

MOTHER INDIA

FEBRUARY 21, 1968 : THE MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY

Price: Re. 1.00

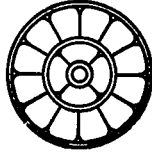
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Subscription rates: Annual Rs. 10/-, Sh. 20/-, \$ 3/-
Single copy Re. 1.00 in India.

All correspondence to be addressed to
MOTHER INDIA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-2, India.

Publishers : Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust.

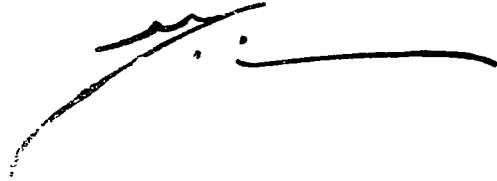


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XX

No. 1

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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Editor: K. D. SETHNA

Assistant Editor : MANOJ DAS

Published by : P. COUNOUMA

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM, PONDICHERY—2

Printed by : AMIYO RANJAN GANGULI

at Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry—2

PRINTED IN INDIA

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

THE FUTURE

WORDS OF THE MOTHER ON THE CENTRAL THEME FOR
"MOTHER INDIA"

Why and how to live
for the future, in the future.
—

THE "WHY" AND "HOW" OF THE FUTURE

SOME LETTERS OF THE MOTHER

SRI AUROBINDO has come on earth not to bring a teaching or a creed in competition with previous creeds or teachings, but to show the way to overpass the past and to open concretely the route towards an imminent and inevitable future.

22.2.1967

Sri Aurobindo does not belong to the past nor to history.

Sri Aurobindo is the future on the way to its realisation.

So we have to put on an eternal youth to be able to advance with the necessary rapidity and not to be laggards on the way

1967

To be young, it is to live in the future.

To be young, it is to be always ready to abandon what one is to become what one ought to be.

To be young, it is to never admit the irreparable.

1967

From the moment you are satisfied and aspire no longer, you begin to die. Life is movement, life is effort ; it is marching forward, climbing towards future revelations and realisations. Nothing is more dangerous than wanting to rest.

The only hope for the future is in a change of man's consciousness and the change is bound to come.

But it is left to men to decide if they will collaborate for this change or it will have to be enforced upon them by the power of crashing circumstances.

August, 1964

Unless we break with the habits and beliefs of the past, there is little hope of advancing rapidly towards the future.

23.12.1967

In the final analysis everything really depends on the Divine Grace and we should look at the future with confidence and serenity, progressing at the same time as quickly as we can.

When you come to the yoga, you must be ready to have all your mental build-ings and all your vital scaffoldings shattered to pieces. You must be prepared to be suspended in the air with nothing to support you except your faith. You will have to forget your past self and its clingsings altogether, to pluck it out of your consciousness and be born anew, free from every kind of bondage. Think not of what you were, but of what you aspire to be ; be in all what you want to realise. Turn from your dead past and look straight towards the future. Your religion, country, family, lie there ; it is the DIVINE.

For the Government of India, one thing is to be known—does it want to live for the future, or does it desperately stick to the past ?

20-6-1967

The future of India is very clear. India is the Guru of the world. The future structure of the world depends on India. India is the living soul. India is incarnating the spiritual knowledge in the world. The Government of India ought to recognise the significance of India in this sphere and plan their action accordingly.

Students' Prayer

Make of us the hero warriors we aspire to become. May we fight successfully the great battle of the future that is to be born, against the past that seeks to endure, so that the new things may manifest and we be ready to receive them.

Auroville is the shelter built for all those who want to hasten towards a future of knowledge, peace and unity.

16-3-1967

At last a place where one will be able to think of the future only.

January, 1967

Do you know what the flower which we have called "Successful Future" signifies when given to you ? It signifies the hope—nay, even the promise—that you will participate in the descent of the supramental world. For that descent will be the successful consummation of our work, a descent of which the full glory has not yet been or else the whole face of life would have been different.

By slow degrees the Supramental is exerting its influence ; now one part of the being and now another feels the embrace or the touch of its divinity ; but when it comes down in all its self-existent power, a supreme radical change will seize the whole

nature. We are moving nearer and nearer the hour of its complete triumph. Once the world-conditions are ready the full descent will take place carrying everything before it. Its presence will be unmistakable, its force will brook no resistance, doubts and difficulties will not torture you any longer. For the Divine will stand manifest—unveiled in its total perfection.

I do not, however, mean to say that the whole world will at once feel its presence or be transformed ; but I do mean that a part of humanity will know and participate in its descent—say, this little world of ours here. From there the transfiguring grace will most effectively radiate. And fortunately for the aspirants, that successful future will materialise for them in spite of all the obstacles set in its way by unregenerate human nature !

1932

When I announced to you the manifestation of the supramental Consciousness and Light and Force, I should have added that it was an event forerunner of the birth of a new world. But at that time the new world was so much engulfed in the ancient that even now there are very few people who are aware of its birth and of the difference it brings into the world. Yet the action of the new forces has continued in a very regular, very persistent, very obstinate and, to a certain extent, very effective way.

The result of all that has been noted at every step in almost day-to-day experience....First of all, it is not merely a new conception of the spiritual life and the divine Reality....

The old spirituality was an escape from life towards the divine Reality, leaving the world where it was, as it was. Our new vision, on the contrary, is the divinisation of life, the transformation of the material into a divine world....But this work could have been a simple continuation, an amelioration, an enlargement of the world as it was. . . .But what has happened is truly a new thing. . . .

To simplify, one can say that the old world, the creation of what Sri Aurobindo calls the Overmind, the Overmental, was in a characteristic way the age of the gods and therefore the age of religions. . .and, at the summit of all that, as an effort towards a still higher realisation, was born this idea of the unity of religions, of Something that is unique behind all manifestation....This conception is on the borderland ; it is something which still belongs to the overmental world, to the overmental creation and from there seems to look at another thing, something of which it has only a presentiment, which is a new creation it tries to attain but is unable to seize. To seize it, what is needed is a reversal. One must come out of the overmental creation. . . .

In the supramental creation there will no more be religions. All life will be the expression, the flowering of the Divine Unity manifesting in the world. And there will be no more what men now call gods.

These great divine beings themselves will be able to participate in the new creation, but for that they must put on what we may call the supramental substance on

earth. And if there are some who choose to remain in their world, as they are, if they decide not to manifest themselves physically their relation with the other beings of the supramental world on earth will be a relation of friends, of collaborators, of equal to equal, because the highest divine essence will have manifested in the beings of the new supramental world on earth.

When the physical substance will be supramentalised, to be born on earth in a body will not be a cause of inferiority, rather the contrary, there will be gained a plenitude which could not be obtained otherwise.

But all that is of the future, a future that has begun but will take some time before realising itself integrally...

There are people who love adventure, and to whom... I give a call...

You must leave behind everything that has been foreseen, whatever has been designed, whatever has been built up, and then on the march into the unknown.
Come what may !

July 10, 1957

THE MOTHER'S HELP

A LETTER

I am not in the habit of
forcing my will upon others.

If they, themselves, ask for help,
the help will be given.

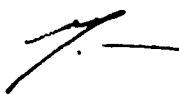
THE PEACE AND THE CALM

A LETTER OF THE MOTHER

Q : J'ai senti une sorte de douleur, surtout dans ma poitrine, comme réaction à la descente intense de la vibration-force et j'ai eu l'impression que le corps voulait la pervertir.

*Pour que l'expérience
ne soit pas dangereu-
sement déformée et
douloureuse, il faut
garder un calme
absolu.*

*C'est seulement dans
le paix et le calme
que la Force Divine
s'exprime et agit.*



Q: I have felt a sort of pain, especially in the chest, as reaction to the intense descent of the vibration-force, and I have had the impression that the body wanted to pervert it.

A: In order that the experience may not be dangerously deformed and painful, one should keep an absolute calm.

It is only in the peace and the calm that the Divine Force expresses itself and acts.

THE MOTHER REPLIES TO A YOUNG SADHAKA

Q : Voulez-vous m'expliquer pourquoi j'ai hésité à parler à X ?

R : C'était l'influence d'une volonté extérieure (celle de X) agissant sur le mental et le vital.

Q : Will you please explain to me why I have hesitated to speak to X ?

A : It was the influence of an outside will (that of X) acting upon the mind and the vital. (21-3-1934)

Q : Pourquoi l'influence de la volonté extérieure des gens n'agit-elle pas réciproquement, comme dans le cas de Y et moi ? Je n'aime pas parler à Y même si elle me parle; cela montre alors que l'influence de ma volonté extérieure n'agit pas sur son mental et son vital. Pourquoi ?

R : Cela prouve que sa volonté est aussi forte que la vôtre et c'est très bien. De quel droit voudriez-vous que votre volonté agisse sur les autres ? Chacun doit être libre. C'est seulement le Guru qui a le droit d'imposer sa volonté sur celle du disciple qui l'a choisi.

Q : Why doesn't the influence of the outside will of people act reciprocally, as in the case of Y and myself ? I do not like to talk to Y although she talks to me; then this shows that the influence of my outside will does not act upon her mind and vital. Why ?

A : This proves that her will is as strong as yours, and that is good. By what right do you want that your will should act upon others ? Each one should be free. It is only the Guru who has the right to impose his will on that of the disciple who has chosen him. (21-3-1934)

Q : Pendant le Pranam j'ai éprouvé une dépression psychique.

R : Le psychique n'est jamais déprimé.

Q : During the Pranam I felt a psychic depression.

A : The psychic is never depressed.

