

Price: ₹ 30

# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE



JULY 2024

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

### INLAND

Single Copy: ₹ 30  
Annual: ₹ 200  
or (2 years: ₹ 400, 3 years: ₹ 600,  
4 years ₹ 800, 5 years ₹ 1,000)  
For 10 years: ₹ 1,800

### OVERSEAS

(Air Mail)  
Annual: \$70  
For 10 years: \$700

All payments to be made in favour of MOTHER INDIA. Cheque should be sent by speed post only. For NEFT/bank transfers (from within India only) kindly inform us by email with full name and address. Our bank details are:

Beneficiary Name: SAAT A/C Mother India  
Account Number: 0927101035721  
Beneficiary Bank Name: Canara Bank  
Beneficiary Branch Name: Pondicherry Muthialpet  
IFSC code: CNRB0000927

For Money Orders please send to:

MOTHER INDIA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry - 605 002

All cheques and correspondence to be addressed to:

MOTHER INDIA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry - 605 002, India  
Phone: (0413) 2233642  
E-mail: motherindia@sriurobindoashram.org.in

For all subscriptions correspondents should give their full address in BLOCK letters, with the correct PIN code along with their email ID or telephone number. Current or past subscribers are requested to mention their subscription number in case of any inquiry.

*Owner:* Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust

*Publisher:* Manoj Das Gupta

Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust

*Printer:* Swadhin Chatterjee

*Published from:* Publication Department, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry - 605 002

*Printed from:* Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press,  
No. 38, Goubert Avenue, Pondicherry - 605 001, India

Editor: S. Ravi

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

Associate Editors: HEMANT KAPOOR & RANGANATH RAGHAVAN

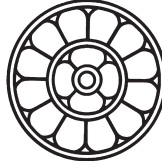
Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers for India: RNI No. 8667/63

# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

JULY 2024

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM  
PONDICHERRY  
INDIA



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



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

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

All correspondence to be addressed to:

MOTHER INDIA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry - 605002, India

Phone: (0413) 2233642

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

# MOTHER INDIA

## MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. LXXVII

No. 7

*“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”*

---

### CONTENTS

#### *Sri Aurobindo*

‘IF THE CHAMBER’S DOOR IS EVEN A LITTLE AJAR . . .’	...	7
JIVANMUKTA	...	9

#### *The Mother*

‘O SUPREME TRIUMPHANT, TRIUMPH OVER EVERY OBSTACLE’	...	30
A CONVERSATION OF 26 NOVEMBER 1958	...	31
A CONVERSATION OF 28 SEPTEMBER 1966	...	34

#### *Amal Kiran (K. D. Sethna)*

“TO MAHESHWARI” — CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO	...	37
---	-----	----

#### *Dyuman*

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE MOTHER — IX	...	41
-------------------------------------	-----	----

#### *Raman Reddy*

ARRANGEMENT FOR MEDITATION AFTER THE SIDDHI DAY	...	61
---	-----	----

#### *Gautam Malaker*

“LIFE OF PREPARATION AT BARODA” —		
SRI AUROBINDO, THE PERFECT GENTLEMAN (Part 47)	...	68
Section 5: Equanimity and Sweetness of Temper		



## **‘IF THE CHAMBER’S DOOR IS EVEN A LITTLE AJAR . . .’**

The world is a spiritual paradox  
Invented by a need in the Unseen,  
A poor translation to the creature’s sense  
Of That which for ever exceeds idea and speech,  
A symbol of what can never be symbolised,  
A language mispronounced, misspelt, yet true.  
Its powers have come from the eternal heights  
And plunged into the inconscient dim Abyss  
And risen from it to do their marvellous work.  
The soul is a figure of the Unmanifest,  
The mind labours to think the Unthinkable,  
The life to call the Immortal into birth,  
The body to enshrine the Illimitable.  
The world is not cut off from Truth and God.  
In vain thou hast dug the dark unbridgeable gulf,  
In vain thou hast built the blind and doorless wall:  
Man’s soul crosses through thee to Paradise,  
Heaven’s sun forces its way through death and night;  
Its light is seen upon our being’s verge.  
My mind is a torch lit from the eternal sun,  
My life a breath drawn by the immortal Guest,  
My mortal body is the Eternal’s house.  
Already the torch becomes the undying ray,  
Already the life is the Immortal’s force,  
The house grows of the householder part and one.  
How sayst thou Truth can never light the human mind  
And Bliss can never invade the mortal’s heart  
Or God descend into the world he made?  
If in the meaningless Void creation rose,  
If from a bodiless Force Matter was born,  
If Life could climb in the unconscious tree,  
Its green delight break into emerald leaves  
And its laughter of beauty blossom in the flower,  
If sense could wake in tissue, nerve and cell  
And Thought seize the grey matter of the brain,  
And soul peep from its secrecy through the flesh,  
How shall the nameless Light not leap on men,

‘IF THE CHAMBER’S DOOR IS EVEN A LITTLE AJAR . . .’

And unknown powers emerge from Nature’s sleep?  
Even now hints of a luminous Truth like stars  
Arise in the mind-mooned splendour of Ignorance;  
Even now the deathless Lover’s touch we feel:  
If the chamber’s door is even a little ajar,  
What then can hinder God from stealing in  
Or who forbid his kiss on the sleeping soul?  
Already God is near, the Truth is close:  
Because the dark atheist body knows him not,  
Must the sage deny the Light, the seer his soul?

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Savitri*, CWSA, Vol. 34, pp. 648-49)



## JIVANMUKTA

### Regarding Nishikanta's two translations of Sri Aurobindo's poem *Jivanmukta*.<sup>1</sup>

I do not find the *mātra-ṛtta* one altogether satisfactory, but the other is a very good poem. But as a translation! Well, there are some errors of the sense which do not help, e.g., *mahimā* for splendour; splendour is light. Silence, Light, Power, Ananda, these are the four pillars of the Jivanmukta consciousness. So too the all-seeing, flame-covered eye gets transmogrified into something else; but the worst is the divine stillness surrounding the world which is not at all what I either said or meant. The lines:

Revealed it wakens when God's stillness  
Heavens the ocean of moveless Nature

express an exact spiritual experience with a visible symbol which is not a mere ornamental metaphor but corresponds to exact and concrete spiritual experience, an immense oceanic expanse of Nature-consciousness (not the world) in oneself covered with the heavens of the Divine Stillness and itself rendered calm and motionless by that over-vaulting influence. Nothing of that appears in the translation; it is a vague mental statement with an ornamental metaphor. . . .

I do not stress all that to find fault, but because it points to a difficulty which seems to me insuperable. This *Jivanmukta* is not merely a poem, but a transcript of a spiritual condition, one of the highest in the inner Overmind experience. To express it at all is not easy. If one writes only ideas about what it is or should be, there is failure. There must be something concrete, the form, the essential spiritual emotion of the state. The words chosen must be the right words in their proper place and each part of the statement in its place in an inevitable whole. Verbiage, flourishes there must be none. But how can all that be turned over into another language without upsetting the applecart? I don't see how it can be easily avoided. For instance in the fourth stanza, "Possesses", "sealing", "grasp" are words of great importance for the sense. The feeling of possession by the Ananda rapture, the pressure of the ecstatic force sealing the love so that there can never again be division between the lover and the All-Beloved, the sense of the grasp of the All-Beautiful are things more than physically concrete to the experience ("grasp" is specially used because it is a violent, abrupt, physical word — it cannot be replaced by "In the hands" or "In the hold") and all that must have an adequate equivalent in the translation. But reading [*Nishikanta's Bengali line*] I no longer know where I am, unless perhaps in a world of Vedantic abstractions where I never intended to go. So again what has [*Nishikanta's Bengali line*] to do with the tremendous and beautiful experience of

1. See *Collected Poems*, CWSA, Vol. 2, pp. 551-52 or the June 2024 issue of *Mother India*.

being ravished, thoughtless and wordless, into the “breast” of the Eternal who is the All-Beautiful, All-Beloved?

That is what I meant when I wrote yesterday about the impossibility — and also what I apprehended when I qualified my assent to Nolini’s proposal [*to print Bengali translations of the poems*] with a condition.

(*Letters on Poetry and Art*, CWSA, Vol. 27, pp. 249-50)

\*

These translations [*of the line “Although consenting here to a mortal body”*] only state what is true of everybody, not only of the jivanmukta. They have therefore no force. In the English the word “consenting” has a great force which makes the meaning of “He is the Undying” quite clear, viz. He is consciously that and his consenting to the mortal body does not diminish that consciousness — the consent being also free and quite conscious.

(*Letters on Poetry and Art*, CWSA, Vol. 27, p. 250)

\*

## Mukti and the Jivanmukta

The ideal of the Karmayogin is the Jivanmukta, the self who has attained salvation but instead of immediately passing out of phenomenal existence, remains in it, free from its bondage. There are three kinds of salvation which are relative & partial; *salokya* or constant companionship with the Lord, *sadrishya*, or permanent resemblance to Him in one’s nature & actions, and *sayujya* or constant union of the individual self with the Eternal. It is supposed by some schools that entire salvation consists in *laya* or absorption into the Eternal, in other words entire self-removal from phenomena and entrance into the utter being of the unconditioned and unknowable Parabrahman. Such *laya* is not possible in the body, but can only begin, *adehanipatat*, as soon as the Self throws away all its bodies and reenters into its absolute existence. It is not indeed the mere mechanical change of death that brings about this result, but the will of the Self to throw aside all its bodies and never returning to them pass rather out of that state of consciousness in the Eternal in which He looks upon Himself as a Will or Force. This, however, is an extreme attitude. Complete self-identification with the Eternal, such as we find in the Jivanmukta, is complete *mukti*; for the Jivanmukta can at will withdraw himself in Samadhi into the being of Sacchidananda, who is actionless and turned away from phenomena; and can at will look again towards phenomena, dealing with them as their Lord who puts them to work without being touched by their stir and motion. For the Jivanmukta *laya*, absorption into the Unknowable, can be accomplished at his will; but he does not will it.

The reason for his not willing this utter departure brings us to the very essence of Mukti. Why do men hanker after complete absorption into the unphenomenal? why do they flee from Karma and dread lest it should interfere with their salvation? Because they feel that phenomenal life and works are a bondage and they desire to be free and not bound. This state of mind can only last so long as the seeker is the *mumukshu*, the self desirous of freedom, but when he is actually *mukta*, the free self, the terror of Maya and her works cannot abide with him. *Mukti*, which we have to render in English by salvation, means really release. But release from what bondage, salvation from what tyranny? From the bondage of Maya, from the tyranny of Avidya which will have us believe that we are finite, mortal and bound, who are not finite, but infinite, not mortal, but deathless & immutable, not bound, but always free. The moment you have realised that Avidya is illusion and there is nothing but the Eternal, and never was anything but the Eternal and never will be anything but the Eternal, the moment you have not merely intellectually grasped the idea but come to have habitual experience of the fact, from that moment you will know that you are not bound, never were bound and never will be bound. Avidya consists precisely in this that the Jivatman thinks there is something else than the Eternal which can throw him into bondage and that he himself is something else than the Eternal and can be bound. When the Jivatman shakes off these illusory impressions of Avidya, he realises that there is nothing but Brahman the Eternal who is in His very nature *nityamukta*, from ever and forever free. He can therefore have no fear of Karma nor shrink from it lest it should bind him, for he knows that the feeling of bondage is itself an illusion. He will be ready not only to do his deeds in this world and live out his hundred years, but to be reborn as Srikrishna himself has promised to be reborn again and again and as other avatars have promised to be reborn. For however often he may enter into phenomenal life, he has no farther terror of Maya and her bondage. Once free, always free.

Even if he does not will to be reborn, he will be careful not to leave the world of phenomena until his *prarabdha karma* is worked out. There are certain debts standing against his name in the ledger of Nature and these he will first absolve. Of course the Jivanmukta is not legally bound by his debts to Nature, for all the promissory notes he has executed in her name have been burned up in the fire of Mukti. He is now free and lord, the master of Prakriti, not its slave. But the Prakriti attached to this Jivatman has created, while in the illusion of bondage, causes which must be allowed to work out their effects; otherwise the chain of causation is snapped and a disturbance is brought about in the economy of Nature. उत्सीदियुरिमे लोकाः. In order therefore to maintain the law of the world unimpaired, the Jivanmukta remains amid works like a prisoner on parole, not bound by the fetters of Prakriti, but detained by his own will until the time appointed for his captivity shall have elapsed.

The Jivanmukta is the ideal of the Karmayogin and though he may not reach his ideal in this life or the next, still he must always strive to model himself upon

it. Do therefore your deeds in this world and wish to live your hundred years. You should be willing to live your allotted term of life not for the sake of long living, but because the real you in the body is Brahman who by the force of His own Shakti is playing for Himself and by Himself this dramatic *lila* of creation, preservation and destruction. He is Isha, the Lord, Creator, Preserver and Destroyer; and you also in the field of your own Prakriti are the lord, creator, preserver and destroyer. You are He; only for your own amusement you have imagined yourself limited to a particular body for the purposes of the play, just as an actor imagines himself to be Dushyanta, Rama or Ravana. The actor has lost himself in the play and for a moment thinks that he is what he is acting; he has forgotten that he is really not Dushyanta or Rama, but Devadatta who has played & will yet play a hundred parts besides. When he shakes off this illusion and remembers that he is Devadatta, he does not therefore walk off the stage and by refusing to act, break up the play, but goes on playing his best till the proper time comes for him to leave the stage. The object of this phenomenal world is creation and it is our business, while we are in the body, to create. Only, so long as we forget our true Self, we create like servants under the compulsion of Prakriti and are slaves and bound by her actions which we falsely imagine to be our own. But when we know and experience our true Self, then we are masters of Prakriti and not bound by her creations. Our Self becomes the Sakshi, the silent spectator of the actions of our Nature which she models in the way she thinks would best please it. So are we at once spectator and actor; and yet because we know the whole to be merely an illusion of apparent actions, because we know that Rama is not really killing Ravana, nor Ravana being killed, for Ravana lives as much after the supposed death as before, so are we neither spectator nor actor, but the Self only and all we see nothing but visions of the Self. The Karmamargin therefore will not try or wish to abandon actions while he is in this world, but only the desire for their fruits; neither will he try or wish to leave his life in this world before its appointed end. The man who violently breaks the thread of his life before it is spun out, will obtain a result the very opposite to what he desires. The Karmamargin aims at being a Jivanmukta, he will not cherish within himself the spirit of the suicide.

*(Isha Upanishad, CWSA, Vol. 17, pp. 207-10)*

\*

### **Parabrahman, Mukti and human thought-systems**

Parabrahman is the Absolute, & because It is the Absolute, it cannot be reduced into terms of knowledge. You can know the Infinite in a way, but you cannot know the Absolute.

All things in existence or non-existence are symbols of the Absolute created

in self-consciousness (Chid-Atman); by Its symbols the Absolute can be known so far as the symbols reveal or hint at it, but even the knowledge of the whole sum of symbols does not amount to real knowledge of the Absolute. You can become Parabrahman; you cannot know Parabrahman. Becoming Parabrahman means going back through self-consciousness into Parabrahman, for you already are That, only you have projected yourself forward in self-consciousness into its terms or symbols, Purusha & Prakriti through which you uphold the universe. Therefore, to become Parabrahman void of terms or symbols you must cease out of the universe.

By becoming Parabrahman void of Its self-symbols you do not become anything you are not already, nor does the universe cease to operate. It only means that God throws back out of the ocean of manifest consciousness one stream or movement of Himself into that from which all consciousness proceeded.

All who go out of universe-consciousness, do not necessarily go into Parabrahman. Some go into undifferentiated Nature (Avyakrita Prakriti), some lose themselves in God, some pass into a dark state of non-recognition of universe, (Asat, Shunya), some into a luminous state of non-recognition of universe — Pure Undifferentiated Atman, Pure Sat or Existence-Basis of Universe, — some into a temporary state of deep sleep (sushupti) in the impersonal principles of Ananda, Chit or Sat. All these are forms of release & the ego gets from God by His Maya or Prakriti the impulse towards any one of them to which the supreme Purusha chooses to direct him. Those whom He wishes to liberate, yet keep in the world, He makes jivanmuktas or sends them out again as His vibhutis, they consenting to wear for the divine purposes a temporary veil of Avidya, which does not at all bind them and which they can rend or throw off very easily. Therefore to lust after becoming Parabrahman is a sort of luminous illusion or sattwic play of Maya; for in reality there is none bound & none free & none needing to be freed and all is only God's Lila, Parabrahman's play of manifestation. God uses this sattwic Maya in certain egos in order to draw them upwards in the line of His special purpose & for these egos it is the only right and possible path.

But the aim of our Yoga is Jivanmukti in the universe; not because we need to be freed or for any other reason, but because that is God's will in us, we have to live released in the world, not released out of the world.

The Jivanmukta has, for perfect knowledge & self-fulfilment to stand on the threshold of Parabrahman, but not to cross the threshold.

The statement he brings back from the threshold is that That is & we are That, but what That is or is not, words cannot describe, nor mind discriminate.

Parabrahman being the Absolute is indescribable by any name or definite conception. It is not Being or Non-Being, but something of which Being & Non-Being are primary symbols; not Atman or unAtman or Maya; not Personality or Impersonality; not Quality or Non-Quality; not Consciousness or Non-Consciousness; not Bliss or Non-Bliss; not Purusha or Prakriti; not god nor man nor animal;

not release nor bondage; but something of which all these are primary or derivative, general or particular symbols. Still, when we say Parabrahman is not this or that, we mean that It cannot in its essentiality be limited to this or that symbol or any sum of symbols; in a sense Parabrahman is all this & all this is Parabrahman. There is nothing else which all this can be.

Parabrahman being Absolute is not subject to logic, for logic applies only to the determinate. We talk confusion if we say that the Absolute cannot manifest the determinate & therefore the universe is false or non-existent. The very nature of the Absolute is that we do not know what it is or is not, what it can do or cannot do; we have no reason to suppose that there is anything it cannot do or that its Absoluteness is limited by any kind of impotency. We experience spiritually that when we go beyond everything else we come to something Absolute; we experience spiritually that the universe is in the nature of a manifestation proceeding, as it were, from the Absolute; but all these words & phrases are merely intellectual terms trying to express the inexpressible. We must state what we see as best we can, but need not dispute what others see or state; rather we must accept & in our own system locate & account for what they have seen & stated. Our only dispute is with those who deny credit to the vision or freedom & value to the statements of others; not with those who are content with stating their own vision. A philosophical or religious system is only a statement of that arrangement of existence in universe which God has revealed to us as our status of being. It is given in order that the mind may have something to stand upon while we act in Prakriti. But our vision need not be precisely the same in arrangement as the vision of others, nor is the form of thought that suits our mentality bound to suit a mentality differently constituted. Firmness, without dogmatism, in our own system, toleration, without weakness, of all other systems should therefore be our intellectual outlook.

You will find disputants questioning your system on the ground that it is not consistent with this or that Shastra or this or that great authority, whether philosopher, saint or Avatar. Remember then that realisation & experience are alone of essential importance. What Shankara argued or Vivekananda conceived intellectually about existence or even what Ramakrishna stated from his multitudinous and varied realisation, is only of value to you so far as you [are] moved by God to accept and renew it in your own experience. The opinions of thinkers & saints & Avatars should be accepted as hints but not as fetters. What matters to you is what you have seen or what God in His universal personality or impersonally or again personally in some teacher, guru or pathfinder undertakes to show to you in the path of Yoga.

