with you, my dear child, and my love never leaves you.

Your mother.

17 July 1938

*

You have my full consent to write poetry, and Sri Aurobindo says that there is no doubt about your poetic capacity. Today's poem is very good. But when you try to write every day, it becomes more and more mental and you lose contact with the true inspiration. That is why you should write only when you feel that the inspiration is there.

20 July 1938

*

My sweet mother,

Were you angry with me because I have decided to leave the Ashram? I want to go forward — not to revolt against you, no, not at all. But I want to be sure of my path.

Give me a chance, Mother, please.

One thing I want to ask you: Mother, will you always be in my heart?

I am not at all angry; but since you have decided to leave, I cannot detain you either, or do anything that might deprive you of the strength to leave. I am and will always be in your heart; so you are sure to find me there if you enter into it deeply enough.

Love from your mother.

30 August 1938

THE MOTHER

(Some Answers from the Mother, CWM 2nd Ed., Vol. 16, pp. 126-39)

YOGIC SADHAN¹

A U M

I

The proper course of the Sadhan is just the opposite of the thing most people do and you have also done. People begin with the body and the prana, go on to the chitta and the manas, and finish up with the buddhi and the will. The real course is to start with the will and finish with the body. There is no need of Asana, Pranayama, Kumbhaka, Chittasuddhi, or anything else preparatory or preliminary if one starts with the will. That was what Sri Ramakrishna came to show so far as Yoga is concerned. “Do the Shakti Upasana first,” he said, “get Shakti and she will give you Sat.” Will and Shakti are the first means necessary to the Yogin. That was why he said always, “Remember you are Brahman,” and he gave that as a central message to Swami Vivekananda. You are Ishwara. If you choose, you can be shuddha, siddha and everything else, or, if you choose, you can be just the opposite. The first necessity is to believe in yourself, the second in God and the third to believe in Kali; for these things make up the world. Educate the Will first, through the Will educate the Jnanam, through the Jnanam purify the Chitta, control the Prana and calm the Manas. Through all these instruments immortalise the body. That is the real yoga,

1. Sri Aurobindo received this book as automatic writing in 1910. According to his biographer A. B. Purani,

“During the first three months of the stay at Pondicherry [April-June 1910] there used to be séances in the evening in which automatic writing was done. The book *Yogic Sadhan* was written in this way. At the rate of one chapter per day, the book was finished in a week or eight days. . . . The Editor’s Epilogue added after the last chapter was written by Sri Aurobindo himself. The editor’s name is given as “the Uttar[a] Yogi”.

A year later, the text that had been received was transcribed and published under the title *Yogic Sadhan* by Sri Vani Vilas Press, Srirangam. “The Uttara Yogi” (the Yogi from the North) is a name by which Sri Aurobindo was known to the person who published the book. A second edition of *Yogic Sadhan*, lightly revised, was brought out by the Modern Press, Pondicherry, in 1920. Two further editions were brought out by Arya Publishing House, Calcutta, in 1923 and 1933. The present text follows the second edition with a few emendations, mainly in chapters 7-9, for which a manuscript in Sri Aurobindo’s hand survives.

Sri Aurobindo permitted the publication of *Yogic Sadhan*, but he did not consider it his own work. In a letter of 1934 he wrote:

The *Yogic Sadhan* is not Sri Aurobindo’s own writing, but was published with a note by him, that is all. The statement made to the contrary by the publishers was an error which they have been asked to correct. There is no necessity of following the methods suggested in that book unless one finds them suggestive or helpful as a preliminary orientation of the consciousness e.g. in the up-building of an inner Will etc.

The “note” referred to is the “Editor’s Epilogue”, which was included in all editions of *Yogic Sadhan*. Sri Aurobindo allowed the book to go out of print after the edition of 1933 was sold out. It has not been reprinted since then in the form of a book.

the Mahapantha, that is the true and only Tantra. The Vedanta starts with Buddhi, the Tantra with Shakti.

What the Will is you have heard. It is Shakti, it is not Vasana, it is not Cheshta. Vasana and Cheshta are the negation of will. If you have desire, that means you doubt the power of your Will. Brahman has no desire. He wills and all things happen according to his Will. If you have Cheshta, that means you doubt your Will. Only those who feel or think they are not strong, struggle and labour to produce an effect. Brahman has no cheshta. He wills and His Will spontaneously produces its effect. But it produces it in time, space and causality. To demand a result now here and under given conditions is Ajnanam. The time, space and causality of every event and its development have been fixed ages ago by yourself and Parameswara, when the Kalpa began. It is ignorance to struggle and try to alter what you have yourself decreed. Care not about time, space or conditions, but will, and leave the result to God who is your omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient self. You are the individual God and He is the universal God. Nothing but God exists. Ekam evadwitiyam. Therefore Will implies Samata, absence of Vasana and Cheshta. Absence of Vasana and Cheshta implies knowledge. Until you have knowledge, you can never be safe against the return of Vasana and Cheshta.

The question is how to start. The Shakti is in you. Let her work and assist her by taking the right attitude. You are the Sakshi, Anumanta, Bhokta, and Bharta. As Anumanta, give the command, as Sakshi watch her work out the result, as Bhokta enjoy the result and as Bharta help her by maintaining the Adhar. Do not ruin it by tamasic udasinata or rajasic revolt. Be sure your Will can never fail to act. You are the Jnata: receive all knowledge that presents itself to you. Adopt the attitude I have described here and apply it to every individual act of the sadhana or of life. You have nothing else to do. Kali will do the rest. Be not troubled, be not anxious, be not in haste, you have all eternity before you, why be in haste? Only do not be tamasic or idly waste your time.

II

I shall speak to-day of the Shakti or Will, since that is the foundation of Yoga. The Shakti is situated in the Sahasradala just above the crown of the head and from that seat of activity it works. Below it at the top of the brain is the higher Buddhi and below that, occupying the middle level of the brain, is the reason or lower buddhi, and below that, at the bottom of the brain, is the organ of communication with the Manas. We may call this organ the understanding. Knowledge, reason and understanding are the three parts of the brain. These functions are in the subtle body, but they are connected with the corresponding portions of the material brain.

In the chest just above the heart is the Manas, that is, the organ of sensation with its five subordinate Indriyas. Below the Manas, from the heart to midway

between the heart and the navel, is the Chitta. From that point up to the navel and below it is the psychic or sukshma prana. All these are in the sukshma deha but connected at these points with the sthula deha. In the sthula deha itself two functions are situated, the physical prana or the nervous system and the annam or the material body.

Now the will is the organ of the Ishwara or living master of the body. It works through all these functions, through the Buddhi for thought and knowledge, through the Manas for sensations, through the Chitta for emotions and through the Prana for enjoyment. When it functions perfectly, working in each organ according to the capacities of the organ, then the work of the Shakti becomes perfect and infallible. But there are two causes of weakness, error and failure. First, the confusion of the organs. If the Prana interferes in sensation, emotion and thought, then a man becomes anisha, the slave of the Prana, that is to say, of the desires. If the Chitta interferes with sensation and thought, then the sensations and thoughts are falsified by the emotions and their corresponding wishes. For instance if love interferes with the Buddhi, the man becomes blind to the truth about the person he loves, he is unable to distinguish between right and wrong, kartavya and akartavya, where the person is concerned. He becomes to a greater or lesser extent the slave of the emotions, love, anger, hatred, pity, revenge etc. So, if the Manas interferes with the reason, the man mistakes his sensations for just ideas or true arguments. He judges by what he sees or hears instead of judging what he sees or hears. If again the reason, imagination, memory and logic interfere with knowledge, the man is debarred from higher knowledge and wanders in the interminable circle of probabilities and possibilities. Finally, if even the Buddhi interferes with the Will, then the man is limited by the power of his limited knowledge, instead of moving nearer to Omnipotence. In brief, if a machine or instrument is used for a work for which it is unfit, for which it was not made or originally adapted, then it either cannot do that work at all or it does it badly; *dharma-sankara is created*. Now what I have described is the ordinary state of men before they gain knowledge. It is all dharma-sankara, confusion of functions, bad administration and incompetent and ignorant government. The Will, the true minister, is rendered a puppet of the lower officials who work each for his own selfish ends, interfering with and hampering each other or dishonestly playing into each other's hands, for their own benefit and to the detriment of the Ishwara, the master. He ceases to be Ishwara, he becomes Anisha, the puppet and dupe of his servants.

Why does he allow it? Because of Ajnanam. He does not know, he does not realise what the ministers and officials and their million and one hangers-on are doing with him. What is this Ajnanam? It is inability to recognise his own true nature, position and authority. He began by being deeply interested in a small portion of his royal activity, the body. He thought "That is my kingdom." He became the tool of his bodily functions. So with the nervous, the sensational, the emotional and

the mental, he identifies himself with each of them. He forgets that he is different from them and much greater and stronger. What he must do is to resume the reins of power, to remember that he is Ishwara, the king, the master and God himself. He must on this understanding remember that he is all-powerful. He has a mighty minister, the Will. Let him support and direct the Will and the Will will introduce order into the government and compel the officials each to do obediently and perfectly his own duty. Not of course all at once. It will take time. The officials have become so much used to confused work and misgovernment that at first they will not be willing to work properly and, secondly, even when they wish, they will find it difficult. They hardly know even how to begin. For instance, when you begin to use your will, what is likely to happen? First you will try to use it through the Prana, through desire, wish, hope, or you will use it through the Chitta, with emotion, eagerness and expectation, or you will use it through the Manas using Cheshta, struggle, effort, as if you were physically wrestling with the thing you want to control; or you will use it through the Buddhi, trying to dominate the subject of your interest by thought, by thinking "Let this be", "Let that happen" etc. All these methods are used by Yogins to recover the power of the Will. The Hatha-yogin uses the Prana and the body, the Rajayogin the heart, Manas and Buddhi, but the best method is none of these. Even the last of them is a second-best means and must entail struggle, failure and frequent disappointment. The Will is only perfect in its action when it works apart from all these, straight on the subject from the sahasradala, without effort, without emotion and eagerness and without desire. *Each function to itself and Will is its own function.* It always obeys the Ishwara but it acts in itself and by itself. It uses the rest, it must not be used by them.

It uses the Buddhi for knowledge, not for command; it uses the Manas for sensation, not for either command or knowledge; it uses the heart for emotion, not for sensation, knowledge or command; it uses the Prana for enjoyment, not for any other function; it uses the body for motion and action, not as a thing that can limit or determine either knowledge, feeling, sensation, power or enjoyment. Therefore it must keep itself apart and command all these things as a thing separate from all of them. These are merely a yantra, a machine, the Purusha is the yantri or master of the machine, the Will is the electricity or motor-power.

This is the right knowledge. How to use it I shall tell you afterwards. That is a matter of practice, not of mere instruction. The man who has dhairyam, calm steadfastness, even in a small degree, can gradually accustom himself to the mastery of his machine by the Will. But he must first know: he must know the machine, he must know the motor-power, he must know himself. The knowledge need not be perfect in order to begin, but the elementary knowledge at least he must have. That is what I am trying to give you. I am explaining to you the different parts of the machine, their nature and functions, the nature of the Will and the nature of the Ishwara.

III

The Will when it begins to act, will be hampered by the Swabhava; therefore until you are able to act on the Swabhava, you will not, should not bring your Will to bear upon life. In other words while you are a sadhak of the Shakti marga, be a sadhak only; when you have got Siddhi of the Will, then first use the Siddhi to get perfection of the adhar, and when you have got perfection of the adhar, then use the siddha adhar for Karma, for life.

The Swabhava opposes the perfect action of the Will. Why? Because the nature of humanity is imperfect, only partly evolved, asiddha, and being in all its dharmas asiddha, the tamasic force of habit, tamasi dhriti, makes it resist any attempt to make it siddha. Humanity is evolving. Yoga is a means of carrying that evolution forward with great and victorious rapidity. But the imperfect Swabhava says, “I do not wish to be perfect, I am accustomed to imperfection and find it easy and comfortable.” First, then, the Will seizes hold of the Swabhava and removes the obstacles in the way of its own perfect development and action.

As I have said, it first gets rid of the old samskaras of impossibility, the samskara, the ajnanam that I am man, not God, limited, not illimitable, helpless, not omnipotent. The Will has first to say, “I am omnipotent, that which the Purusha commands, I can act”. For the Will is the Shakti in action, and there is only one Shakti, Kali herself, who is God manifesting as Divine Energy.

Next the Will seizes the adhar and makes it shuddha in order that the Will may itself be shuddha. I have explained that if there is confusion and disorder among the functions, then the Will cannot act omnipotently. Therefore you must first develop Jnanam and by Jnanam effect the shuddhi of the adhar. When the adhar becomes shuddha, the Will being entirely free from wrong samskaras and wrong action, is what I call shuddha. It works perfectly. Working perfectly it makes the adhar siddha, that is the adhar rids itself of all doshas, deficiencies and weaknesses and works perfectly. It becomes a perfect instrument for the Purushottama, the Purusha and Shakti to carry on their Lila.

Knowledge, therefore, jnanam is the next stage to be considered. But before I come to that, let me finish about the obstacles in the Swabhava. There are not only the wrong Samskaras and the ashuddhi of the adhar, but the general nature of things has certain tendencies or laws in it which oppose the development of the Yoga as well as certain tendencies which help the development of the Yoga. There are three laws which oppose — the law of persistence, the law of resistance and the law of recurrence: there are three laws which assist — the law of gradual processes, the law of concentrated processes and the law of involved processes.

The law of persistence is this, that a rule, habit or tendency once established has a right to survive, a natural unwillingness to be changed or annulled. The longer it has been established, the longer it takes to root out. If a man has been yielding to

the shadripus for many lives without any serious effort to dominate them or purify himself, then he cannot by mere wish or a mere rapid effort get rid of them and become pure and calm. They refuse to be so cavalierly treated. They say “You have given us rights in this adhar, and we persist”. Still more hard to deal with are those dharmas of the body which men call the laws of physical nature.

But the Will is omnipotent and if patiently, calmly and heroically exercised, will prevail. For the Will, I repeat, is Kali herself. Therefore in the end it establishes by its action new rules, habits or tendencies which fight with and gradually overcome the old. What then happens is that the old, though put down, weakened and no longer a real part of the nature, resist eviction from the adhar. They are supported by an army of forces or spiritual beings who surround you and live upon your experiences and enjoyments. This law of resistance marks the second period of the Yoga and, unless the Will has already become siddha and the adhar shuddha, is very trying and troublesome to the sadhak. For there seems to be no end to the capacity of resistance.

Here again the Will is bound to triumph, if it is supported by faith or knowledge. Even then the evicted habits and tendencies strive continually to re-enter the system and recover their lost seats of power and enjoyment. This is called recurrence. In proportion as the Will is siddha and the Adhar shuddha, the recurrence becomes weaker and less frequent or, when it comes, less prolonged. But in an impure adhar, or with an imperfect Will, the recurrence is often as prolonged and troublesome as the resistance.