Q : Pendant la dépression j'ai prié : "Comme le vital est infidèle ! La Mère fait tant de choses pour moi mais tout de même il se révolte. Je n'ai jamais vu une telle infidélité. Quelle grande désobéissance ! O Douce Mère ! permet que le vital ne se révolte plus et qu'il ait confiance en le Divin seul."

R : C'est la partie du mental qui est convertie, qui se détache du reste, observe, juge et regrette ce que font le mental ordinaire et le vital non-régénéré.

Q : During the depression I prayed: "How unfaithful is the vital! The Mother does many things for me but all the same it revolts. O Sweet Mother! grant that the vital may not revolt any more and that it may have trust in the Divine alone."

A : It is the part of the mind that is converted, that detaches itself from the rest, observes, judges and regrets what the ordinary mind and the unregenerate vital do.

(21-3-1934)

Q : Alors n'est-il pas vrai qu'il y a trois sortes de dépression : la dépression du mental, du vital et aussi du psychique ?

R : Je vous dis que le psychique ne connaît pas la dépression, parce que sa nature est divine et que dans le Divin il n'y a pas de dépression.

Q : Then is it not true that there are three kinds of depression: the depression of the mind, of the vital and also of the psychic ?

A : I tell you that the psychic does not know depression, because its nature is divine and because in the Divine there is no depression.

(22-3-1934)

Q : Est-ce que le psychique ne se déprime pas quand le mental et le vital font comme ils veulent et quand ils désobéissent au Divin ou se révoltent contre le Divin ?

R : NON—NON—NON. Est-ce compris ?

Le psychique peut voir avec regret la stupidité des autres parties de l'être, mais par sa nature même il lui est impossible d'être déprimé.

Q : Does not the psychic get depressed when the mind and the vital do what they like and when they disobey the Divine or revolt against the Divine ?

A : NO—NO—NO. Is that understood ?

The psychic may see with regret the stupidity of the other parts of the being, but by its very nature it is impossible for it to be depressed.

(22-3-1934)

Q : Si cette pensée : "Ce que Vous faites est toujours pour mon bien", est fermement établie dans le mental, alors est-ce qu'elle ne peut pas influencer l'être vital ?

R : Certainement ; mais en retour souvent l'être vital influence le mental et crée en lui des doutes.

Q : If this thought—"What You do is always for my good"—is firmly established in the mind, then can it not influence the vital being ?

A : Certainly ; but often in return the vital being influences the mind and creates doubts in it.

(22-3-1934)

Q : Y a-t-il un moyen pour que le vital n'influence pas l'être mental ?

R : Que le mental reçoive la lumière d'en haut et se refuse à être influencé.

Q : Is there a means by which the vital may not influence the mental being ?

A : Let the mind receive the light from on high and refuse to be influenced.
(22.3.1934)

Q : Hier Vous avez écrit : "Cela prouve que sa volonté est aussi forte que la vôtre et c'est très bien." Je ne comprends pas bien ce que Vous voulez dire par : "C'est très bien".

R : C'est toujours très bien quand quelqu'un a une forte volonté.

Q : Yesterday You wrote: "This proves that her will is as strong as yours, and that is very good." I don't understand well what You mean to say by "That is very good".

A : It is always very good when somebody has a strong will. (22.3.1934)

Q : Comment se fait-il que la volonté de X agisse sur la mienne tandis que la mienne n'agit pas sur celle de Y ?

R : Cela prouve simplement que vous êtes plus ouvert à l'influence de X que Y ne l'est à la vôtre. C'est toujours regrettable quand on est ouvert à l'influence d'une autre personne. On ne devrait recevoir aucune influence excepté celle du Divin.

Q : How is it that the will of X acts on mine while mine does not act on Y's ?

A : This simply proves that you are more open to X's influence than Y is to yours. It is always a matter of regret when one is open to the influence of any other person. One should not receive any influence except the Divine's. (22.3.1934)

Q : Que faire maintenant que je suis influencé par X ?

R : Moins s'occuper d'elle en pensée et en fait.

Q : What to do now that I am influenced by X ?

A : Be less occupied with her in thought and in fact.

Q : Comment suis-je influencé par X ?

R : Parce que vous sentez une attraction pour elle et sa volonté semble plus forte que la vôtre.

Q : How am I influenced by X ?

R : Because you feel an attraction for her and her will seems to be stronger than yours. (25.3.1934)

Q : Puisque Y a une forte volonté de me parler, alors je ne comprends pas comment cela est bon.

R : C'est plutôt un désir ou un instinct qu'une volonté.

Je ne dis pas qu'il soit bon qu'elle veuille vous parler, je dis qu'il est bon, d'une façon générale, d'avoir une forte volonté. Quand on a une forte volonté, il ne reste plus qu'à bien l'orienter; quand on n'a pas de volonté, il faut d'abord s'en construire

une, ce qui est toujours long et parfois difficile.

Q : Since Y has a strong will to talk to me, I do not understand how that can be good.

A : It is more a desire or an instinct than a will.

I don't say that it is good that she should wish to talk to you, I am saying that it is good, in a general way, to have a strong will. When one has a strong will, what remains is only to turn it well ; when one has no will, one has first to build one. This is always long and sometimes difficult. (23.3.1934)

Q : C'est X elle-même qui m'a parlé, bien que j'aie été sous l'impression depuis quelque jours qu'elle ne voulait pas me parler.

R : Les gens n'ont pas toujours les mêmes désirs.

Q : It is X herself who talked to me, although I had been under the impression for some days that she did not wish to do so.

A : People do not have always the same desires. (24.3.1934)

Q : Cet enfant Te désobéit souvent à cause de sa faiblesse. Tu lui as dit de ne pas parler à certaines femmes, mais il lui devient difficile de ne pas leur répondre puisqu'il est faible.

R : La force pour la surmonter vous est donnée, mais il faut la recevoir et l'utiliser.

Q : This child disobeys You often on account of his weakness. You have told him not to talk to certain women, but it has become difficult not to respond to them since he is weak.

A : The force to overcome it is given to you, but you have to receive and use it. (29.3.1934)

Q : Voulez-vous que j'écrive une prière chaque fois ?

R : Il faut écrire seulement quand la prière vient spontanément.

Q : Do you wish that I should write a prayer each time ?

A : One should write only when the prayer comes spontaneously. (31.3.1934)

From the Note-book of SHANTI DOSHI

THE ORDINARY LIFE AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS BY SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

It is not helpful to abandon the ordinary life before the being is ready for the full spiritual life. To do so means to precipitate a struggle between the different elements and exasperate it to a point of intensity which the nature is not ready to bear. The vital elements in you have partly to be met by the discipline and experience of life, while keeping the spiritual aim in view and trying to govern life by it progressively in the spirit of Karmayoga.

26-5-1945

SRI AUROBINDO

Tu dis que tu veux mener la vie spirituelle, mais pour cela il faut que tu comprennes que le premier point est de surmonter tous les mouvements inférieurs, toutes les attractions, tous les attachements, car tout cela est *absolument contraire* à la vie spirituelle.

La vie spirituelle *exige* qu'on soit exclusivement tourné vers le Divin et le Divin *seul*. Tout ce que l'on fait doit être fait *pour le Divin*, toutes les occupations, toutes les aspirations, tout, sans exception, doit être dirigé vers le Divin avec une soumission complète de tout l'être.

Je sais que cela ne peut pas se faire en un jour. Mais la *décision* qu'il en soit ainsi doit être prise d'une façon *inébranlable*. C'est seulement à cette condition que je peux t'accepter pour la vie spirituelle.

29-7-1960

LA MÈRE

You say that you wish to lead the spiritual life, but for that you should understand that the first point is to overcome all the lower movements, all the attractions, all the attachments, for all these are *absolutely contrary* to the spiritual life.

The spiritual life *demand*s that one is exclusively turned towards the Divine and the Divine *alone*. All that one does should be done *for the Divine*, all occupations, all aspirations, all, without exception, should be directed towards the Divine with a complete surrender of the whole being.

I know that this cannot be done in a day. But the *decision* that it may be so should be taken in an *unshakable* manner. It is only on this condition that I can accept you for the spiritual life.

29-7-1960

THE MOTHER

THE OBJECT OF YOGA

AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF SRI AUROBINDO

You must get out of certain wrong ideas that you seem to have about Yoga, for these are dangerous and ought to be thrown away by every sadhak :

(1) The object of Yoga is not to become "like" Sri Aurobindo or the Mother. Those who cherish this idea easily come to the further idea that they can become their equals and even greater. This is only to feed the ego.

(2) The object of Yoga is not to get power or to be more powerful than others or to have great siddhis or to do great or wonderful or miraculous things.

(3) The object of Yoga is not to be a great Yogi or a superman. This is an egoistic way of taking the Yoga and can lead to no good ; avoid it altogether.

(4) To talk about the supramental and think of bringing it down in yourself is the most dangerous of all. It may bring an entire megalomania and loss of balance. What the sadhak has to seek is the full opening to the Divine, the psychic change of his consciousness, the spiritual change. Of that change consciousness, selflessness, desirelessness, humility, bhakti, surrender, calm, equality, peace, quiet sincerity are necessary constituents. Until he has the psychic and spiritual change, to think of being supramental is an absurdity and an arrogant absurdity.

All these egoistic ideas, if indulged, can only aggrandise the ego, spoil the sadhana and lead to serious spiritual dangers. They should be rejected altogether.

3-10-1936

THE MOTHER AND HER WORKING

LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

SELF : I do not attempt anything and yet wrong suggestions, ideas, etc. are falling off from me. Even my receptivity seems to be on the increase. How do such changes come about ?