*(Essays Divine and Human, CWSA, Vol. 12, pp. 103-06)*

\*

## Apparent contradictions in the Gita

The language of the Gita in many matters seems sometimes contradictory because it admits two apparently opposite truths and tries to reconcile them. It admits the ideal of departure from sansara into the Brahman as one possibility; also it affirms the possibility of living free in the Divine (in Me, it says) and acting in the world as the Jivanmukta. It is this latter kind of salvation on which it lays the greatest emphasis. So Ramakrishna put the “divine souls” (Ishwarakoti) who can descend the ladder as well as ascend it higher than the ordinary Jivas (Jivakoti) who, once having ascended, have not the strength to descend again for divine work. The full truth lies in the supramental consciousness and the power to work from there on life and matter.

(*Letters on Yoga – II*, CWSA, Vol. 29, p. 441)

\*

## Jnana and Karma

. . . Janaka and the others did works after they had acquired Jnan as well as before. For the same reason Shankara’s argument that कर्म must cease as a matter of sheer necessity as soon as one gains Brahma, because Brahma is अकर्ता, will not stand; for Janaka gained Brahma, Srikrishna *was* Brahma, and yet both did works; nay, Srikrishna in one place speaks of him as doing works; for indeed Brahman is both अकर्ता as Purusha and कर्ता as Prakriti; and if it be said that Parabrahman the Turiya Atma in whom all *bhed* disappears is अकर्ता, I answer that he is neither कर्ता nor अकर्ता, He is नेति नेति, the Unknowable and the Jivatma does not merge finally in Him while it is in the body; though it may do so at any time by Yoga. लय takes place आदेहनिपातात्, that is to say by the Muktatma after leaving its body, not willing to return to another; the Jivanmukta is made one with the luminous shadow of Parabrahman which we call the Sacchidananda. If it be said that this is not Mukti, I answer that there can be no greater Mukti than becoming the Sacchidananda, and that *laya* in the Parabrahman is स्वेच्छाधीन to the Jivatman when it has ceased to be Jivatman and become Sacchidananda; for Parabrahman can always & at will draw Sacchidananda into Itself and Sacchidananda can always and at will draw into Parabrahman; since the two are in no sense two but one, in no sense subject to Avidya but on the other side of Avidya. Then if it be said that निष्काम कर्म can only lead to Brahmaloaka and not mukti, I still answer that in that case we must suppose that Srikrishna after he left his body, remained separate from the Supreme and therefore was not Bhagavan at all but only a great philosopher & devotee, not wise enough to attain Mukti, and that Janak and other Jivanmuktas were falsely called muktas or only in the sense of the आपेक्षिक *mukti*.

. . .

Shankara himself therefore admits that in these cases निष्काम कर्म was not inconsistent with मुक्ति or with being the Brahman; and he would have admitted it still more unreservedly if he had not been embarrassed by his relations of intellectual hostility to the Purvamimansa. It is proved therefore that कर्म is not inconsistent with मुक्ति but that on the contrary both the teaching and practice of the greatest Jivanmuktas and of Bhagavan himself have combined Jnana and निष्काम कर्म as one single path to *mukti*.

...

## THE STUDENT

But how can this be that the jivanmukta is still bound by his past deeds? Does not *mukti* burn up one's past deeds as in a fire? For how can one be at the same time free and yet bound?

## THE GURU

*Mukti* prevents one's future deeds from creating bondage; but what of the past deeds which have already created bondage? The Jivanmukta is not indeed bound, for he is one with God and God is the Master of His *prakriti*, not its slave; but the Prakriti attached to this Jivatman has created causes while in the illusion of bondage and must be allowed to work out its effects, otherwise the chain of causation is snapped and the whole economy of nature is disturbed and thrown into chaos. [. . .] In order to maintain the worlds therefore, the Jivanmukta remains working like a prisoner on parole, not bound indeed by others, but detained by himself until the period previously appointed for his captivity shall have elapsed.

...

## THE GURU

. . . Yet what is *mukti*? It is release, — from what? From Avidya, from the great Nescience, from the belief that you are limited & bound, who are illimitable Brahman and cannot be bound. The moment you have realised that Avidya is an illusion, that there is nothing but Brahman and never was nor will be anything but Brahman, realised it, I say, had अन्मव of it, not merely intellectually grasped the idea, from that moment you are free and always have been free. Avidya consists precisely in this that the Jivatman thinks there is something beside himself, he himself being other than Brahman, something which binds him; but in reality He, being Brahman, is not bound, never was bound nor could be bound and never will be bound. Once this is realised, the Jivatman can have no farther fear of *karma*; for he knows that there is no such thing as bondage. He will be quite ready to do his deeds in this world; nay,

he will even be ready to be reborn, as Srikrishna himself has promised to be reborn again and again; for of rebirth also he has no farther fear, since he knows he cannot again fall under the dominion of Avidya, unless he himself deliberately wills it; once free, always free. Even if he is reborn, he will be reborn with full knowledge of what he really is, of his past lives and of the whole future and will act as a Jivanmukta.

### THE STUDENT

But if this statement once free, always free hold, what of the statements about great Rishis & Yogis falling again under the dominion of Avidya?

### THE GURU

A man may be a great Rishi or Yogi without being Jivanmukta. Yog and spiritual learning are means to Mukti, not Mukti itself.

...

The Jivanmukta will be perfectly ready to live a hundred years or more if needs be; but this recommendation is given not to the Jivanmukta or to any particular class of person but generally. You should desire to live your allotted term of life, because you in the body are the Brahman who by the force of His own Shakti is playing for Himself by Himself this *lila* of creation, preservation and destruction; in this view Brahman is Isha, the Lord, Creator & Destroyer; and you also are Isha, Creator & Destroyer; only for your own amusement, to use a violent metaphor, you have imagined yourself limited by a particular body for the purposes of the play, just as an actor imagines himself to be Dushyanta or Rama or Ravana; and often the actor loses himself in the part and really feels himself to be what he is playing, forgetting that he is really not Dushyanta or Rama, but that Devadatta who plays a hundred parts besides. Still when he shakes off this illusion & remembers that he is Devadatta, he does not therefore walk off from the stage and by refusing to act, break up the play but goes on playing his best till the proper time for the curtain to fall. And so we should all do, whether as householder or Sannyasi, as Jivanmukta or as mumukshu, remembering always that the object of this *sansara* is creation and that it is our business so long as we are in this body to create. The only difference is this, that so long as we forget our Self, we create like servants under the compulsion of our Prakriti or Nature, and are, as it were, slaves & bound by her actions which we imagine to be ours; but when we know the Self and experience our true Self, then we are masters of our Prakriti and not bound by her creations; our soul becomes the Sakshi, the silent spectator, of the actions of our Nature; thus are we both spectator & actor, and yet because we know the whole to be merely the illusion of an action and not action itself, because we know that Rama is not really killing Ravana nor Ravana

being killed, for indeed Ravana lives as much after the supposed death as before; so are we neither actor nor spectator but the Self only and all we see only visions of the Self — as indeed the Sruti frequently uses the word ऐक्षद्, saw, in preference to any other for those conceptions with which the Brahman peoples with Himself the Universe of Himself. The mumukshu therefore will not try or wish to leave his life before the time, just as he will not try or wish to leave actions in this life, but only the desire for their fruit. For if he breaks impatiently the thread of his life before it is spun out, he will be no Jivanmukta but a mere suicide and attain the very opposite result of what he desires.

(Isha Upanishad, CWSA, Vol. 17, pp. 115-20)

\*

It is difficult to give a positive answer to these questions, because no general rule can be laid down applicable to all. The mind makes rigid rules or one rigid rule, but the Manifestation is in reality very plastic and various and many-sided. My answers therefore must not be taken as exhaustive of the subject or complete.

1. He [*a Jivanmukta*] can go wherever his aim was fixed, into a state of Nirvana or one of the divine worlds and stay there or remain, wherever he may go, in contact with the earth-movement and return to it if his will is to help that movement.

This is doubtful [*whether a Jivanmukta can go direct from the world of the soul's present highest achievement to a still higher world*]. If originally he is not a being of the evolution but of some higher world, he could go back to that world. If he wants to go higher, it is logical that he should return to the field of evolution so long as he has not evolved the consciousness proper to that higher plane. The orthodox idea that even the gods have to come to earth if they want salvation may be applied to this ascension also. If he is originally an evolutionary being (Ramakrishna's distinction of the Jivakoti and Ishwarakoti may be extended to this also), he must proceed by the evolutionary path to either the negative withdrawal through Nirvana or some positive divine fulfilment in the increasing manifestation of Sachchidananda.

As to the impossibility of return [*to the earth*], that is a knotty question. A divine being can always return — as Ramakrishna said, the Ishwarakoti can at will ascend or descend the stair between Birth and Immortality. For the others, it is probable that they may rest for a relative infinity of time, *śāśvatīḥ samāḥ*, if that is the will in them, but a return cannot be barred out unless they have reached their highest possible status.

No [*a Jivanmukta does not take rest in the psychic world before taking birth again on earth*]. That is part of the evolutionary line only, not obligatory for divine returns.

2. An advanced psychic being may mean here one who has arrived at the soul's freedom and is immersed in the Divine — immersed does not mean abolished. Such

a being does not sleep in the psychic world, but may remain in his state of blissful immersion or come back for some purpose.

The word “descend” has various meanings according to the context — I used it here in the sense of the psychic being “coming down” into the human consciousness and body ready for it; that descent might be at the time of birth or before or it may come down later and occupy the personality it has prepared for itself. I do not quite understand what are these personalities from above<sup>1</sup> — it is the psychic being itself that takes up a body.

3. No, the psychic being cannot take up more than one body. There is only one psychic being for each human being, but the Beings of the higher planes, e.g. the Gods of the Overmind can manifest in more than one human body at a time by sending different emanations into different bodies. These would be called Vibhūtis of these Devatas.

4. These [*guardians of the psychic world*] are not human souls nor is this an office to which they are appointed nor are they functionaries — these are beings of the psychic plane pursuing their own natural activity in that plane. My word “guardians” was simply a phrase meant to indicate by an image or metaphor the nature of their action.

(*Letters on Yoga – I*, CWSA, Vol. 28, pp. 540-41)

\*

If the word *vāsanā* is used in the original [*the Yogavasishtha*], it does not mean “desire”. It means usually the idea or mental feeling rising from the chitta, imaginations, impressions, memories etc., impressions of liking and disliking, of pain and pleasure. What Vasishtha wants to say is that while the ideas, impressions, impulses that lead to action in an ordinary man rise from the chitta, those that rise in the Jivanmukta come straight from the *sattva* — from the essential consciousness of the being — in other words they are not mental but spiritual formations. As one might say, instead of *cittavṛtti* they are *sattvapreranā*, direct indications from the inner being of what is to be thought, felt or done. When the chitta is no longer active and the mind silent — which happens when the *mukti* comes and no one can be Jivanmukta without that — then what remains and perceives and does things is felt as an essential consciousness, the consciousness of the true self or true being.

(*Letters on Yoga – I*, CWSA, Vol. 28, pp. 172-73)

\*

1. *The correspondent asked whether the “personalities” of an advanced being “move about in the higher planes”.* – Ed. in CWSA.

. . . the freedom born of unbroken contact and identification of the individual being in all its parts with the Divine, *sāyujya-mukti*, by which it can become free\* even in its separation, even in the duality . . .

\*As the Jivanmukta, who is entirely free even without dissolution of the bodily life in a final Samadhi.

*(The Synthesis of Yoga, CWSA, Vol. 23, p. 48)*

\*

Purusha-Prakriti, Consciousness-Force, Soul supporting Nature, — for the two even in their separation are one and inseparable, — are at once a universal and a transcendent Power. But there is something in the individual too which is not the mental ego, something that is one in essence with this greater reality: it is a pure reflection or portion of the one Purusha; it is the Soul Person or the embodied being, the individual self, Jivatman; it is the Self that seems to limit its power and knowledge so as to support an individual play of transcendent and universal Nature. In deepest reality the infinitely One is also infinitely multiple; we are not only a reflection or portion of That but we are That; our spiritual individuality — unlike our ego — does not preclude our universality and transcendence. But at present the soul or self in us intent on individualisation in Nature allows itself to be confused with the idea of the ego; it has to get rid of this ignorance, it has to know itself as a reflection or portion or being of the supreme and universal Self and solely a centre of its consciousness in the world-action. But this Jiva Purusha too is not the doer of works any more than the ego or the supporting consciousness of the Witness and Knower. Again and always it is the transcendent and universal Shakti who is the sole doer. But behind her is the one Supreme who manifests through her as the dual power, Purusha-Prakriti, Ishwara-Shakti.<sup>2</sup> The Supreme becomes dynamic as the Shakti and is by her the sole originator and Master of works in the universe.

*(The Synthesis of Yoga, CWSA, Vol. 23, pp. 215-16)*

\*

2. Ishwara-Shakti is not quite the same as Purusha-Prakriti; for Purusha and Prakriti are separate powers, but Ishwara and Shakti contain each other. Ishwara is Purusha who contains Prakriti and rules by the power of the Shakti within him. Shakti is Prakriti ensouled by Purusha and acts by the will of the Ishwara which is her own will and whose presence in her movement she carries always with her. The Purusha-Prakriti realization is of the first utility to the seeker on the Way of Works; for it is the separation of the conscient being and the Energy and the subjection of the being to the mechanism of the Energy that are the efficient cause of our ignorance and imperfection; by this realisation the being can liberate himself from the mechanical action of the nature and become free and arrive at a first spiritual control over the nature. Ishwara-Shakti stands behind the relation of Purusha-Prakriti and its ignorant action and turns it to an evolutionary purpose. The Ishwara-Shakti realisation can bring participation in a higher dynamism and a divine working and a total unity and harmony of the being in a spiritual nature.

The culmination of the path of knowledge need not necessarily entail extinction of our world-existence. For the Supreme to whom we assimilate ourselves, the Absolute and Transcendent into whom we enter has always the complete and ultimate consciousness for which we are seeking and yet he supports by it his play in the world. Neither are we compelled to believe that our world-existence ends because by attaining to knowledge its object or consummation is fulfilled and therefore there is nothing more for us here afterwards. For what we gain at first with its release and immeasurable silence and quietude is only the eternal self-realisation by the individual in the essence of his conscious being; there will still remain on that foundation, unannulled by the silence, one with the release and freedom, the infinitely proceeding self-fulfilment of Brahman, its dynamic divine manifestation in the individual and by his presence, example and action in others and in the universe at large, — the work which the Great Ones remain to do. Our dynamic self-fulfilment cannot be worked out so long as we remain in the egoistic consciousness, in the mind's candle-lit darkness, in the bondage. Our present limited consciousness can only be a field of preparation, it can consummate nothing; for all that it manifests is marred through and through by an ego-ridden ignorance and error. The true and divine self-fulfilment of Brahman in the manifestation is only possible on the foundation of the Brahman-consciousness and therefore through the acceptance of life by the liberated soul, the Jivanmukta.

*(The Synthesis of Yoga, CWSA, Vol. 23, pp. 298-99)*

\*

This is the integral knowledge; for we know that everywhere and in all conditions all to the eye that sees is One, to a divine experience all is one block of the Divine. It is only the mind which for the temporary convenience of its own thought and aspiration seeks to cut an artificial line of rigid division, a fiction of perpetual incompatibility between one aspect and another of the eternal oneness. The liberated knower lives and acts in the world not less than the bound soul and ignorant mind but more, doing all actions, *sarvakṛt*, only with a true knowledge and a greater conscient power. And by so doing he does not forfeit the supreme unity nor fall from the supreme consciousness and the highest knowledge. For the Supreme, however hidden now to us, is here in the world no less than he could be in the most utter and ineffable self-extinction, the most intolerant Nirvana.

*(The Synthesis of Yoga, CWSA, Vol. 23, p. 299)*

\*

### **Pride and self-esteem**

Pride is only one form of ego — there are ten thousand others. Every action of man is full of ego — the good ones as well as the bad, his humility as much as his pride,

his virtues as much as his vices.

To get the ego out of the human nature is not so simple as that. If one is free from ego, does nothing with reference to himself or for his own sake but only for the Divine and all his thoughts and feelings are for the Divine, then he is Jivanmukta and a Siddha Yogi.

*(Letters on Yoga – IV, CWSA, Vol. 31, p. 241)*

\*

### **No bondage**

But the Jivanmukta feels no bondage [*in work*]. In all work and action, he feels perfectly free, because the work is not done by him personally (there is no sense of limited ego) but by the cosmic Force. The limitations of the work are those put by the cosmic Force itself on its own action. He himself lives in communion of oneness with the Transcendent which is above the cosmos and feels no limitation. That is at least how it is felt in the Overmind.

*(Letters on Yoga – II, CWSA, Vol. 29, p. 265)*

\*

### **Action is a part of the integral knowledge of God**

This action I propose to you, first no doubt as a means of perfection in the supreme spiritual Nature, but as a part too of that perfection. Action is a part of the integral knowledge of God, of his greater mysterious truth and of an entire living in the Divine; action can and should be continued even after perfection and freedom are won. I ask of you the action of the Jivanmukta, the works of the Siddha. Something has to be added to the Yoga already described, — for that was only a first Yoga of knowledge. There is also a Yoga of action in the illumination of God-experience; works can be made one spirit with knowledge. For works done in a total self-vision and God-vision, a vision of God in the world and of the world in God are themselves a movement of knowledge, a movement of light, an indispensable means and an intimate part of spiritual perfection.

*(Essays on the Gita, CWSA, Vol. 19, p. 585)*

\*

### **Five conditions of the Brahman**

For the final absolution of the intellect can only be at a point where the Knower, Knowledge and the Known become one, Knowledge being there infinite, direct and

without media. And where there is this infinite and flawless knowledge, there must be, one thinks, infinite and flawless existence and bliss. But by the very conditions of this state, we can only say of it that it is, we cannot define it in words, precisely because we cannot realize it with the intellect. The Self can be realized only with the Self; there is no other instrument of realization.

Granted, it may be said, that such a state is conceivably possible, — as certainly it is, starting from your premises, the only and inevitable conclusion, — but what proof have we that it exists as a reality? what proof can even your Yoga bring to us that it exists? For when the individual Self becomes identified with the Supreme, its evolution is over and it does not return into phenomena to tell its experiences. The question is a difficult one to handle, partly because language, if it attempts to deal with it at all precisely, must become so abstract and delicate as to be unintelligible, partly because the experiences it involves are so far off from our present general evolution and attained so rarely that dogmatism or even definite statement appears almost unpardonable. Nevertheless with the use of metaphorical language, or, in St Paul's words, speaking as a fool, one may venture to outline what there is at all to be said on the subject. The truth then seems to be that there are even in this last or fourth state of the Self, stages and degrees, as to the number of which experience varies; but for practical purposes we may speak of three, the first when we stand at the entrance of the porch and look within; the second when we stand at the inner extremity of the porch and are really face to face with the Eternal; the third when we enter into the Holy of Holies. Be it remembered that the language I am using is the language of metaphor and must not be pressed with a savage literalness. Well then, the first stage is well within the possible experience of man and from it man returns to be a Jivanmukta, one who lives & is yet released in his inner self from the bondage of phenomenal existence; the second stage once reached, man does not ordinarily return, unless he is a supreme Buddha, — or perhaps as a world Avatar; from the third stage none returns nor is it attainable in the body. Brahman as realised by the Jivanmukta, seen from the entrance of the porch, is that which we usually term Parabrahman, the Supreme Eternal and the subject of the most exalted descriptions of the Vedanta. There are therefore five conditions of Brahman. Brahman Virat, Master of the Waking Universe; Brahman Hiranyagarbha, of the Dream Universe; Brahman Prajna or Avyakta of the Trance Universe of Unmanifestation; Parabrahman, the Highest; and that which is higher than the highest, the Unknowable. Now of the Unknowable it is not profitable to speak, but something of Parabrahman can be made intelligible to the human understanding because — always if the liberal use of loose metaphors is not denied, — it can be partially brought within the domain of speech.