On the other hand there are the three favourable laws. When a new habit or tendency is once established, it is the law that it shall develop towards strength and perfection. So long as it is struggling to establish itself, the Yogin may at any time become bhrashta, that is he may from error, weakness or impatience give up the struggle. That is the only fall for the Yogin. Failure, temporary defeat, is not bhramsa, so long as he refuses to give up the struggle. But once the right tendency is established, no man can destroy it, until it has enjoyed supremacy and its bhoga.

Still at first, while the Will is comparatively weak or unpractised, the progress must be slow. In proportion as the perfection of the Will brings purity of the Adhar, the progress becomes rapid. Everything in this world is done by a process; a process means a series of actions leading to a particular result by certain recognised stages. These stages may be passed through slowly or swiftly, but so long as the law of gradual processes obtains, all the stages must be successively and consciously passed through. You have so many milestones to pass; but you may pass them walking, in a carriage, in a railway train, but pass them you must. Still by the growing strength of the Will, you can replace slow process by swift process.

Then a time comes when Kali begins to transcend the ordinary human limits and becomes no longer the Shakti of a man, but the Shakti of God in man. It is then that gradual processes are replaced by concentrated processes. It is as if, instead of

travelling from milestone to milestone you could leap from the first milestone to the third and so on to your journey's end. In other words the process remains the same but some of the stages seem to be dispensed with. In reality they are passed over so lightly as to escape notice and occupy little time. Therefore it is called a concentrated or contracted process.

Lastly, when the man himself becomes God, either in a part of his actions or in the whole, then the law of concentrated processes gives place to the involved processes, when no process at all seems to be used, when the result follows the action instantaneously, inevitably and miraculously. In reality there is no miracle, the process is used but so rapidly, with such a sovereign ease, that all the stages become involved or hidden in what seems a moment's action. To most men it is enough, if they can reach the second stage; it is only the Avatar or the great Vibhuti who can reach the third.

Therefore do not be discouraged by any failure or delay. It is purely a question of force and purity of the Will. By purity I mean freedom from desire, from effort, from misplacement. It is best to begin by concentrating effort on the self-purification of the Will, towards which the first necessity is passivity of desire for the fruit, the second the passivity of the Chitta and the Buddhi, while the will is being applied; the third the development of self-knowledge in the use of the Will. It will be found that by this process of educating the Will, *âtmânam âtmanâ*, purity of the adhar will also be automatically prepared and knowledge will begin to develop and act.

IV

What is knowledge? In what does it consist? We must distinguish between knowledge in itself and the means of knowledge. Again, among the means we must distinguish between the instruments and the operations performed with the instruments. By Knowledge we mean awareness, taking a thing into active consciousness, into our Chaitanyam. But when we say, taking it into our Chaitanyam, what do we imply? Whence do we take it? The European says from outside, we say from inside, from Chaitanyam itself. In other words, all knowledge is an act of consciousness operating on something in the consciousness itself. In the first place everything we know exists in Parabrahman, that is, in our indivisible, universal self-existence. It is there, but not yet expressed, not vyakta. Then it exists in pure Chit, which is the womb of things as an idea of form, name and quality. It has name, form and quality in the Karana or Mahat, the causal, typal and ideal state of consciousness. Then it gets the possibility of change, development or modification in the Sukshma, the subtle, mental or plastic state of consciousness. Finally it gets the actual change, development, modification or evolution in the Sthula, the material or evolutionary state of consciousness. In the Karana there is no evolution, nothing ever changes, all is eternal. The Karana is Satyam. In the Sukshma all is preparation of change; it is full

of imagination or anritam, therefore it is Swapna, not really false, but not immediately applicable to the Karana or Sthula. In the Sthula all evolves. It is partial satyam developing by the turning of old satyam into anritam, which is called destruction, and the turning of new anritam into new satyam, which is called creation. In the Karana there is no creation, no birth, no death, all exists for ever — the only change is from type to type, from fulfilment to fulfilment.

Therefore to know is really to be conscious of the thing in any or all of these three states. The knowledge of the Sthula is science. The knowledge of the Sukshma is philosophy, religion and metaphysics. The knowledge of the Karana is Yoga. When a man knows the Sthula, he knows it with his senses, that is, with the Manas, he knows the Sukshma with reason or the inspired intellect, he knows the Karana with the Jnanam or spiritual realisation. Therefore complete knowledge consists of three operations, first, objective Upalabधि or experience, secondly, intellectual statement of your understanding of the thing, thirdly, subjective Upalabधि or spiritual experience. The scientist begins from the bottom and climbs if he can, to the top. The Yogin begins from the top and descends for perfect proof to the bottom. You are not scientists, you are sadhaks. Therefore, when you speak of knowledge you must understand the process; you realise a thing by subjective experience, Bhava, then, think about it and formulate your experience in Artha and Vak, the combination which forms thought; you verify or test your experience by physical or objective experience.

For instance you see a man. You want to know what he is, what he thinks and what he does. How does the scientist or the material man do it? He watches the man, he notes what he says, what are his expressions of speech and face, what are his actions, what sort of people he lives with, etc. All this is objective. Then he reasons from his objective experience. He says “The man says this or that, so he must think so and so or he must have such and such a character; his actions show the same, his face shows the same,” and so he goes on reasoning. If he does not get all the necessary facts, he fills them up from his imagination or from his memory, that is his experience of other men, of himself or of human life as read of in books or heard of from other people. He perceives, he observes, contrasts, compares, deduces, infers, imagines, remembers and the composite result he calls reason, knowledge, fact. In reality he has arrived at a probability, for it is impossible for him to be sure that his conclusions are correct or anything indeed correct in his thought, except the actual observation, perceptions of his eye, ear, nose, touch, and taste. Anything beyond this the material man distrusts. Nothing is true to him except what he observes with his senses or what agrees with his sensory perceptions.

Now what does the Yogin do? He simply puts himself into relation with the thing itself. Not with its form, name or quality, but with itself. He may never have seen the form, heard the name or had experience of the quality, but still he can know the thing. Because it is the thing itself and it is in himself and one with himself,

that is in the Mahakarana in a man. There all meet the Atman and are so entirely one with the Atman that by merely being in contact with it, I can know everything about it. Few Yogins reach that state. But all the same, even in the Karana I can put myself in relation with the thing and know it by Bhava. I put myself, my soul, into relation with the soul of the man I study or the thing I study; Prajna in me becomes one with the Prajna in him or it. How do I do this? Simply by becoming passive and facing him or it in my Buddhi. If my Buddhi is quite pure or fairly purified, if my Manas is shanta, then I get the truth about him. I get it by Bhava, by spiritual or subjective realisation.

Then I have to make the thing I have got clear and precise. To do that I must state it intellectually to my mind, that is, I must think about it. I have these ideas I am telling you in myself as unexpressed knowledge; they shape themselves in words, Vak, and take on a precise meaning, Artha. That is thought. Most people think vaguely, half expressing the thing in an imperfect Vak and a partial Artha. The Yogin must not do that. His thoughts must express themselves in clear and perfect sentences. He may know a thing without thinking it out, but if he thinks, he must think clearly and perfectly.

The Yogin reasons when necessary, but not like the man of science. He sees the thing with his prophetic power interpreting the truth into thought; the pratyaksha gives him the Artha, the inspiration gives him the Vak, the intuition gives him the right conclusion about it, the right siddhanta, the Viveka guards him from error. Behold the truth by these four simple operations perfectly thought out. If he has to argue, then the intuitions give him the right arguments. He has not to proceed painfully from one syllogism to another as the logician does.

Finally, he verifies his knowledge by the facts of the objective world. He has seen the truth about the man by merely looking at him or at the idea of him; he has thought it out clearly and now he compares his idea with the man's action, speech etc. Not to test his truth; for he knows that a man's action, speech etc. only partially express the man and mislead the student; but in order to see how the truth he knows from the Karana is being worked out in the Sthula. He trusts the man's objective life only so far as it is in agreement with the deeper truth he has gained by Yoga.

You see the immense difference. The only difficulty is that you have been accustomed to use the senses and the reason to the subordination and almost to the exclusion of the higher faculties. Therefore you find it difficult to make the higher faculties active.

If only you could start from the beginning, with the Bhava, the Atmajnana, how easy it would be! That will yet happen. But first, you have to get rid of the lower Buddhi, of the Indriyas in the manas, and awaken the activity of the higher faculties. They will see for you, hear for you, as well as think for you.

First, then, get your sanskaras right. Understand intellectually what I have told you and will yet tell you. Then by use of the Will, keep the reason, imagination,

memory, thought, sensations sufficiently quiet for the higher Buddhi to know itself as separate and different from these lower qualities. As the higher separates itself and becomes more and more active, the lower, already discouraged, will become less and less active and finally trouble you no more.

Therefore Will first, then by Will, by Shakti, the Jnanam. First Kali, then Surya. I shall explain the various faculties when I have finished with the rest of the system.

V

If men were satisfied with indulging in reason, memory and imagination, the purification of the Buddhi and the development of the higher faculties would be an easy matter. But there is another means of thought which they habitually indulge in and that is Manas. The Manas is a receptive organ; it receives the images expressed on the eye, the ear etc., and turns them into what the Europeans call the percepts, that is, things perceived. Besides, it receives the ideas, images etc., sent down from the Vijnana into the Chitta and passes them on to the latter organ. In this passage these things become what are called concepts, that is, things conceived or thought of. For instance, when the mind sees the image of a book and says "A book", it has hold of a percept the name of which it conceives; that is sensational thought. When it says "A book contains language" that is a remoter concept, intellectual thought. One merely puts things sensed into words, the other puts things thought into words. Percept and concept together make what is called understanding. Reason, according to the European idea, merely arranges percepts and concepts and draws from this arrangement fresh and more elaborate concepts. Many believe that concepts are merely percepts put together and converted into what is called thought. According to this idea, all thought is merely the arrangement of sensation in the terms of language. Even when I imagine an angel, I merely put a human figure and the wings of a bird together and give the combination a name, angel. Even when I talk of abstract qualities, for example, virtue, courage etc., I am not thinking of anything beyond sensation, but merely a classification of virtuous and courageous sensations and actions put together and labelled with the name virtue or courage.

All these ideas are correct so far as the Manas or understanding is concerned. The Manas is an organ of sensation, not of thought. It catches thoughts on their way from the Buddhi to the Chitta, but in catching them it turns them into the stuff of sensations, as described above.

It regards them from the point of view of sensations. Animals think with their Manas and animals are not able to form ideas that do not relate themselves to some image, form, sound, smell, touch, taste, etc. They are bound by their sensations. That is why in animals the Buddhi is dormant; so far as it acts, it acts behind the veil.

But man can become aware of things which the senses cannot grasp, *buddhi-grâhyam atîndriyam*. The proof of that you can get daily, when the Yogic power is

developed. This single fact that man can see with his Buddhi the truth about a thing he has never seen or known before, is enough to destroy the materialistic idea of thought.

That idea is only true of the Manas. The Manas responds to the senses and is always forming percepts and concepts about the sensations it receives. These ideas it sometimes gets from the outside world, sometimes from the passive memory in the Chitta, sometimes from the Buddhi. But it tries to impose them all on the Buddhi. It tests everything which it does not take for granted by reference to the senses. "I saw that", "I heard that", therefore it is true, that is the reasoning of the Manas. That is why people who have a poorly developed Buddhi, attach so much importance to what they have seen or read. "I have seen it in print" says the just literate man, and he thinks he has closed the argument.

What are we to do with the Manas? Get it to be still, says the Yogin. While it is busy, knowledge is impossible. You can get only fragments of knowledge. That is true and the quiet mind is no doubt essential to the Yogin. But what of the senses? Concepts in the Manas you may get rid of, but what are you to do with the percepts? You cannot stop seeing, hearing etc., except when you are in Samadhi. That is why the Vedantin attaches so much importance to samadhi. It is the only condition in which he is safe from the persistent siege of the percepts of the senses.

But if you can only exercise knowledge when you are in Samadhi, then you will have to become an ascetic or recluse, a man who gives up life or thought. That is a necessity which cuts the unity of God's world into two and makes an unnatural division in what should be indivisible. The Tantric knows that this is not necessary, that Samadhi is a great instrument, but not the only instrument. He so arranges his antahkarana that he can know when he is walking, talking, acting, sleeping, whatever he is doing. How? By not only stilling the conceptual activity of the Manas but by transferring to the Buddhi its perceptual activity.

In other words he sees, hears etc., not with the senses in the manas, but with the Indriya in the Buddhi. You will find what a difference this makes. Not only do you see much more perfectly, minutely, accurately than before, but you are able to appreciate colours, forms, sounds etc., in a way you never did before. And besides you are able to catch the soul, the Guna, the essential quality and emotion of a thing, the moment you are aware of it. This is part of what the Yoga calls Prakamya, the absolute and sovereign activity of the Indriya.

Therefore when the Yoga is perfect, you will not be troubled by the Manas. It will cease to perceive. It will be merely a passage, a channel for things from the Buddhi to the Chitta. There are many ways of bringing this about, but most of them suffer from this defect, that you get the thinking part of the Manas still, but the perceiving part retains its inferior and hampering activity. The best way is to use the Will simultaneously for awaking the Jnanam and for stilling the Manas. This method has two advantages. First, you do not, as in the ordinary method, have to make your

mind a blank. That is a powerful but very difficult and trying discipline or Tapasya. You simply replace by degrees the activity of the lower reason by the activity of the higher thought, the activity of the mind by the activity of the same organ and the sense-perceptions by the activity of the Prakamya. This process is less painful and more easy. Secondly, you cannot stop perceiving so long as you are not in Sushupti, you only stop thinking. So you cannot make your mind blank. Unless you wake the Jnanam first, how are you going to get rid of this intrusive element? The Prakamya must be there already active before the ordinary perceptions can stop work.

This then is the third operation of the Tantric method. You develop the Will, you use the Will to awaken the Jnanam, you use the Will to still the mind and the lower Buddhi and you use the Jnanam to replace them.

VI

I come next to Chitta. There are two layers in the Chitta, one for the emotions, the other for passive memory. In the lower layer of the Chitta, the impressions of all things seen, thought, sensed, felt are recorded and remain until the Jiva leaves this body. Even afterwards all these impressions are taken up with the Sukshma body and go with the Jiva into the other worlds. When he is born again, they are brought with him as latent samskaras in the Muladhara; that is why people do not remember their past births, but can get back the memory by awakening the Kundalini in the Muladhara. These impressions are latent in the Chitta until the active memory in the Buddhi calls for them. Those which are continually brought to the Buddhi have a habit of recurring even when not wanted, habitual thoughts, ideas, sentiments, opinions etc., which are the Yogin's chief trouble until the Manas in which they occur becomes quiet.