SRI AUROBINDO : By turning to the Mother and getting her contact, that result naturally begins to come. 1-1-1934

If you want the Mother's contact always, you must get rid of depression and the mental imaginations that bring it. Nothing comes more in the way than that.

3-1-1934

SELF : Tajdar says that while giving us flowers the Mother always tells us something ; as for example, our future difficulty, danger, fall, etc. Is it true ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Mother never thinks of future difficulties, falls or dangers. Her concentration is always on help and uplift, not on difficulty and downfall.

8-1-1934

SELF : In the morning, I experience the effect of the Mother's light dynamically, It penetrates the inner as well the outer being in an intense way. In the evening I feel nothing of the kind. There is only silence. Why so ?

SRI AUROBINDO : In the evening the Mother brings down silence, but not the silence only—also the power for transformation. But as calm and silence are the first requisite for transformation, you feel that.

8-2-1934

SELF : During the general Evening Meditation, my mind tries in vain to become conscious of the Mother's thoughts which she brings down. Is it its right activity ?

SRI AUROBINDO : It is not altogether the way—if the mind is active it is more difficult to become aware of what the Mother is bringing . It is not thoughts she brings, but the higher light, force etc.

22-3-1934

SELF : A sadhak who is called often by the Mother for interviews or Pranams is very fortunate. He thus gets opportunities to talk with her, to be before her physical presence and receive directly her light and help. Is it not so ?

SRI AUROBINDO : No. It depends entirely on the condition of the person and his attitude. Especially if they insist on seeing her or on remaining when she wants them to go or are in a bad mood and throw it on her, it is very harmful for them to see her Each should be contented with what the Mother gives them, for she alone

feels what they can or cannot receive. Mental constructions of this kind and vital demands are always false. 3-4-1934

SELF : I wonder why the Mother does not become strict with such a wanton person like X and allows him to do whatever he likes.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is the Mother's business. She alone can say what is the right way to deal with people. If she were to deal with people only according to their defects, there would be hardly half a dozen people left in the Ashram.

26-3-1934

SELF : Does the Mother's Light always remain in the inner being even when due to the engrossment in the external activities we do not feel it ?

SRI AUROBINDO : It is always there in the inner Purusha consciousness—but identification with the mental, vital and physical movements prevents it from being effective.

26-4-1934

SELF : During the Terrace Darshan, the Mother filled my whole head with her Light.

SRI AUROBINDO : She does so every time, only today you not only received but were consciously receptive.

8-5-1934

You can receive the Light at all times even if less concretely than in the physical presence.

SELF : At times some disturbance stirs up just after the Pranam ceremony. It rises up and veils the consciousness. I understand that it has nothing to do with the Pranam. I wonder why then it starts just at that time.

SRI AUROBINDO : Why should it have anything to do with the Pranam ? The Mother does not raise these things. It is the obstruction of the lower consciousness that rises up, as is its nature, to obstruct what is coming down.

5-5-1934

SELF : What should be its solution ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Reject it, call down the Force.

5-5-1934

SELF : Are there any sadhakas here who are still trying to do Yoga by revolting against the Divine Mother ?

SRI AUROBINDO : It seems there are. At least if they are not trying, they announce it as a principle that the more you revolt against the Mother the more she gives to you.

19-5-1934

SELF : Mr. Y told me, "When I came to the Ashram (it was long, long ago) Sri Aurobindo never used to teach us anything of the Yoga or sadhana. He had

instructed us to follow our own knowledge." Was it really so ?

SRI AUROBINDO : I am not aware of that. But now also the Mother does not teach, she asks all to open and receive. But she does not tell them and I dont think I told people to follow their own "knowledge".

26-4-1934

From NOGIN DOSHI

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(These talks are from the Note-books of Dr. Nirodbaran who used to record most of the conversations which Sri Aurobindo had with his attendants and a few others, after the accident to his right leg in November 1938. Besides the recorder, the attendants were: Dr. Mamlal, Dr. Becharlal, Purani, Champaklal, Dr. Satyendra and Mulshanker. As the notes were not seen by Sri Aurobindo himself, the responsibility for the Master's words rests entirely with Nirodbaran. He does not vouch for absolute accuracy, but he has tried his best to reproduce them faithfully. He has made the same attempt for the speeches of the others.)

FEBRUARY 28, 1940

EVENING

N : I have another letter of A. He has come out again with his scheme of village reconstruction. It is more elaborate now. One interesting point I find is a common kitchen.

P : That is nothing new, and I doubt very much how far it will work out. Village people have a strong individuality in these things. They will hardly agree to share common cooked food.

S : In this land of caste and creed and untouchability, how will they accept a common kitchen ?

N : A further writes : "I now see that my ideas came from the universal mind."

SRI AUROBINDO : Universal mind ? That is too much to say.

N : It's my mistake. Instead of "general" I read "universal".

SRI AUROBINDO : Then ?

N : Then he says : "they come out with such force that it seems there must be some truth in them."

SRI AUROBINDO : That's right.

N : He continues : "So I must know their swarupa, true form, either to accept or reject them. Now the most urgent need of the country is some sort of unity, and unity can only come if the country has a vigorous and living programme of work acceptable to all and sundry."

SRI AUROBINDO : Good Lord !

N : "For this," says A, "I have fixed a programme—"

SRI AUROBINDO : "for your approval." (*Laughter*) Then ?

N : "The programme is : (1) none shall go unfed, (2) none untreated, and (3) none uneducated. That is very possible if all villagers are combined—as was in ancient India."

SRI AUROBINDO : How does he know it was so in ancient India ?

N : I don't know. He goes on : "There was no common property in India. Following the ancient way, my idea is to have village institutions fitting present conditions. The main thing is a common kitchen."

SRI AUROBINDO : Why not have everything else also common ? (*Laughter*)

S : Everybody will come and eat anything they like in the common kitchen ?

N : No, according to one's needs. In such an institution, the poor people who go without food will be fed.

SRI AUROBINDO : How is it to run ? Who will pay the expenses ?

N : According to one's means one will contribute. If it is run on a large scale, expenses will be much less.

P : Then nobody will pay and everybody will come to eat.

SRI AUROBINDO : Quite so—and it will encourage idleness.

N : There will also be a dispensary under the supervision of a qualified doctor who will be maintained by two or three villages combined.

P : If A goes to the villages he will find how very difficult it is to get people to pay the expenses. Unless the Government gives support, the public can't run the dispensaries.

N : If the Government doesn't ?

P : Then try to capture the Government itself.

N : That is more easily said than done. Both constructive work and fight for freedom would have to go hand in hand, as with Gandhi at present.

SRI AUROBINDO : With very little success, I am afraid.

P : I know of cases where people wanted to help the villagers by paying off their loans, etc., but it was found that the villagers were very shrewd, astute folk, who are more than a match for the city people.

SRI AUROBINDO : A is living in his mind, he has lost touch with practical reality.

S (*seeing N trying to translate A's Bengali into English*) : Why doesn't he write in English ? That will save you the trouble of translation.

N : Now I will ask him.

SRI AUROBINDO : Now ? (*Laughter*) I thought he had finished all his questions.

N : He may begin some other theme. In the present letter, the last item is : to propagate Sri Aurobindo's ideas through books, essays, etc., in order to have a spiritual foundation.

S : They will understand the books ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Even if they understand, will they be able to execute the ideas ?

N : He seems to have said to D that he has one weakness still—the desire to work for the country.

SRI AUROBINDO (*smiling*) : A great weakness. If he goes, he will meet with no better fate than B—namely, failure.

S : B and A are different personalities.

SRI AUROBINDO : Even then he will have the same fate. B went out to revolutionise the world.

N : And he ended by revolutionising himself ! (*Laughter*) A is putting out all these ideas from his own unpublished novel.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, he wanted to publish it but the Mother sat tight on the

proposal. If he wants to write about politics, village reform, etc , he can do it for his own satisfaction but not for publication.

FEBRUARY 20, 1940

N : Talking of the Burma rebellion and the Chittagong Armoury Raid, Dutt came out with the belief that by such risings India can get independence.

SRI AUROBINDO : How will India do it ?

N : D asked Dutt what Surya Sen would have done if the British army had attacked. Dutt replied : "Where is the British army ? It is a myth. There is only the Indian army and they won't shoot their own people. If in a few more places rebellion had occurred and succeeded, the country would have been converted.

SRI AUROBINDO : Would a few places like that convert the whole of India ? Besides, what about the British navy and the British aeroplanes ? England can bring her own army from home. Even as regards the Indian army, it would be only a part of it that may refuse to fight.

N : Dutt says that during the Non-cooperation Movement, the Gharwallis refused to shoot their own people.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, yes, but there are other troops that will shoot.

P : The Gharwallis were afterwards court-martialled.

N : Dutt also told a story of how at one time foreign governments were sought to be interested in India's struggle with the British. Actually, during the Bengal movement it seems a ship of ammunitions from Germany was captured by the British Government.

SRI AUROBINDO : That was at the time of Rashbehari Ghose, perhaps in 1905 or 1908. The idea of revolution at that time was intelligible. But now, after the First World War, with so much development of means of warfare, it is impossible.

N : Dutt is going to write a review of your *Life Divine*.

SRI AUROBINDO : Is he a philosopher ?

N : I don't think so. Sisir Mitra seems to have asked him to do it.

P : He can begin with a story.