(*Kena and Other Upanishads*, CWSA, Vol. 18, pp. 364-65)

\*

## Works of the Karmayogin

But the works of the Karmayogin are works done with knowledge and without desire. These certainly cannot prevent release or lead to fresh debt and fresh bondage. For bondage is the result of desire and ignorance and disappears with desire and ignorance. Desire & ignorance are indeed the boundaries of Nature's jurisdiction and once we have left them behind, we have passed out of her kingdom; we have taken sanctuary from her pursuit and are freemen released from the action of her laws. To deny the innocence of works without desire would be to deny reason, to deny Sruti, to deny facts. For Janaka and others did works, Srikrishna did works, but none will say that either the *avatar* or the *jivanmukta* were bound by his works; for their karma was done with knowledge and without desire. Works without desire, then, cannot prevent salvation or lead to fresh bondage.

(*Isha Upanishad*, CWSA, Vol. 17, p. 204)

\*

## Direction of future human evolution

Creation, then, has been a downward evolution which has for its object to create a body fit for an upward evolution into the region of pure spirit. It is in this direction that the future of human evolution lies. When man has mastered the physical world and its forces, when the earth is his and the fullness thereof, he must turn his efforts towards mastering the world within himself. Instead of allowing the soul to use the body for its own ends, he must learn to master both soul and body and use them consciously for the purposes of the spirit, that Eternal Will & Wisdom which at present operates in secrecy, veiled with darkness within darkness and seeming even to be blind and hidden from itself. In the end he will be master of spirit, soul and body, a Jivanmukta using them at will for cosmic purposes or transcending them to feel his identity with the Self who is pure and absolute existence, consciousness and bliss.

(*Isha Upanishad*, CWSA, Vol. 17, p. 232)

\*

## Seeing the Lord everywhere

To see oneself in others is impossible without completely identifying oneself with others; a perfect sympathy is essential and perfect sympathy brings with it perfect love, perfect charity and forgiveness, perfect pity for sin and suffering, perfect tolerance,

a universal benevolence with its counterpart in action universal beneficence. The Jivanmukta, the Rishi, the sage must be, by their very nature, sarvabhutahitarata; men who make it their business and pleasure to do good to all creatures, not only all men, but all creatures, — the widest possible ideal of universal charity and beneficence. To do as one would be done by, to love your enemies and those who hate you, to return good for evil are the first ethical inferences from the Vedantic teaching; they were fully expressed in their highest and noblest form by Buddhism five hundred years before they received a passionately emotional and lyrical phrasing in Judaea and were put widely into practice in India more than two thousand years before Christian Europe took even slightly to heart what it had so long been professing with its lips. And not only perfect love and beneficence, but perfect justice with its necessary counterpart in action, honest dealing and faithful discharge of duty are the natural outcome of the Vedantic teaching. For if we see ourself in others, we shall not only be willing but delighted to yield them all that is due to them and must shrink from wronging or doing hurt to them as naturally as we would shrink from doing hurt to ourselves. The debts we owe to parents, family, friends, the caste, the community, the nation we shall discharge not as an irksome obligation, but as a personal pleasure. The Christian virtue of charity, the Pagan virtue of justice are the very sap and life of Vedantic morality.

Seeing the Self in all creatures, implies seeing the Lord everywhere. The ideal man of Vedanta will accept pain as readily as pleasure, hatred, wrong, insult and injustice as composedly as love, honour and kindness, death as courageously as life. For in all things he will see the mighty Will which governs the Universe and which wills not only his own good and pleasure and success, but the good and pleasure and success of others equally with his own; which decrees that his own good and the good of others shall be worked out not only by his victories and joys, but by his defeats and sufferings. He will not be terrified by the menace of misfortune or the blows dealt him by man or nature, nor even by his own sins and failures, but walk straight forward in the implicit faith that the Supreme Will is guiding his steps aright and that even his stumblings are necessary in order to reach the goal. If his Yoga is perfect, his faith and resignation will also be perfectly calm and strong; for he will then fully realize that the Supreme Will is his own Will. Whatever happens to me, it is I that am its cause and true doer and not my friend or enemy who is merely the agent of my own Karma. But the faith and resignation of the Karmayogin will not be a passive and weak submission. If he sees God in his sufferings and overthrow, he will also see God in his resistance to injustice and evil, a resistance dictated not by selfishness and passion, but undertaken for the sake of right and truth and the maintenance of that moral order on which the stability of life and the happiness of the peoples depend. And his resistance like all his actions will be marked by a perfect fearlessness, a godlike courage. For when a man sees God in all things and himself in all beings, it is impossible for him to fear. What is it that can cause him terror? Not

danger or defeat, not death or torture, not hatred or ingratitude, not the worse death of humiliation and the fiercer torture of shame and disgrace. Not the apparent wrath of God Himself; for what is God but his own self in the Cosmos? There is nothing that he can fear. The Christian virtue of faith and resignation, the Pagan virtue of courage are the strong stem and support of Vedic morality.

(*Isha Upanishad*, CWSA, Vol. 17, pp. 282-84)

\*

### **Practical fruits of the realisation of God as the Self in all**

Only perfect knowledge & sympathy can give perfect help and these are impossible without oneness.

At the same time it is true that the jivanmukta is not governed by ordinary moral considerations. He shrinks from no actions which the divine purpose demands or the divine impulse commands. He has no wish to kill, but he will not shrink from slaying when it is demanded, for he is bound neither by the rajasic ahankara nor by the sattwic; sattwic obstacles to slaying are therefore taken from him and his knowledge delivers him both from the desire to take life which is the evil of hinsa [and] from the emotional horror of taking life & the nervous fear of taking life which are the rajasic & tamasic basis of outward ahinsa. So also with other actions. For this morality or dharma is of the soul & does not depend upon the action which is a mere outward symbol of the soul & has different values according to the times, the social ideas & environments, the religious creed or the actual circumstances. To men who are not free a conventional morality is an absolute necessity, for there must be a fixed standard to which they can appeal. It is as necessary for the ordinary practice of the world as a standard value of coin for the ordinary commerce of a country. The coin has not really an immutable value; the pound is not perhaps really worth 15 Rs but fluctuates owing to circumstances; nevertheless to allow a fluctuating value is to bring a certain amount of confusion, uncertainty & disorder into finance & commerce. Therefore the liberated man though he knows the truth will not contravene the fixed rules of society unless he is impelled by divine command or unless the divine purpose is moving towards a change in the fixed morality. Then, if it is the part given to him, he will act as fearlessly against social rules as under ordinary circumstances he will adhere firmly to the law of the environment in which he dwells. For his one care & purpose will be to observe the divine purpose & carry out the divine will.

Neither will events bring to him grief or disappointment, fear or disgust with things, because he follows that divine will & purpose in himself & in others, in the inner world & the outer, watching everywhere the play of the Self. He has divined God's movement. Disgrace & dishonour, obloquy & reproach cannot move him. He

is equal in soul to honour & dishonour, respect & insult, mana & apamana, because both come from himself to himself & not from another. Success & failure are equal to him, since he knows that both are equally necessary for the fulfilment of the divine intention. He will no more quarrel with them than with the cold of winter or the breath of the stormblast. They are part of the jagat, part of God's play, of the Self's action on the Self. He acquires a perfect titiksha or power to bear; he moves towards more than titiksha, towards an equal & perfect enjoyment.

Such, then, are some of the practical fruits of the realisation of God as the Self in all existences & the Brahman containing all existences. It raises us towards a perfect calm, resignation, peace & joy; a perfect love, charity & beneficence; a perfect courage, boldness & effectiveness of action; a divine equality to all men & things & equanimity towards all events & actions. And not only perfect, but free. We are not bound by these things we acquire. Our calm does not stay us from even the most colossal activity, for the calm is within us, of the soul & is not an activity in the jagat, in the movement. Our resignation is of the soul & does not mean acquiescence in defeat, but acceptance of it as a circumstance in the struggle towards a divine fulfilment; our peace & joy do not prevent us from understanding & sympathising with the trouble & grief of others; our love does not prevent an outward necessary sternness, our charity a just appreciation of men & motives nor does our beneficence hold back the sword when it is necessary that it should strike — for sometimes to strike is the highest beneficence, as those only can thoroughly realise who know that God is Rudra as well as Shiva, Chamunda Kali with the necklace of skulls no less than Durga, the protectress & Gauri, the wife & mother. Our courage does not bind itself by the ostentations of the fighter, but knows when flight & concealment are necessary, our boldness does not interfere with skill & prudence, nor our activity forbid us to rest & be passive. Finally our equality of soul leaves room to the other instruments to deal with each thing in the vyavahara according to its various dharma & utility, the law of its being & the law of its purpose.

(*Isha Upanishad*, CWSA, Vol. 17, pp. 413-15)

\*

To every touch there will be but one response from heart & mind & nerve alike — “This is Brahman.” Nanyat pashyati, nanyach chrinoti. They will see nothing else, hear nothing else, smell nothing else, feel nothing else, taste nothing else, but only Brahman. Of such a state it can be truly & utterly said, & not merely relatively, not subject to any qualification, ekatvam anupashyatah.

That oneness is the oneness of Sacchidananda, one being, one knowledge, one bliss, being that is consciousness, knowledge that is identity, both of them in their essence & reality bliss, — therefore not three separate qualities, but one existence,

even though presented to the intellect as a trinity, yet always one. Whatever therefore is felt, seen, heard, thought, it will be bliss that is felt, bliss that is seen, bliss that is heard, bliss that is thought — a bliss which is in its essence & inseparably existence & knowledge. For the intellect we have to use all three words, for on the level of our mental action these three are or seem to be divided & different from each other, but to the illumined being of the Jivanmukta there is no difference, they are one. It is ekatvam. It is Brahman.

*(Isha Upanishad, CWSA, Vol. 17, p. 420)*

\*

### **What we need is experience**

What is the utility of logical discussion & the marshalling of Vedic texts to decide whether works are incompatible with salvation or indispensable to it or neither incompatible nor indispensable, but only useful & permissible? What we need is experience. If once it is established by the experience of the Jivanmuktas that works & salvation are compatible, by the experience of the Karmayogins that works also lead to freedom in the Infinite & Divine Existence, — although they need not be the only path, nor the only requisite, although, even, it may be difficult to harmonise an active existence with the calm & peace of Infinity, — then no amount of logic to the contrary can be of any avail.

*(Isha Upanishad, CWSA, Vol. 17, pp. 583-84)*

\*

### **One with the luminous shadow of Parabrahman**

. . . the Jivanmukta is made one with the luminous shadow of Parabrahman which we call the Sacchidananda.

*(Isha Upanishad, CWSA, Vol. 17, p. 115)*

\*

### **Aim of the Jivanmukta**

But the aim of our Yoga is Jivanmukti in the universe; not because we need to be freed or for any other reason, but because that is God's will in us, we have to live released in the world, not released out of the world.

The Jivanmukta has, for perfect knowledge & self-fulfilment to stand on the threshold of Parabrahman, but not to cross the threshold.

The statement he brings back from the threshold is that That is & we are That, but what That is or is not, words cannot describe, nor mind discriminate.

*(Essays Divine and Human, CWSA, Vol. 12, p. 104)*

SRI AUROBINDO



**‘O SUPREME TRIUMPHANT,  
TRIUMPH OVER EVERY OBSTACLE’**

**August 28, 1914**

O Lord, O eternal Master, my thought lies mute and powerless before Thee but my heart calls to Thee; awaken all my being that it may be for Thee, entirely, the needed instrument, the perfect servitor.

Oh, to be infinitely Thou, Thou in all things, Thou everywhere, Thou always, the absolute silence, the absolute movement . . .

To be nothing other than the One, all-containing, contained in all — free from every limitation and from all blindness.

O Supreme Triumphant, triumph over every obstacle.

THE MOTHER

*(Prayers and Meditations, CWM 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. 1, p. 234)*



## A CONVERSATION OF 26 NOVEMBER 1958

*“As Mind is established here on a basis of Ignorance seeking for Knowledge and growing into Knowledge, so Supermind must be established here on a basis of Knowledge growing into its own greater Light. But this cannot be so long as the spiritual-mental being has not risen fully to Supermind and brought down its powers into terrestrial existence. For the gulf between Mind and Supermind has to be bridged, the closed passages opened and roads of ascent and descent created where there is now a void and a silence. This can be done only by the triple transformation to which we have already made a passing reference: there must first be the psychic change, the conversion of our whole present nature into a soul-instrumentation; on that or along with that there must be the spiritual change, the descent of a higher Light, Knowledge, Power, Force, Bliss, Purity into the whole being, even into the lowest recesses of the life and body, even into the darkness of our subconsciousness; last, there must supervene the supramental transmutation, — there must take place as the crowning movement the ascent into the Supermind and the transforming descent of the supramental Consciousness into our entire being and nature.”*

Sri Aurobindo  
(*The Life Divine*, CWSA, Vol. 22, p. 924)

*What is the role of the spirit?*

One might say that it is both the conscious intermediary between the Supreme and the manifestation, and the meeting-place of the manifestation with the Supreme.

Spirit is capable of understanding and communicating with the highest Godhead and at the same time it is the purest, one might say the least distorted intermediary of the highest Godhead in the outermost manifestation. It is spirit which, with the help of the soul, turns the consciousness towards the Highest, the Divine, and it is in the spirit that the consciousness can begin to understand the Divine.

It might be said that what is called “spirit” is the atmosphere brought into the material world by the Grace so that it may awaken to the consciousness of its origin and aspire to return to it. It is indeed a kind of atmosphere which liberates, opens the doors, sets the consciousness free. This is what enables the realisation of the truth and gives aspiration its full power of accomplishment.

From a higher standpoint, this could be put in another way: it is this action, this luminous and liberating influence that is known as “spirit”. All that opens to us the road to the supreme realities, pulls us out from the mud of the Ignorance in which we are stuck, opens the doors to us, shows us the path, leads us to where we have to

go — this is what man has called “spirit”. It is the atmosphere created by the Divine Grace in the universe to save it from the darkness into which it has fallen.

The soul is a kind of individual concentration of this Grace, its individual representative in the human being. The soul is something particular to humanity, it exists only in man. It is like a particular expression of the spirit in the human being. The beings of the other worlds do not have a soul, but they can live in the spirit. One might say that the soul is a delegation of the spirit in mankind, a special help to lead it faster. It is the soul that makes individual progress possible. The spirit, in its original form, has a more general, more collective action.

For the moment the spirit plays the part of a helper and guide, but it is not the all-powerful master of the material manifestation; when the Supermind is organised into a new world, the spirit will become the master and govern Nature in a clear and visible way.

What is called “new birth” is the birth into the spiritual life, the spiritual consciousness; it is to carry in oneself something of the spirit which, individually, through the soul, can begin to rule the life and be the master of existence. But in the supramental world, the spirit will be the master of this entire world and all its manifestations, all its expressions, consciously, spontaneously, naturally.

In the individual existence, that is what makes all the difference; so long as one just speaks of the spirit and it is something one has read about, whose existence one vaguely knows about, but not a very concrete reality for the consciousness, this means that one is not born into the spirit. And when one is born into the spirit, it becomes something much more concrete, much more living, much more real, much more tangible than the whole material world. And this is what makes the essential difference between beings. When *that* becomes spontaneously real — the true, concrete existence, the atmosphere one can freely breathe — then one knows one has crossed over to the other side. But so long as it is something rather vague and hazy — you have heard about it, you know that it exists, but . . . it has no concrete reality — well, this means that the new birth has not yet taken place. As long as you tell yourself, “Yes, this I can see, this I can touch, the pain I suffer from, the hunger that torments me, the sleep that makes me feel heavy, this is real, this is concrete . . .” (*Mother laughs*), that means that you have not yet crossed over to the other side, you are not born into the spirit.

(*Silence*)

In fact, the vast majority of men are like prisoners with all the doors and windows closed, so they suffocate, which is quite natural. But they have with them the key that opens the doors and windows, and they do not use it. . . . Certainly there is a time when they don’t know they have the key, but long after they have come to know it, long after they have been told about it, they hesitate to use it and doubt whether it has

the power to open the doors and windows or even that it is a good thing to open them! And even when they feel that “after all, it might be good”, there remains some fear: “What will happen when these doors and windows are opened? . . .” and they are afraid. They are afraid of being lost in that light and freedom. They want to remain what they call “themselves”. They like their falsehood and their bondage. Something in them likes it and goes on clinging to it. They still have the impression that without their limits they would no longer exist.

That is why the journey is so long, that is why it is difficult. For if one truly consented to cease to exist, everything would become so easy, so swift, so luminous, so joyful — but perhaps not in the way men understand joy and ease. In truth, there are very few people who do not enjoy fighting. There are very few who could accept the absence of night, few can conceive of light except as the opposite of darkness: “Without shadows there would be no picture. Without struggle, there would be no victory. Without suffering there would be no joy.” That is what they think, and so long as one thinks in this way, one is not yet born into the spirit.

THE MOTHER

*(Questions and Answers 1957-1958, CWM 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. 9, pp. 428-31)*



## A CONVERSATION OF 28 SEPTEMBER 1966

*Why is there suffering? How to cure suffering?*

For a long time quite recently, that is to say, for days together, there was a very acute, very intense, very clear perception that the action of the Force translated itself externally by what we call “suffering” because that is the only kind of vibration which can pull Matter out of its inertia.

The supreme Peace, the supreme Calm are deformed and disfigured into inertia and into *tamas*, and precisely because this was the deformation of true Peace and Calm, there was no reason why it should change! A certain vibration of awakening — of reawakening — was necessary to come out of this *tamas*, that could not pass directly from *tamas* to Peace; something was needed to shake the *tamas*, and that is translated externally by suffering.

I am speaking here of physical suffering, because all the other sufferings — vital, mental, emotional sufferings — are due to a wrong working of the mind, and these . . . may simply be classed together as Falsehood, that’s all. But physical suffering gives me the impression of a child being beaten, because here, in Matter, Falsehood has become ignorance; that is to say, there is no bad will — no bad will is there in Matter, all is inertia and ignorance: complete ignorance of the Truth, ignorance of the Origin, ignorance of the Possibility and ignorance even of what is to be done in order not to suffer physically. This ignorance is everywhere in the cells, and it is only the experience, the experience of what is translated in this rudimentary consciousness as suffering, which can awaken, bring forth the need to know and to cure, and the aspiration to transform oneself.

It has become a certainty, because in all the cells there is born the aspiration, which is becoming more and more intense and which wonders at the resistance; but they have observed that whenever something goes wrong in the working (that is to say, instead of being supple, spontaneous, natural, the working becomes a painful effort, a struggle against something which takes the appearance of a bad will, but is only a reticence that does not understand), at that moment, the intensity of the aspiration, of the call, is tenfold, becomes constant. The difficulty is to remain at that state of intensity. Generally everything falls back, I cannot say into a somnolence, but a kind of relaxation: you take things easy; and it is only when the inner disorder becomes painful that the intensity grows and remains permanent. For hours — hours together — without slackening, the call, the aspiration, the will to be united with the Divine, to become the Divine, is maintained at its maximum. Why? Because there was externally what is called a physical disorder, a suffering. Otherwise, when there is no suffering, from time to time one soars up, then one falls back into a

slackening; again another time one soars up once more . . . there is no end to it. That lasts eternally. If we want things to go fast (relatively fast according to the rhythm of our life), this smack of the whip is necessary. I am convinced of it, because as soon as you are within your inner being you look upon that with contempt (as regards oneself).