The second and the upper layer is that of emotion. The emotions are the acts of Will sent down into the Chitta and there assuming the form of impulses. There are three divisions, thought impulses, impulses of feeling, and impulses of action. The first are called by various names, instincts, inspirations, insights, intuitions etc. They are really messages sent down by the Jiva from the Sahasradala into the Chitta, they pass unobserved through the Buddhi, lodge in the Chitta and, whenever excited by any contact external or internal, start up suddenly and strike the Buddhi with the same force as the real inspirations etc., which come down direct from the Vijnana to the Buddhi. But they come up coloured by emotions, distorted by associations and memories in the Chitta, perverted by the imagination which brings them up. Much of what is called faith, Bhakti, genius, poetic inspiration etc., comes from this source. It is useful to the ordinary man, all important to the animal, but a hindrance to the Yogin.

The impulses of feeling are what are ordinarily called emotions. The emotions are of two kinds, natural or eternal, artificial or Vikaras. Love is natural, it proceeds from Jnanam and tends to endure in the evolution; hatred is a Vikara from love, a

distortion or reaction caused by Ajnanam. So courage is eternal, fear is Vikara; compassion is eternal, ghrina or weak pity, repulsion, disgust etc., are Vikaras. Those which are natural and eternal, love, courage, pity, truth, noble aspirations, are Dharma; the others are Adharma. But this is from the eternal standpoint and has nothing to do with Samajic or Laukic or temporary Dharma or Adharma. Moreover, Adharma is often necessary as a passage or preparation for passing from an undeveloped to a developed, a lower to a higher Dharma. The Yogin has to get rid of Vikaras, but not of Sanatana Dharmas.

The third kind of impulse is the impulse to action. Its presence in the Chitta is a temporary arrangement due to the rajasic development of the human being. The asuddha rajasic man cannot easily be stirred into action, except through two forces, desire or emotion. Love, hatred, ambition, rage etc., must stir in him or he cannot act, or acts feebly. He cannot understand shuddha pravritti, action without desire and independent of emotion. Emotion should only give a colour to the man's swabhava or temperament. He should be habitually full of feelings of love, courage, honour, true ambition, self-reliance etc., but he should not act from any individual impulse of however noble a character. He should act in obedience to the impulse from the Will in direct communication with the Purusha in the Vijnana, understanding with the Buddhi why the Will acts in that particular way and colouring the act with the emotion appropriate to his Swabhava. But neither the Buddhi nor the emotion should directly interfere with or try to determine his action. The Buddhi is for thought and the Chitta for emotion. Neither of them have anything to do with action in the shuddha state. The intellectual Asura determines his actions by his reason or his ideal, the emotional Asura by his feelings. But the shuddha determines them by the higher inspiration proceeding from the divine existence in the Vijnana. That is what people often call the Adesha. Only the shuddha can safely rely on having this kind of Adesha, the asuddha Yogin often mistakes his own ideas, imaginations, emotions or even desires for the Adesha.

Therefore what the Yogin must aim at, is to get rid of the activity of his lower Chitta or the old impressions by stilling the Manas as described in my last lecture; get rid of his instinctive thought or thought-impulses by the same means; get rid of the habit of acting on his emotions by allowing the will to silence his impulses and purify his emotions. He should prohibit and inhibit by the Will all action or speech that starts blindly from the passions or emotions surging in his heart. The emotions will then become quiet and must be habituated to come as a sort of wave falling into a sea, instead of surging furiously into action. These quiet waves which are satisfied with existing and do not demand satisfaction in action or seek to dominate the life or the ideas, are the purified emotions. Those which rise upward into the Buddhi and try to shape the thought or opinion, those which move outward into speech or action, are asuddha emotions. What I mean is that the emotions in the Chitta are for enjoyment only; the action must be dominated by a higher principle.

There again it is the Will that must purify, govern and renew the heart. Only, it has the best chance of doing it if the knowledge has first become active and the mind is still. A still mind means a heart easily purified.

VII

I come next to Prana, the nervous or vital element in man which is centralised below the Manas and Chitta in the subtle body and connected with the navel in the Sthula Deha. Here I must distinguish between the Sukshma Prana and the Sthula Prana, the former moving in the nervous system of the subtle body as described in the Yogic books, the latter in the nervous system of the gross body. The two are closely connected and almost always act upon each other. The prana forms the link between the physical and the mental man. I must here warn you against stumbling into the error of those who try to harmonise Yogic Science with the physical science of the Europeans and search for the Yogic Nadis and Chakras in the physical body. You will not find them there. There are certain centres in the physical nervous system with which the Chakras correspond, otherwise Hathayoga would be impossible. But the Chakras are not these centres. The Europeans are masters in their own province of knowledge and there you need not hesitate to learn from them, but for God's sake do not subject your higher knowledge to their lower; you will only create a most horrible confusion. Develop your higher knowledge first, then study their sciences and the latter will at once fall into their place.

It is with the Sukshma Prana that I am principally concerned; for the Sthula Prana belongs to the Annam rather than to the Antahkarana and I will speak of it in connection with the Annam. The Sukshma Prana is the seat of desire and its purification is of the utmost importance to the Yogin. Until you have got rid of desire, you have accomplished nothing permanent. When you have got rid of desire, you are sure of everything else. That is why the Gita says "Get rid of desire first". Only until you have got knowledge and can learn to use your will to still the mind and purify the emotions, you cannot utterly get rid of desire. You may drive it out by Samyama, you may hold it down by Nigraha but eventually it is of no use, for it will return. "Prakritim yânti bhûtâni nigraha kim karishyati." Creatures follow after nature; what is the use of coercion? That is to say, it has a temporary result and the coerced desires come back ravaging and more furious than before. That was what Christ meant by the parable of the devil, the unclean spirit who is driven out of a man only to return with seven spirits worse than himself. For it is the nature of things, the unalterable nature of things, that unpurified emotion must clamour after desire, an unstilled Manas give it harbourage whenever it returns, an unilluminated Buddhi contain the seed of it ready to sprout up at the first opportunity. Therefore unless the whole Antahkarana is purified, unless you get a new heart and a new mind, desire cannot be got rid of; it returns or it remains. When however an illumi-

nated understanding lighting up the action of a strengthened Will and supported by a pure heart, casts desire into the Sukshma Prana and attacks it there in its native place, it can be utterly destroyed. When you have a visuddha Buddhi you will be able to distinguish these various organs and locate all your mental activities. Desire can then be isolated in the Prana and the heart and mind kept pure of its insistent inroads. For desire is only effective when it can get hold of the Chitta and Buddhi, generating Vikaras of emotion and perversions of knowledge which give it strength to impose itself on the Will and so influence internal and external action. It is most powerful in the higher kind of human being when it masks itself as a principle or ideal or as a justifiable emotion.

Remember moreover that all desires have to be got rid of, those which are called good, as well as those which are called bad. Some people will tell you, keep the good desires and drive out the bad. Do not listen to that specious piece of ignorance. You can use the good desires to drive out the bad on condition that immediately after you drive out the good also by the one desire of Mumukshutwa, liberation and union with God. And even that last desire finally you must renounce and give yourself up wholly to God's will, even in that last and greatest matter, becoming utterly desireless, nishkâma nihsprîha. Otherwise you will find yourself travelling in a vicious circle. For if you keep desire at all, he is such a born traitor that he will eventually open the door to your enemies. When the unclean spirit returned to his house, he found it swept and garnished, that is, purified of bad thoughts and adorned with good desires, and immediately he got in and made the last state of that man worse than his first. So get rid of all desires utterly, good, bad and indifferent. Get beyond virtue as well as beyond vice. Be satisfied with no bondage even though the fetters be of pure gold. Admit no guide or master but God, even though they be gods or angels who claim your homage.

Desire is composed of three elements, attachment or Asakti, longing or Kamana, and preference or Ragadwesha. Get rid of attachment first. Use your will and purified Antahkarana to throw out that clinging and insistence on things, which says "I must have that, I cannot do without that," and returns on the idea of it, even when it is persistently denied. When the emotions are quiet, this Asakti will of itself die away, but for a time it will rage a great deal and try to get the emotions active again. Apply the Will steadily and patiently and do not get disturbed by failure; for desire is a terrible thing, as difficult to get rid of as a leech. It is indeed the daughter of the horse-leech crying "Give, give." Do not violently silence the cry; ignore it and use your Will to get rid of the clamourer. When Asakti becomes weak, Kamana loses nine tenths of its force and you can easily throw it off. Still for some time, out of sheer habit, the longing for certain things will come, not in the heart or Buddhi, but in the Prana; only if Asakti is gone, the refusal of the thing craved will not leave behind it a permanent grief or continual hunger. There will only be temporary disturbance of the peace of the heart. When you have got rid of the Kamana, even

then Raga may remain, and if Raga is there, Dwesha is sure to come in. You will not ask or crave for anything; for Kamana is gone; but when some things come, you will not like them; when other things come, you will feel glad and exultant. You will not rebel or cling to what you have, but you will not like the coming of the evil, you will not like the loss of your joy, even though you say “Very good” and submit. Get rid of that Raga and Dwesha and have perfect Samata.

When you have perfect Samata, then either you will have perfect Shanti, divine peace, or else perfect or Shuddha Bhoga, divine enjoyment. Shanti is the negative Ananda and those have it who rest in the Nirguna Brahman. Shuddha Bhoga is the positive Ananda and those have it who rest in the Trigunatita Ananta Brahman. You can have both and it is best to have both. God enjoys the world with Shuddha Bhoga based on the perfect Shanti. Most people cannot imagine Bhoga without Kama, enjoyment without desire. It is a foolish notion, none the less foolish because it is natural and almost universal. It is Ajnanam, a fundamental part of ignorance. Enjoyment does not really begin until you get rid of desire. That which you get as the result of satisfied desire is troubled, unsafe, feverish, or limited, but Shuddha Bhoga is calm, self-possessed, victorious, unlimited, without satiety and Vairagya, immortally blissful. It is in a word, not Harsha, not Sukha, but Ananda. It is Amrita, it is divinity and immortality, it is becoming of one nature with God. The soul has then no kama, but it has pure lipsa, an infinite readiness to take and enjoy whatever God gives it. Grief, pain, disgrace, everything that is to rajasic men a torture, changes then to bliss. Even if such a soul were to be cast into hell, it would not feel hell, but heaven. It would not only say with the Bhakta “This is from the beloved” but with the perfect Jnani “This is the Beloved; this is the Anandam Brahman: this is the Kantam, the Shivam, Shubham, Sundaram.”

I need not repeat the process by which this purification is effected. I have indicated it sufficiently. This Tantric process is the same throughout, the reliance on the Shakti, the divine Will working in the Adhar, without any effort on the part of the Purusha, who remains Akarta throughout the sadhana, but still Ishwara, the source of the command and the sanction, the ruler dispossessed by his subjects and gradually recovering control of his rebellious and disordered kingdom.

VIII

There remains the Sthula, the gross part of man which is composed of the Sthula Prana or physical nervous system and the annam or body in which the prana operates. The prana is the principle of life, death is brought about by the dissolution of the tie between the sukshma deha and the sthula deha. That tie is the prana. The sukshma deha takes the prana into itself and departs; the little that is left in the gross body is of the nature of apana with a tendency to that species of dissolution which we call corruption. The prana part of it, which can alone hold the body together, evaporates

and the apana leads to swift disintegration. In some animals, however, the prana is so abundant that the body shows signs of life even after the sukshma deha has departed.

I have been dealing throughout with the purification of the sukshma part of man, the Antahkarana or mind, — the subject of the body is a little foreign to my purpose. Nevertheless a few words are necessary. The principle upon which this Yoga I am explaining to you stands, is that the gross body is merely the shadow or creation of the subtle. Body is a mould into which mind pours itself, but the mould itself has been prepared by the mind and can be changed by the mind. A mind purified, liberated and perfected (siddha) can do whatever it likes with the body. It may leave it as it is, allowing the past karma to do its will with the physical part in the form of disease, suffering, misfortune and death, without the mind being in the least affected. All that is impurity and bondage, which is the physical translation and result of mental impurity and bondage. With the cessation of the cause, the effect ceases; but not at once. It is again like the steam and the locomotive. The habits, the results created by past lives, are expelled from the mind and precipitated entirely into the body. You may allow them to work themselves out there, many do that. On the other hand, you may pursue them into the body and drive them out from there as well. In that case you get the Kayashuddhi and the Kayasiddhi. They are usually sought after by the Hathayogic or Rajayogic processes, but these are not necessary. It is even better and certainly much easier and surer to follow the process I have been indicating.

The very fact of having a purified mind makes for purity of the body, a liberated mind for liberation of the body, a perfected mind for perfection of the body, and to a certain extent as you go on with the yoga in the Antahkarana, the body will automatically begin to respond to the new influences. But you should not consciously meddle with the body until you have finished with the mind. Let nature do its work. Detach yourself as much as possible from the body, think of it as a mere case, leave it to the care of God and His Shakti. Many sadhaks are frightened by illness in the course of the Yoga. You need not be frightened, for you have put yourself in God's hands and He will see to it. It will come to you only as a part of the necessary process for purification of the body, work itself out, fade and return no more. Other disturbances of the body will come which are incidental to the turning of an unfit physical adhar into a fit one. Profound alterations are necessary in your brain-cells, your nervous system, your digestive and secretive processes and they cannot be effected without some physical disturbance, but it will never be more than is necessary for the process. Do no violence of any kind to the body; if you use physical remedies, let them be of the simplest and purest kind; above all dismiss anxiety and fear. You cannot care more for yourself than God cares for you. Only your care is likely to be ignorant and unwise; His is with knowledge and uses the right means to the right end.

Impurities in the body show themselves chiefly as disease, as pain, as the discomfort of heat and cold, as the necessity of the excretive processes. The first

sign of Kayashuddhi is the disappearance of all tendency to disease; the second is liberation from the dwandwa of heat and cold, which will either go altogether or change to pleasurable sensations often marked by electrical phenomena; and the third, the diminution or disappearance of excretive activity. Pain also can be entirely eliminated from the body, but even before the reaction called pain is got rid of, or even without its being got rid of, the discomfort of pain can be removed and replaced by a sort of bodily Ananda. Finally, the craving of hunger and thirst disappears from the prana to which it belongs and the dependence on food diminishes or ceases. The perfection of all this is the basis of Kayasiddhi. But perfect Kayasiddhi includes other developments such as the siddhis of Mahima, Laghima, Anima and the invulnerability and incorruptibility of the body, — powers hitherto attained in the Kaliyuga only by very advanced Siddhas. They depend primarily on the replacement of the ordinary fivefold processes of prana, apana, vyana, samana and udana by the single simplified action of the original or elemental force of prana, the infinite vital energy surcharged with electricity, vaidyutam.