SRI AUROBINDO : And end with a story. (*Laughter*)

P : B appears to have written well about the Mother in *Khulna Basi*. (*Sri Aurobindo smiled.*)

N : Is what he says about the Mother true ? He says that what would have taken you 10 years in sadhana was done in 1 year by your contact with her.

SRI AUROBINDO : I may have said something like that—not these very words but the same substance.

(*To be continued*)

NIRODBARAN

THE FUTURE AND THIS FEBRUARY

I

THE look backward and the look forward always accompany the look around. And the basic psychology of the double movement is acutely hit off by the poet :

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not...

The look around is shot with a desire for something that ought to be or something that has vanished. And actually the look forward at its most longing is deeply coloured by the look backward at its most wistful. We are haunted by the sense of an Eden from which we have strayed and we strive ever for a glimpse of some Eden ahead of us. Indeed, the reverie of a paradise to be gained is surcharged with a memory as of some paradise lost. Fundamentally, the nostalgia for a golden past animates the vision of an ideal future.

Here is at once an instinct of truth and a failure of insight.

For, if the ideal future is to answer to all that has been in travail through the ages, it must restore the felicity whose disappearance is felt by us as the cause of our endless pining. But, if it is to bring us real fulfilment, must it not be something more than even the most glorious possible past reprojected ? How is it that the past disappeared and gave place to a long history of stumble and fumble, baseness and blindness, folly and frailty ? Surely, it must always have held the seed of a fall. Inherent in whatever "perfection" was achieved in the days departed, in some myth-misty antiquity, there was a secret door opening into the abyss : at one moment or another the brightness might fall from the air, and dust not only close the most Helen-heavenly eye but also cross it with shadowy specks even while it was wide-open.

No doubt, "perfection" need not be static : it can display a variety of change, but—if we may use poetic language—it should be a change from divine dawn to luminous noon and ecstatic evening and nectarous night. A passage into ignorance, incapacity, suffering and mortality would belie the label "perfection". There could never have been a truly golden past, and to hanker for the recovery of a paradise lost is to sabotage the prospect of ever gaining a genuine paradise.

The Indian idea of a recurring cycle of Four Ages practically recognises this conclusion. For, its Satya-yuga, the Age of Truth, when heaven and earth had easy commerce, declined inevitably into a series of inferior epochs until the Fourth Age, the Age of Darkness, Kali-yuga, was reached after the yugas named Treta and Dwapara. Then the time came full circle for a new Satya-yuga and its successors. Here is optimism in plenty inasmuch as the Age of Truth returns without fail, but a

confirmed pessimism goes hand in hand with it inasmuch as every such epoch is transitory.

India, however, had an inkling of another possibility. After the rise of Sri Krishna as the supreme object of worship, there was the faint vision of a future in which a final Avatar, a crowning Incarnation—Kalki—would appear and establish a divine world. Other countries too had their prophetic moods vaguely envisaging a Millennium, a Kingdom of God upon earth. All these glimpses of “things to come” we consider a seeing “as through a glass darkly”, because on the one side history was taken to culminate in a concrete imperishable ideality and on the other this ideality was only a come-back of what had once wonderfully been, a come-back with no break-up now of the ancient beauty. The dreaming World-Soul did not realise that such a seeing was self-contradictory. The quality of permanence cannot be added unless the essential character of the earthly paradise of legend is transformed. It is not by chance and accident that this paradise had been lost—just as it is not by mere fortuitous circumstance that the human body degenerates and dies.

No matter what panaceas are discovered, no matter how much recharging of energy takes place, by means medical or methods occult, a body that is the habitation of a half-lit mind in tension with the universe and of a life-force at struggle with itself and egocentrically pushing outward its sphere of influence cannot find the secret of perpetual existence. Its arch-enemy is within. And as long as this enemy remains, however attenuated, there will sooner or later be degeneration and death. Similarly, the legendary paradise which is again to be set up by nothing more than human mind and life-force functioning at their finest as the soul’s formula of self-expression cannot but crumble by the divisiveness inherent in their being. The mind may make an aggregate of parts and call it a unity, the life-force may build a balance of pulls and pushes and name it a harmony : fate will yet not be fooled and our highest hopes will lack fulfilment.

Above mind as it is, above life-force as we know it, the soul catches sight of Godhead. But this Godhead who is felt as Unity and Harmony is known as a Power that can receive the soul into its perfection but does not wholly permeate mind and life-force : it can illumine them, refine them and yet something of their present deficiency lingers on and is only covered up for a while. That is why even India, the seeker *par excellence* for the Divine and the Absolute everywhere, has joined her voice with all the rest of the religious world in saying, despite her prophecy of Kalki, that the soul must abandon at last the field of matter, the space-time of history, and seek Light, Bliss, Freedom, Plenitude, Immortality in some Beyond.

And yet the passion for a lasting heaven on earth persists. “Fantasy, chimera, will-o-the-wisp, mirage !”—so cries the disillusioned self in us. But to follow this sweet deception is also the instinct of our soul. And the truth behind the instinct seems to be that, within the Light, Bliss, Freedom, Plenitude, Immortality which in their pure form have been realisable elsewhere than here, there lies some dynamism we have missed. The Godhead who does not wholly permeate mind and life-force

with His perfection falls short of the true Supreme. The Divinity from whom all has come must hold the divine original of whatever emerges and evolves in the phenomenal universe, and the manifestation of this original must be the aim of every phenomenon.

Outside the range of spirituality explored so far the seeker of perfection has to venture. A future of soul-endeavour different in many respects from all that was attempted must be faced. A golden age other than any that hovers in the racial memory and visits individual reverie should be our goal. Such is the message of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

They offer us their realisation of what they term the Supermind, the hitherto unrevealed Divinity who carries the secret power of a total transformation of mind and life-force and therefore of the very body these conscious energies inhabit.

This present month of February, in which our Review of Culture bears the Mother's creative words on the Why and the How of a self-dedicated pursuit of the Future to the exclusion of all past, a pursuit of the New beyond all marvels that have been—this month has three dates pregnant of the Future we are asked to follow.

2

February 21 is the Mother's birthday. What it signifies may be gathered from what Sri Aurobindo has to say on the Mother:

“There is one divine Force which acts in the universe and in the individual and is also beyond the individual and the universe. The Mother stands for all these. but she is working here in the body to bring down something not yet expressed in this material world, so as to transform life here....

“It is the work of the Cosmic Power to maintain the cosmos and the law of the cosmos. The greater transformation comes from the Transcendent above the universal, and it is the transcendent Grace which the embodiment of the Mother is there to bring to action...

“In her universal action the Mother acts according to the law of things—in her embodied physical action is the opportunity of a constant Grace—it is for that the embodiment takes place...

“The Mother comes in order to bring down the supramental and it is the descent which makes her full manifestation here possible.”

The coming of the Mother upon earth with the Supermind's mission—that is, from beyond all divine powers whose action would constitute the paradise intuited as once lost by humanity—is what is celebrated on February 21. On that day she will complete her 90th year. This birthday of hers is one more pointer to the unprecedented future she is creating and calling us to share.

This birthday is of special moment because it begins with her 90 years a 9-day

period of February in which, on two further occasions, that future casts its shining shadow before.

Let us first glance at the occasion ending the period : February 29. Although it comes after the other meaningful day—February 28—it is logically anterior to it. For, it marks the third return of the date on which the Mother, with Sri Aurobindo subtly present with her, brought about what she has designated as the manifestation of the Supermind.

The Supermind descended into the bodies of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in 1938—but the descent was just its entry and not its settlement. The Truth-Consciousness, which had already settled in the inner being, made its first direct appearance in the outer; but it could not be fixed down.

In 1950 there came a crisis in which Sri Aurobindo confronted two possibilities: a long postponement of the world-wide appearance of the Supermind which was his aim or else the sacrifice by himself of his own body in order to absorb—and thereby essentially annul—in that semi-divinised instrument the whole force of the darkness which was bent upon that postponement.

Sri Aurobindo, caring nothing for personal achievement and everything for the Divine's work in the world, chose the dire alternative of individual death. But it was no common dying. Rather, it was a final conflict with Yama, the God of Death. Yama stands in Indian spiritual vision for the universe of Ignorance and Inconscience carrying all perishable creatures as its puny inhabitants. By that conflict, resulting in Sri Aurobindo's withdrawal from his physical frame within whose partly transformed substance his inner being had held the plenary Supermind, what died was Death itself.

The universe of Ignorance and Inconscience, whose ultimate stronghold is the material field, was destroyed in its essence : the principle of its existence was caught in the body of Sri Aurobindo and cancelled with the loss of that body. The moment Sri Aurobindo drew himself out of his body, accepting what seemed a defeat in the limited personal sense, his whole material envelope was filled with the supramental light and, for 111 hours after "clinical death", it showed neither discolouration nor decomposition and the light remained as a token of the victory won under the disguise of dying. The all-transformative power was at last given hold.

But we should term it a symbolic hold. First, because Sri Aurobindo had given a real sacrifice and his body was not meant to be resuscitated. Secondly, because the occurrence which here was as a temporary sign grew actual elsewhere : the all-transformative power was fixed for good in the Mother's body. The consequence was the establishment of what Sri Aurobindo has called the Mind of Light which the Mother has defined as the physical mind receiving the Supramental Light.

This was on December 5, 1950. Since then the Mother has moved forward year after year and the Ashram grown from strength to strength. And with the established Mind of Light as the basis, the Mother accomplished under the command of Sri Aurobindo not only the entry but also the establishment of the Supermind in

the whole world's subtle-physical atmosphere. That event took place in the evening of February 29, 1956. In the individual, with the various centres of consciousness on various levels of the embodied system, the Supermind effects a "descent" : on a universal scale, where there are no such levels, it effects a "manifestation". The Golden Day of the Supramental Manifestation : that is how February 29, 1956, has come to be known.