But then, all of a sudden, when there comes this true Compassion of the Divine Love, and when one sees all these things that appear so horrible, so abnormal, so absurd, this great pain which is upon all beings and even upon all things . . . then there takes birth in this physical being the aspiration to soothe, to cure, to remove that. There is in Love, at its Origin, something which is translated constantly as the intervention of Grace: a force, a sweetness, something like a vibration of solace spread everywhere, but which an illumined consciousness can direct, concentrate on some points. And it is there, there itself that I saw the true use one can make of thought: thought serves as a kind of channel to carry this vibration from place to place, wherever it is necessary. This force, this vibration of sweetness is there in a static way upon the world, pressing in order to be received, but it is an impersonal action. And thought — illumined thought, surrendered thought, thought which is no longer anything but an instrument, which tries no longer to initiate things, which is satisfied with being moved by the higher Consciousness — thought serves as an intermediary to establish a contact, a relation, and to enable this impersonal Force to act wherever it is necessary, upon definite points.

It may be said in an absolute way that an evil always carries its own remedy. One might say that the cure of any suffering coexists with the suffering. So, instead of seeing an evil “useless” and “stupid” as it is generally thought to be, you see that the progress, the evolution which has made the suffering necessary — which is the cause of the suffering and the very reason for its existence — attains the intended result; and at the same time the suffering is cured, for those who are able to open themselves and receive. The three things — suffering as a means of progress, progress, and the cure of suffering — are coexistent, simultaneous; that is to say, they do not follow each other, they are there at the same time.

If, at the moment when the transforming action creates a suffering, there is in that which suffers the necessary aspiration and opening, the remedy also is taken in at the same time, and the effect is total, complete: transformation, with the action necessary to obtain it, and, at the same time, cure of the false sensation produced by the resistance. And the suffering is replaced by . . . something which is not known upon this earth, but which is akin to joy, well-being, trust and security. It is a supersensation, in a perfect peace, and which is obviously the only thing that can be eternal.

This analysis expresses very imperfectly what one would call the “content” of Ananda.

I believe it is something that has been felt, experienced, partially and in a very

fleeting manner, through all the ages, but which has just begun to concentrate and almost concretise itself upon earth. But physical Matter, in its cellular form, has, one cannot say fear or anxiety, but a kind of apprehension of new vibrations, and this apprehension naturally takes away from the cells their receptivity and assumes the appearance of uneasiness — it is not suffering, but an uneasiness. When, however, this apprehension is counterbalanced and cured by aspiration and the will for total surrender and by the act of total surrender, then this sort of apprehension, having disappeared, becomes a supreme well-being.

All this, they are as though microscopic studies of the phenomena of consciousness, free from mental intervention. The necessity of using words to express oneself brings this mental intervention, but in the experience it does not exist. And it is very interesting, because the pure experience has a content of truth, of reality, which disappears as soon as the mind intervenes. There is a savour of true reality which altogether escapes expression because of that. It is the same difference as between an individual and his portrait, a fact and the story told. It is like that. But it is much more subtle.

And then, to come back to what we were saying just now, when one is conscious of this Force — this Force, this Compassion in its essential reality — and when one sees how it can act through the conscious individual, one has the key to the problem.

THE MOTHER

*(Notes on the Way, CWM 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. 11, pp. 41-44)*



## “TO MAHESHWARI” — CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

*Sri Aurobindo —*

*If this seems to have no true, deep feeling and inward spiritual significance behind it but to be a weak attempt at “transfiguring” sentimental despair, please destroy it. I shall also destroy my rough copy of it; for, in that case, I do not want it to get preserved.*

O not that I may shed on earth  
The undiminishable rays  
Of thoughts that take melodious<sup>1</sup> birth  
On Thy lips’ kindled<sup>2</sup> loveliness,  
I hold so unforgettably dear  
Thy visionary face!

Deny, if Thou wilt, my heaven-enchanted ear,  
And I shall not regret  
To live ineloquent, honourless.  
But this one grace, Belovèd, I beseech — \*  
Let<sup>3</sup> never those<sup>3</sup> stainless lips forget,  
Upon my soul’s dim-lifted<sup>4</sup> brow,  
**The**  
That sweetness to bestow;<sup>5</sup>  
**That**  
Which is more precious than immortal speech!<sup>6</sup>

1. Would not “harmonious” be better, more in the sound and colour movement of the verse?

2. Meaning?

3. Is it better to say “May” and “Thy” instead of “Let” and “those”?

Yes.

\* If you think the variant [3.] indicated in the margin to be better, is it not necessary to change this line into:

*But one grace, O Belovèd, I beseech . . .*

Perhaps

*And is it also advisable to transpose the two lines that follow it?*

4. Why the hyphen? it is far better without.

5. [Sri Aurobindo inserted “The” and crossed out the comma]

6. [Sri Aurobindo inserted “That”] Which . . . speech like Let . . . forget is open to the objection of involuntary rhyme within the verse.

The poem does not call for destruction; on the contrary it is quite good but for two or three details; it has a sort of modernised Elizabethanness about it that is very attractive.

[undated]

\*

Sri Aurobindo —

*Whatever adjective replaces “kindled” in the line*

*On Thy lips’ kindled loveliness*

*I should like to serve a threefold end: 1) it must suggest animation, a glow of inspiration; 2) it must subtly indicate that the person in question is supernatural, a being of light; and 3) make completely felicitous “the undiminishable rays” of thoughts that take melodious or harmonious birth on lips. “kindled” may be replaced by “lucid” — an adjective more in tune with “harmonious”, but not suggestive of animation, much less of divine frenzy. How will “lucent” do”?*

*(I am happy to conclude from your kind comment on my little poem that, poetically, I haven’t quite become a cipher at present.)*

Lucent, lucid, kindled all suffer from the same objection — they do not go well with “lips”, though they would go well with “eyes”. I really have not been able to find a substitute — I would have suggested one when sending back the poem, but none came to me.

14 September 1931

\*

Sri Aurobindo —

*Provided it does not seem to repeat the sound as well as the sense of “rays” in*

*The undiminishable rays*

*and to be in itself somewhat hackneyed, has “radiant” a sufficiently strong psychological shade indicating blissfulness and absence of grossness to warrant its use in place of “kindled”? When we can speak of a radiant smile, why not*

*On thy lips’ radiant loveliness?*

*I asked Arjava if he could think of a suitable adjective. He suggested that I might find a compound word. At present the best I can get is “sky-born”: that fulfils all the conditions set up by myself. Perhaps “heaven-born” is better in itself, but I do not like to spoil the “heaven-enchanted ear” of the second verse. Please give your opinion.*

*P.S. You once quoted to me two lines written by yourself:*

*Piercing the limitless unknowable,  
Breaking the vacancy and voiceless peace . . .*

*Where do they occur? They produce such a wonderful impression of a slow, majestic widening out into infinity — the first word in each line seeming to liberate into that sort of rhythmic movement what may be called the concentrated soul of the idea expressed.*

“Radiant” will not do, it repeats rays and is hackneyed — it can hardly be said to convey the force you want to put in it.

A compound, as Arjava suggests, seems called for. I had thought of “heaven-fraught” but it is not quite what you want to say and there is heaven again afterwards.

As for “sky-born” it is all right otherwise, but “sky” suggests ethereal tenuity rather than luminous divinity. But in the absence of anything else it may do.

The lines I quoted from myself are not in any published poem, but in the unfinished first book of “Savitri, A Legend and a Symbol” which was in intention a sort of symbolic epic of the aim of supramental Yoga! I may send it to you for typing when I have completed it; but in view of my abundant absence of leisure, the completion seems still to lurk in the mists of the far-off future.

15 September 1931

[Version from *The Secret Splendour – Collected Poems*  
of K. D. Sethna (Amal Kiran), 1993, p. 407]

### TO MAHESHWARI

O not that I may shed on earth  
The undiminishable rays  
Of thoughts that take harmonious birth  
On Thy lips' dawn-pure loveliness,  
I hold so unforgettably dear  
Thy visionary face!

Deny, if Thou wilt, my heaven-enchanted ear,  
And I shall not regret  
To live ineloquent, honourless.  
But one grace, O Beloved, I beseech —  
May never Thy stainless lips forget  
Upon my soul's dim lifted brow  
The sweetness to bestow  
That is more precious than immortal speech.

AMAL KIRAN  
(K. D. SETHNA)

*She is Maheshwari, goddess of the supreme knowledge, and brings to us her vision for all kinds and widenesses of truth, her rectitude of the spiritual will, the calm and passion of her supramental largeness, her felicity of illumination . . .*

*Sri Aurobindo*

*(The Synthesis of Yoga, CWSA, Vol. 24, p. 780)*

## CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE MOTHER

(Continued from the issue of June 2024)

### IX

*My dear Mother,*

*I have learned that M is arriving on the fourth or fifth of June.*

Yes, he is coming back — but if you do not mind, I like much better that you should keep the work of sweeping the terrace. I like the feeling of having you there early morning. He can clean the shutters of the meditation hall.

Always with you, my dear child

1 June 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*H wrote You a letter asking if she could help in the Granary when needed, till a good and trustworthy worker is found.*

We have indeed received a letter from H — but we do not think it is wise to mix works like that. Her responsibility is in the kitchen and must remain there alone. Otherwise a big strain could be created in her and her health would suffer much.

*The number of persons not doing Ashram work is increasing and increasing. Perhaps they think it is a good sign of their sadhana.*

The progress in sadhana comes from the rectification of the inner and outer attitude, not from the nature of the work one does.

2 June 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*M told me that when P was working upstairs, he used to sit and meditate near the door opening to the glazed-tiled terrace when Sri Aurobindo was reading letters to You. This seems to me a very objectionable thing. Perhaps that is why You were not feeling well.*

Exactly so. He says he heard but was *not listening* — but of this I am not at all so sure.

4 June 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*My conviction is that with one K and one H we can very easily feed the entire Ashram. If both join together, the Granary, Kitchen and Canal House will be child's play for them. And above that, they will move about as if they have no work at all and give you pieces of embroidery as they are doing now.*

Let them come definitively out of all mental, vital and physical troubles and then it will be possible.

5 June 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*Last night M told me about A: "He feels that his body is completely wrecked and that it will not recover. If he takes up any work, it will immediately be broken again."*

Nobody asks him to take up work — and the doctor has forbidden him to work. So . . .

*To me it seems a pity that he does not have confidence in the Divine Grace.*

Ninety-nine per cent of his illness is pure imagination.

6 June 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*H got burnt in two places today, although blisters did not form. Last year she had violent attacks on the vital; now they are coming on the physical. She seemed much discouraged today, but my feeling is that there is a quiet and steady opening of her physical consciousness to the Divine. She must rely on You completely and quietly go on.*

Yes, if she keeps quiet inside and calm outside all these attacks will have to stop.

10 June 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*May we not trouble You, may we not keep You engaged over a crumb of bread, a rag of cloth, a pen nib or a little broom. May the whole field get cleared of the devil and we go forward towards a perfect union with our dear Mother.*

Yes, what you say is quite true and it will be indeed a great thing when this condition will be established in the Ashram.

All love and blessings to you my dear child

10 June 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*In spite of P's note saying that she would not go for work, she did go. But there was all the anger possible against me.*

The poor girl is suffering very much from big boils — this is the cause of the bad temper.

14 June 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*Our sadhana is passing through a stage when unshakeable steadfastness is necessary. May we remain calm and quiet in this period and cross over the obstacles of the dark and ignorant physical nature.*

Indeed it is only the calm and luminous peace of a higher consciousness that can conquer these difficulties.

15 June 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*It is not possible for me to leave the work or to leave You. This much I know, that even in a disturbed condition I shall serve You up to the last.*

I am quite convinced of that, and I have full trust also in your capacity for Yoga.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

16 June 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*H is full of sorrow and despondency. But I have noticed that sweetness of the heart and kindness have not left her.*

It is a pity she has stopped writing — I think it was helping her to keep open to the force and the influence.

17 June 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*I feel that in the last few days I have been crossing the difficulty that Sri Aurobindo found in me. But there is a new will, a greater self-giving to the Divine and a firm faith.*

Yes, my dear child, from the point of view of your spiritual progress the past year has been a very good one and I expect the beginning year to be still better. Indeed the Light has to come down in the lower nature, in the subconscious and bring there the knowledge and the right attitude — and it is bound to come.

Always with you, my dear child

17 June 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*With all my heart I wish for peace, happiness and harmony in the Ashram. This is my humble prayer on the eve of my birthday: let jealousy, disharmony and anger pass away and peace be established in every heart.*

Let this year bring you the power of being constantly aware of my Presence for, indeed, I am always with you, in all trust and affection.

18 June 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*The coming year is a year of a great promise — a promise for victory. In solemn faith and courage, peace and quietness I enter the year. Victory to Thee, my dear Mother.*

Indeed, let this year that begins bring for you a perfect peace and an unshakeable equanimity. Our love and blessings are and will always be with you, my dear child.

18 June 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*I can see in my being the resistance of some forces of the subconscious. But there is nothing to fear; knowledge is also there, coming to check them and achieve the victory.*

Yes, the Light is slowly but surely coming down in the subconscious.

Always with you my dear child, closer and closer

19 June 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*Let nothing come in my way to You. Let nothing stop my progress towards You.*

Nothing can stop your progress except your own will — and this cannot happen.

21 June 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*H's cold has worsened and she had a high fever; she took no food today. She is obstinate in not writing to You.*

I am very sorry for the cold, very sorry that she did not eat and also very sorry that she refuses to write.

21 June 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*May H turn herself fully towards You and allow the Force to act on her.  
May her thinking mind be quiet.*

The Divine Grace is always with her, but she must open to it and learn to receive it fully.

She has not written tonight, and I am sorry for it. I so hope that she will get all right soon.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child.

It seems that she has written. I had not seen her letter.

24 June 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*Somebody has taken my umbrella from Aroumé and left an old one in its place. A has put a notice on the board, but no news as yet.*

Now we have the name of the owner put on the umbrella so that such a thing cannot happen (B is in charge of that). If your umbrella does not come back, you will ask for a new one.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child.

29 June 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*From my very boyhood, my attitude has been one of disgust towards life and its things. But now I accept all life and whatever things come from You.*

Yes, I am in the things also and that is why they must be treated with care.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

2 July 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*The cause of the outburst between M and L was nothing of importance. If we do not rise above personal feelings and stand for the work, how is the work to be done!*

It is the control over oneself that is the first thing needed, and especially the control over one's tongue! If people could learn to keep silent how many troubles would be avoided!

3 July 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*I do not understand the troubles in the D. R. — there are angry outbursts for nothing.*

The spirit of quarrels is still in the Aroumé atmosphere. Unless the workers make an effort to throw it away, it will always attack them and create some mischief or other.

10 July 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*There are plenty of thoughts suggesting my failure both as a sadhak and as a worker and of my being unfit and unworthy.*

You know that these thoughts are quite wrong and come from a hostile force. All thoughts of that kind must be rigorously driven away, for to receive them is an unfaithfulness towards the Divine.

The child does not worry about his growth, he simply . . . grows.

Love and blessings to my dear child

15 July 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*N asks me if K can occasionally roast brinjals in the kitchen after the cooking is over.*

If it brings no *inconvenience at all*, it can be done, but if it is to create any inconvenience or extra work I do not want it.

15 July 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*I have this hope for the descent of the Light into the lower nature and into the subconscious on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August.*

Yes, my dear child, the Light will descend sooner or later and it is bound to enlighten the subconscious. My force, love and blessings are always with you — helping you to conquer.

16 July 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*Until now it has never happened that I have lost money. But the money is stolen; even before I came here to my room it had been stolen. It looks to me like somebody is making mischief.*

It is unconscious movements from the subconscious which allow this mischief to happen. But when these movements come to the surface they can be enlightened and then the mischief has no more hold.

Always with you

19 July 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*I saw M delivering a long speech to L and it did not look pleasant. L told me afterwards that it was about the Ashram lemons — they are small in size and without juice, etc.*

I suppose there is only to pay no attention to his speech. The best thing is not to answer, not to discuss and not even to listen! . . .

*These are the days for peace; I pray for peace and some tolerance.*

When the heart and the mind are at peace the rest naturally follows.

26 July 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*What is the matter with N? He looks all right, he moves about and yet he is unable to go for his food!*

As far as I know it is a dangerous illness: laziness.

*And G also.*

G is truly unwell with fever, etc. . . .

30 July 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*C's friend is coming tomorrow evening. Perhaps he could help us work in the Dining Room for these busy days before Darshan.*

I know nothing about him; we shall see. But it seems difficult to bombard him with work as soon as he arrives, unless he asks for it himself.

My dear child, my force and help are with you, I am always present near you and in you, so that you may pass through these busy days with a quiet and concentrated strength.

4 August 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*I asked the Bangalore vegetable vendor to get more cabbage on the 12<sup>th</sup>, but he got it this week by mistake. So we will serve vegetables for 4 days: Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Monday.*

Will it keep up to Monday? The cabbages get rotten very easily. It seems to me that it would be safer to make the dishes of Thursday, Friday and Saturday bigger and to use them all within these 3 days.

*Again, how shall we cook them — in curry or make salad?*

I think the visitors will like curry better than salad.

*My dear Mother, I hope that we shall pass these busy days quietly. No doubt attacks will come to me, yet I have eternal hope.*

To be calm and quiet is the first necessity, and for that do not worry too much about details during these days. I am sure each one will do his best and more can be asked from nobody. Evidently this “best” must progress and become better but that takes time and cannot be expected at once.

Always with you, my dear child

5 August 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*I spoke to B about work and he will give an answer tomorrow. So he told me.*

He wrote to me saying that he was accustomed to do very light work and to be at the head, but, of course if I order him . . . etc. . . . We are writing to him that he need not join the work at all.

11 August 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*S is not drinking her milk but preparing curds from it. She may prepare it for You, but I think she should not do so for N and me. If things go on like this, we shall have a second edition of M for cooking.*

I think she is too unsteady to go on cooking for a long time. Her health is not quite good and she is feeling much troubled about it. That is why I am lenient to her little fancies.

6 September 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*This noon food for 69 persons was sent to their rooms.*

I have nothing to say, if you want to do it — but I find that it is those who are doing nothing all day who ought to go for their food in Aroumé.

20 September 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*S is under nobody's medical treatment, it seems, yet he is able to walk in the hot sun to the other end of town to search for manure. Then what is the need of giving him food at home?*

Yes, he must come to Aroumé to eat or take his tiffin-box away. All those who are not ill or very busy (with some exceptions, of course, like A, D, R, etc.) ought to eat in the D. R. or to come to fetch their tiffin-box themselves.

21 September 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*In regard to the need for coolies, You told me that if I informed C a few days in advance, he could give me the Building Service people required. But what if I suddenly need somebody for only a few minutes?*

It is more difficult for the B. S. to give a coolie for a very short time than for half a day. The work of each workman is arranged on the previous evening and told to him before he goes.

It creates always a confusion to change that afterwards. Moreover just now a new building is started and it occupies almost all of the workmen.