All these are important elements of Tantric Yoga, but I have mentioned them only cursorily because they are foreign to my purpose. They can all be developed if the mental siddhi is perfected and it is on this perfection that I wish you to concentrate your energy and attention. When you get that, you get everything. The centres of man's activity, at present, are the buddhi, the heart and the manas, and the body, though extremely important, is a dependent and subordinate function. It has not to be despised on that account, but most people give it an undue importance. When the Jiva is Ishwara of his mind, his body falls into its proper place and instead of interfering and often domineering over the mind and will, it obeys and takes its stamp from them. The Europeans are obsessed with the idea of the physical as the master of the mental. I would have you hold fast to the opposite standpoint and always remember that for the body to impose its conditions on the mind is an abnormal state of man's being, which has to be got rid of; it is the mind that must command, condition and modify the body.

IX

CONCLUSION

I have finished what I had to say. I will only add a word in conclusion. You must not think that what I have given you, is all the knowledge you need about yourself or about the Yoga. On the contrary, these are only certain indications necessary at a particular stage; they are chiefly important for purification, which is the first part of the Yoga. After the shuddhi is complete one has to perfect the mukti, to get liberation, a thing easy after shuddhi, impossible before it. By mukti I do not mean *laya*, which is a thing not to be pursued or desired, but waited for whenever God wills, but

liberation from ignorance, Ahankara and all dualities. With the progress of the purification, there will be a natural tendency towards liberation and the farther stages of yoga, bhukti and siddhi, liberated enjoyment and perfection. As you go forward you will have to change your attitude, not radically but in certain important points. That, however, I will not meddle with. It is well to do one thing at a time.

In all that I have written, I have taken one standpoint to which many of you have not been accustomed. If you regard Vairagyam as the beginning of all wisdom, you will not be satisfied with me. Vairagyam is to me merely a useful temporary state of mind which God uses to enforce rejection of that to which the old samskaras cling too obstinately to be unseated from it by mere abhyasa. Jnanam is essential to shuddhi and mukti; but Jnanam must be assisted either by abhyasa or by vairagya until the mind is still and lets knowledge do its own work. As soon as the mind is still and not susceptible to resuscitation of its old energies from outside, the Jnanam develops, the Shakti pursues its task unhampered; there is then no sadhan for you, only a progressive siddhi without any deliberately adopted method, increasing by the mere easy and natural process of Nature as a man breathes or sees or walks. All necessity for either abhyasa or vairagya ceases. Attachment to vairagya is as harmful as attachment to lobha itself.

Again if you think with the Buddhists that all life is a misery and extinction of some kind the highest good, or if you think with the Mayavadin that we came into this world with no other object but to get out of it again as soon as possible, like the famous general whose greatest military exploit was to march up a hill in order to march back again, you had better pass me by. I am a Tantric. I regard the world as born of Ananda and living by Ananda, wheeling from Ananda to Ananda. Ananda and Shakti, these are the two real terms of existence. Sorrow and weakness are vikaras born of ajnanam, of the forgetfulness of the high and true self. These are not universal or eternal things, but local and temporary, local mainly of this earth, temporary in the brief periods of the Kali yuga. Our business is to bring down heaven on earth for ourselves and mankind, to eliminate sorrow and weakness from the little corners of existence and time, where they are allowed to exist. I do not give any assent to the gloomy doctrine which preaches a world of sorrow and inaction and withdrawal from it as the sole condition of bliss and freedom, which thinks, contrary to all reason and knowledge, that God in himself is blessed, but God in manifestation accursed. I will not admit that the Brahman is a fool or a drunkard dreaming bad dreams, self-hypnotised into miserable illusions. I do not find that teaching in the Veda; it does not agree with my realisations which are of the actuality of unalterable bliss and strength and knowledge in the midst of desireless phenomenal action. I am of the mind of Sri Krishna in the Mahabharata when he says, "Some preach action in this world and some preach inaction; but as for those who preach inaction, I am not of the opinion of those weaklings." *Na me matam tasya durbalasya.*

But the action he holds up as an example, is the action of the great Gods, even

as Goethe speaks of the action of the great natural forces, disinterested, unwearying, self-poised in bliss, not inert with the tamas, not fretful with the rajas, not limited even by the sattwic ahankara — action made one in difference with the Purushottama, my being in His being, my shakti only a particular action of His infinite shakti, of Kali. I am not ignorant, I am not bound, I am not sorrowful: I only play at being ignorant, I only pretend to be bound; like an actor or like an audience I only take the rasa of sorrow. I can throw it off when I please. Who calls me degraded and sinful, a worm crawling upon the earth among other worms? I am Brahman, I am He; sin cannot touch me. Who calls me miserable? I am God, all blissful. Who calls me weak? I am one with the Omnipotent. He, being One, has chosen to be Many. He, being infinite, localises himself in many centres and in each centre He is still infinite. That is the mystery of existence, the *uttamam rahasyam*, God's great, wonderful and blissful secret, a secret logic rejects, but knowledge grasps at, a knowledge not to be argued out but realised, but proved by experience, by the purified, liberated, all-enjoying, all-perfect soul.

EDITOR'S EPILOGUE

A few words seem necessary in conclusion. For it is as well to guard against certain misconceptions which may arise from the brevity of the writer and his omission of some important points considered by him, no doubt, to be, however important, yet outside his scope.

The prohibition of cheshta in the ideal use of the will does not imply the renunciation of Karma. The cheshta referred to is internal, not external, arambha, not karma. The distinction is that made by Sri Krishna in the Gita when he holds up the ideal of action with renunciation of all arambhas, — *sarvârambhân parityajya*. We are to do actions with the body, mind, buddhi, senses, each doing its own separated work in its absolute purified simplicity, *kevalair*, without any desire, expectation or straining in the will after either action or its success. The sadhak should abstain from applying his method to important actions in life until the higher purified will is to some extent trained, and even then it will be best for him to apply it to things of smaller moment first, then to those of greater moment. During the sadhana subjective progress and superfluous action small or great should be his main fields for test and training.

Secondly, it must not be supposed that the treatment in these short lectures is intended to be full or exhaustive or even that in those points which it handles at the greatest length all has been said that the sadhak needs to know. On the contrary, only a few main ideas have been broadly struck out which may be useful to the beginner. The more advanced will find that they have rapidly outgrown the utility of these hints and that they have to be greatly enlarged on and modified before the

knowledge at which they point can be considered full and satisfactory.

Finally, the aim of the particular path of Yoga indicated is not the assertion of the individual will, but surrender of the individual will, its absolute, unreserved and ungrudging surrender into the direction and control of the Infinite Being. The training of the system or adhar prescribed has for its purpose, first, the subjugation of the clamorous desires and impulses, the stubborn pride and egoism, the vain self-sufficient reason and imagination of the unregenerate man so that they may not interfere with the completeness of the surrender, secondly, the possession of a strong, mighty and effective will to offer as a yajna to the Most High and not one that is weak, distracted, ignorant and diffident. The Karma of the Siddha Yogin must be like that of the sun and stars, the avalanche and the cyclone, the breeze, moon or flowers, fire and the dust of the earth, either calm and luminous or mighty and violent or gentle, sweet and useful, either lofty or humble at the will of the One Supreme Shakti, impelled and used by Her entirely, and, whatever its outward appearance, always working on a basis of absolute peace, self-surrender and self-knowledge.

“UTTARA YOGI”

(*Record of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 11, pp. 1371-99)

One must be very great, very pure, have a very high and very disinterested spiritual consciousness in order to be successful without being affected by it. Nothing is more difficult than being successful. This, indeed, is the true test of life!

When you do not succeed, quite naturally you turn back on yourself and within yourself, and you seek within yourself the consolation for your outer failure. And to those who have a flame within them — if the Divine really wants to help them, if they are mature enough to be helped, if they are ready to follow the path — blows will come one after another, because this helps! It is the most powerful, the most direct, most effective help. If you succeed, be on your guard, ask yourself: “At what price, what cost have I bought success? I hope it is not a step towards . . .”

The Mother

(*Questions and Answers 1954*, CWM 2nd Ed., Vol. 6, p. 239)

“DOCUMENTS IN THE LIFE OF SRI AUROBINDO”

(Some Extracts)

K.V. RANGASWAMI IYENGAR, NAGAI JAPTA AND YOGIC SADHAN

1

Letter of Sri Aurobindo, date unknown. Published in On Himself, p. 373.

The Yogi from the North (Uttara Yogi) was my own name given to me because of a prediction made long ago by a famous Tamil Yogi, that thirty years later (agreeing with the time of my arrival) a Yogi from the North would come as a fugitive to the South and practise there an integral Yoga (Poorna Yoga), and this would be one sign of the approaching liberty of India. He gave three utterances as the mark by which this Yogi could be recognised and all these were found in the letters to my wife.

As for *Yogic Sadhan* it was not I exactly who wrote it, though it is true that I am not a Mayavadin.

2

Extract from letter of Sri Aurobindo dated 28 October 1934. Published in Archives and Research Journal (1978): 192.

The *Yogic Sadhan* is not Sri Aurobindo's own writing, but was published with a note by him, that is all. The statement made to the contrary by the publishers was an error which they have been asked to correct. There is no necessity of following the methods suggested in that book unless one finds them suggestive or helpful as a preliminary orientation of the consciousness — e.g. in the upbuilding of an inner Will etc.

3

Letter of Sri Aurobindo dated 4 May 1934. Published in On Himself, pp. 372-73.

Your friend writes about my disapproval of Vairagya in *Yogic Sadhan*. But *Yogic Sadhan* is *not* my composition, nor its contents the essence of my Yoga, whatever the publishers may persist in saying in their lying blurb, in spite of protests.

4

Extract from a talk of Sri Aurobindo of 10 December 1938. Transcripts of Purani and Nirodbaran [identical].

[Sri Aurobindo:] Do you know the origin of the name Uttara Yogi?

[Disciple:] No, Sir.

[Sri Aurobindo:] There was a famous Yogi in the South who while dying said to his disciples that a Purna Yogi from the North would come down to the South and he will be known by three sayings. Those three sayings were those I had written to my wife. A Zamindar disciple of that Yogi found me out and bore the cost of the book Yogic Sadhan.

5

From Srinivasachari MS

The leader of the turbulent Hindu group that won the victory for the European party in the election this time, while closely watching the movement of Richard had come to know through his spies of the presence of Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry and the place of his residence. He would have assured the British police of his presence in town and would have promised them to keep an eye on him. From that time his presence there and the way he is spending his time in Yogic practices must have been known to everybody interested in him. Kodyalam Rangaswami Iyengar who later became a member of the Central Legislative Council in Delhi sent his man Va Ra who had made a name as a good Tamil writer in his later days, secretly to arrange for an interview with Sri Aurobindo. He went to Bharati and told the purpose he had come for. Bharati mentioned it to me and in the evening when we met him as usual Bharati told him what all he knew about Kodyalam Rangaswami Iyengar and his family and after getting his consent the interview was arranged. On the first occasion Rangaswami Iyengar himself wanted to keep his arrival and departure secret, perhaps it might have been for avoiding the police trouble. But the next time he visited a year or so after he came accompanied by one of his friends Dr S. Soundar Rajan (who after the Indian Independence was the Minister of Health in Madras in Rajaji's Ministry and after) he made no secret of it.

After these incidents Sri Aurobindo must have thought that there was no meaning in thinking that his presence in Pondicherry was still a secret. Moreover after his conversations with Paul Richard and Kodyalam Rangaswami Iyengar must have greatly confirmed his premonitions about his mission to establish in this world his

new system of Yoga. Just as he heard from the former his practices of the same in some of his previous births, the latter spoke to him of a tradition in his family from his grandfather's time that a Uttara Yogi (Yogi from the North) would be coming to these parts and they would help him in his mission. His grandfather was under the impression that the Uttara Yogi might come from some northern part of the Tamil Nad and so he entertained in Nagai near Rajamannarkoil or Mannargudi a number of families who had some yogic tendencies. He was given to understand that this humanity will get great powers under its control and that man will be flying in air, a thing undreamt of in those days, and 'akāsa gamanam' or air travel will be a matter of daily occurrence with him. Even in the year 1910 when we heard it, it looked very strange, like many others we thought that it will be an individual achievement possible only to Siddha Purushas and such a thing we were sure could not happen at so near a future as was foretold, but it never occurred to us that it was quite possible if we worked collectively as it is done today. All the same when we spoke to Kodyalam Rangaswami Iyengar of Sri Aurobindo's 'Yogic Sādan' he took very great interest in it and taking a copy of it from him and published it in the name of 'Uttara Yogi', that is Sri Aurobindo. Though these things happened later on still when he understood that his stay in Pondicherry was a matter of common knowledge, he wanted us to look for him a separate [house] to live in. A near relative of Sankara Chettyar had a house in the European quarters for about Rs. 20/- a month and Sri Aurobindo went and occupied it for the present though it was a bit distant from our dwelling places. This was about September 1910 and very soon after the British police also engaged a house in the same quarters and took up its residence with Abdul Karim as its chief, though all of them were in baredress. As the house was about half a mile from our places our visits to him were not so frequent as before but only once or twice a week ordinarily, if nothing of importance made us go to him oftener. The secret police were somewhat more active and were watching closely the Railway station and the ships in the port to note who is coming to him and who is going out. Within seven or eight months [Sri Aurobindo] left that house and came nearer to our place.

6

Extract from K. Amrita, "Old Long Since", in Nolini Kanta Gupta and K. Amrita, Reminiscences (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, 1969), pp. 152-54.

It became a habit with me to meet Ramaswami Iyengar on the beach every evening at about 5-30 just after leaving school. It was natural for my school friends also to accompany me.

How did Ramaswami Iyengar come to Pondicherry? How did he meet Sri Aurobindo? I did not know well then. I heard that it was he, Ramaswami Iyengar,

who had secretly invited K.V. Rangaswami Iyengar, of whom more presently, and arranged a meeting between him and Sri Aurobindo.

The story is this. A Siddhapurusha — a Yogi — called Nagai Japta was the Kulaguru (family preceptor) of K. Rangaswami Iyengar and a close friend of his. My uncle used to tell me of many a miracle which the Yogi had done. It was rumoured that when paddy fields went dry for want of water, Japta’s power would bring down the needed rain and make the withering paddy plants shoot forth again.

This great man had also said to the family members of Rangaswami Iyengar to this effect: “A great saint will come to the South from the North; he is a great Yogi and will show the way not only to our country but to the whole human race; he will be indeed your Kulaguru after me, you should accept him as such.” This he said and after a few days disappeared, one did not know where.

On learning of Sri Aurobindo’s arrival at Pondicherry, Rangaswami came here secretly with the help of Ramaswami, to see Sri Aurobindo and talk to him. Secrecy was necessary at that time to avoid suspicion of the British Police.