The manifestation, however, was not of Supermind in its entirety. The supramental light, consciousness and force manifested, but not yet the bliss, the Ananda that is the supreme creator of worlds. Nor did the Supermind involved in the Inconscience break out. It was the uninvolved Supermind, free and fully deployed in its own archetypal dimension, that had arrived. But its arrival made certain within a short time the emergence of the involved deity.

With this emergence will start the new race. Every time a free principle and an involved principle meet in the evolutionary scheme, a novel species commences. When the Mind from its own unearthly dimension fused with the Mind emergent from the depths of the earth, as it were, Man as a race began. The hour is preparing for the beginning of the race of Superman, with the Mother its pioneer already *en route* to physical transformation.

February 29 this year is a further milestone on this route. But there is another side to the divine development whose starting-point was 18 years ago on December 5, 1950, When Sri Aurobindo left his body and would not take it up again the Mother received from him the promise that he would be the first to appear in a supramental body built in the supramental way. With each return of the day of the Supermind's universal manifestation the advent of a supramental being in a supramental body directly built by occult means and not by the crude commonplace methods of Nature draws nearer.

And, to prepare a general terrestrial *milieu* for both the evolutionary and the revolutionary embodiments of the Supermind in the future, the Mother has launched the scheme of a model town, "Auroville", "the City of Dawn," named after "Aurobindo" in combination with the French "Aurore" meaning "Dawn". Its plans have by now become sufficiently known to need no elaboration here. Its broad aim is summed up in the Mother's statement : "Auroville is the shelter built for all those who want to hasten towards a future of knowledge, peace and unity." But we must not forget that here is no merely idealistic venture—only a great experiment in co-operative living, a masterpiece of collective organisation set within a wonderful ensemble of architecture at once functional and beautiful. It has behind it the whole inspiration that is Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's. Although it is broad-based and welcomes all men of goodwill, we should always bear in mind the Mother's words on the subject of individuals and groups willing to aid in Auroville's development : "They may not practise themselves, but if they do not know about yoga, how can they understand the purpose of Auroville ?"

In Auroville a new consciousness receptive to the supramental future, that is

above all nationalities, politics and religions, will be helped to blossom. And it is this blossoming that is shown in the lotus specially constructed by the youth of the Ashram to hold, along with the soil of Auroville's site, the handfuls of earth which teenage boys and girls will bring from every country in the world. Here will the foundation-stone be laid of the City of the Future on February 28.

Auroville has become possible because of the manifestation on February 29 in 1956. But it will itself provide ground for a further supramental manifestation. And so the laying of its foundation-stone a day before the third return of the Golden Day is spiritually apt as well as effective in the profound drama of the future and this February.

K. D. SETHNA

SALUTATIONS

(Continued from the January issue)

*This is how
all sincere aspirations
are fulfilled
With Blessings*

1-9-63

Miwani (Africa), 16-5-1954

21

My dearest Mother,

You have brought down upon earth my soul with high and beautiful aims. O Great One ! let Your Will be done.

Mother, I do not know why but nowadays there is a forceful pull towards You as if I should stay near You for ever. But do You consent ? You still want to mould me, don't You ?

30

I do not really understand very well the secret of life, what a full life would be like and what an empty one. But, after everything has been understood and put into action, if by Your Grace my way becomes clear then all will be well.

I have seen everything—all momentary happiness and grief. But I see no high and divine future in them. It is like getting a little relief by taking medicines in a long illness !

The things of the world, like thunderous storms in the sky, strange dreadful things, overcast human life.

Earthly attractions, love of family and friends—all is transient. O free me soon from these illusions. Now I have no desires or ambitions left. Even if any are left in some corner of my life then burn and destroy them with Your luminous-compassionate Eyes. Save me, save me...

Now I do not wish to have any illusory attachments of the world. All of them give a moment's happiness and afterwards these very things drag us into misery. Now I have had enough of them !

With one gracious glance take up my soul like a flower and press it against Your golden Heart. This is all I want.

Wherever You take me, on whatever path, there will I always go, obedient to Your Call.

22

Miwani (Africa), 17-5-1954

Beloved Krishna,

What am I to tell You, my dear One ? You are my eternal Companion—Eternity of Eternities !

Have You ever cast a glance at me any day ? O Lord, I am Your slave, I implore You, come soon and merge me in You. When I hear Your Name, every cell of my body thrills. O God, destroy my difficulties of life after life, and give me peace and happiness unending—fix for ever the feeling that I am You and You are I.

No matter what my defects, no matter what I am, even if the whole world's imperfections are packed in me, still make me Yours, O Lord. Come, do not delay.

23

Miwani (Africa), 17-5-1954

Sweet dear Mother,

Every now and then You are teaching me something. You are making my road smooth by making instruments of various people. Of course, some roughness still remains in the way. But whatever the path on which You are leading me it is most acceptable. However great the difficulties, when You are my protector and my torch-bearer, what have I to fear ? Now I have only one hope and support—You.

You have taught me that the past is to be forgotten. To remember anything or to record it is not good. So I have destroyed my diary. I will not jot down anything. But I shall surely write whatever You make me write by Your inspiration. Moreover,

I shall go on expressing my prayers to You, my aspirations towards You and the impressions of my travels.

Mother, lead me always along the true path. Save me from falling and grant me the boon of rest at Your feet. I am Yours and will always remain Yours.

O Mother ! subdue my mind and give new birth to my whole being. Make it pure and peaceful. Are You not the One who has to worry about all these problems ? Is it then necessary for me to tell You about them over and over again ?

This body, this life-force, mind and soul—everything is Yours. Whatever You wish, You are capable of doing. What have I to say in it ?

For me, I want only refuge in You, remembrance of You and my journey's end at Your feet.

24

Miwani (Africa), 20-6-1954

Mother dear,

Today You have shown me my defects. You have awakened me from the dreadful darkness of ignorance. You have opened my eyes. I feel that in my last birth I must have fallen deep down by egoism and over-sensitiveness. Even in this life the same traits have remained. But now I am growing conscious step by step that I have to meet the Divine alone. I am born only for the Divine and I must find the Divine. My aspiration is to merge in the golden Heart of the Supreme Lord.

Today I have understood all the various kinds of obstacles hindering me.

The world's illusion, my ego, my sensitiveness, my temper—if all these could be rooted out, then my way would be smooth.

Indeed, owing to my sensitiveness, many have suffered, many have hated me, many have scorned me, many have found me a source of misery. But alas ! whatever truth lay in my frank heart I could not make them understand nor could they understand me

Mother, You alone understood me. You have shown me the way. Now remove all my defects and make all of me Yours. Do what You wish and nothing else.

25

Miwani (Africa), 28-5-1954

O Mother !

Whenever I pray to You or concentrate on You one-pointedly then I feel deep peace and Your constant Presence. Besides, I get new inspirations.

But when the mind is not fixed on Your Divine Form, the whole day passes in gloom. I try hard always to take Your name. I do not know how I forget so often.

Mother, day by day my longing for You—my yearning for Your Darshan—goes on increasing.

You work great changes in my life. And I am certain that step by step You will make me Your own. In Your Light You will make me luminous too.

(To be continued)

HUTA

LIGHTS FROM PONDICHERRY

(We reprint this article from the *Mother India* of February 21, 1950, when our journal was a fortnightly and appeared in a very different format—a fortnightly whose copies are hardly available now. The article is necessarily not up to date, but it has so much of essential truth and it states that truth so well and with such a variety of reference that it is worth studying at all times.)

To write a book in French and that again to publish in India is not a very happy proposition for any writer. Here, in the first place, the number of its readers are few, and fewer still the number of true appraisers. Secondly, in a glaring contrast with things of the West, publication-publicity in our country is indeed extremely feeble, still in its infancy or crawling stage. Only recently has there been in evidence some push and go in this field, but all still remains to be organised and set firmly upon a broader and intenser basis. However, that is another matter.

Against this discouraging background there appeared, in succession, *Entretiens avec Mère*, *Prières et Méditations* (both in the thirties of the present century), *Paroles d'Autrefois* and *Belles Histoires*. The Mother, the writer of these beautiful books, has in addition a good number of translations to her credit : *La Mère*, *La Synthèse du Yoga*, *La Vie Divine* and *Essais sur le Gita* (all of them from the original in English by Sri Aurobindo). Of the translations we shall speak later on. Not that they are unimportant or less important, but because we want to follow the chronological order of the works, which incidentally may also help us to a better understanding of both the original works and the translations.

It is interesting to note that *Paroles d'Autrefois*, though printed as late as March, 1946, contains the earliest writings (1893) of the Mother. A young traveller going astray just for a little negligence and realising his mistake only too late when his misfortunes grow to immense proportions—this is the theme of the beautiful parable that opens the book (written as a school essay when the Mother was a girl of fifteen!). Every word is in its right place, and the words invariably are the right ones, and the *ensemble* gives vividly the concrete picture of a terrible conflict in the conscience of the young traveller. Written in prose, as I have already indicated, it overflows all the limiting rigidities this mode of expression is subject to and often it rises to enchanting lyric heights. One hears the cry of the agonised soul, sees the prospect which a wrong path once chosen may lead to and is finally relieved to know the secret to get over any such catastrophe. And how many secrets are there in the book about dream and thought and life and Supreme Knowledge, laid open before the eyes of the reader to know and profit by! *Les Vertus*, *Savoir Souffrir* and *La Découverte Suprême* are all gems of the purest kind shining in their inherent worth.