24 September 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*I am very badly constipated since a few days. And that does not allow me to take my food properly.*

You ought to take an enema, but to eat less because of constipation does not help, on the contrary.

All love and blessings to you my dear child

25 September 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*I wish the day would come when You can use me as an instrument in worlds other than this material world. You go into other worlds, worlds of the subconscious, and fight there and conquer and spread the kingdom of light. Is it not possible for us to be Your soldiers even in those dark lands?*

There is nothing impossible in the realisation of what you are asking for — a patient, strong, steady and absolutely sincere aspiration can conquer all obstacles — but it takes time.

Always with you

3 October 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*I shall try my utmost to change myself. I have understood the hints that Sri Aurobindo gave in his answer to H. I give myself to You for a change in consciousness.*

The change is certain; it is only a matter of steady patience and I am always with you to help you and protect you on the way.

6 October 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*There is a rivalry between A and S — each claims to be the head of the Granary. One comes and tells me something and the other comes and tells me something else. How to pull on, dear Mother?*

You might remind them that both Yoga and work suffer by such miserable little currents.

10 October 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*Dr. B will talk with H about her treatment tonight; there is some fear in her mind. The same fear was in K. All these people may be talking and gossiping on the subject and supporting the fear in one another. This whole recent wave of illness in the Ashram is perhaps due to this fear and nothing more.*

You are quite right. It is all due to fear and nothing else. It is a wave of fear and falsehood that has passed over the Ashram and each one is answering according to his or her nature. Very few are those who can stand firm on the rock of their faith and trust in the Divine and reject the wave altogether.

11 October 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*It is my humble confession that a wave of fear and falsehood attacked me. This wave wanted me to be very angry with H. But to all the suggestions and attacks of the hostile forces, I had one answer: "It is impossible; I know all of you very well. How can I be faithless to the love of my dear Mother?" And in gratitude my heart took shelter more and more in Your Love.*

I am indeed very happy to hear that you have passed successfully through the experience. Your answer to the attack was the right one. You have only to keep up this attitude and after several attempts the attacks are bound to stop.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

12 October 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*C wrote me a letter. She wants to come here and is thinking of using a trick. She will agree to marriage on one condition: that her family allows her to come to Pondicherry before the wedding; then she will not return to Gujarat. She puts this trick idea before You and asks for Your advice.*

I do not approve of tricks like that — they can only bring trouble.

13 October 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*L goes to Aroumé and wipes vessels in the morning. She told me: "I shall not be able to go in the evening because my body is not well." The need for her was in the evening, but that she has now refused. Here is one more person whom we are "making ill by heavy work". Those are her words; that is why I have accepted her terms. I know that after some time she will ask for work.*

Do not give it.

*Then I shall send her to You.*

Yes, they seem to be all like that. They ask for work, insist on having it and if anything goes wrong with their body they accuse us of killing them with work!

21 October 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*It would help if You could see H and talk with her and let her say freely her things about the kitchen and the cooking. Then You can directly answer her and the horizon will get cleared. It is now three months that she has been struggling over this and that.*

My dear child,

I have seen H; she was very nice and spoke quite frankly. She told me that she was not feeling happy but did not put any blame upon you for it; she accused only the weakness and restlessness of her mind. She expressed only one wish for the work, that you should not leave the decisions to her. She wants you to give her exactly what is needed and to tell her plainly what is to be done. She told me repeatedly that she would feel very much relieved if you did that. It seems that you used to do that before and it is only recently that you have changed your ways. I saw clearly that she feels too weak to have more responsibility than that of carrying out your instructions, and it seems to me that she can be given satisfaction on that point.

She did not mention the fact of your telling me that she had finished her work and consequently I saw no necessity to show her your books. It seems to me that very easily everything can be all right.

28 October 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*When You ask me about something, how should I answer You? I was not pleased with my answer today. Not only today but almost always I feel a shortcoming.*

The best thing to do is to give me the correct, precise and complete information about the matter. It is what I am asking from you, to have a ground for my decision.

Love and blessings to my dear child

30 October 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*What shall I say about M's disturbance today in the D. R.? The reports differ and I wait for a little more clarity. In any case a life of peace and harmony is also worth living, and anger thrown out falls back upon the thrower and clouds his soul.*

I know nothing more silly than this habit of always quarrelling — it is miles away from Yoga.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

5 November 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*This evening's meditation has resulted in a great renunciation of the past. My soul has gone to the future and given itself to You to be a perfect instrument in Your hands for the new creation that You are bringing down upon the earth.*

Yes, it is the future realisation that counts.

*My being gives itself to You in all devotion and faithfulness.*

And the gift is received with my heart's best affection.

Always with you, my dear child

7 November 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*A weak point is opening in me: I am becoming over-sensitive to the slightest thing and my first reaction is: "Send me away, relieve me from this work." My faithfulness to You does not in the least tolerate this weakness, and yet I cannot deny its presence. Some months back You told me: "You have not taken full refuge in me; there is something which is not yet worked out." This is true, and this is what brings up all the trouble from the subconscious.*

My very dear child,

It is a very great progress that you have become conscious of this weak point in you — for now it will be relatively easy to overcome it.

The first step is not to identify yourself with it — to consider it as some wrong influence from outside, something to be pushed away. And if in spite of that it touches

you, call me, call me ceaselessly until you are cured. At the same time it will give strength to the weak point and you will see that little by little it will become strong.

Always with you, certain of the victory

11 November 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*I wish to become humble, very humble and sincere.*

Yes, my dear child, you will have this great boon of humility and sincerity.

All love and blessings to you

14 November 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*My horoscope says that I shall be friendly towards nobody; even my friends will abuse me and give me up. But this prediction will prove wrong; there will be peace in my heart, sweetness in my speech, gentleness and harmony in every expression. My entire being will live in the Divine, for the Divine and by the Divine.*

Surely, by Yoga the horoscope can be mastered — we are no more bound to it — and we can change our nature as well.

Surely, you are my child and will become so more and more perfectly.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

19 November 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*A very humble confession. Since 1911 I have denied the sex-instinct in me, refused to accept it. There was a very strong will in me which simply controlled it, crushed it, pushed it out from the surface consciousness. Yet for all the negation it was there, acting in some form or other.*

*My dear Mother, my being now accepts its past silliness and in all humbleness it opens itself to You. May this blot be removed and my entire being be Yours.*

I am very glad that you have found it out. This is a very great step towards the cure.  
Always with you, in the effort and the success

2 December 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*Truly I am a pretender and a hypocrite. I showed myself to be what I was not and brought a good many troubles to You by my behaviour, especially because I have to work mainly with ladies. Would the solution be to remove myself from the field of work?*

No solution at all. It is not you that you must remove but the difficulty. The weakness must be overcome and my force will be with you and do what is necessary to remove altogether the obstacle, if you let it do so.

*My entire being has become grateful today. I was put to a real and true test. If I were not placed in such close contact with the ladies, I would not have found out my weakness. But I must confess, I could not remain sincere to the core. I hope that it is not too late.*

Surely it is not too late and the victory is certain.

*In spite of all this, I have always felt some unknown protection around me, even before I came here.*

Yes, the protection has always been upon you.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

3 December 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*May I remain given to You.*

There is surely no question about that — but surely also you could not believe that sadhana could be done without facing some difficulties. As your aspiration is sincere, whatever was in the subconscious standing in the way of the Divine Realisation, has come to the surface in order to be transformed. There is nothing there to make you sad or depressed — on the contrary you ought to rejoice over these occasions to make progress and never forget to lean for support and help on my love, force and blessings.

15 December 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*The clouds passed away this morning and once more I find myself in the consciousness of zeal, courage and confidence.*

I am very glad about this good news, glad but not astonished for I expected as much.

Love and blessings to you, my dear child

16 December 1936

\*

*My dear Mother,*

*The year ends and a new year begins. May the new year bring to us God-realisation.*

Yes, the Light must illumine the consciousnesses and the shadows of Ignorance must be dissolved in all.

Love and blessings to my dear child

30 December 1936

\*

Since months I am tasting the food and find it truly very good — sometimes it is simply perfect.

Always with you, my dear child

1 January 1937

\*

*Dear Mother,*

*We have a woman-coolie in the Granary who is unable to cope with the work. It was decided by You to get a man in her place. K's choice is either M, B's gardener, or R who has worked at the Granary before.*

M is our best gardener; what would happen to the gardens if he was taken away from that work?

As for R he is one of the very few (4 or 5) coolies who know the concrete work. He will be quite indispensable for the new building. I have asked the mason (a reliable man) to bring us somebody for the Granary work. Strong and honest and if possible knowing already something of the work. I have insisted on these points.

2 September 1937

\*

*Dear Mother,*

*Here is the food that we have served this noon for the Ashram. Will You take it? And if You find it worthy of Sri Aurobindo, will You give it to Him also?*

The food is truly excellent. I am keeping it for Sri Aurobindo.

*4 September 1937*

\*

*Mother,*

*. . . But what does P mean by rules! I have not exerted any rule on him. In any case, my going to the Prosperity stops from now.*

I do not understand what you mean by saying that your going to the Prosperity stops from now. The Prosperity is not P's property. He is there only to keep the things and to distribute them and his personality has nothing to do in the matter. It is I who give the things in Prosperity, it is from me that they are received and to stop going to Prosperity because P is not always pleasant to deal with, is to give an undue importance to his person. I thought I had explained that to you already.

Now get out of your own feeling, step back into a more objective view of things and imagine that somebody — rightly or wrongly — thinks that you have ill-treated him and declares: "Now I will no more take food from the D. R." What would you say to this?

Dear child, my love

*Undated*

\*

*Mother,*

*There are plenty of moods and fancies among the inmates, many unnecessary harassings. I undergo all possible pinchings, tortures and troubles, but our goal is something else — it is the Divine Life.*

You are quite right in not allowing the moods and fancies of the people to affect you. You must soar above all that in the constant feeling of the Divine's Presence, Love and Protection.

With you always

*Undated*

\*

It is true, my child, that Nature is very brutal in her ways, but it can't be one of my squirrels that has been eaten, as they have come for food just now . . .

It must be the babies that get caught like that, those who have, as yet, no experience of life and of its dangers.

But surely we can hope for a world in which the aspiration for unity should not translate itself into a devouring instinct.

*Undated*

\*

*Faith is the condition to be frank with the Divine.*

A complete frankness with the Divine will allow your faith to be steady.

*Undated*

*(Concluded)*

DYUMAN

*(New Correspondences of the Mother – I, pp. 160-84)*

*. . . there is no discord, disparity or difficulty of adjustment in the complex motion of the supramental jñāna, but a simplicity in the complexity, an assured ease in a many-sided abundance that comes from the spontaneous sureness and totality of the self-knowledge of the spirit.*

*Sri Aurobindo*

*(The Synthesis of Yoga, CWSA, Vol. 24, p. 848)*

## ARRANGEMENT FOR MEDITATION AFTER THE SIDDHI DAY

The two sketches drawn by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother indicate the sitting arrangement of the disciples during the Mother's collective meditations after the Siddhi Day. The Mother's sketch (with the initials of disciples written in her handwriting) seems to be a draft of the final sketch made by Sri Aurobindo (with the initials of disciples written in his handwriting). There are 24 spots in all with two rectangles in the centre forming an oblong sitting arrangement. Each spot has been marked with the initials of the disciple along with the powers of consciousness they represent. There are six groups of four and each group comes under two headings. The headings outside the oblong seem to indicate the planes of consciousness to which the group belongs, such as "Vital", "Mental", "Psychic", with their corresponding functions designated by the headings inside the oblong, such as "Process", "Theory", "Power". For example, the group under Mental (Theory) has the following sadhaks:

M [Moni] = Enjoyment  
N [Nolini] = Conception  
Ks [Kshitish] = Holiness  
A [Amrita] = Creation

Most of the disciples can be identified by comparing the initials with the list of disciples present on the Siddhi Day, though the names of the two lists don't match exactly. Pujalal, Purushottam Patel and Rambhai Patel, who are there in Purani's list of disciples present on the Siddhi Day, have been replaced by Haradhan Bakshi, Tirupati and Ila (Mme. Potel) in the sitting arrangement. A few names of disciples have been found or ascertained from other sources of information — these have been indicated under each name.

### **Psychic (Power)**

Conquest — Bi [Bijoy]

(*"Bi" in Mother's sketch*)

*Drawing with caption "Bijoy Japanese war god" in Mother's handwriting*

Wealth — Rj [Rajani Palit]

*In one of the first noon sittings (joint) Mother gave me a half sovereign — a symbol of wealth — which was supposed to have belonged to the Goddess of Wealth of the United Kingdom — and Mother asked me to repeat what she said.*

*The idea was that I, representing the God of Wealth, would surrender the power to the Mother.*

*(Rajani Palit's Notes)*

Life — Dr [Doctor Babu = Upendranath Banerjee]

Purity — Ka [Kanai]

*(Champaklal Speaks, 2002, p. 70)*

### **Vital (Fulfilment)**

Ananda — L [Lilavati = Mrs. Purani]

Peace — P [Purani]

*Trita. The Angel of Peace – One of the Vital Four*

*(Record of Yoga, Vol. 2, p. 1344)*

*(Purani's study room was named "Peace in the Physical" by the Mother.)*

Order — Cl [Champaklal]

*(The small passage room on the first floor of the Library House where Champaklal prepared fruit juices for Sri Aurobindo was named "Orderly Work" by the Mother.)*

Organisation — Ch [Champaben = Mrs. Punamchand]

### **Mental (Practice)**

Victory — Nn [Nonibala]

*("Nn" in Mother's sketch)*

Revelation — I [Ila = Mme. Potel]

Redemption — D [Datta]

Tapasya — Ba [Barin]

*("Ba" in Mother's sketch)*

**Psychic (Dynamism)**

Realisation — S.H. [Saint-Hilaire = Pavitra]  
*(Pavitra's room was named "Realisation" by the Mother.)*

Prayer — Pn [Punamchand]

Adoration — Rg [Rajangam]  
*(Breath of Grace, p. 85; Champaklal Speaks, 2002, p. 70)*

Faith — T [Tirupati]  
*(Champaklal Speaks, 2002, p. 70)*

**Vital (Process)**

Transubstantiation — Rt [Rati Palit]

Transformation — Cs [Chandrasekharam]

Transmutation — H [Haradhan]  
*(Haradhan Bakshi, Diary notation of 27 November 1926: "When you are ready and have a sure hold on you, then we two shall work out certain occult processes for the transmutation of the material life to the immaterial life.")*

Interdynamisation — S [Satyen]

**Mental (Theory)**

Enjoyment — M [Moni]

Conception — N [Nolini]  
*(Nolini Kanta Gupta's room was named "Pure Mind" by the Mother.)*

Holiness — Ks [Kshitish]

Creation — A [Amrita]  
*(Amrita was very much associated with "creation". Read his experiences in which he identifies himself with Michael Angelo.)*  
*(See also CWSA, Vol. 11, Record of Yoga, p. 1344.)*

Here is A. B. Purani's list of disciples present on the Siddhi Day of 24 November 1926 along with the list of disciples present in the sitting arrangement for meditations after the Siddhi Day.

**A. B. Purani's Siddhi Day List**

**Sitting Arrangement for  
Meditations after the Siddhi Day**

1	Bijoy Kumar Nag	Bi
2	Nolini Kanta Gupta	N
3	Amrita	A
4	Moni (Suresh Chakravarty)	M
5	Pavitra (Philippe Barbier Saint-Hilaire)	S.H.
6	Barindra Kumar Ghose	Ba
7	Datta (Miss Hodgson)	D
8	Rajangam	Rg
9	Satyen	S
10	Purani	P
11	Lilavati (Purani's wife)	L
12	Punamchand	Pn
13	Champaben (Punamchand's wife)	Ch
14	Rajani Kanto Palit	Rj
15	Dr Upendranath Banerjee	Dr
16	Champaklal	Cl
17	Kanailal Ganguly	Ka
18	Kshitish Chandra Dutt	Ks
19	Chandrasekharam	Cs
20	Pujalal	
21	Purushottam Patel	
22	Rati Palit	Rt
23	Rambhai Patel	
24	Nonibala	Nn
		I [Ila = Mme. Pote]
		T [Tirupati]
		H [Haradhan Bakshi]





References to sitting arrangements for collective meditation during this period have been made by Nolini Kanta Gupta, Anilbaran Roy, Champaklal and Rajangam in the following passages:

Mother would now sit daily for her meditations with all of us together, in the evening after nightfall. That was the beginning of collective meditation. She made a special arrangement for our seating. To her right would sit one group and to her left another, both arranged in two rows. The right side of the Mother represented Light, on the left was Power. Each of us found a seat to her right or left according to the turn of our nature of the inner being. I was to her right, Amrita sat on her left.

(*Collected Works of Nolini Kanta Gupta*, Vol. 8, pp. 204-06)

I took part in the group meditation, by the left side of A at midday; and between B and C in the evening. During evening meditation D saw a vision of golden light by the side of A and I was in the centre of that column of light.

11.12.1926

During the morning interview Mother changed my place for the evening meditation to the side of A, with whom she said I had intimate relation in reference to the work and power that is to manifest in me.

12.12.1926

(Anilbaran Roy, *Sri Aurobindo Circle*, 1976, p. 39)

The next day, she said: To bring down Immortality four pillars are needed. Of them

Purity is Kanai,  
Faith is Tirupati,  
Adoration is Rajangam,  
Aspiration is Champaklal.

(*Champaklal Speaks*, 2002, p. 70)

During those early years of the Ashram life the Mother used to allot numbers to those who attended the meditations. Mine was No. 9. She used to bring down the Gods. The godhead that was brought down into me was ADORATION.