Rangaswami came several times afterwards to meet Sri Aurobindo openly. But it was during the earlier secret visits Sri Aurobindo wrote — apparently — the book *Yogic Sadhan* for him and gave it to him.

In the company of some close friends like Srinivasachari, Ramaswami and Rangaswami, there used to be now and then what is called “automatic writing”, that is to say, writing by spirits, as they are named. I am not sure whether the persons mentioned were the only ones present, there might have been a few others too. I gathered different versions from different people on the matter. It is said that Bharati also used to be in those meetings. . . .

The book *Yogic Sadhan* had its origin in this way. It is said that it was written through the medium of Sri Aurobindo by some great spirit, probably Rammohan Roy; for it seems Sri Aurobindo said that he saw the figure of Rammohan as he was doing the writing. The spirit entered into him, that is to say, into his hands and wrote down the book. That is why the book, printed at Srirangam Vani Vilas Press, at the instance of Rangaswami Iyengar, was ascribed to an Uttara Yogi as author or editor: that is to say, a Yogi who had come from the North gave form to the book.

7

Text by S. Ranganathan, Lakshmi Bhavanam, First St., Mannargudi [Tamil Nadu] 604001, dated 26 May 1988.

Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya Nama Om Sri Aravindaya Nama

* * * *

A brief history of Sri Vasudeva Iyengar Swami¹ — the Scion of Nagai — the founder of Nagai Japtha — the Uthara Yogi:

According to the manuscripts available, the Adi Uthara Yogi, the Scion of Nagai and the famous NAGAI JAPTHA was born in the Tamil year Virodhi, in the month of Purattasi, with the birth star Uthiram, corresponding to 27th September, 1829.² He was born to Sri Rangachariar and Janaki Ammal in the hamlet SEMBODAI in Vedaranyam taluk of Thanjavur district.

He moved out of his birth place at a fairly young age and finally landed in the village Nagai, a small hamlet in Mannargudi-Vadeseri road. Something striking must have happened here, for the village atmosphere put an end to his nomadic life and made him settle down and finally become the Japtha. The Nagai village and surrounding areas were rich with Vedic scholars, comprising of the three branches of religious philosophies (Vaishnavaites, adwaitins, and dwaitins) prosecuting themselves in their own way of rites and rituals. Sri Vasudeva Iyengar following his own sedentary life of Japa yagnas must have attracted the attention of these scholars and very soon he congregated a close well knit circle of followers who were collectively called the Nagai Japthas. The group gave importance to a special form of Japa yagna comprising of the great Gayatri Mantra ingeniously weaving into the system the Ashtakshara Mantra³ also. The repetitive rendering of the Japas in groups and in individual levels rendered a remarkable symphony and harmony to their lives, and very soon the Nagai Japthas became quite popular and the entire group of followers of the founder Japtha perfected the system of collective meditation accepting him as their veritable GURU. Soon they built a small fortress around the colony and an exclusive place for meditation — the KUSUMAKRAM — a raised platform like structure in an octagonal shape with a Pranava chakra in the apex. His followers were struck at the extraordinary meditative prowess coupled with yogic powers that they verily started addressing him as Adi Uthara Yogi!

The founder Japtha was unmarried till his late years and probably on the request of his disciples consented to marry at fairly late age of 35 or so and had a daughter born. He must have attained siddhi (samadhi) shortly after marriage. Prior to his samadhi he had evidently left word with his disciples that they would in future follow a great Guru from North and when further pressed for proper identification, he had advised them that the great Yogi from North would also be known UTHARA YOGI, who will land in the South soon. Nearly four decades had passed and yet the Nagai Japthas were unable to seek their Master or locate him anywhere. Finally

1. In a letter of 26 August 1988, S. Ranganathan writes: “I am advised to alter the name of the Swami as SRI VASUDEVA and not to use the religious name after his surname. It will be simply Sri Vasudeva and not Sri Vasudeva Iyengar.”

2. Amavasya & Sunday. [marginal notation]

3. OM Namō Nārāyaṇāya.

around 1908 Kodyalam (K.V.) Rangaswami Iyengar and his brother K.V. Srinivasa Iyengar identified in Sri Aurobindo clear similarities of thoughts of their Guru. Sri Aurobindo also called himself Uthara Yogi and the famous Alipore trials involving Sri Aurobindo brought to light various striking similar ideas between the great souls and it was not difficult for the brothers to get in touch with Sri Aurobindo through their usual contacts, one among them was Sir Sharma of Mavoor, who was a great Kali Bhakta and who had spent a major part of his life in Calcutta. Probably Rangaswami Iyengar was one of the early few to have influenced Sri Aurobindo and to have rendered financial assistance to move to Pondicherry from Chanden Nagore.⁴

A brief history of the Kodyalam brothers:

K.V. Rangaswami Iyengar and his brother K.V. Srinivasa Iyengar were the two sons among the nine children of Sri Kodyalam Vasudeva Iyengar. They were born in 1887 and 1889 respectively as the second and third in the line. Sri Vasudeva Iyengar of Kodyalam was actually married to the youngest sister-in-law of the great Nagai Japtha, and he was an unknowing child of two or three when the Japtha attained samadhi. The only daughter of the Nagai Japtha was a few years older than Kodyalam Vasudeva Iyengar. He was popularly known as the Zamindar of Kodyalam and was very well known among the ruling British and represented the landed genre in the Council. He died around 1906 at a young age of 40 and his eldest son K.V. Rangaswami Iyengar was elected to the British State Council and also represented in the Imperial British Council of State in Delhi. Both the brothers were very close not only to the British administration, but also to the then National leaders like Balgangadhar Tilak, Khaparde, Gopalakrishna Gokhale, Lala Lajpat Rai, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Poet Subrahmanya Bharathi and so on. Their closeness to the British was quite advantageous to them in rendering assistance to Sri Aurobindo during his secret travel to Pondicherry from Calcutta, as they were the least suspects in the British eyes. It was all the more advantageous to Sri Aurobindo also in making an easy passage to deep south from the turmoil of National and political extremism. Seeing him safe in the shores of Pondicherry in those days was not an easy task and to continue to assist him without culling the disfavour of the British authorities was an equally difficult task. Kodyalam brothers' proximity to the British rulers must have been responsible in their continued help to Sri Aurobindo without creating any untoward suspicion in the British eyes. Practically all the visits of the brothers to Pondicherry to meet both Sri Aurobindo or Subrahmanya Bharathi were kept

4. If, as it would appear from Document 5, Rangaswami Iyengar learned of Sri Aurobindo's coming to Pondicherry only some time after Sri Aurobindo's arrival, it would seem unlikely that Rangaswami had anything to do with Sri Aurobindo's departure from Chandernagore.

well guarded secrets that no proper records or even casual mentions are made in the history. That is why most of the details of their assistance or other forms of help were entirely shrouded in mystery. Even a brief visit and stay of Poet Subrahmanya Bharathi in 1918 to Nagai village as the guest of the Kodiyalam brothers (escaping the shrewd British intelligence) was mentioned in the biography of Poet Bharathi by V. Ramaswami (Va. Ra.). It is of interest to observe here that Va. Ra. himself was brought up through the munificence of K.V. Rangaswami Iyengar who was responsible to educate him beyond his school days in S.P.G. College, Trichy. This early association with Kodiyalam family, paved an easy way for the Kodiyalam brothers to contact and convey messages to Sri Aurobindo through Va. Ra. Since K.V.R. was a member of the British Council of State in Delhi he was unable to frequently visit Pondicherry; however the early visit and meeting with Sri Aurobindo is clearly mentioned in the biography and his efforts to undertake the publication of the very first work of Sri Aurobindo christened YOGIC SADHAN was also mentioned. It is of particular interest to note here that the above work was authored by Sri Aurobindo as UTHARA YOGI. A letter written by Sri Aurobindo in April, 1916 to Sri K.R. Appadurai (brother-in-law of Poet Bharathi) shows clearly that KVR continued to help Sri Aurobindo during times of need.

Sri K.V. Srinivasa Iyengar had vividly described his episodes of visits to Pondicherry between 1911 and till the time Sri Aurobindo restricted his public darshans and interviews. He was a frequent visitor to Pondicherry to represent his brother and he used to trek the distance between Cuddalore and Pondicherry by walk with his pet bull-dog, as though he was on casual walking errands and sneak into the prohibited territory with cash to be handed over to Sri Aurobindo. His description of the news flash on the Alipore trials involving Sri Aurobindo and the disclosure of certain details about his being a Yogin simply thrilled the brothers, who never lost an opportunity to get in touch with him and render all possible help. And their first meeting at Pondicherry, where they exchanged for the first time about their views and beliefs of the Uthara Yogi was an experience of their life time! It was the belief of the Kodiyalam family who were the followers of the Nagai Japtha, that Sri Aurobindo was actually the incarnation of the founder of the Nagai Japthas, the Adi Uthara Yogi. The Nagai clan who had been in search of their GURU for well over three decades must have been overjoyed at finally locating him in Sri Aurobindo!

* * * * *

(From *SRI AUROBINDO: Archives and Research*,
Vol. 12, No. 2, December 1988, pp. 193-97)

“SHIVA” — CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

Sri Aurobindo —

Your analysis, please? I wonder if the image and the expression seem a little stale. How are the essence and atmosphere of Shiva-consciousness brought out?

SHIVA

rapture

No clay-dream curves with ~~joy~~
The lips of that lone face:
A film of unearthly light
Has blinded the gaze —

A light which bears no colour
Of transient love
But falls from a silver secrecy
Caught high above

The surge of heart or mind,
mystic¹
A magic blaze
Of beauty carved to a crescent moon
Smiling in spirit space.

All calm the countenance,
But² }³
Yet a warrior-will afar
by
Slays every shadow with this smile
through
Of heaven's scimitar.

(Amal's questions and comment in the margins:)

1. “Mystic” is a rather overworked adjective — isn't it?
2. “But” has occurred already in line 7.
3. or, { Though calm the countenance,
A warrior-will afar

Sri Aurobindo’s comment:

1. So is “magic”.
3. This is best.

Very fine. Intuitive — at its highest in the last six lines.

13 September 1937

*

(*Amal’s further question re “magic”:*)

What about “virgin” (no clash with “surge” in previous line?), “vigil”, “austere”, “holy” or “primal” instead of “magic”?

Sri Aurobindo’s answer:

“Virgin” is the only one that fits — the assonance does not matter.

(Version from *The Secret Splendour — Collected Poems of K. D. Sethna [Amal Kiran]*, 1993 edition, p. 424:)

SHIVA

No clay-dream curves with rapture
The lips of that lone face:
A film of unearthly light
Has blinded the gaze —

A light which bears no colour
Of transient love
But falls from a silver secrecy
Caught high above

The surge of heart or mind,
A virgin blaze
Of beauty carved to a crescent moon
Smiling in spirit space.

Though calm the countenance,
 A warrior-will afar
 Slays every shadow with this smile
 Of heaven's scimitar.

AMAL KIRAN
 (K. D. SETHNA)

To transcend the natural action of the lower Prakriti is indispensable to the soul, if it is to be free in its self and free in its works. Harmonious subjection to this actual universal Nature, a condition of good and perfect work for the natural instruments, is not an ideal for the soul, which should rather be subject to God and his Shakti, but master of its own nature. As agent or as channel of the Supreme Will it must determine by its vision and sanction or refusal the use that shall be made of the storage of energy, the conditions of environment, the rhythm of combined movement which are provided by Prakriti for the labour of the natural instruments, mind, life and body. But this inferior Nature can only be mastered if she is surmounted and used from above. And this can only be done by a transcendence of her forces, qualities and modes of action; otherwise we are subject to her conditions and helplessly dominated by her, not free in the spirit.

Sri Aurobindo

(*The Synthesis of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 23, p. 232)

THE STORY OF JABALA-SATYAKAMA

(1)

I think I told you once of the story in the Upanishad about a seeker of spiritual knowledge who had been given by his teacher as a first assignment the task of looking after his kine. This was meant to serve both as an initiation and a training; it was to be his work and also his test. But the student had had to pass through another, perhaps somewhat minor, ordeal of a preliminary nature. Tagore has a well-known poem based on this episode. I begin my story with that narrative, giving it almost *verbatim* as it appears in the Upanishad (Chhandogya, IV.4).

Jabala Satyakama, says the Upanishad, approached his mother, Jabala, and put to her the question, “What, O my mother, is the name of my caste and family, for I desire to become a student of sacred lore?” To this Jabala replied, “I do not know about that, my darling; but I obtained you when I was young and was serving maid to a number of different men. That is why I do not know what is the name of your caste and family. But my name is Jabala and yours is Satyakama. So you may say that you are Satyakama, the son of Jabala.”

Satyakama now went to Gautama, the son of Haridruma, and said, “I come to you with the desire to stay as a student of sacred lore.” Gautama asked him, “What is the name of your caste and family, my child?” Satyakama answered, “I do not know what my caste or the name of my family is. But when I asked my mother, she said, ‘I obtained you when I was young and was serving maid to a number of different men. So I do not know who your father was. But my name is Jabala, and yours is Satyakama. You should therefore say you are Jabala Satyakama.’ This is the whole story.” Thereupon Gautama answered, “No one but a Brahmin could have spoken thus. Bring in the fuel, my dear; I shall take you as a disciple, for you have not swerved from the truth.”

(2)

Thus was Satyakama given admission to the Ashrama of Gautama. Now for his initiation and training and the tests. Gautama sent for him and said, “Satyakama, I shall now invest you with the sacred thread.” This investiture is a sacred rite which “sets one on the path” — what the Buddhists call in Pali “sompatti” (*srotapatti* in Sanskrit), that is, “getting into the stream” or starting on the way. He added, “You bring in the fuel from the neighbouring woods.” Satyakama did as he was told and the ceremony of initiation was duly performed.

The teacher now sent for him again and said, “Satyakama, I possess some four

hundred kine. But they are all puny and weak. You should look after them.” This meant that he was to take them out to pasture. Satyakama replied, “Very well, sir, it will be as you desire. I am leaving with the four hundred kine and I do not return till they are a thousand.” Gautama sent him off with his blessings.