Only one month after the publication of this book, there appeared *Belles His-*

toires. As is evident from the name itself, it is a book of short stories. Intended chiefly for children, *Belles Histoires* (based upon an English book) contains stories from various countries of the East and the West, stories that are arranged in eleven different chapters, each one of which has its appropriate title, *viz.* "Self-mastery," "Courage", Cheerfulness, "Self-help", "Patience and Perseverance", "Plain Living," "Prudence," "Sincerity," "To Judge Correctly", "Order" and "To Construct and to Destroy". From a cursory glance at the table of contents it is quite possible for the superficial critic to boo at it as a book of morals. But a little journey into the book reveals that it is really a work of art, and the Mother is ever at her best when narrating a story, a dialogue or the various shades of a psychological state.

Indeed if Art has any constructive value in life instead of being merely pleasant, if it is not merely a toy to sport with in leisure hours but serves deeper purposes and needs of the being it has to say something useful. The question then is both what is said and how it is said. Judged on these two counts *Belles Histoires* is a masterpiece. Here stories are not stories, that is to say fantastic fabrications, but actual facts that have occurred. These living examples point to higher things in man, and they all insist upon the nobler qualities that build up human character. Written with an infinite love for children, it is at once a call to them to take up the challenge of the triple demon-god of Ignorance, Inertia and Ugliness, and re-lay the pattern of human life. Especially in India, where so colossal a misery prevails and so much work remains for the future generation to accomplish, this inspiring book will be, to quote the Mother herself, "a new weapon" in their hands.

We now come to the two more serious books of the Mother: *Prières et Méditations* and *Entretiens*. I shall first take up the *Prayers and Meditations*. It was, I suppose, in connection with this book that Maurice Magre who knew as much French as a Frenchman ought to know remarked that it was the highest perfection in style of which French was capable. A great compliment, no doubt. But what does it precisely mean ?

The French language in general and French prose in particular are marked out for their clarity and precision, their rational and scientific nature. Racine and Renan, Voltaire and Anatole France, Pascal and Michelet are a few among the immortal names that have contributed to this unique consummation. French, in the final analysis, means precision and precision means French. But such an instrument carries its own limitations as well. For, there are subtle shades in meaning, some extremely suggestive and subtle vibrations behind the words, which you cannot catch with the help of this mechanism of intellectual language. Whereas English, with its essentially Celtic nature, is less rational but more full of suggestiveness, more pliant, more capable of growing. French artists knew of this difference and were consciously trying various means to make up for the defect.

In the realm of poetry Mallarmé made a gallant effort and not without considerable success. Yet the insistence was all the while on the instrument, on the manner of composition : sometimes perhaps to loosen the rules of syntax and punctuation,

sometimes in the Chinese manner of painting to give some significant strokes or hints in ideas and leave the rest to the readers to fill up in their own canvas of mind. Such a process, as we have already said, can lead only to a partial success. Here the degree of success will vary according as the mental equipment is sharpened and trained and made receptive. But in order to break new ground, to achieve new perfection, whether it be in the domain of poetry or prose, one has to breathe a new atmosphere or touch a different consciousness than the prevalent one. And the higher this level of consciousness that is contacted, the greater is the value it assumes in its outward expression. Here, for example, is this magnificent piece from *Prayers and Meditations* which shines like the sun and needs no other light to be explained :

“A ces heures bénies la terre tout entière chante un hymne d’allégresse, l’herbe frissonne de plaisir, l’air vibre de lumière, les arbres dressent vers le ciel leur prière plus ardente, le chant des oiseaux devient un cantique, les vagues de la mer se gonflent d’amour, le sourir des enfants raconte l’infini, les âmes des hommes apparaissent dans leurs yeux.

“Dis moi : m’accorderas-Tu le pouvoir merveilleux de faire naître cette aurore dans les cœurs attentifs, d’éveiller les consciences à Ta sublime Presence, dans ce monde si triste et si démantelé de susciter un peu de Ton vrai Paradis ? Quels bonheurs, quelles richesses, quelles puissances terrestres peuvent égaler ce don souverain ?...

“O Seigneur, jamais en vain je ne T’ai imploré, car c’est Toi-même en moi qui Te parles à Toi-même.”

As one reads through these prayers one unmistakably feels that here French has, besides being thoroughly poetical, assumed another quality and another dharma, the very character of mantra. That is to say, the words become here the Word and carry in them the Power of realisation. The Vedic mantras were, of course, the earliest and the most perfect articulation in human speech ; so much so, that they were rightly thought to belong to no individual person but breathed out of the universal. In the full blaze of the twentieth century we saw another miracle done by Sri Aurobindo who introduced a new spirit into the English language, lifted it up and changed it into a marvellous vehicle to express even the Inexpressible, the profoundest thought that man in the modern world was groping in the darkness to seize and embody. The Mother has come in the same line after the Vedic Rishis and Sri Aurobindo. This, I think, was the implied meaning justifying Monsieur Magre’s tribute to the author of *Prières et Méditations*.

Prières et Méditations originally filled the pages of the Mother’s personal diary. They were written out of an irresistible urge or an irrepressible need of the being within to put down in black and white the torrents of realisation that were rushing in upon her, and to give them permanence also, as the occultists would, say. They were not addressed to any human audience nor is there any sense of literary vanity in it. They are truly her prayers and meditations. In this respect they are singularly different from all other diaries of the world. The comparison is so futile that it would

be better that we took to no such study. A magnificent book, but it would have remained in some unseen corner of Pondicherry, had not Sri Aurobindo immediately seen its value and urged its publication. Printed as it is, it begins in France on November 2, 1912 and ends in India on October 23, 1937. A long journey indeed but the reader feels not the slightest drudgery in traversing it; on the contrary one feels taken up by a pair of strong arms and placed in a world where it is all light and peace and purity and knowledge. I quote below another incomparable example :

“Sois cet amour en toute chose et partout, toujours plus largement, toujours plus intensément et le monde entier deviendra à la fois ton œuvre et ton bien, ton champ d’action et ta conquête. Lutte avec persistance pour faire tomber les dernières limites qui ne sont plus que de frêles barrières devant l’expansion de l’être, pour vaincre les dernières obscurités qu’éclaire déjà la Puissance Illuminatrice. Lutte pour conquérir et pour triompher ; lutte pour surmonter tout ce qui fut jusqu’à ce jour ; pour faire jaillir la Lumière nouvelle, l’Exemple nouveau dont le monde a besoin. Lutte avec opiniâtreté contre tous les obstacles extérieurs ou intérieurs. C’est la perle de grand prix qui est proposée à Ta Réalisation.

Apparently these two quotations present a very small portion of the entire volume but they are sufficient, if read not with the flickering light of the mind but with the heart wide open, to allow us a clear glimpse of the fascinating vast panorama of creation which is very near to us and yet at the same time veiled from our human eye and wisdom.

From *Prayers and Meditations* we enter into a new world in *Entretiens*. If in the former we see the heights and profundities of occultism and mystical wisdom, in the latter we come to the practical discipline of Yoga, an infallible spiritual knowledge and an intellectual understanding of the mystic Path. Here the very first question takes us into the heart of the matter : “Would you say something to us about Yoga ?” In fact the whole of *Entretiens* is a series of questions and answers. And they deal with the central problems of aspiration and destiny, e.g., “How is one to meet adverse forces—that are invisible and yet quite living and tangible ?” or “Is our vital being to take part in the Divine Love ? If it does, what is the right and correct form of participation it should take?” or, again, “Have Yogis done greater dramas than Shakespeare ?” Here discourses centre upon particular problems that are raised, sometimes by our foolish mind : the answers are marvellous in their clarity, cogency and a certain revelatory quality which is not difficult for the human mind to understand. We have hardly any scope here for a long quotation but we can take this splendid piece as a specimen—both with regard to the light and the beauty it emanates :

“Love is a supreme force which the Eternal Consciousness sent down from itself into an obscure and darkened world that it might bring back that world and its beings to the Divine. The material world in its darkness and ignorance had forgotten the Divine. Love came into the darkness ; it awakened all that lay there asleep ; it whispered, opening the ears that were sealed, ‘There is something that is worth waking to, worth living for, and it is love !’ And with the awakening to love there

entered into the world the possibility of coming back to the Divine. The creation moves upward through love towards the Divine and in answer there leans downward to meet the creation the Divine Love and Grace. Love cannot exist in its pure beauty, love cannot put on its native power and intense joy of fullness until there is this interchange, this fusion between the earth and the Supreme, this movement of Love from the Divine to the creation and from the creation to the Divine.”

Lastly, the translations. We have already spoken about the Mother's French, we need not repeat the same arguments over again. *La Mère, La Synthèse du Yoga, La Vie Divine* (the first few chapters) are a landmark in the history of French literature. Of course the world would have felt luckier to get a complete translation of *The Life Divine* from the Mother's hands, and also of *The Ideal of Human Unity*. The world today is torn to pieces, due to a war of petty conflicting ideas and interests. A good part of the world still adores French and there these books will serve as a beacon light of hope and assurance. But for the moment it will be wiser perhaps to remain content with what we have got. One more thing we hope it is not impertinent to mention. Amidst the fairly large body of French we have spoken about let it not be forgotten that the Mother is equally at ease with English. The whole of *Entretiens* was first in English; the French version came subsequently.