(Rajangam, *Breath of Grace*, 2002)

*Compiled and edited by* RAMAN REDDY

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

(Part 47)

(Continued from the issue of June 2024)

## Section 5: Equanimity and Sweetness of Temper

### Alipore Bomb Case

In February 1908, the police received definite information about the existence of secret societies following which the CID started watching and shadowing several suspected revolutionaries at different places in Calcutta including 32 Muraripukur Road, 23 Scott’s Lane etc. The garden-house in Muraripukur consisted of a dilapidated building with a large room and two verandahs, and a large plot of land with a couple of ponds. The plot, which had no boundary wall, had gardens on its three sides and an open field on the fourth side. Nolini Kanta Gupta writes that “the house where we lived was in ruins” and the garden “was primitive jungle, a tangle of shrubs and trees and creepers”.<sup>1</sup> The plot belonged to Sri Aurobindo, Barin, Sarojini and the two elder brothers. From August 1907 Barin started using the property as a monastery on the lines of Bhawani Mandir with his band of recruits for purposes of religious, political, physical and military training. The police could have apprehended the revolutionaries for suspicious actions but they waited for a more opportune moment. When news of the bloodshed in Muzaffarpore reached Calcutta, F. L. Halliday, Commissioner of police and C.W.C. Plowden, DIG of Provincial CID, discussed the intelligence gathered so far through the surveillance operations and obtained search warrants from the Court in the late afternoon of 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1908.<sup>2</sup> Early in the morning of 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 1908, the police concurrently searched several places in and around Calcutta. Principal of these were:

1. 32 Muraripukur Road, Maniktolla — Revolutionary literature, explosives, guns, rifles, revolvers etc. were recovered from the garden house. The persons arrested there were 1. Barindra Kumar Ghose 2. Ullaskar Dutt 3. Indu Bhusan Roy 4. Bibhuti Bhusan Sarkar 5. Narendra Nath Bakshi 6. Paresh Chandra Moulik 7. Kunjolal Saha 8. Bijoy Kumar Nag 9. Sachindra Kumar Sen 10. Purna Chandra Sen 11. Hemendra Nath Ghose 12. Nolini Kanta Gupta

1. Nolini Kanta Gupta, *Reminiscences*, 1<sup>st</sup> Ed., 2015, p. 18.

2. See Niharendu Roy, *Alipore Conspiracy Case*, 1<sup>st</sup> Ed., 2016, pp. 36-37.

13. Sishir Kumar Ghose and 14. Upendranath Banerjee, all educated young men belonging to respectable families. There were four others also arrested but they were released on bail and were not charged.
2. 48 Grey Street — a large number of letters and documents, newspaper articles and cuttings were found. Arvinda Ghose was arrested upstairs and Abinash Chandra Bhattacharjee and Sailendra Nath Bose were arrested in the ground-floor.
  3. 38/4 Raja Navakrishen Street — several bottles containing chemicals, tubes, etc. and incriminating correspondence were found. Hem Chandra Das was arrested.
  4. 15 Gopimohan Dutt’s Lane — several documents were found and its inmates Nirapado Roy and Kanai Lal Dutt were arrested.
  5. 134 Harrison Road — bombs, dynamite, cartridges and bomb-making materials were found. Asoke Chandra Nandy, Nagendra Nath Gupta, Dharani Nath Gupta, Bejoy Ratna Sen Gupta and Moti Lal Bose were arrested.
  6. Dindayal Bose was arrested the next day, 3<sup>rd</sup> May, from 80, College Street where a considerable amount of correspondence was found.<sup>3</sup>

The judicial process started on 4<sup>th</sup> May, 1908 and some of the arrested persons from the Gardens surprisingly began recording confessional statements. Barin opined that by partially revealing their activities, the remaining part of the underground network along with some of the activists could be saved. He convinced Upendranath and Ullaskar to confess by telling them: “We are in any case dead, so let us do one last round of propaganda, let us tell the country how this path can be chosen . . . Let us also show how one can invite one’s own death and die . . . without apprehension and fear”.<sup>4</sup> Besides, Ullaskar believed that by taking the blame on themselves, others, who had been arrested without culpability, would be released, especially his innocent friends Nagen and Dharani, in whose house he had left a box of bombs without their knowledge.<sup>5</sup> Ten of the accused made confessions. Confessions in a criminal trial are considered to be the most clinching piece of evidence against the accused and indeed a direct admission of guilt. When Sri Aurobindo heard that Barin had confessed, he remarked, “Has Barin grown crazy?”<sup>6</sup> Hemchandra Das, whom Barin unsuccessfully tried to persuade to confess, and several others resented Barin’s decision and became disenchanted with his leadership. For any disclosure would not only strengthen the prosecution’s case but also provide clues to the police to unearth more evidence. Barin later regretted that “the name of Naren Gossain had been mentioned; at that time we did not realise how far the consequences of this would

3. See Bejoy Krishna Bose, *Alipore Bomb Trial*, Butterworth & Co. (India), 1922, pp. 2-3, 14-15, 149.

4. Barindra Kumar Ghose, *Barindrer Atmakahani* (translated from Bengali by Kumkum Roy – manuscript).

5. Upendranath Banerjee, *Nirbashiter Atmakatha* (translated from Bengali by Kumkum Roy – manuscript).

6. See Manoj Das, ‘Sri Aurobindo: Life and Times of the Mahayogi’, *Mother India*, April 2015, pp. 300-01.

flow”.<sup>7</sup> Sri Aurobindo remarked that Barin had “an immense amount of vitality” but was “wilful & erratic”.<sup>8</sup> Earlier, when the police came to search Muraripukur gardens, Barin foolishly implicated himself by revealing where the firearms were buried. Barin later admitted that at that time “my temperament was that of an inexperienced leader,” and “my nature had an excess of romance and desperation, and a deficit of a sense of proportion.”<sup>9</sup>

Further searches were made in several districts of Bengal between 4<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> May. Those arrested were Narendranath Gossain, Hrishikesh Kanjilal, Sudhir Kumar Sarkar, the brothers, Birendra Chandra, Hem Chandra and Sushil Kumar Sen (the boy who was whipped by the orders of Kingsford), Krishnajibon Sanyal and Birendra Nath Ghose. Incriminating documents were found with all of them. All the arrested were brought down to Calcutta.<sup>10</sup>

The news of all the arrests spread like wildfire. Whilst *The Times* of London, in its issue of 6<sup>th</sup> May, observed that the Press in India had expressed sympathy with the victims of the bomb blast, it also mentioned that several newspapers had made “angry protests against the arrest of Aurobindo Ghose and the refusal to release the accused on bail.”<sup>11</sup>

The preliminary enquiry began before Mr. Birley, the District Magistrate of Alipore, on 19<sup>th</sup> May on the charge of “conspiracy to wage war against the King-Emperor.” The significance of the trial lay in the fact that it was the first political case of such gravity and magnitude. Bail was refused to all the accused. As many as 222 witnesses were examined but Birley prejudicially denied the defence the right to cross-examine them as his priority was in promptly bringing the alleged offenders to book. He committed the accused to the Alipore Sessions Court on 19<sup>th</sup> August. Meanwhile, a second batch of seven persons was arrested, namely — 1. Debabrata Bose, 2. Charu Chandra Roy, 3. Indra Nath Nandy, 4. Nikhileshwar Roy Moulik, 5. Bijoy Chandra Bhattacharya, 6. Provas Chandra Deb, and 7. Balkrishna Hari Kani. In this specific case 55 witnesses were examined and on 14<sup>th</sup> September they were committed to the Sessions Court to face trial along with those previously committed.<sup>12</sup>

Alluding to a *Bande Mataram* report of 14<sup>th</sup> June, K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar writes about Sri Aurobindo’s detached demeanour during the preliminary enquiry:

Sri Aurobindo was superficially a part of all this ghastly drama, yet not of it; he was one of the undertrial prisoners, yet he seemed, like a star, to stand aloof and

7. Barindra Kumar Ghose, *Barindrer Atmakahani* (translated from Bengali by Kumkum Roy – manuscript).

8. *CWSA*, Vol. 36, pp. 147-48.

9. Barindra Kumar Ghose, *Barindrer Atmakahani* (translated from Bengali by Kumkum Roy – manuscript).

10. See Bejoy Krishna Bose, *Alipore Bomb Trial*, Butterworth & Co. (India), 1922, pp. 2-3, 17.

11. See Manoj Das, *Sri Aurobindo in the First Decade of the Twentieth Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., p. 74.

12. See Bejoy Krishna Bose, *Alipore Bomb Trial*, Butterworth & Co. (India), 1922, pp. 3-4; See Amiya K Samanta, *Alipore Bomb Trial 1908-1910*, 2017, p. 119.

above. When he was brought before Mr. Birley on 11 June, “a black ring was distinctly visible around Aurobindo Babu’s eyes”; two days later, he “laughed heartily while conversing with his pleaders, only he looked paler than before”.<sup>13</sup>

Sri Aurobindo’s amusement during the preliminary enquiry is palpable when he writes:

The nature of the case was a little strange. Magistrate, counsel, witnesses, evidence, exhibits, accused, all appeared a little outré. Watching, day after day, the endless stream of witnesses and exhibits, and the counsel’s unvaried dramatic performance, the boyish frivolity and light heartedness of the youthful magistrate [*Mr. Birley*], looking at the amazing spectacle I often thought that instead of sitting in a British court of justice we were inside a stage in some world of fiction. Let me describe some of the odd inhabitants of that kingdom.<sup>14</sup>

He goes on to paint a comical caricature of the District Magistrate, Mr. Birley:

Very fair, quite tall, extremely spare, the little head on the long body seemed like little Auchterlonie sitting on top of the sky-kissing Auchterlonie monument, or as if a ripe coconut had been put on the crest of Cleopatra’s obelisk! Sandy-haired, all the cold and ice of Scotland seemed to lie frozen on his face. So tall a person needed an intelligence to match, else one had to be sceptical about the economy of nature. But in this matter, of the creation of Birley, probably the Creatrix had been slightly unmindful and inattentive. The English poet Marlowe has described this miserliness as “infinite riches in a little room” but encountering Mr. Birley one has an opposite feeling, of little riches in an infinite room. Finding so little intelligence in such a tallish body one indeed felt pity. Remembering how a few such administrators were governing thirty crores of Indians could not but rouse a deep devotion towards the majesty of the English masters and their methods of administration.<sup>15</sup>

The trial of both the batches commenced at the Sessions Court before Mr. C. P. Beachcroft, I.C.S., Additional Sessions Judge, Alipore on 19<sup>th</sup> October, 1908. On 20<sup>th</sup> October, Beachcroft put forth the charges in the Sessions Court against Sri Aurobindo and 36 other revolutionaries as follows:

13. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Sri Aurobindo – a biography and a history*, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed., 2006, p. 324 (*Bande Mataram*, 14<sup>th</sup> June, 1908).

14. Sri Aurobindo, *Tales of Prison Life*, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed., 2014, pp. 50-51 (translated from the original Bengali, *Karakahini*).

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58.

1. Collected men, arms or ammunition, or otherwise prepared to wage war with the intention of either waging or being prepared to wage war against the King-Emperor and thereby committed an offence punishable under section 122 of the Indian Penal Code.
2. Wage war against the King, attempted to wage war against the King, and abetted the waging war against the King and thereby committed an offence punishable under section 121 of the Indian Penal Code.

Of the aforesaid 41 persons arrested, two of them, namely Bejoy Ratna Sen Gupta and Moti Lal Bose were released and two others died in prison. Another person, whilst serving a two month sentence in another case, was also charged in the Alipore case. The circumstances of all these three cases will be discussed later. So in total 37 were charged by Beachcroft. Of these, Charu Chandra Roy, a French subject extradited from Chandernagore, was discharged on 5<sup>th</sup> November as the Government withdrew from his prosecution.<sup>16</sup> Roy later refused to meet Sri Aurobindo when he took temporary exile in Chandernagore. Sri Aurobindo felt that as a fellow revolutionary he was obliged to receive him.<sup>17</sup>

On 12<sup>th</sup> February, 1909 a complete list of nine charges was framed by Beachcroft and read out to the accused. The offences committed were punishable under section 121, 121A (conspiracy to wage war against the Crown), 122 and 123 (concealing with the intent to facilitate design to wage war) of the Indian Penal Code.<sup>18</sup>

Of the 222 witnesses, 206 were examined and most of them cross-examined in the Sessions Court. The mass of documents filed, if counted individually, were over four thousand and the material articles exhibited, consisting of bombs, revolvers, ammunition, detonators, fuses, poisonous acids and other explosive materials, numbered about 300 to 400. The court was engaged till the 13<sup>th</sup> April, 1909. On the 14<sup>th</sup> April the opinion of the Assessors was taken and judgment was delivered on the 6<sup>th</sup> May, 1909.<sup>19</sup>

On 13<sup>th</sup> June, 1908, Sri Aurobindo's sister, Sarojini, made an appeal for funds in the *Bande Mataram*:

My countrymen are aware that my brother Aravinda Ghose stands accused of a grave offence. But I believe, and I have reason to think that the vast majority of my countrymen believe, that he is quite innocent. I think if he is defended by an able counsel he is sure to be acquitted. . . . I know all countrymen do not hold the same political opinions as he. But I feel some delicacy in saying that

16. See Bejoy Krishna Bose, *Alipore Bomb Trial*, Butterworth & Co. (India), 1922, pp. 4, 52-54.

17. A. B. Purani, *Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo*, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed., 2007, p. 655.

18. See Bejoy Krishna Bose, *Alipore Bomb Trial*, Butterworth & Co. (India), 1922, p. 56.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 4; K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Sri Aurobindo – a biography and a history*, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed., 2006, pp. 313, 324.

probably there are few Indians who do not appreciate his great attainments, his self-sacrifice, his single-minded devotion to the country’s cause and the high spirituality of his character. This emboldens me, a woman, to stand before every son and daughter of India for help to defend a brother, — my brother and theirs too.<sup>20</sup>

Facing a hostile government determined to convict him, it was essential that Sri Aurobindo be defended by a proficient lawyer. Sri Aurobindo’s maternal uncle, Krishna Kumar Mitra (1852-1936), organised the legal defence of Sri Aurobindo and published an appeal, in Sarojini’s name, for funds to fight the case.<sup>21</sup> A leading Bengali journal, the *Basumati*, published Sarojini’s appeal on 27<sup>th</sup> June, 1908. No political leader hitherto had been presented as a “spiritual teacher”. We reproduce an excerpt:

Arabinda’s sister, Miss Sarojini, is today a beggar at the door of her countrymen. Not for her own self, not for selfish interest, it is for the sake of Arabinda, the brother of all Bengalis, the brother of all Indians and the Sannyasi who is a devoted servant of the Mother-land . . .

Arabinda has made the sacred land resound with the thunder of the new creed; Arabinda has renounced all desires for earthly pleasures and prosperity for your welfare; Arabinda has taken *niskāma dharma* to preach the *mātrimaantra* and has turned a sannyasi renouncing everything. . . .

Arabinda has taught that the power of the will can conquer the world. The power of the country has not disappeared; it was reposing, it is awaking now. . . .

Arabinda felt that Western politics would not suit spiritual India. It is *dharma* which saved India in every yuga. That the Indians are nearing annihilation is due to their abandonment of that *dharma*. It is for this that he encouraged the Indians to devote themselves to *dharma*. . . .

Arabinda said: “Let *dharma* be your very soul . . . Let the service of the country be enthroned in the inmost hearts of this spiritually-inclined people . . . and then, O Indians! You will attain *siddhi*.”

Arabinda loves the Mother, loves his own country . . . Arabinda’s culture is unparalleled. His sacrifice is unequalled. There is no other devoted son of the Mother, no other disinterested Karmayogin like him in India. O Bengalis, will you not save that Arabinda from the clutches of the law?. . .<sup>22</sup>

On 2<sup>nd</sup> July the *Sanjivini* reported that Rs. 4000 had been collected for the Defence Fund and remarked: “It is the wish of every soul that Aurobindo Ghose

20. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Sri Aurobindo – a biography and a history*, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed., 2006, p. 312.

21. See Basanti Chakravarty (*née* Mitra), ‘Our Aurodada’, *Srinwantu*, April/August 1984, p. 84.

22. Manoj Das, *Sri Aurobindo in the First Decade of the Twentieth Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., pp. 74-78.

should lightly escape the danger he has found himself in. It would be a disgrace to the Bengalis if an able counsel cannot be engaged in his defence simply for the want of funds.”<sup>23</sup>

On 12<sup>th</sup> July the daily *Hitavadi* of Calcutta, observed that it was impossible to accept that Sri Aurobindo could have anything to do with the Muzaffarpore affair and added, “Still his case has grown so complex that there appears to be little chance of his escape unless defended by an able counsel. It is the duty therefore of his countrymen to help him in his trial.”<sup>24</sup> The *Anusilan* on the 17<sup>th</sup> July stated that considering the exemplary sacrifices made by Sri Aurobindo, “it will be a crying shame for all Bengalis if sufficient funds are not subscribed for his defence.”<sup>25</sup> On 18<sup>th</sup> July the *Basumati* exhorted: “Bengalis, if you have any heart, come forward to help Aurobindo. . . . The sum collected up to date amounts to Rs. 13000/- and intending contributors should make haste, as there is no time to lose.”<sup>26</sup>

Sarojini’s appeal was fervently supported by the *Bengalee*, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and other leading papers. Response to the appeal came from numerous institutions and individuals in the form of financial assistance and moral support. Contributions and messages of sympathy came even from Europe, Australia and America. The Government had become an object of antipathy for the public because it had framed a grievous criminal charge against an individual who was considered a selfless patriot and a saintly figure by his countrymen.<sup>27</sup>

Outside Bengal, Sri Aurobindo’s admirers in Maharashtra, particularly from Nagpur and Poona, publicly expressed their sympathy and proposed to raise funds for his defence.<sup>28</sup> Institutions like the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha galvanised themselves to make collections for the Arabinda Defence Fund.<sup>29</sup> Following the Muzaffarpore bomb incident Bal Gangadhar Tilak published two articles on 9<sup>th</sup> June and 12<sup>th</sup> July in his paper, *Kesari*. Both the articles sought to explain the roots of extremism in India. The British construed it as supporting and encouraging terrorism. A blatantly partisan Judge sentenced Tilak to six years’ transportation to Mandalay on grounds of sedition.<sup>30</sup> Support from Maharashtra came in other ways. Following Sarojini’s appeal, a book published at the Vande Mataram Press, Poona, endorsed her views:

Babu Aurobindo Ghose’s claims upon the sympathy and support of his countrymen in his present trial is based not upon his political views, though these too entitle him to the support of every Nationalist in the country, — but

23. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

26. *Ibid.*

27. See K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Sri Aurobindo – a biography and a history*, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed., 2006, pp. 312-13.

28. Manoj Das, *Sri Aurobindo in the First Decade of the Twentieth Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., pp. 74, 208.

29. See K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Sri Aurobindo – a biography and a history*, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed., 2006, pp. 312-13.

30. Amiya K Samanta, *Alipore Bomb Trial 1908-1910*, 2017, p. 5.

upon his personal character and acquirements. There is no man living among us who has made greater sacrifices for the service of the Motherland than Aurobindo Ghose. . . . Aurobindo Ghose took up, what his sister describes as a vow of poverty with a view to devote himself body and soul to the service of that country which he always addressed as the Mother . . . is there any room for difference of opinion in regard to the supreme value of his personality and character, the value of the spirit of his patriotism and self-sacrifice, as a contribution to the moral and spiritual life of the present generation? . . .

It is hardly necessary, we think, to remind the general body of the Nationalists in the country of the extent of their indebtedness, as a party, to Aurobindo Ghose. All that they need be told is that to organise a proper defence for their brother and leader a very large sum of money will be needed . . .<sup>31</sup>

The situation was grave. A concerned Bhupal Chandra Bose, Sri Aurobindo’s father-in-law who held an important government post and was decorated as “Rai Bahadur” for his immense contribution to agriculture in Assam and Bengal, advised K. K. Mitra to approach Barrister Byomkesh Chakravarty, a legal luminary sympathetic to the Nationalist cause. Chakravarty had attended Sri Aurobindo’s marriage in 1901, and in 1907 Sri Aurobindo was having dinner at his house when the news of his arrest warrant in the *Bande Mataram Sedition Case* reached him and it was he who advised Sri Aurobindo to report to the police station the same evening. K. K. Mitra hoped that Chakravarty would fight the case on a voluntary basis but the Barrister said, “I won’t charge any fee; however, my assistants have to be paid.” He assured that he and his team would fight for the accused till the trial would conclude in the High Court and his total fee package of Rs. 11,000 was paid in advance. Chakravarty appeared for barely a month and tried to shift Sri Aurobindo’s case to the High Court but this was not conceded. Disappointingly, he withdrew from the case on the ground of heavy engagement with his other cases in the High Court.<sup>32</sup> Sri Aurobindo has referred to Chakravarty’s appearance during the preliminary enquiry: “Mr. Birley’s knowledge of law came a cropper during the cross-examination by Shrijut Byomkesh Chakravarty. Asked to declare when he had taken charge of the case in his own benign hands and how to complete the process of taking over charge of a case, after years of magistracy, Mr. Birley’s head reeled to find these out. Unable to solve the problem he finally tried to save his skin by leaving it to Mr. Chakravarty to decide.”<sup>33</sup>

Although admiration for Sri Aurobindo and the revolutionaries soared to

31. Manoj Das, *Sri Aurobindo in the First Decade of the Twentieth Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., pp. 210-12.