Satyakama went along with his herd of kine. He looked after them as they roamed over the meadows and fields, through the forests and village settlements. Months passed, and years went by — many years. The kine had by now all gained in bulk and had a well-fed look; their numbers too had reached the thousand mark. One day, all on a sudden, a Bull from out of the herd appeared before Satyakama and addressed him in the voice of a man. “Satyakama!” he said. Satyakama took it as nothing unusual and answered in a polite tone, “Yes my Lord.” The Bull went on, “Satyakama, now let us turn homeward. We have reached the thousand mark and all of us are fit and strong.” Then the Bull added something more. “Meanwhile, Satyakama,” he said, “let me tell you something about the knowledge of Reality, *brahmavidya* — the very first lesson. Brahman has to be known in his four aspects; of these I shall tell you about the first just now. Of this first phase or aspect there are again four limbs. North, south, east and west, these four quarters are the four limbs of the first aspect of Brahman out of the four. Through the four quarters Brahman appears as the manifest One, *prakasavan*. And he who realises this manifest aspect of the Brahman becomes himself manifest and wins all the manifest worlds. This is the first of the four aspects of Brahman. Now, Agni is going to tell you about the second.” The next day, Satyakama resumed his march with the kine. As evening came, he gathered his herd together and penned the kine. Then he collected the fuel and lighted the sacrificial fire, and sat facing the east with Agni in front. Now Agni called to him, “Satyakama!” And Satyakama gave reply with his usual humility, “Yes, my Lord?” Agni continued, “Let me now, speak to you about the second aspect of Brahman. This too has four limbs; these are earth, mid-air, the heavens and the ocean. This second aspect of Brahman that is constituted by these four is the Infinity of Brahman. He who gains it lives in Infinity even on this earth and wins all the worlds of Infinity.” Again the homeward march began, and again the Bull came and informed Satyakama thus, “Now it will be the Swan who will come and tell you about the Brahman.” When it was eventide, Satyakama gathered his herd again, penned them in, and lighted his sacrificial fire. Again he sat in front of the fire facing the east. Then the Swan appeared as promised by the Bull and called in a human voice, “Satyakama!” And Satyakama made answer, “Yes, my Lord?” The Swan continued, “I shall speak to you about another aspect of Brahman.” “Tell me, my Lord.” “This the third aspect of Brahman consists of Fire, the Sun, the Moon and Lightning. Through this quartet of the third aspect Brahman appears as the Effulgent One. He who realises this aspect of Brahman becomes himself effulgent and wins all the worlds of effulgence even while on this earth.”

Satyakama started on his march again, and once again the Bull came and

informed him that this time a Flamingo would come and tell him about the fourth aspect of Brahman. As evening came, Satyakama gathered his herd together and penned them as usual. He lighted the sacrificial fire and sat in front facing the east, and waited. The Bird flew in and called, "Satyakama!" Satyakama replied, "Yes, my Lord?" The Bird went on, "I shall give you the knowledge of the fourth aspect of the fourfold Brahman." Satyakama replied in all humility, "Tell me, my Lord." The Bird said, "The four limbs of this aspect are the Life-force, the Eyes, the Ears and Mind. These four combined make Brahman the All-Form. He who knows this becomes the All-Form and wins here itself the All-Form."

By now Satyakama arrived at his master's home, accompanied by his herd of a thousand well-fed kine in place of the original four hundred weaklings. As he came to his master, Gautama gave him a look and came out with these words, "Satyakama, I see your face shining with the light of Brahman. Who has given you the knowledge of the Brahman?" Satyakama told him about the four strange encounters. But he added, "My master, you are my sole teacher, and my knowledge will remain incomplete until I receive the knowledge directly from you." Gautama then repeated to him the same things that he had heard about the four aspects of Brahman, thus confirming what Satyakama had already experienced and realised; it was now sanctified with Gautama's blessings. Thus did Satyakama become a knower of Brahman and foremost among Brahmins. In course of time he himself took the place of a Guru.

(3)

I intend to tell you on another occasion the story of his dealings with his own disciples. That story too appears in the Upanishad. Let me in the meantime add some explanations of the knowledge given to Satyakama.

The knowledge and realisation that he had gained from his life of a wandering cowherd are the basic truth of the world, the supreme secret of creation. He realised that Brahman is the ultimate Truth, the one and only Reality. The signs or qualities of this ultimate Truth or Reality are four. Brahman may be described as if in a group of four aphorisms, like the first four aphorisms of the Brahmasutra, the basic compendium of Vedantic thought, which Shankara has commented on in very clear terms. If you know his commentary on these four aphorisms, you get to know practically the entire philosophy of the Vedanta as interpreted by Shankara. The first of the aphorisms taught to Satyakama implies that Brahman has made himself manifest, for He is self-manifest. Another Upanishad has said the same thing: *tameva bhantam anubhāti sarvam*, "His is the Light that illumines all." Of this self-luminous form of Brahman or God the four limbs are the four quarters. He is manifest on all sides, above and below, in every direction, and he is not only thus manifest; there is also no end or limit to his manifestation. Hence, as a second step in our knowledge,

we learn that God or Brahman is the Infinite. This Infinity too has four limbs or lines: (1) earth, or the physical and material extension, (2) mid-air, or the expanse of the vital worlds, (3) the vast expanses of mind, and (4) the oceanic reaches of the higher worlds that stand above the mind. The third attribute or quality of God is Luminosity, He is the Bright, the Effulgent One — He is the supreme light. Of His Brightness or Effulgence the symbols are four, the four that serve as the medium or base: these are fire, the sun, the moon and the stars. Fire is enkindled on the solid earth of matter; the sun burns in the mid-regions of life; the moon illumines with its cooling rays the regions of the quiet and happy mind; and the stars give us the brilliance of the world beyond mind. It is needless to add that the Seer is not speaking here in terms of astronomy. He has been expressing his meaning through the help of significant symbols or metaphors.

And finally, the Reality or God is made up of Form: that is to say, He has put Himself forth variously through a multitude of forms, *rupam rupam pratirupo babhuva*. And the functions or instrumentalities through which Form has taken shape are the four main powers of sense-consciousness. These are: (1) the power of sensitivity, the capacity of living contact and intimate or close experience, of which the sense of touch represents to us the external form or activity, for through it we get a sense of reality as living existence; (2) the power of vision or sight, for through the eyes we get a sense of form and definite shape; (3) the power of hearing, for the organ of hearing gives us a sense of rhythm, of sound, the form of articulate speech; and (4) the power of mind which, being the centre of thinking, gives us a sense of meaning, builds the forms of thought.

These then are the four aspects of Brahman, the fourfold quartet through which we get a glimpse of the wholeness of Brahman, *Purnabrahman*.

(4)

This story of Satyakama brings out a picture that tells us something about the lines or circumstances of ancient Indian education.

We know that the Upanishads are classed with the Aranyaka literature; the Brihadaranyaka is a well-known name. The forest life of the recluse was in those days intimately associated with education and learning, and especially with the spiritual disciplines. The injunction for the seeker of truth was, “Repair to the forest,” *vanam vrajet*. The seers, the Rishis, had their hermitages in the forests alone. That of course was an age when the forest reigned upon earth. The greater part of the globe was still a virgin forest. Cities and townships were not so common; there were only a scattered few that glimmered like torches amid vast stretches of night. There is also the point that the free and easy association of day to day with Nature brings about a natural heightening and widening of the consciousness. The English poet Wordsworth, as I told you the other day, had some experience of this to which he

gave voice in lines like these: “And beauty born of murmuring sound / Shall pass into her face.”

The quiet beauty and rhythm of Nature permeate the limbs if one lives in close proximity to Nature. We in our country had, no doubt, the advantage of forests. But even in other countries like Arabia or Egypt which had no forests but only desert tracts with their wide stretches of bare sand, the same method was followed. There the seekers and the saints and mystics lived in the heart of the desert and drew from that source its rhythm and harmony and inspiration.

But in the modern world, under the circumstances of today, we no longer follow the ancient method either physically or even perhaps psychologically. Man does not now depend on external props or surroundings, nor does his consciousness either. Man’s consciousness has grown to be in large measure free and self-reliant. It would rather bring external Nature under its own control than be guided by its influence. As in our outer so in our inner spiritual life, we are becoming city-dwellers in place of the old forest recluses. Even when we repair to the forest we try to make it as far as possible akin to the city. But this need not give rise to a quarrel or conflict between the forest and the city; it is possible to reconcile the two — the rural and the urban — even as it is necessary to effect a reconciliation between the inner and the outer life, between the consciousness within and the conditions of life without.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

(*Collected Works of Nolini Kanta Gupta*, Vol. 8, pp. 125-32)

When the trouble is too strong to be kept out, it must be allowed to pass and its return discouraged by a greater vigilance and insistence of the spiritualised buddhi. Thus persisting, it will be found that these things lose their force more and more, become more and more external and brief in their recurrence, . . .

Sri Aurobindo

(*The Synthesis of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 24, p. 723)

SRI AUROBINDO, THE PERFECT GENTLEMAN — “LIFE OF PREPARATION AT BARODA”

(Continued from the issue of January 2020)

1. KINDNESS AND COMPASSION

(Part 6)

Sri Aurobindo's compassion was not limited to kith and kin, nor only to his friends. In a letter to Mrinalini Devi, dated August 1905, he wrote:

But the account is not settled by giving only to one's brothers and sisters. In these dark days the whole country is seeking refuge at my door. I have three hundred million brothers and sisters in this country. Many of them are dying of starvation and the majority just manage to live, racked by sorrow and suffering. They too must be helped.¹

In the same letter Sri Aurobindo reveals that it is his sacred duty to defend the deprived:

What does giving to God mean? It means to spend on good works. The money I gave to Usha or to Sarojini causes me no regret. To help others is a sacred duty; to give protection to those who seek refuge is a yet greater sacred duty.²

In an October 1905 letter to Mrinalini Devi, Sri Aurobindo expresses his concern for the economically underprivileged: “Almost always the poor lose, the rich win.”³

Once, a sum of Rs 2000 had accrued to Sri Aurobindo. Upendranath Banerjee, a fellow revolutionary, reports that Sri Aurobindo was so uneasy with such a large sum that he felt compelled to spend it.⁴

Sri Aurobindo's generosity was blended with empathy. Once a student at Calcutta University fell from the first floor of the building and lost consciousness. A crowd gathered, yet none took the initiative to help but only looked on helplessly. An Englishman, who was passing by, acted promptly by carrying the student into

1. A. B. Purani, *The Life of Sri Aurobindo*, 2001, p. 81.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Sri Aurobindo in Baroda*, compiled and edited by Roshan and Apurva, 1st Ed., p. 66.

4. See Upendranath Banerjee, *Aurobindo Prasanga*; papers at Sri Aurobindo Archives (translated from Bengali).

his car, and driving him to the hospital. Out of sympathy for the student Sri Aurobindo narrated this sad incident to both the teachers and students of Bengal National College. He then emphasised the need for Indians to learn from the Europeans their virtue of dedication to work, which was one of the reasons why the latter are ruling the world.⁵

Although Sri Aurobindo was earning handsomely, he had a tight budget, for his finances were allocated for several selfless purposes. His habit of unreservedly giving away monies meant he was always afflicted with pecuniary difficulties. As a consequence, Mrinalini's allowance was stringent as is apparent in an extract from a letter dated 30th August 1905:

I read ten rupees instead of twenty and so I said I would send ten rupees. If you need fifteen rupees I will send fifteen. This month I sent money for the clothes Sarojini bought for you in Darjeeling. How was I to know that you had borrowed money to stay there? I am sending fifteen rupees you need. If you need three or four rupees I will send it next month. I will send twenty rupees at that time.⁶

Then again on 3rd October 1905 Sri Aurobindo explains to Mrinalini Devi his several financial obligations:

I can't send you any money because I have to send 60 to 70 rupees for Sarojini's Darjeeling expenses . . .⁷

Shortly after, on 22nd October 1905, Sri Aurobindo conveys to Mrinalini his appreciation of her resolve to spend less money:

That long letter of yours gave me no reason to despair. I was rather glad. If Sarojini learns to practise self-denial like you, it will help me much in my future (plan) of work.⁸

Despite Mrinalini's self-denial, funds had almost dried up. In several letters Mrinalini Devi had sharply complained to Sri Aurobindo about having insufficient monies to meet the household expenses.⁹ That Sri Aurobindo was facing severe dearth of funds is again revealed in a letter of February 1908:

5. See Rishabchand, *Sri Aurobindo – His Life Unique*, 1st Ed., pp. 225-26.

6. *Sri Aurobindo in Baroda*, compiled and edited by Roshan and Apurva, 1st Ed., p. 60.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

9. Sourced from papers at Sri Aurobindo Archives.

Dearest Mrinalini,

As there will be a delay in my obtaining my salary from the College I have borrowed Rs 50 from Radha Kumud Mukherjee and am sending it. . . . Take the rent money from this and after keeping aside something for mother, pay off some of the debt. Next month I will get my salary for February and January, three hundred rupees. Then we can pay off the rest of the debt.¹⁰

Sri Aurobindo was constantly facing financial difficulties in 1907. Hemendra Prasad Ghose, an associate of Sri Aurobindo at *Bande Mataram*, writes that on several instances his colleague Shyam Sunder along with Abinash Bhattacharya came to him to ask for a few rupees in order to purchase rice for Sri Aurobindo's household.¹¹

Abinash Bhattacharya, who was looking after the domestic affairs of Sri Aurobindo's house, writes:

Food or clothing did not matter to him. He ate whatever was there. There were holes in his shoes but he did not notice. He did not concern himself with the household at all. I had to look after everything. He got 150 rupees a month from the National College, but it did not always come and finally it stopped altogether. Sometimes I borrowed from Hemendraprasad Ghosh and then tried to pay him back at my convenience.¹²

Sri Aurobindo's generosity extended not only to individuals but also for the national cause. A letter of 3rd October 1905 to Mrinalini Devi states:

Madhavrao has been sent abroad for some special work. Much money has to be given for the Swadeshi movement and besides that I'm trying to start another movement and I will need no end of money for that. I can't put anything away.¹³

The reference to Madhavrao in the above letter concerns Sri Aurobindo financing his Europe trip, presumably to get military training, secure arms and learn about the making of explosives. Sometime later, another patriot — Hemachandra Kanungo — was also sent to Europe for the same purpose.¹⁴

10. *Sri Aurobindo in Baroda*, compiled and edited by Roshan and Apurva, 1st Ed., p. 72.

11. Sourced from *Orient Illustrated Weekly*, 27 February 1949, (Article by Hemendra Prasad Ghose, 'Reminiscences of Aurobindo Ghose'); papers at Sri Aurobindo Archives.

12. Abinash Bhattacharya, 'Sri Aurobindo', *Mother India*, July 2012, p. 531.

13. *Sri Aurobindo in Baroda*, compiled and edited by Roshan and Apurva, 1st Ed., p. 66.

14. See K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Sri Aurobindo – a biography and a history*, 5th Ed., 2006, p. 216.