One does not know what will happen, but I for one would like to see French given in future India an equally honoured place side by side with English so that masters of that sweet language may be appreciated in their original. In the meanwhile, the Mother's message is accessible through English and in some cases through advanced Indian languages. Thus, the temple is ready, the path made clear for pilgrims to reach the altar and fill their bosoms with a priceless treasure.

SAMIR KANTA GUPTA

ELLE

Parce qu'Elle est,
 Nous voyons les grands sommets,
Parce qu'Elle est,
 Nous aspirons et nous espérons,
Parce qu'Elle est,
 Nous serons sauvés.

Pour nous aider à monter,
 Elle est venue,
Pour nous mener à la Lumière,
 Elle est venue,
Comme la réponse d'en haut à l'appel d'en bas,
 Elle est venue.

Pour ceux qui L'aiment,
 Pour ceux qui ne L'aiment pas,
Pour ceux qui L'adorent,
 Pour ceux qui L'ignorent,
Son amour est égal,
Son sourire invariable.

Où est Elle ?
Qui est Elle ?
 La connaissez-vous ?
Non ?
Mais le temps presse, savez-vous,
 Le temps presse.

SHYAM SUNDAR

SHE

Because She is,
 We see the great summits,
Because She is,
 We aspire, we hope,
Because She is,
 We are saved.

To help us mount high
 She is come,
To take us to the Light
 She is come,
As the response from above to the call from below,
 She is come,

For those who love Her,
 For those who do not,
For those who adore Her,
 For those who do not,
Same is Her love,
Same Her smile.

Where is She ?
Who is She ?
Do you know Her ?
No ?
But time presses, do you not know
 Time presses ?

SHYAM SUNDAR

THE ARCH-PLAYER

I

Ah, how He plays—the Eternal Player—
The indefatigable Sportsman, the incorrigible Child !
 Playing with toy-planets,
 Whirling them to motion,
 Setting them to rhythm,
 Training them to orbits,
Laying down systems, raising up structures,
 Devising and deflecting,
 Revising and correcting,
Without haste, without rest, without strain, without stress !

 Playing with clod-puppets, too,
 Raising some to eminence,
 Casting some to corners down,
 Approving the once-rejected,
 Condemning the once-exalted,
Looking fast-absorbed in the whole make-believe
 Yet full conscious of the play,
With perfect self-composure of the perfect Master-Player !

 And playing too the sweetest Play,
In the Inner Circle of the Aspiring Elect,
With live-wire Companions and eternal Counterparts,
 Playing games of Hide-and Seek,
 Of Touch-and-Tell and Know-ye-not :
 Games of tense suspenses and mounting glad surprises,
 Games of ever-widening zones and ever-changing patterns,
 Of breathless adventure and agonising torture,
 Of insatiate raptures and overwhelming setbacks,
Of strategies and schemes and vantage-grounds and Victories !

II

For the Arch-Player is He,
 And no matter who ye be,
 If you really mean to play, and are 'Ready' for the Play,
 He too is Ready, full-glad and full-chivalrous,
 Ready on all fronts, on all fields, on all terms :
 And if you be not ready,
 And feel a little chary,
 Then too He will play, play one way or the other,
 Play Black-and-White Himself,
 Play Red-and-Green Himself :
 He will have His wayward play—Infinity-in, Eternity-out !

But if you decide to play
 In true sporting manly spirit,—
 If only you go on playing,
 Spite of all your stumbling falls,
 Spite of all defeat-repeats,
 Play evermore and more with that Player Arch of yore,
 He will give you the zest of play,
 Give rest, too, if you need it,
 And give you the best of Him :
 The more you play with Him the more you'll learn of Him,—
 Learn of Him, and learn, too, of His tricks and His Technique !

For, that is what He wants,
 Wants players like Himself :
 Players who can catch Him in dead earnest and can watch Him,
 Players who can match Him in skill and sporting spirit:
 Players like His Lone Self,
 Who would never leave Him now
 Lonely or Alone!

CHIMANBHAI

SUPERMAN

THE eyes are fixed
Far off
Upon Thy unrevealed splendour, O Mother of Light.
The way courses through burning sun
Among quietude and peace.
Each step is full of promise and certitude,
Quite impossible to retrace.

The mind is now flooded with light and hush,
Speech drawn into overwhelming adoration,
No word sprouts to sing Thy glory.
Thy ecstatic touch bursts the heart,
From within outflow actions of praise,
New life vibrates in the whole being.

The vital self is filled with enthusiasm;
Thy victory alone its deep desire,
Its sole passion : to spread Thy kingdom upon earth,
Unimaginable reliance and surrender grow,
Intimacy and Love for Thee.

The body becomes Thy darling child,
A loving image of Thy glory and charm;
Losing all inert heaviness,
Something supple in it soars higher and higher,
Across horizons unknown,
Bearing from all its members perfect gratitude.

MOHANLAL

CREATRIX OF A NEW AGE*

THE Mother, the creatrix of a new age of consciousness, is not—as a Soul, as a guiding divine puissance—a newcomer to this earthly scene. She has had her past incarnations, who by their divine collaboration with Sri Aurobindo have assisted the growth of the earth-consciousness, in different epochs of world history. But in those past epochs earth was not ready for her final and full manifestation; so she revealed herself partly, as superhuman womanhood, as a great queen, as a great beauty, as a great God-lover. But now at the dawn of a new age of supramental creation she has manifested herself as the Divine Mother herself, for, without her the great descent of the supramental Truth is not possible, and without this great descent her total revelation cannot become a fact. So long she was working from behind a veil; so long she fought the powers of Ignorance from behind the cloak of a human name or through the disguise of a saint or a queen, which were her masks. But Sri Aurobindo tore that mask and revealed the godhead behind. In him she found her total epiphany and he on his part revealed himself fully due to her power of manifestation.

But born amid the circumstances of 'birth, fate and change', conditioned by ignorance, the Mother, the supreme deity, nevertheless felt the same stroke of darkness which a human takes for granted as a natural concomitant of this terrestrial existence. To her this birth must have meant a great decline and an unparalleled distress. But she, the Eternal World Mother, bears unique love for her children in Time; hence she condescends to wear this mask and endure this cross, to raise them up, to reveal a path of self-fulfilment and transformation. The Mother records her feeling of suffocation under human conditions as a child. Although she grew up as a common child, the consciousness that she bore within was not human. And it is this consciousness which goes to make the entire difference. To the normal child, growth is a series of wonders, experiments, learnings and a slow manifestation of acquired or latent possibilities; but to the Mother it was a lesson in human conditions, in the human pattern of life and human development, which was entirely different to her soul which had to become accustomed to human ways, not for anything else but for the sap of experience which enriched her soul and made her ready for the life and ordeal ahead.

With girlhood years came a greater growth of the 'Flame'. The Mother had a vivid premonition of her future role as the leader of humanity. What was latent in her childhood as instinctive groping became a conscious aspiration. For an ordinary girl these are years of emotional unrest, intellectual seeking and the growth of the personality. But to her they proved a significant period of self-discovery and self-expression. Music became the expression of her soul's aspiration, the expression of her

* A speech delivered at the Fourth Annual Conference of the New Age Association on 10-9-1967.

true self of felicity. Painting came to her as the revelation of form, of beauty, of harmony and as the expression of the aesthetic being in terms of colour, composition and line. Formal knowledge visited her with its information, system, logic and classification, moulding her brain, giving coherence to her instrument of thinking, which is so necessary in a world which comprehends things in terms of intellectuality. She grew proficient in household craft, not because this was needed for the future but because the Divine when it manifests uses the human instrument to its fullest extent and exploits the human ways as a total ground of manifestation and the seizing of the totality of man's existence. Thus this becomes a ground of expression on the one hand and a mode of self-veiling on the other. The Divine comes close to us, assumes a human garb which is only a camouflage; all its powers, emanations, influences it shuts away completely, so total is the masking. It does not seek to amaze us with feats of miracles which man takes as singular pointers to divinity. Rather it seeks to show us a path of slow progression (from the point of view of the Divine) for man to follow. A miracle is no solution to any human problems or ills. Hence to learn the ways of humanity, the Mother learnt to perfection the ways of expression, the ways of comprehension, the ways of analysis and the path of growth. But the indwelling divinity often expressed itself in all these ways. And, in fact, whatever she did bore this secret God-touch which made her work different from the work of her fellow-beings in its intrinsic value as well as in method of execution.

The Mother then naturally turned towards the learning of occultism, the human way of entry into the verities of the spirit. This experiment confirmed her intuitive and inborn knowledge about the worlds designated as supra-terrestrial. Later this knowledge became a realisation as she leaned towards Yoga.

Yoga as a conscious process or as an intuitive path had been known to her since her childhood; later it became a developed path of self-perfection. But ordinarily what takes a man a life-time took her a few years. She became slowly conscious of her mission on earth and of Sri Aurobindo as a great spiritual being somewhere on the earthly scene.

Meanwhile to complete her human education she entered into a matrimonial alliance, as was done in the past by Chaitanya, Mirabai, Buddha, Ramakrishna and also by Sri Aurobindo. Matrimony is an important phase of human existence and one who was the World-Mother incarnate must bear the mortal pangs of matrimony and child-bearing to acquaint herself at first hand with the experience of this human phase.