32. See Manoj Das, ‘Sri Aurobindo: Life and Times of the Mahayogi’, *Mother India*, October 2015, pp. 827-28; See Anurag Banerjee, ‘Sri Aurobindo – The Prophet of Nationalism’, *Śraddhā*, 21 February 2018, p. 110; See Amiya K Samanta, *Alipore Bomb Trial 1908-1910*, 2017, p. 124.

33. Sri Aurobindo, *Tales of Prison Life*, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed., 2014, p. 58 (translated from the original Bengali, *Karakahini*).

reverential levels, no lawyer was selfless or patriotic enough to offer their services without charge. Else, they feared retribution from the bureaucracy if they took up the case. On 12<sup>th</sup> July the daily *Hitavadi* of Calcutta asked, “But why cannot the pleaders and barristers defend a man like him without charging fees?”<sup>34</sup>

At this critical juncture, K. K. Mitra approached his friend, an expert criminal lawyer, Ashutosh Biswas, who promised to take up the defence provided the State did not involve him in the prosecution, for he was a Government Pleader. Alas, he was soon appointed Public Prosecutor in the case. Ironically, he was assassinated by Charu Chandra Basu on the premises of the court on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 1909.<sup>35</sup>

By the middle of July the Aurobindo Defence Fund had got Rs. 13,000 and a few weeks later it stood at Rs 23,000, but this was not enough. The Government’s prosecutor, the formidable Eardley Norton (1852-1931) was confident of getting a conviction. Sarojini therefore made a further appeal to her countrymen to raise the defence fund to at least Rs. 60,000, the absolute minimum required to organise Sri Aurobindo’s defence.<sup>36</sup>

Unable to find a competent lawyer, K. K. Mitra, in desperation, requested an experienced and sincere *mukhtar* (legal practitioner), Neelkanta Babu, to defend his nephew, for a daily fee of Rs. 20. K. K. Mitra would daily meet the *mukhtar* to discuss the progress of the case. Although the *mukhtar* dropped his other assignments to solely concentrate on this case, K. K. Mitra realised that Neelkanta Babu’s devotion and sincerity would not be a match for the Government’s famed prosecutor, Norton, who was renowned for his melodrama and histrionics in court and feared for his brow-beating of the witnesses.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, the Government paid him an astronomical sum of Rs. 1000 per day, in their expectation of getting a conviction.

The situation was becoming increasingly dire. In his moment of crisis, Mitra discussed the matter with his former student, Dhannulal Agarwal, now a High Court attorney. They decided to approach a young promising barrister named Chittaranjan Das (1870-1925). He was not yet the famous lawyer he would soon become. But would he accept? Das had gone to England to qualify himself for the I.C.S. but, it is believed, that he was excluded from the list of successful candidates because of his nationalist speeches. He returned to India as a barrister in 1893, the very year of Sri Aurobindo’s homecoming after his long stay in England. We learn from C. R. Das’ daughter, Aparna Devi, that Das was not in a sound financial position in 1908; besides he had other obligations and assignments. Furthermore the defence fund had whittled down to a bare minimum. C. R. Das was a patriot. Coupled with the fact that he had a high regard for Sri Aurobindo, K. K. Mitra hoped that Das’ sentiments

34. Manoj Das, *Sri Aurobindo in the First Decade of the Twentieth Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., pp. 79-80.

35. See Manoj Das, ‘Sri Aurobindo: Life and Times of the Mahayogi’, *Mother India*, October 2015, p. 831; See Amiya K Samanta, *Alipore Bomb Trial 1908-1910*, 2017, p. 137.

36. See K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Sri Aurobindo – a biography and a history*, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed., 2006, pp. 312-13, 324.

37. See Manoj Das, ‘Sri Aurobindo: Life and Times of the Mahayogi’, *Mother India*, October 2015, p. 831.

would impel him to become the defence counsel.<sup>38</sup>

C. R. Das was quite aware of Sri Aurobindo’s contribution to India’s independence movement. When at a public meeting in Calcutta on 9<sup>th</sup> November, 1906, Subodh Mullick announced that he would contribute Rs. 1 lakh for founding a national college — and probably announced that Sri Aurobindo would take up the position of its founder-principal — C. R. Das along with Bipin Pal, Shyamsundar Chakravarty and others spoke on the occasion.<sup>39</sup> Das also had a connection with the *Bande Mataram*, for when a sum of Rs. 2500 was owed to the *Sandhya* office when it was being printed from there, Bipin Pal borrowed this amount from him and two others.<sup>40</sup> On the editorship of *Bande Mataram* Sri Aurobindo wrote: “Bepin Pal who was strongly supported by C. R. Das and others remained as editor.”<sup>41</sup> Further, it was on C. R. Das’ advice that Bipin Chandra Pal refused to give evidence against Sri Aurobindo in the *Bande Mataram Sedition Case*, for which Pal was sentenced to six months imprisonment.<sup>42</sup> Historian R. C. Majumdar records that Sri Aurobindo and C. R. Das were in the first Executive Committee of the Anusilan Samiti — Bengal’s first organised revolutionary secret society. Other Committee members were P. Mitra, Sister Nivedita and Surendranath Tagore.<sup>43</sup>

Curiously, Aparna Devi states that C. R. Das was awaiting an opportunity to defend Sri Aurobindo. Chittaranjan’s mother too may have instilled in him his duty to take up the case. Once, at a séance Das invoked the spirit of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay and told his friends, “Tonight I will ask about the case of Aurobindo.”<sup>44</sup> The ensuing automatic writing read: “You must defend Aurobindo.” Das then exclaimed to Barrister, B. C. Chatterjee, “You’ll see, Bijay, the case will surely come to me.” Soon after the case was offered to Das but he was told that the Defence Fund, largely disbursed to Barrister Byomkesh Chakravarty and his legal team, was left with only Rs. 6000. Although Das was not financially stable, he accepted the challenge.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, he overstrained himself by giving his heart and soul to the defence. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, Das “sat up half the night day after day for months and broke his health to save me”.<sup>46</sup>

While C. R. Das defended Sri Aurobindo, R. C. Banerji defended Barin, Ullaskar, Upendranth and a few others for a small fee or no fee at all. Several other lawyers like Bejoy Krishna Bose, P. Mittra etc. defended the others.<sup>47</sup> Upendranath

38. *Ibid.*, pp. 831-32.

39. Niharendu Roy, *Alipore Conspiracy Case*, 1<sup>st</sup> Ed., 2016, p. 18.

40. See Bejoy Krishna Bose, *Alipore Bomb Trial*, Butterworth & Co. (India), 1922, pp. 85-86.

41. *CWSA*, Vol. 36, p. 79.

42. See Anurag Banerjee, ‘Sri Aurobindo – The Prophet of Nationalism’, *Śraddhā*, 21 February 2018, p. 113.

43. See R. C. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. I, 1962, p. 463, Vol. II, p. 265.

44. Manoj Das, ‘Sri Aurobindo: Life and Times of the Mahayogi’, *Mother India*, October 2015, p. 832.

45. *Ibid.*

46. *CWSA*, Vol. 8, pp. 7-8.

47. Amiya K. Samanta, *Alipore Bomb Trial 1908-1910*, 2017, pp. 125-26.

Banerjee noted: “Except for one or two of us, the others did not have the resources to meet legal expenses; so small amounts of money from the fund that had been raised to support Aurobindo Babu began to be spent on lawyers and barristers. Those who were not satisfied with the meagre fees disappeared within a few days; ultimately Shrijukta Chittaranjan Das gave up the lure of lucre and began pursuing our case.”<sup>48</sup>

K. K. Mitra’s concern for his nephew has been recorded by his daughter, Basanti Mitra:

After arresting Aurodada, the police handcuffed him and tied a rope around his waist. . . . On getting the news, my father went immediately to Aurodada’s house and told the policeman: “Aurobindo is a respectable man — was it proper to handcuff him and tie a rope around his waist?” On hearing this, the policeman untied the rope from Aurodada’s waist.

The responsibility of arranging for Aurodada’s defence fell on my father. Aurodada did not have much money then. Consequently my father published in Sarojinidi’s name an appeal for funds from the public to conduct the case. As a result of the appeal 15,000 rupees were collected . . .

Father used to go daily to the Alipore bar-library and sit there the whole day keeping himself informed about the case. He engaged a barrister to free Sri Aurodada.

He [*Father*] alone looked after the case. Suddenly one day the police came to search our house. They came to find out who had given how much money for conducting the case and whether any arms and ammunition were hidden in the house. They did not find any arms, but they took away some papers.

The police discovered that many people of moderate means had each given a few rupees and this had added up to almost eleven thousand rupees.

The case continued till 1909. Aurodada’s father-in-law, the late Rai Bahadur Bhupal Chandra Bose was in Government service. Therefore he could not give any help or support in this case. Father had to look after the conduct of the case all by himself, and so he became the object of the government’s displeasure. He offered the charge of fighting this case to the barrister Chittaranjan Das and handed him 6000 rupees on the spot.<sup>49</sup>

In the police raid many of the papers, files and notebooks were examined and taken away. They were satisfied that the Defence Fund’s collection consisted of small donations by common people, apart from a sum of one hundred rupees contributed by Swarna Kumari Devi, a daughter of the Tagore family and the mother of Sarala Devi.<sup>50</sup>

48. Upendranath Banerjee, *Nirbashiter Atmakatha* (translated from Bengali by Kumkum Roy – manuscript).

49. Basanti Chakravarty (*née* Mitra), ‘Our Aurodada’, *Srinwantu*, April/August 1984, pp. 84-85.

50. Manoj Das, ‘Sri Aurobindo: Life and Times of the Mahayogi’, *Mother India*, October, 2015, p. 828.

K. K. Mitra’s son, Sukumar Mitra, writes about his father and his efforts in protecting Sri Aurobindo:

Krishna Kumar has provided a detailed account about the revolutionary conspiracy at Muraripukur, regarding which there was a famous case involving the arrest of the revolutionaries, including Sri Aurobindo. This case is famous in history as the Alipore Case. In this context, the way in which Krishna Kumar supported his sister-in-law’s son, Aurobindo Ghose (later Sri Aurobindo), is incomparable, even though this is ignored in history even today. As Krishna Kumar shouldered the responsibility for directing the Alipore Case, he earned the disfavour of the English bureaucracy, and they thought that Krishna Kumar was also a part of the revolutionary party. The heavy price that he had to pay for this was being deported to Agra Jail. The account of his stay in jail that Krishna Kumar provided in his *Atmcharit* is very moving. The account that Sri Aurobindo provides of his life in jail, *Karakahini*, is truly incomparable. But at the same time, the story of Krishna Kumar’s life in jail has remained unacknowledged, even though it provides us with fresh insight. The account that we find of Krishna Kumar’s courage, patience, endurance, faith and reliance on god, and his response to any kind of injustice within the jail, as well as his compassion and prayers for those who were suffering, are both touching and moving.<sup>51</sup>

It was on 11<sup>th</sup> December, 1908 that the Viceroy, Lord Minto, issued orders to arrest and deport K. K. Mitra, along with eight other nationalist leaders. Incidentally, C. R. Das took up the case around the same time. More than a year later, on 8<sup>th</sup> February, 1910, the Government announced K. K. Mitra’s release, along with the eight other Nationalists. When he arrived at Calcutta on 11<sup>th</sup> February, he was received by Sri Aurobindo, among others, at the Railway Station.<sup>52</sup> That Sri Aurobindo held his uncle in high esteem is evident in his Jhalakati speech of 19<sup>th</sup> June, 1909: “Can anyone name a single action of Krishna Kumar Mitra’s which would be derogatory to the reputation of the highest in the land?”<sup>53</sup>

K. K. Mitra’s family had a history of sacrifice and dedication to the country. His father, Gurucharan Mitra, was a patriot and had organised and led a daring armed rebellion against the tyrannical British indigo-planters.<sup>54</sup>

During the period of attending Birley’s court, Sri Aurobindo noticed that one of the accused “was not quiet and well-behaved, like the other boys” and whose

51. Sukumar Mitra, *Sri Aurobindo Ackroyd Ghose*, compiled and edited by Supriya Bhattacharya and Biswajit Gangopadhyay, January 2019 (translated from Bengali by Kumkum Roy – manuscript).

52. Manoj Das, ‘Sri Aurobindo: Life and Times of the Mahayogi’, *Mother India*, January 2017, p. 34..

53. *CWSA*, Vol. 8, p. 34.

54. Manoj Das, *Sri Aurobindo – Life and Times of the Mahayogi*, 1<sup>st</sup> Ed., 2020, p. 43.

“eyes spoke of his evil propensities”. He casually narrates his observations about this person:

One person would however often edge his way towards my side, this was the future approver, Narendranath Gossain. . . . A landlord’s son, brought up in luxury and evil ways, the severe strain and the austerity of prison life had proved too much, this was a fact which he did not hesitate to express before others. The grotesque longing to be freed by any means from this agony began to grow upon his mind from day to day. . . . During this period Gossain developed a tendency to be curious and ask all kinds of questions. . . . Gossain himself had confessed that the police were trying to persuade him in a number of ways to turn into a “King’s approver”. He had once mentioned this to me in the court. “What did you tell them?” “Do you think I am going to listen to that! And even if I do, what do I know that I could offer evidence in the way they would like to have it?” When after a few days he broached the subject once again, I noticed events had moved a bit too far. While standing by my side at the identification parade he told me, “The police are visiting me all the time.” “Why don’t you tell them that Sir Andrew Fraser was the chief patron of the secret society, that would be ample reward for their labour,” I told him jokingly.<sup>55</sup>

To enable Gossain to extract information from his fellow-detainees, particularly about the secret supporters of their organisation, the jail authorities herded the prisoners together in three dormitories.<sup>56</sup> In order to gain a pardon Narendranath Gossain finally became a King’s approver. Sri Aurobindo writes: “. . . I could make out that, once under the thumb of the police, by telling them fact or fiction, just as they needed, Gossain would try to save his own skin. The degradations of an evil nature were being enacted before our very eyes. . . . He started to adduce economic and political justifications in support of ruining his companions through treachery.”<sup>57</sup>

The news of Narendranath’s treachery reached the shores of England. The *Times* of London reported on 20<sup>th</sup> August: “The Magistrate of Alipore today committed 30 of the 32 men charged in connection with the discovery of bombs in Mr. Aurobindo Ghose’s garden at Maniktollah, to take their trial at the sessions. They include Mr. Aurobindo Ghose himself. Narendra Nath Gossain, who turned approver, was engaged this afternoon.”<sup>58</sup> Gossain’s testimony in court would have certainly led to

55. Sri Aurobindo, *Tales of Prison Life*, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed., 2014, pp. 70-72 (translated from the original Bengali, *Karakahini*).

56. See Manoj Das, ‘Sri Aurobindo: Life and Times of the Mahayogi’, *Mother India*, November 2015, p. 872.

57. Sri Aurobindo, *Tales of Prison Life*, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed., 2014, pp. 72-73 (translated from the original Bengali, *Karakahini*).

58. Manoj Das, *Sri Aurobindo in the First Decade of the Twentieth Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., pp. 80-81.

Sri Aurobindo’s conviction. Sri Aurobindo, however, offhandedly noted that the “only worthwhile event in the magistrate’s court was the evidence of Narendranath Goswami.”<sup>59</sup>

Gossain’s confession was designed to show the existence of the secret society and Sri Aurobindo’s leadership role in it. In his inaccurate testimony he was to swear that Sri Aurobindo not only knew but also helped to plan several dacoities and bombings. Barin later clarified: “He knew nothing about our internal matters, he had provided some support when a bomb was hurled at the mayor of Chandernagore, Tardiwell, and he had taken a team to Bankura for a dacoity at a place near their zamindari.” Barin added: “Naren was ensnaring several people with his evidence, a mix of truth and lies.”<sup>60</sup> Gossain also stated that he often reported to Sri Aurobindo because he was their leader. Nolini Kanta Gupta later rebutted this statement by declaring that none of the boys had free access to Sri Aurobindo. However, some of Gossain’s evidence was true and incriminating; for instance most of the boys in the secret society knew Sri Aurobindo as their chief, “Karta” or “Bara Karta”. Gossain testified:

I have heard the name “Bara Karta” applied to a member of our society: it was applied to Arabindo Ghose: Karta means a “leader”.

The name “Chhota Karta” is applied to Barendra Kumar Ghose. If the word Karta was used without either “Bara” or “Chhota” it would refer to the “Bara Karta,” viz., to Arabindo Ghose.<sup>61</sup>

Such damning evidence in the court would have proved Sri Aurobindo to be the principal figure in the conspiracy and would have almost certainly led to a harsh conviction. Sri Aurobindo told *Sanjivani*: “On the day he gave evidence as an approver, he was removed to the European ward”,<sup>62</sup> as the prison authorities feared retribution from his revolutionary comrades. Barin mentioned that earlier Gossain had become exceedingly curious and tried to gather details about the secret society. Under the guise of a friendly scuffle, Upendranath and others, out of annoyance, had given him a sound thrashing. Gossain had immediately complained to the jailor, “This gang of goondas will not stop till they have beaten me to death.”<sup>63</sup>

A plan in utmost secrecy was devised by Satyendranath Bose (1882-1908) and Kanailal Dutta (1888-1908). Satyen was hospitalised due to a severe attack of bronchitis. On 29<sup>th</sup> August, Satyen sent Naren a message that he too wanted to make a confession. Naren knew that his evidence as an approver needed to be corroborated.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

60. Barindra Kumar Ghose, *Barindrer Atmakahani* (translated from Bengali by Kumkum Roy – manuscript).

61. See Archival Notes: ‘Sri Aurobindo on Trial’, *Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research*, Dec. 1981, p. 207.

62. Manoj Das, *Sri Aurobindo in the First Decade of the Twentieth Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., p. 113.