Sri Aurobindo's generosity towards the national cause was also evident to the young revolutionary workers. When Sri Aurobindo shifted from Baroda to Calcutta his salary dipped drastically from Rs 700 to Rs 150. Yet, Upendranath Banerjee reveals, he was sending monies to others.¹⁵

Bhupendranath Dutta (1880-1961), a revolutionary working at *Yugantar*, writes in his *Aurobindo Smarane*:

When Aurobindo came to Bengal, it was a moment of unity of Bengal national life. As an earning member he always helped the secret society with heavy donations.¹⁶

Sri Aurobindo's kind nature was also brought to light in a preface of a book, covering his political tour to Maharashtra in January 1908, where it was mentioned:

Babu Arbind was so generous and charitable a man that out of 700 (his salary) he could not save anything. Now we learn he spends Rs. 50 per month. So much is the curtailment.¹⁷

One is reminded of the Mother saying,

But just as we must be compassionate and kind to others, we must be exacting and strict with ourselves, since we want to become lights in the darkness, torches in the night.¹⁸

Despite Sri Aurobindo's unobtrusive nature his nobility in the turmoil of Indian politics was noticed by the French Nobel laureate Romain Rolland. He writes in his *Prophets of the New India*:

Another personality — the greatest after him [Tagore] — thrown into the limelight by the independence movement, was his young friend, Aurobindo Ghose. He was the real intellectual heir of Vivekananda. He had just completed a brilliant education at Cambridge. Very learned, brought up in the classical culture of Europe, he was in the service of the Gaekwar of Baroda. He gave up his lucrative post and accepted for a very modest stipend the headship of the

15. See Upendranath Banerjee, *Aurobindo Prasanga*; papers at Sri Aurobindo Archives (translated from Bengali).

16. See Bhupendranath Dutta, *Aurobindo Smarane*; papers at Sri Aurobindo Archives (translated from Bengali).

17. *Sri Aurobindo: His Political Life and Activities*, compiled and edited by Anurag Banerjee, p. 181.

18. *CWM*, Vol. 2, 2nd Ed., p. 92.

National College at Calcutta. His aim was to mould the character of Bengal youth by uniting education closely to the religion, politics and life of the nation.¹⁹

Veteran parliamentarian and central minister, Arun Chandra Guha, himself a participant in the independence movement, writes in his *First Spark of Revolution*:

Even while he was in service at Baroda, he used to send to Calcutta the major portion of his salary for revolutionary work, living a very austere life.²⁰

When Sri Aurobindo took leave without pay from Baroda State in 1906, his resources were meagre, yet he stepped in to financially help *Bande Mataram*. Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya had undertaken to print *Bande Mataram* for two months after a sum of Rs 6000 was secured and paid to him. Hemendra Prasad Ghose writes:

But Upadhyaya found it difficult to manage with the money thus secured; and when the paper was about to suffer shipwreck on the rock-ahead of a financial crisis, Aurobindo was one of those who came forward with help to weather the squall. On September 23rd, 1906 he made over a sum of Rs 300 to Shyam Sunder and myself for the purpose. His counsel prevailed with Subodh Chandra, Chitta Ranjan and Charu Chandra Dutt (then a member of the I.C.S.) who agreed to recognise the *Bande Mataram* as the organ of the New Party and reorganise it.”²¹

During his activity in the political field Sri Aurobindo worked incessantly but all his labour was largely gratis. He said:

Nor have I ever received any payment for any political work except occasional payments for contributions to the Calcutta *Bande Mataram* while I was on its staff.²²

Whilst Sri Aurobindo's political action “covered eight years, from 1902 to 1910”,²³ as far back as 1893 the “public activity of Sri Aurobindo began with the writing of the articles in the *Indu Prakash*.”²⁴ He has also stated:

19. Romain Rolland, *Prophets of the New India*, (translated by E. F. Malcolm-Smith), p. 499.

20. Arun Chandra Guha, *First Spark of Revolution*, 1971, pp. 136-37.

21. *Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research*, April 1979, p. 121 (Hemendra Prasad Ghose, ‘Reminiscences of Sri Aurobindo’).

22. CWSA, Vol. 36, p. 266.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

For the first few years in India, Sri Aurobindo abstained from any political activity (except the writing of the articles in the *Indu Prakash*) and studied the conditions in the country so that he might be able to judge more maturely what could be done. Then he made his first move when he sent a young Bengali soldier of the Baroda army, Jatin Banerji, as his lieutenant to Bengal with a programme of preparation and action which he thought might occupy a period of 30 years before fruition could become possible.”²⁵

Whilst Sri Aurobindo’s time at Baroda “were years of self-culture, of literary activity”, the major thrust of his work in the later years was his political efforts in securing India’s liberation.

It is fascinating to study Sri Aurobindo’s comportment during his political life, for politics as a profession can bring out the worst in a person. For any dignified and cultured person to descend into the murkiness of politics for the sake of his country is indeed most laudable and courageous, but to maintain one’s dignity and integrity whilst combating an exploitative colonial government could perhaps qualify as the ultimate test of a gentleman’s character.

Quite in contrast to his academic career Sri Aurobindo was well aware that he was entering the muddy waters of politics; he once told his disciples:

You know what [Chittaranjan Das] said about politicians? He said that in his whole legal career he had not met worse types of criminals than in politics.”²⁶

The Mother has said that politics is “dominated by falsehood” and to succeed there one has to have an “unscrupulous ambition.”²⁷ Interestingly, Sri Aurobindo wrote to a disciple:

And the second fact is that I do not care a button about my having my name in any blessed place. I was never ardent about fame even in my political days; I preferred to remain behind the curtain, push people without their knowing it and get things done. It was the confounded British Government that spoiled my game by prosecuting me [*in the Bande Mataram Sedition Case of August 1907*] and forcing me to be publicly known and a “leader”.²⁸

The fiery nationalist leader, Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya was more than impressed by the purity and nobility of Sri Aurobindo:

25. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

26. A. B. Purani, *Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo*, 4th Ed., 2007, p. 686.

27. See *CWM*, Vol. 13, 2nd Ed., pp. 122-23.

28. *CWSA*, Vol. 35, p. 71.

This Aurobindo of ours is rare in the world. In his snow-white hue there is the divine beauty of the pure Sattvic man. He is great and noble. In the wideness of his heart, he is great. In the nobility of the Swadharma of the Hindu, he is noble. Such a complete and pure man — a core of fire like that of the thunderbolt and at the same time delicately graceful like the lotus leaf: a man so rich in knowledge, so immersed in meditation — you will never find in the three worlds. To break the chains binding our Mother India, this worthy son of the Mother, tearing off the alluring mesh of the foreign culture, sacrificing all earthly comfort and happiness, has dedicated himself to the editing of the paper, *Bande Mataram*.

Do not any more touch the journals published by the fat, hollow, whining, arrogance-drunk creatures who play second fiddle to the foreigner. Aurobindo's thoughts and feelings will flood every heart with the love of the Motherland, awaken the enthusiasm of serving the Mother. If you listen to the words of the *Bande Mataram* all your fears will disappear, your arms of flesh will be mighty as the thunder, a stream of fire will run through your veins and death will seem like a frolic of the spring. As the medicine men who specialise in snake bites, remove the poison by uttering mantras, in the same way, the mantra of the *Bande Mataram* will rid the nation of the poison of foreign influence.²⁹

Sri Aurobindo considered Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya to be a “great man”. And Rabindranath Tagore said of him:

On the one hand a Roman Catholic sannyasin, on the other a vedantin — eminent, fiery, courageous, world renouncer, possessed of extraordinary talent.³⁰

The towering Nationalist leader of Punjab, Lala Lajpat Rai of “Lal, Bal, Pal” fame, in his Presidential address at the 1920 special Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress, also commended Sri Aurobindo's purity:

It was at Calcutta that the ideas of new Nationalism that have since then grown into a mighty tree, were first expounded and explained by one of the purest minded and the most intellectual of Bengal's gifted sons, I mean Sri Arabindo Ghosh.³¹

Elsewhere Lajpat Rai has stated:

29. Brahmabandhav Upadhyay, ‘Aurobindo in Manasarovar’ (translated from Bengali by Aniruddha Sircar), *Mother India*, June 2004, p. 518.

30. *Ibid.*, footnote.

31. Sujata Nahar, *Mother's Chronicles*, Book V, p. 378.

None of us had the right to exclude from the deliberations of the Congress anybody who pitched his ideal so high as the complete independence of his mother country . . . No assembly in India could be called national which precluded by virtue of his creed a man of purity and of the absolute disinterestedness and high patriotism of the nation as Aurobindo Ghose.³²

In his book *Young India*, published in 1916, Lajpat Rai says this of Sri Aurobindo:

In intellectual acumen and scholastic accomplishments, he is perhaps superior to Har Dayal, but above all, he is deeply religious and spiritual. He is a worshipper of Krishna and a high-souled Vedantist. . . . His notions of life and morality are pre-eminently Hindu and he believes in the spiritual mission of his people. . . .³³

It is interesting to note that Lala Lajpat Rai along with Purushottam Das Tandon (afterwards a Bharat Ratna awardee) came to Pondicherry in 1925 to meet and hold discussions with Sri Aurobindo. First Lalaji and Sri Aurobindo conversed privately for about forty five minutes, then they joined the others.

The third part of the “Lal, Bal, Pal” triumvirate, Bipin Chandra Pal, hails Sri Aurobindo’s character:

The youngest in age among those who stand in the forefront of the Nationalist propaganda in India, but in endowment, education and character, perhaps, superior to them all — Aravinda seems distinctly marked out by Providence to play in the future of this movement a part not given to any of his colleagues and contemporaries. The other leaders of this movement have left their lives behind them; Aravinda has his before him. Nationalism is their last love; it is Aravinda’s first passion. . . . His only care is for his country — the mother, as he always calls her. His only recognised obligations are to her. Nationalism, at best a concern of the intellect with some; at the lowest a political cry and aspiration with others, is with Aravinda a supreme passion of his soul. Few, indeed, have grasped the full force and meaning of the Nationalist ideal as Aravinda has done. But even of these very few — though their vision may be clear, their action is weak. . . . By the general verdict of his countrymen, Aravinda stands today among those favoured sons of God.³⁴

32. Manoj Das, ‘Sri Aurobindo: Life and Times of the Mahayogi’, *Mother India*, December 2014, p. 1019 (Lajpat Rai, *India’s Will to Freedom*, Ganesh & Co., Chennai, 1921).

33. Rishabchand, *Sri Aurobindo – His Life Unique*, 1st Ed., p. 119.

34. Manoj Das, *Sri Aurobindo in the First Decade of the Twentieth Century*, 2nd Ed., pp. 185-86.

Sri Aurobindo has said that Pal “was perhaps the best and most original political thinker in the country, an excellent writer and a magnificent orator”.³⁵

Intriguingly, Sri Aurobindo’s goodness and graciousness was also apparent when he was participating in revolutionary activities. When Sri Aurobindo was charged for sedition in the *Bande Mataram* Case in August 1907, Tilak’s journal, the *Maharatta*, succinctly declared:

Who knows but what is sedition today may be divine truth tomorrow? Mr. Aurobindo Ghose is a sweet soul.³⁶

Sudhir Kumar Sarkar, a revolutionary who personally attended on Sri Aurobindo during the period 1907 to 1909, observed and even tested him but was astonished with the heights of loftiness that Sri Aurobindo attained. He reminisces:

Sri Aurobindo’s simple and easy manner, his politeness, friendliness and equanimity overwhelmed me. I wondered at that time if he was really a being of this world or some other. Yet my mischievous mind had the temerity to test him — I had been brought up in an atmosphere of insincerity and suspicion, a life beset with want and struggle, misunderstanding and jealousy, the play of hide and seek and duplicity. I could never convince myself that a man could be of his height. Could it be really possible? Yet I could not help liking Sri Aurobindo. On how many occasions I tried to look searchingly through him with my mischievous eyes to discover some little bit of human weakness; later, I felt overwhelmed with shame and disgust at my own lowly mentality.³⁷

During his tours in Bengal in 1909, Sri Aurobindo used to address political meetings; despite his hectic schedule he never hesitated to personally help those who approached him in his leisure time. Nolini Kanta Gupta notes:

It is not that he confined himself to political matters alone. There were many who knew that he was a Yogi and spiritual guide and they sought his help in these matters too. I have myself seen as I spent whole nights with him in the same room, at Jalsuka, how he would sit up practically the whole night and go to bed only for a short while in the early hours of the morning.³⁸

Nagendrakumar Guharoy, who since his childhood had been helped by Sri Aurobindo’s maternal aunt’s husband, K. K. Mitra, was first introduced to Sri

35. CWSA, Vol. 36, p. 55.

36. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Sri Aurobindo – a biography and a history*, 5th Ed., 2006, p. 244.

37. Mona Sarkar, *A Spirit Indomitable*, 21st February 1989, pp. 90-91.

38. Nolini Kanta Gupta, *Collected Works*, 1st Ed., Vol. 7, p. 389.

Aurobindo by Subodh Mullick when he went to the latter's house on a visit — Sri Aurobindo stayed with Subodh Chandra Mullick at Calcutta in 1906-07. Nagendrakumar remembers that Sri Aurobindo was sweet, peaceful and had bright eyes. Subsequently Nagendrakumar often visited Subodh Mullick's mansion and saw Sri Aurobindo almost daily.³⁹

A share-holder in the Company which floated *Bande Mataram* and a close friend of Subodh Mullick's family, Sukumar Sen, observed that Sri Aurobindo "was a very gentle and mild-mannered man."⁴⁰

That Sri Aurobindo was a cut above the rest was noticed by a prominent politician, Barrister M. R. Jayakar — he became the first Vice-Chancellor of the University of Poona, a judge in the Federal Court of India, a member of the Constituent Assembly and a leader of the Swaraj Party. At the Calcutta Session in December 1906, Sri Aurobindo's presence left a deep impression on Jayakar, who notes in his autobiography:

I then had my first opportunity of observing from close quarters the Congress leaders of those times, with some of whom my contact increased later. I then saw Aurobindo Ghose and his associates. What struck me, were his great earnestness and dignified appearance. He had not then developed, so far as outside appearance could show, into a complete Yogi, but I got, from a distance, an indication that his political philosophy was different from that of those who surrounded him.⁴¹

Sri Aurobindo's political and revolutionary activity in no way diminished or affected his stature as the perfect gentleman. Rather his self-sacrifice and his heroic actions in the interests of the nation and its people was the crowning glory of his nobility. Henry W. Nevinson (1856-1941) — a respected English journalist sympathetic to the Indian nationalist movement and the author of more than 30 books — writes:

In an age of supernatural religion Arabindo would have become what the irreligious mean by a fanatic. He was possessed by that concentrated vision, that limited and absorbing devotion. Like a horse in blinkers, he ran straight, regardless of everything except the narrow bit of road in front. But at the end of that road he saw a vision more inspiring and spiritual than any fanatic saw who rushed on death with Paradise in sight. Nationalism to him was far more than a political object or a means of material improvement. To him it was

39. Nagendrakumar Guharoy, *Galpa Bharati*; papers at Sri Aurobindo Archives (translated from Bengali).

40. Manoj Das, 'Sri Aurobindo: Life and Times of the Mahayogi', *Mother India*, January 2016, p. 37 (Deposition of P.W. No. 92; The Alipore Conspiracy Case documents).