63. Barindra Kumar Ghose, *Barindrer Atmakahani* (translated from Bengali by Kumkum Roy – manuscript).

So when he was enticed by Satyen he was only too eager to meet him. With the Jail Superintendent’s approval Naren met Satyen the same evening in the hospital and also the very next day. On 30<sup>th</sup> August, Kanai pretended to have a terrible stomach ache and got admitted to the hospital. On 31<sup>st</sup> August Naren, accompanied by a European guard, went to the hospital. Whilst the guard waited outside, Naren met Satyen in the dispensary while Kanai hid himself in the verandah. After conversing with Naren for a while Satyen shot him in the thigh. In shock, Naren raced out screaming, “For God’s sake, save me, they will kill me!” The guard tried to knock the revolver off Satyen’s hand and in the scuffle fractured his thumb. When Kanai heard the commotion, he came out of the verandah and saw that the prey had fled. Naren had scrambled out of the dispensary and scampered down the hospital steps. Kanai rushed to the hospital gate, brandished his pistol and asked the guard: “In which direction has Naren gone?” The frightened man indicated the direction and stepped aside to let Kanai through. This was when the jailor and his entourage were on their rounds. When they saw Naren running with bloodied feet they stopped him and enquired what had happened. Naren was too terrified to speak, and could just blurt out, “He is coming, let me go.” Exactly at this moment Kanai appeared with his pistol in his hand. Such was Kanai’s menacing warrior-like appearance that the jailor and his team thought it best to beat a hasty retreat. Seeing that the path was clear, Kanai pursued Naren and repeatedly shot at him from behind. One of the bullets pierced through his spine and entered his chest and Naren fell to the ground, dying immediately.<sup>64</sup> The assassination was well timed as the Sessions Court was to open on 1<sup>st</sup> September and Naren was the first witness. About the approver’s elimination Nolini Kanta Gupta wrote:

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

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

All of a sudden, one evening, the alarm bell of the jail rang out. This bell with its furious clang was rung only in a grave emergency. At the same time a

64. See Shyam Kumari, ‘Kanailal Dutt – A Great Revolutionary’, *Mother India*, October 2012, pp. 816-17; See Barindra Kumar Ghose, *Barindrer Atmakahani* (translated from Bengali by Kumkum Roy – manuscript); See Upendranath Banerjee, *Nirbashiter Atmakatha* – translated from Bengali by Kumkum Roy – manuscript).

prisoner ran wildly about, shouting in Hindustani . . . “Naren Gosain has been done for, Naren Gosain has been done for!”<sup>65</sup>

On 26<sup>th</sup> October, *The Times* of London wrote about the confiscation of the *Bande Mataram* newspaper, as it published an article alluding to the murder of informer Narendranath Gossain titled, ‘Traitors in the Camp’, which stated: “No more shall the wretch of an Indian who kisses away the heads of his comrades reckon himself safe from the avenging hand. From the moment that Kanai fired the fatal shot, the spaces of the country’s heaven have been ringing with the echo of a voice — ‘Beware of traitors!’”<sup>66</sup> Concerning this article Sri Aurobindo noted that since the finances became impossible the editors “deliberately wrote an article which made the Govt. come down on the paper and stop its publication, so that the *Bande Mataram* might end with some éclat and in all honour.”<sup>67</sup>

A court was set up in the prison itself. On 21<sup>st</sup> October, the High Court sentenced Kanai and Satyen to death. A puzzled and curious Police Chief could not contain himself and asked Kanai that since he was going to die what was the harm in telling how the revolvers were smuggled into prison. Kanai became serious and sarcastically replied, “It is the spirit of Khudiram who gave me his revolver.”<sup>68</sup> The revolvers were actually smuggled in as Barin was recklessly planning to escape from prison, a decision Sri Aurobindo did not agree with. “As far as I am concerned,” he said, “I mean to stand trial.”<sup>69</sup> Barin had organised for a dozen revolvers to be brought in through the Chandernagore revolutionaries. Sudhangshu Jiban Rai gave the first revolver to Barin in a small packet on 23<sup>rd</sup> August. But since the revolver was too big for Satyen, Srish Ghosh handed over a smaller one to Barin on 30<sup>th</sup> August. That evening Hem Das went to the hospital and handed over the revolver to Satyen. Barin, though, was not informed of the assassination plans.<sup>70</sup>

Kanai declined to appeal against his death sentence; his statement to the District Magistrate was touchingly succinct and simple: “I wish to state that I did kill him. I do not wish to give any statement why I killed him. Wait, I do wish to give a reason. It was because he was a traitor to his country.”<sup>71</sup> Barin remarked that Kanai “was the quiet, silent one amongst us, he would generally not speak unless it was absolutely necessary.”<sup>72</sup> A day before the hanging a British jail warden saw Kanai smiling, and said, “You are smiling now, but tomorrow morning all the smiles will disappear from

65. Nolini Kanta Gupta, *Collected Works of Nolini Kanta Gupta*, Vol. 7, 1<sup>st</sup> Ed., 1978, pp. 379-80.

66. See Manoj Das, *Sri Aurobindo in the First Decade of the Twentieth Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., p. 81.

67. *CWSA*, Vol. 36, p. 80.

68. Nolini Kanta Gupta, *Collected Works of Nolini Kanta Gupta*, Vol. 7, 1<sup>st</sup> Ed., 1978, p. 370.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 377.

70. See Niharendu Roy, *Alipore Conspiracy Case*, 1<sup>st</sup> Ed., 2016, p. 54; See Barindra Kumar Ghose, *Barindrer Atmakahani* (translated from Bengali by Kumkum Roy – manuscript).

71. Website: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kanailal\\_Dutta/12.1.2024](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kanailal_Dutta/12.1.2024)

72. Barindra Kumar Ghose, *Barindrer Atmakahani* (translated from Bengali by Kumkum Roy – manuscript).

your lips.” When Kanai was brought to the gallows the next day he saw the warden, and asked him smilingly, “How do you find me now?” The warden was speechless and later told Charu Chandra Roy, “I am the sinner who has executed Kanailal. If you have a hundred men like him, your aim will be fulfilled.”<sup>73</sup>

On 10<sup>th</sup> November Upendranath Bhattacharya reached the prison just before 5 a.m. Many people, including the revolutionaries Bagha Jatin, Rash Behari Bose, M. N. Roy and Bipin Bihari Ganguly, had already gathered there. Kanai’s elder brother, Ashutosh Dutt, who was escorted by the revolutionary Amarendra Chatterjee, had been granted permission to receive Kanai’s body. Upendranath describes a poignantly moving scene:

The Jail Superintendent was Irish. Kanai’s courage charmed him. Climbing the gallows-platform Kanai examined the rope. He then descended and talked joyfully with those present. As it struck five he took off his spectacles and handed it over to the doctor. “Please pass it on to my brother,” he said . . .

The death-bell rang and Kanai was no more.

Peeping through the doors I saw hectic activities inside. The jail superintendent, the jailor and the doctor — all of them pressed handkerchiefs to their eyes as they sat down around a table to finish the paper works. . . . Then the doctor came closer to Ashutosh Babu and suppressing his surging tears, said, “Please don’t mind; I have to work for a living, after all . . .”

“In what way are you at fault?” Ashu Babu, his face gloomy, consoled him.

“Many a hanging have I witnessed, but never had I known nor will I know again anything like this. I feel blessed.” He took a long breath and resumed, “The joy with which he lived those few days after the judgment for his execution was delivered, had never been seen by me in any convict, European or of any other race. He had a sound sleep and he woke up by himself at 3 a.m. and took a bath and prayed and read the *Gita* and the *Bhagavatam*. With steps firm and fearless he climbed the execution platform.”

Then the doctor handed over Kanai’s spectacles to Ashutosh Babu, overwhelmed with respect for the departed soul and said, “He instructed me to give this to you.”

We who heard their exchange stood stunned.<sup>74</sup>

Kanai’s cremation was done with tremendous fanfare. Thousands participated in his funeral procession to pay their respects and shouts of “Bande Mataram”, mingled with patriotic songs, resonated right through the morning. Many were eager to shoulder the bier. Enormous amounts of flowers and sandalwood paste were used

73. See Website: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kanailal\\_Dutta/12.1.2024](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kanailal_Dutta/12.1.2024).

74. Manoj Das, ‘Sri Aurobindo: Life and Times of the Mahayogi’, *Mother India*, December 2015, p. 948.

for Kanai’s mortal remains. At the cremation grounds it became almost impossible to control the crowds. He was bathed in ghee and cremated on a huge heap of sandalwood sticks.<sup>75</sup> On 13<sup>th</sup> November *Sandhya* published an article titled ‘Kanai Lal in the Cremation Ground’ for which it was prosecuted under the newly passed Newspapers (Incitement to Offences) Act, 1908. This led to forfeiture of their press and finally *Sandhya* ceased to exist.<sup>76</sup>

The British Press was intrigued and *The Times* of London covered several reports on Kanai and Satyen. About Kanai’s cremation *The Times* wrote:

It seems that the scenes at the cremation of Kanai who was hanged yesterday for the assassination of Gossain, the approver, was even more extraordinary than appeared from the first account. The body was carried through the streets with the face uncovered and the thousands who pressed around the cortege, gazed upon the features of the “murdered Kanai”, while Purdah women followed in closed carriages. Hundreds of rupees were collected around the burning ghat in order to enrich the burning pyre, and there was a general rush to gather portions of the ashes, which were carried away in vases of silver and gold, while fragments and bones were preserved for despatch of relics to other towns.<sup>77</sup>

Barin wrote that Kanai “was a brave, magnanimous soul, forged out of metal, one of those who, by their very nature, offer their lives for others, even if unasked; he was a kshatriya, created by God . . .”<sup>78</sup> On Kanai’s valour Barin wrote in his autobiography:

. . . he spent his time sleeping, and reading the Gita. As a result of this desireless, pure, peaceful life of surrender his hair grew long, his face glowed and appeared full, he put on a great deal of weight. . . . The previous day, in the evening, he had come out into the courtyard; he stood outside my cell, and those of several others, smiling, saluting, and taking leave; the guard did not obstruct him that day, instead, he kept the door of the courtyard open. I will never forget that smiling, happy bright face; Kanai was then a great ascetic, a true sannyasin who had renounced everything. Whether the path was mistaken or true, the greatness of his death cannot be denied; there were people, even amongst the English, who were in awe of his courage. Amongst us, Kanai was the last priest who sacrificed himself for the sake of the country. After that, there were many others who died amongst other groups, but Kanai’s blessed memory remains undimmed. Kanai remains incomparable throughout the world, because such

75. *Ibid.*, pp. 948-49.

76. Amiya K Samanta, *Alipore Bomb Trial 1908-1910*, 2017, p. 77.

77. Manoj Das, *Sri Aurobindo in the First Decade of the Twentieth Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., p. 84.

78. Barindra Kumar Ghose, *Barindrer Atmakahani* (translated from Bengali by Kumkum Roy – manuscript).

bravery does not belong to any caste, lineage or country; wherever anyone adopts the true vow of the Kshatriya, to protect the weak, the person is worthy of respect.<sup>79</sup>

Kanai's sacrifice also left a profound impact on Upendranath Banerjee. He narrates:

What we saw was indeed worth seeing. The picture is absolutely fresh in my memory; and will remain so till the end of my life. I have seen many sadhus and sanyasis in my life, but I have rarely seen a face as calm and composed as Kanai's. A face without a trace of anxiety, without a shadow of sorrow, without the slightest restlessness — like a cheerful lotus, blooming radiantly with its own joy.<sup>80</sup>

When a disciple showed a photo of Kanai to the Mother, she exclaimed: “This one was with Sri Aurobindo!” After being told that he along with Satyen had shot dead the traitor Naren Goswami she remarked: “It is clearly written on his face that he was with Sri Aurobindo — it is like an aura. His psychic being is burning intensely; it is quite an individualised psychic being.”<sup>81</sup>

Satyen was hanged on 21<sup>st</sup> November. To prevent a similar spectacle like Kanai's cremation, the authorities cremated him inside the jail compound the same morning. A friend of the revolutionaries, A. C. Roy, who presented himself before the jail gate along with a few others, stated:

A white man in uniform, a Superintendent of Police, came near me and said, “You can go now. The thing is over. Satyendra died bravely. Kanai was brave, but it seemed Satyendra was braver.” Then came a sergeant who said, “When I went to his cell to get him to the gallows, he was wide awake. When I said, “Satyendra, be ready,” he answered, “Well, I am quite ready,” and smiled. He walked steadily to the gallows. He mounted it bravely and bore it cheerfully. A brave lad.”<sup>82</sup>

Satyendranath Bose was the son of Abhaya Charan Bose, one of the younger brothers of Rajnarayan Bose. He was thus a maternal uncle of Sri Aurobindo, although he was ten years younger than him. In December 1907, he attended the Congress session at Surat as head of the “National Volunteers” from Midnapore. On Sri Aurobindo's order they helped to break the Congress. After the Muzaffarpore

79. *Ibid.*

80. Upendranath Banerjee, *Nirbashiter Atmakatha* – translated from Bengali by Kumkum Roy – manuscript).

81. Mona Sarkar, *A Spirit Indomitable*, 1989, p. 20.

82. Manoj Das, ‘Sri Aurobindo: Life and Times of the Mahayogi’, *Mother India*, December 2015, p. 950.

incident Satyen got scent of the arrests and destroyed all documents at Midnapore. However, on 3<sup>rd</sup> May the police found a gun and Satyen was prosecuted under the Arms Act. He was in police custody till 20<sup>th</sup> June and then released on bail. Two weeks later he was convicted under the Arms Act and sentenced to two months imprisonment. Before the term of his sentence was over, he was charged in the Alipore conspiracy case and transferred to the Alipore jail.<sup>83</sup>

Satyen was perhaps carrying the same gun during the fractious Surat Congress Conference of 1907. Referring to his presence in the Conference, Sri Aurobindo remarked, “Satyen Bose was with me and he had a pistol. He said to me, ‘I have a pistol with me. Shall I shoot down Suren Banerji?’ I said, ‘For heaven’s sake, don’t do that.’” (*Laughter*) “But why did he want to shoot him?” queried a disciple. Sri Aurobindo replied: “He must have got very excited. At any rate there was a pistol, there was Satyen and there was Banerji.” (*Laughter*)<sup>84</sup>

Referring to the hanging of Kanai and Satyen, Lala Lajpat Rai wrote in his autobiography that “a day will come when people will take wreaths of homage to their statues”.<sup>85</sup>

Although Gossain had testified in the Magistrate’s court the law stipulated that he give evidence in the Sessions Court so that the defence counsel get an opportunity to cross-examine him. Thus the potential incriminating evidence provided by him was rendered inadmissible in the Sessions Court. Nolini Kanta Gupta affirmed:

Kanai and others had wanted to get rid of Naren Gossain as soon as possible, not simply because he had been a traitor to the country but in order that his testimony be rejected in the Sessions court, for his evidence would have no value unless it could be tested in cross-examination. This saved us all, at least from the clutches of the law.<sup>86</sup>

In an interview to *Sanjivani*, featured in *The Bengalee* of 21<sup>st</sup> May, 1909, Sri Aurobindo was asked if Naren Gossain had said anything about the false statements he made in court about him. Sri Aurobindo replied: “Yes. He said to one, “I had no desire to implicate Aurobindo Babu, but I would not be saved without implicating him, and therefore I have also implicated him.”<sup>87</sup>

At the time of the assassination Sri Aurobindo’s reaction was mystifying; Sudhir Sarkar’s account makes fascinating reading:

On the day Naren Goswami was killed by Kanai, the sound of the firing brought cheer to our hearts. . . . By and by news reached us that Kanai had overpowered

83. See Niharendu Roy, *Alipore Conspiracy Case*, 1<sup>st</sup> Ed., 2016, pp. 52-53.

84. Nirodbaran, *Talks with Sri Aurobindo*, Vol. 1, 2009, p. 470.

85. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Sri Aurobindo – a biography and a history*, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed., 2006, p. 324.

86. Nolini Kanta Gupta, *Collected Works of Nolini Kanta Gupta*, Vol. 7, 1<sup>st</sup> Ed., 1978, p. 380.

87. Manoj Das, *Sri Aurobindo in the First Decade of the Twentieth Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., p. 112.

and finished off Naren Goswami in front of the jail hospital. We felt like dancing out of sheer joy. The alarm bell had already started ringing following the sound of the shots.

Sri Aurobindo was then taking his bath and he went on with it as if he had heard nothing. I was wiping his body. At that time I used to bathe Sri Aurobindo in the presence of the guards every morning since during that period he had ceased to make any effort at doing things himself, eating, bathing or anything; he had even stopped making comments. He remained in the state of perpetual absentmindedness. Our elders, Upen-da and others, finding me a strong and healthy lad, had selected me to look after him. I told Sri Aurobindo that the guards were asking people to get inside their rooms, and that the alarm bell was ringing because Goswami had been murdered. Shots could still be heard outside. Sri Aurobindo seemed to be totally unaware of all this as he slowly entered the room. Such a big event for us! He seemed hardly to take any notice of it. He never made any comment on these events even afterwards. His silence was something totally unlike that of ours, which is just the shutting of our mouths. Slowly his silence spread itself inwardly and outwardly; all became silent . . .<sup>88</sup>

*(To be continued)*

GAUTAM MALAKER

88. *A Spirit Indomitable*, edited by Mona Sarkar, 1989, p. 100.

*To know the highest Truth and to be in harmony with it is the condition of right being, to express it in all that we are, experience and do is the condition of right living.*

*Sri Aurobindo*

*(The Synthesis of Yoga, CWSA, Vol. 23, pp. 374-75)*



*an honest business for honest people*

*With Best Compliments from:*

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

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

E-mail: [contact@snsunderson.com](mailto:contact@snsunderson.com) Telephone: 23612776, 43750060  
Fax: 011-23620632

### *Our Lines of Business:*

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

### *Branches at:*

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

**Completed 98 years on Basant 2024**

PY/50/2024-2026

RNI 8667/1963

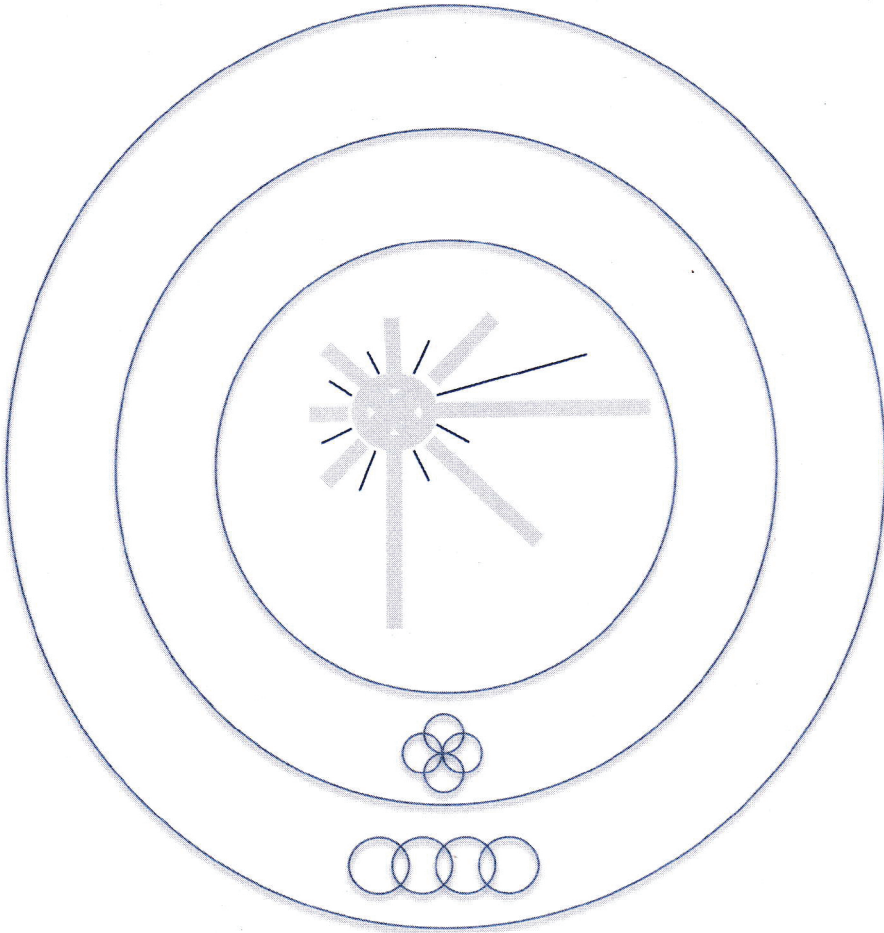
Licensed to Post without Prepayment under

No. TN/PMG/(CCR)/WPP 80/24-26

Valid from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2026

Dates of posting: 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of every month

*The Birth of Suns is the Dawn of Creativity...*



**Aurosoorya.com:** The source and origin

**DeepOrderTechnologies.com:** Exploring deep fourfold order

**QIQuantum.com:** Quaternary based quantum computation