41. M. R. Jayakar, *The Story of my Life*, Vol. 1, p. 76; papers at Sri Aurobindo Archives.

surrounded by a mist of glory, the halo that medieval saints beheld gleaming around the head of martyrs. Grave with intensity, careless of fate and opinion and one of the most silent men I have known, he was of the stuff that dreamers are made of, but dreamers who will act their dream, indifferent to the means. “Nationalism”, he said in a brief address delivered in Bombay, early in 1908, “is a religion that comes from God”.⁴²

Like Nevinson, Jitendralal Bandhopadhyay — a distinguished professor who passed his Masters, first class, in English Literature from Presidency College — also felt that Sri Aurobindo was a dreamer who acted upon his dreams. In 1909, he wrote about Sri Aurobindo’s love and concern for his countrymen in a prestigious monthly review:

He is like gold, thrice tested in fire. . . . Yes, Aravinda Ghose is a dreamer — but he has dreamed golden dreams for his country and people — visions of glory and triumph, yet visions as they are, not untouched by a gleam of far-off prophecy.⁴³

Indeed, Sri Aurobindo was a man of deeds. In 1971 the Mother said:

They have found some letters — some old letters — from Sri Aurobindo to Barin and the lawyer⁴⁴ — extraordinary! They are incredible. They give the measure of Sri Aurobindo as a man of action. Even in 1920, he intended to undertake an action. To organise centres all over India, the world, oh! . . . a plan! . . . And that was before the liberation of the country!

He says that he has completely withdrawn to find his yoga, but once he had found it, he is going to start his action. . . .⁴⁵

Sri Aurobindo believed that it was indispensable that India secure her independence; the reason why Nevinson recognised him as a staunch and ardent nationalist. Sri Aurobindo’s gentlemanliness had many dimensions, amongst which was a selflessness and resoluteness. He believed that India’s independence was more

42. Manoj Das, *Sri Aurobindo in the First Decade of the Twentieth Century*, 2nd Ed., pp. 14-15 (Henry W. Nevinson: *The New Spirit in India*).

43. Manoj Das, ‘Sri Aurobindo: Life and Times of the Mahayogi’, *Mother India*, June 2016, p. 451 (Also at Sri Aurobindo Archives).

44. C. R. Das, Sri Aurobindo’s lawyer in the Alipore bomb case. There are three letters; one dated November 18, 1922, to C. R. Das, and the two others to Barin, Sri Aurobindo’s younger brother, dated November 18, 1922 and December 1, 1922.

45. Mother’s conversation with a disciple on 20 October 1971.

important than personal moksha (spiritual salvation),⁴⁶ and was determined to achieve it. “Liberty is the life-breath of a nation”,⁴⁷ he said. And in the columns of the *Bande Mataram* he elucidates on this necessity:

The subject nation becomes dependent, disorganised and loses its powers by atrophy. For this reason national independence is absolutely necessary to national growth. There can be no national development without national liberty.⁴⁸

Sri Aurobindo further writes that “British control” implies “a radical and congenital evil” since exploitation by “British capital” is a “murderous drain” resulting in a “gradual death by bleeding”.⁴⁹

Nevinson writes:

Where the consciousness of timidity exists among a people, the first duty of a patriot is to remove it at all costs. So in the columns of his paper and in his rare speeches Aurobindo Ghose was insisting especially on the necessity of courage . . . “Courage,” said a leader in *Bande Mataram*, “is your principal asset. Heroism, says Emerson, feels and never reasons, and therefore is always right. If you are to work out the salvation of your country, you will have to do it with heroism. . . .”⁵⁰

Heroism, courage and strength are qualities that make a gentleman an integral noble being, for then he can fight for the weak and deprived, an ideal that Sri Aurobindo revealed to his wife in August 1905.

On 5th April 1907 Sri Aurobindo writes in the *Bande Mataram*:

Politics is the work of the Kshatriya and it is the virtues of the Kshatriya we must develop if we are to be morally fit for freedom. But the first virtue of the Kshatriya is not to bow his neck to an unjust yoke but to protect his weak and suffering countrymen against the oppressor and welcome death in a just and righteous battle.⁵¹

46. See CWSA, Vol. 6, p. 302, See A. B. Purani, *Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo*, 4th Ed., 2007, p. 331, 423, 612.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 278.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 364.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 271.

50. Manoj Das, ‘Sri Aurobindo: Life and Times of the Mahayogi’, *Mother India*, April 2014, p. 307 (Henry W. Nevins: *The New Spirit in India*).

51. CWSA, Vol. 6, p. 238.

An aphorism of Sri Aurobindo reads:

Courage and love are the only indispensable virtues; even if all the others are eclipsed or fall asleep, these two will save the soul alive.⁵²

Nevinson was important enough a figure for Sri Aurobindo to comment on:

Yes. I met him twice, once in Bengal at Subodh Mullick's place. I was very serious at that time. The next occasion was when I was president of the National Conference at Surat. Then also I couldn't laugh, being the President. So he called me "the man who never laughs."⁵³

Sri Aurobindo once wrote to a disciple:

Nevinson seeing me presiding at the Surat Nationalist Conference — which was not a joke and others were as serious as myself — spoke of me as that most politically dangerous of men — "the man who never smiles" which made people who knew me smile very much. . . .⁵⁴

Yet Nevinson speaks of Sri Aurobindo as "a man of very fine culture, his is a lovable nature."⁵⁵

Ramsay MacDonald, the future Prime Minister of England, met Sri Aurobindo in Alipore jail and formed a high opinion of him. He notes in his journal:

I called on one whose name is on every lip as a wild extremist across whose path the shadow of the hangman falls. . . . He talked of things which trouble the soul of man; he wandered aimlessly into the dim regions of aspiration where the mind finds a soothing resting-place. He was far more a mystic than a politician. He saw India seated on a temple throne. . . . Man has to fulfil God, he has written, and that is only possible by fulfilling himself, this again being possible only through nationality.⁵⁶

It is interesting to note what Sri Aurobindo wrote in the *Karmayogin* in 1909 about MacDonald and Nevinson and Keir Hardie, the founder of the Labour party and also a sympathiser of Sri Aurobindo:

52. CWSA, Vol. 12, p. 455.

53. Nirodbaran, *Talks with Sri Aurobindo*, Vol. 1, 2009, p. 95.

54. CWSA, Vol. 35, p. 48.

55. Sujata Nahar, *Mother's Chronicles*, Book V, pp. 379-80 (article in the *Indian Patriot*).

56. Dilip Kumar Roy, *Sri Aurobindo Came to Me*, p. 268. (J. Ramsay MacDonald, *The Awakening of India*).

Mr. MacDonald belongs to the new thought, but he is, we believe, one of those who would hasten slowly to the goal. He has not the rugged personality of Mr. Keir Hardie, but combines in himself, in a way Mr. Hardie scarcely does, the old culture and the new spirit. He has as broad a sympathy and as penetrating an intelligence as Mr. Nevinson, but not the latter's quick intensity. Nevertheless, behind the slow consideration and calm thoughtfulness of his manner, one detects hidden iron and the concealed roughness of the force that has come to destroy and to build, some hint of the rugged outlines of Demogorgon, the claws of Narasingha. For every man is not only himself, he is that which he represents.⁵⁷

Sri Aurobindo discerned a feebleness and lack of courage in the Moderate leaders, who were controlling the Congress Party. He said:

The Moderate method of resistance was verbal only — prayer, petition and protest; the method we proposed was practical, — boycott.⁵⁸

He further said that the Moderates

. . . cannot embrace Nationalism with their whole heart and try to arrive at a compromise between subjection and independence, — a half-way house between life and death.⁵⁹

Alluding to the Moderate leaders, Sri Aurobindo earlier wrote on 27th August 1906:

We do not think the amazing timidity of our political leaders can be paralleled in any other country in the world. Is a National Congress established?"⁶⁰

Sri Aurobindo then thunders:

Meanwhile the country loses the inspiration of great ideals, the exaltation of frank and glorious conflict, the divine impulse that only comes to those who know they are battling bravely and openly for the freedom of their country, not to men who cringe to the enemy and lie and palter with their consciences.⁶¹

57. CWSA, Vol. 8, p. 330.

58. *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, p. 287.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 358.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

61. *Ibid.*, pp. 114-15.

The Indian people's servility to the British was slowly killing the nation. In the opening lines of the *Bande Mataram*, 5th April 1907, Sri Aurobindo brings forward this dark reality:

In a country where subjection has long become a habit of the public mind, there will always be a tendency to shrink from the realities of the position and to hunt for roundabout, safe and peaceful paths to national regeneration. Servitude is painful and intolerable, servitude is killing the nation by inches, servitude must be got rid of, true; but the pains and evils of servitude seem almost more tolerable to a good many people than the sharp, salutary pangs of a resolute struggle for liberty. Hence the not uncommon cry, "The violent and frequently bloody methods followed by other nations are not suited to a gentle, spiritual and law-abiding people; we will vindicate our intellectual originality and spiritual superiority by inventing new methods of regeneration much more gentlemanly and civilised." The result is a hydra-brood of delusions, two springing up where one is killed.⁶²

In order to "protect his weak and suffering countrymen", Sri Aurobindo, on 8th April 1907, exhorts his people to rise:

When things violent or fearful take place let no one be alarmed or discouraged . . . An individual or a nation cannot rise to its full height except through trouble and stress. The stone block patiently submits to hammering, cutting and chiselling to be made into the statue which pleases the eye and gladdens the soul. If it could feel it certainly would say, "How dearly I have to pay for the beautiful transformation." This is the inexorable law of nature. . . . If you want to grovel in the dust, indolence, ease and ignoble peace may do, but if climbing up the heights of glory is your ambition learn to encounter difficulties and dangers manfully.⁶³

In a later speech he tries to inspire his countrymen to strengthen their character:

Repression is nothing but the hammer of God that is beating us into shape so that we may be moulded into a mighty nation and an instrument for His work in the world. We are iron upon His anvil and the blows are showering upon us not to destroy but to re-create. Without suffering there can be no strength, — without sacrifice there can be no growth. . . .

62. *Ibid.*, p. 236.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 248.

What is it that we seek? We seek the fulfilment of our life as a nation. This is what the word “Swaraj”, which is a bugbear and terror to the Europeans, really means. . . .⁶⁴

Sri Aurobindo emphasises that nothing “can compensate for the loss of the very basis of individual and national strength and character.”⁶⁵ He urges us to strengthen ourselves so as not to weaken our souls:

Get strength first, get independence and all these things will be added unto you. But persist in your foolish moderation, your unseasonable and unreasonable prudence, and another fifty years will find you more degraded than ever, a nation of Greeks with polished intellects and debased souls, body and soul helplessly at the mercy of alien masters.⁶⁶

Sri Aurobindo’s concern for both Indians and the world at large is breathtaking. It is interesting to note that sometime in 1914-15 Sri Aurobindo wrote to a disciple:

Soon after the Arya began, I got a letter from some graduates saying that what they wanted was “man-making”. I have done my share of man-making and it is a thing which now anybody can do; Nature herself is looking after it all over the world, though more slowly in India than elsewhere. My business is now not man-making, but divine man-making. My present teaching is that the world is preparing for a new progress, a new evolution.⁶⁷

Indeed, Sri Aurobindo is one of a kind, for not only was he integrally courageous (morally and physically), but, through his articles, speeches and actions, he also instilled courage in others. The Mother has said:

Courage is a sign of the soul’s nobility.

But courage must be calm and master of itself, generous and benevolent.⁶⁸

Sri Aurobindo’s struggle against the British Empire was one of his glorious achievements that is etched in the annals of India’s Independence movement. Interestingly, he reveals how violent action and spirituality are not incompatible:

64. *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, pp. 38-39.

65. *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, p. 378.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 379.

67. *Ibid.*, Vol. 36, p. 225.

68. *CWM*, Vol. 14, 2nd Ed., p. 169.

All depends on the spirit in which a thing is done, the principle on which it is built and use to which it is turned. I have done politics and the most violent kind of revolutionary politics, *ghoraṁ karma*, and I have supported war and sent men to it, even though politics is not always or often a very clean occupation nor can war be called a spiritual line of action. But Krishna calls upon Arjuna to carry on war of the most terrible kind and by his example encourage men to do every kind of human work, *sarvakarmāni*. Do you contend that Krishna was an unspiritual man and that his advice to Arjuna was mistaken or wrong in principle? Krishna goes farther and declares that a man by doing in the right way and in the right spirit the work dictated to him by his fundamental nature, temperament and capacity and according to his and its dharma can move towards the Divine.⁶⁹

Nolini Kanta Gupta discloses that there was no contradiction between revolutionary work and spirituality:

There is no insurmountable disparity between spirituality and worldliness, between meditation and the most terrible work — *ghore karmani*: The Gita has definitely proved the truth of the fact millenniums ago. War has not been the monopoly of warriors alone: it will not be much of an exaggeration to say that Avatars, the incarnations of the Divine, have done little besides that.⁷⁰

Though unobtrusive, Sri Aurobindo's political life reveals that he was a powerhouse of strength, courage and energy. An aphorism of Sri Aurobindo reads:

The old writings call the Titans the elder gods. So they still are; nor is any god entirely divine unless there is hidden in him also a Titan.⁷¹

(To be continued)

GAUTAM MALAKER

69. CWSA, Vol. 35, p. 770.

70. Narayan Prasad, *Life in Sri Aurobindo Ashram*, 1st Ed. p. 238.

71. CWSA, Vol. 12, p. 455.



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who own the newspaper and partners
or shareholders holding more than
one per cent of the total capital | Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust
Pondicherry - 605 002 |

I, Manoj Das Gupta, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

March 2020

(Sd.) Manoj Das Gupta
Signature of Publisher

SSP/PY/50/2018/2020

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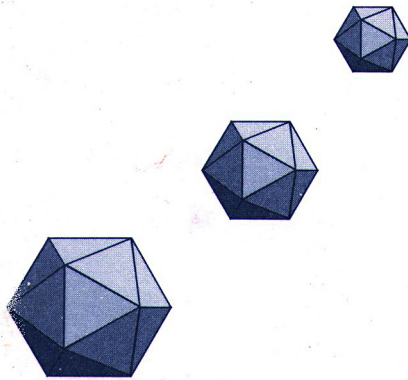
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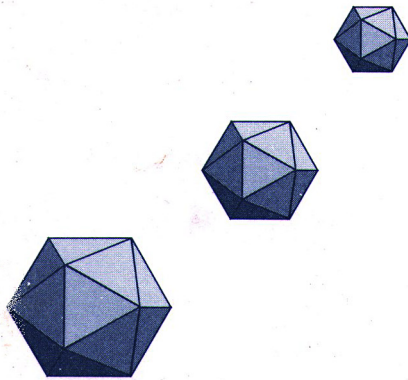
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