Prayers and Meditations of the Mother records poignantly the meeting between Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. It was not a romantic rendezvous. It was a meeting of two spirits one in essence, but divided in manifestation for the purpose of their special mission. Sri Aurobindo poetically records this meeting in his epic *Savitri*, in the Book of Love, where, if we exclude the legend and outer circumstances of the poem, we get the true essence of the meeting of the two souls. Sri Aurobindo's Yoga took a new turn of development. The Mother's quest (the quest of Savitri) was over. The results became externally perceptible in two ways. First, the publication of the

Arya with its new foundation of knowledge, new approach and new vision in the realms of philosophy, Yoga, sociology, history, poetry and a host of other subjects. Second, the growth of the Ashram as a nucleus of spiritual seekers. To put it in external terms : the Mother became the dynamic and living agent to manifest Sri Aurobindo's realisations. His thoughts, ideas, doctrines and researches in Yoga she formulated in action, in visible vehicles. Here in this sphere her past experiences and developments in the human ways became useful. A new light appeared amidst the few sadhaks that had flocked around the Master and it gave their life a novel meaning, value and orientation.

But we must not surmise that all her existence was without difficulties, troubles, problems and setbacks. In fact, humanity and human conditions are beset with limitations. It is these that visited the Mother with redoubled vigour, because she had come to establish a new harmony, she was the leader of the evolution. She faced all the attacks of ignorance, of ill-will, of ingratitude, of insincerity and inertia. They came from the world-atmosphere and from some of those who failed to accept her as the Divine Mother, or else fostered doubts, or bore ill-will, or were callously antagonistic to her and her workings. They came to her as difficulties which she had to surmount; as hindrances to her calling down a greater light into the earth-consciousness; they even invaded her as physical illnesses.

Of this condition Sri Aurobindo has repeatedly spoken in his poems, specially in *Savitri*. It is the necessary fate of the incarnate Divine. History records many a tale of callous ingratitude and baseness. The Redeemer and the Saviour have always to suffer greatly for their singular sacrifice to incarnate themselves as man; so it was with the Mother, so it was with Sri Aurobindo.

Thus the labour of the two divine collaborators was filled with immense difficulties. And at every step the goal seemed to withdraw further. And it seemed at one moment that the descent of the Supermind into the terrestrial consciousness might take a very long time indeed. So the problem was of indefinite delay or the adoption of an extreme method to hasten this descent and change the entire existing conditions. And the Master took upon himself to withdraw voluntarily from his material envelope as a holocaust. This literally took the Kingdom of Heaven by storm. The supramental light, which had long been descending but somehow could not be fixed in the body, came down and surcharged the body of Sri Aurobindo as he lay in state after his passing. And a new power began its swift work from a centre in the Mother's physical consciousness. But the Mother, as a result of Sri Aurobindo's self-sacrifice, was left alone in the material field. The future of her mission and the fate of the world lay now entirely with her. We, human beings, cannot conceive of this ordeal, which became most acute owing to the decisive conflict brought on between the protagonists of darkness and the newly descended light whose leader she was. To those who seek to understand fully the Mother's condition, we may suggest the reading of Books Seven to Ten of *Savitri*.

In 1956 at last the new light which had been directly working so far in the indi-

vidual consciousness entered directly the general atmosphere of the earth as a universal force. This marked the second and more decisive stage of Supermind's terrestrial action. The first stage, concerned with the individual human body, can be termed a descent; here now was a suffusion, however subtle, on a world scale and it may be distinguished, in the Mother's words, as a manifestation.

From now onwards as the light increased, the struggle too became more acute —because what the Mother aims at is the entire divinisation of the human constitution and thus a reversal of what man normally is. As a pioneer of this new creation she has to work over every inch of the ground, each element of the consciousness, each part of the nature. The struggle now is to change the very fibre of the body. The new light works in her physiological system, in her very cells, awaking a new consciousness, a new energy and a new birth in them. The process is on the way, a way of which no man has yet any glimpse. The barriers are many; the difficulties we cannot even gauge with our limited human comprehension. But the Mother continues her action upon the very material basis of her body, urging it to change, to become a conscious receptacle of the supramental illumination. Thus with her as the golden nucleus, we are marching towards a new dawn of perfection.

Meanwhile the Mother's hold and influence on men and nations and on world conditions is steadily increasing. Her power is there working in men's egoism, their littlenesses, their basenesses, their habits and their unwillingness to change. The disturbance, disharmony in the world's affairs are outer signs of the opposition to her working. The disturbance and chaos mean that nations are not yet ready to change, or to submit their egos to a higher power. And until they submit to her light, the struggle will continue.

We stand at the crossroads of history. There is one light with us, it is the Mother. None else can show us the way, can lead us; none else is there who can uplift us; all human efforts, human ways, human leaderships have failed. The ego of the nations, the ignorance of the mass of humanity are leading man to his doom. It seems that man does not want to be saved. But amid all this chaos and disharmony there is she who is not only the light to all who have flocked around her but is the guiding Power of the entire world. In her is the key that saves, the light that wakes, the sun that discovers and transforms. She is the creatrix of the new age to come.

Studying her life on earth, we learn that there is no end to the growth of man; there is no end to perseverance, there is no end to acquisition; there is no end to self-giving and to humility. This is the goal of which the Mother is the bodied symbol

The superman shall wake in mortal man
 And manifest the hidden demi-god
 Or grow into the God-Light and God-Force
 Revealing the secret deity in the cave.
 Then shall the earth be touched by the Supreme,
 His bright unveiled Transcendence shall illumine

The mind and heart, and force the life and act
 To interpret his inexpressible mystery
 In a heavenly alphabet of Divinity's signs.
 His living cosmic spirit shall enring,
 Annulling the decree of death and pain,
 Erasing the formulas of the Ignorance,
 With the deep meaning of beauty and life's hid sense,
 The being ready for immortality,
 His regard crossing infinity's mystic waves
 Bring back to Nature her early joy to live,
 The metred heart-beats of a lost delight,
 The cry of a forgotten ecstasy,
 The dance of the first world-creating Bliss.¹

ROMEN

1. Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri* (1st Edition), Book XI, Canto I, pp. 328-9.

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WORK IN OUR ASHRAM

I

HE was young and had just come for a two-month holiday after completing his studies at the University of Madras. He had qualified for the Master's degree and was brilliant in mathematics and languages—an intellectual of a high type. He came and met Kapali Sastri who took to him very kindly. A few days later, when the youngster asked how best he could utilise his time, Sastri told him to take up work in the Dining Room, and do it consecratedly, for about six hours a day. And he did accordingly.

I was intrigued. I had thought that for an intellectual like him, Sastri would advise an intensive course of reading Sri Aurobindo-literature, general philosophy, etc. So I asked him why he had advised this kind of physical work to the young man. He replied cryptically, "It will do him good in future." I could not quite follow but did not pursue the topic.

The young friend left after the vacation. He had great difficulty in settling down ; circumstances were very trying. But gradually a series of changes took place and today he is a top executive drawing a four-figure salary in a premier industrial establishment. Every time I see him I remember what Sastri said when the young man was asked to do work in the Dining Room. The seriousness with which he had taken it up and the spirit of consecration that evidently had gone into it have had far-reaching consequences in shaping his whole career. The selfless output of his energies in adoration of the Mother forged new lines of destiny for him.

That is the character of the work that the Mother provides in the Ashram. It is a dynamic means for growth and change—not only spiritual but also material. Properly approached and rightly taken on, work in the Ashram effects changes and promotes growth much more rapidly and effectively than meditation. Work is given by the Mother as an opportunity for one to learn to consecrate oneself, to pour out one's energies—physical, mental, vital and other—in the service of the Divine, to repeatedly converge the multiple movements of one's consciousness on the Divine. The entire being participates in the *yajña*. There is a joy of selfless exertion, self-giving and the being exults in a glow of upliftment. Continuous practice is found to lead to a gradual change in the consciousness.

Indeed, the type of work does not matter. As long as it is taken up and done in a spirit of sadhana, it operates as a lever for growth into the Mother's Consciousness. One feels concretely the vibrations of a different consciousness during the period of work. And yet for particular seekers who by nature or by habit are lethargic, slow-moving or too erratic, disorganised and tense, physical work is found to be the ideal. It harnesses the most difficult part of the system to a higher purpose and one does not take long to feel and experience the steady dissolution of the tamasic

crust or the beginnings of a settling order ; a lightness begins to be felt, a streak of joy issues forth and develops into a stream of delight. There is even a light on the face which no onlooker can miss. This change has its repercussions on the other levels of the being. This kind of hard exertion is specially advisable in moments or spells of depression. It is an unfailing remedy.

II

What is the right way to do this work, one would ask. First, work is to be approached as something sacred, as a means of yoga, a means for achieving union with the Divine Consciousness. It is something holy which one takes up with a measure of poise, purity and soul-attitude, as when one begins to pray, for example. And indeed, as the Mother has repeatedly said, work is the body's prayer to the Divine.¹

And when one begins the work each day, it is offered to the Divine—here to the Mother who is the Divine to us. The offering is not a mere mental idea. It is a felt movement that issues from the heart and the work proceeds on the wave of that inner impulsion as a continuous self-giving to the Divine. One may and does forget this purpose after a while and works mechanically, especially in the beginning. The moment one perceives this, one has to re-dedicate and continue. Without the spirit of dedication, work becomes just labour. The quality deteriorates and it has little spiritual value. I remember once someone had typed some matter for the Mother and sent up the sheets. The moment She held the papers, She remarked that it was only physical exertion, nothing more. It is not the quantity of the work done or the speed with which it is carried out that matters in the spiritual context. Even a machine can do things and that, too, much more efficiently and quickly. When a sadhaka does it he is expected to put his best consciousness into it and make it alive with his soul's consecration.

Naturally when one does this work in dedication to the Divine, it becomes a kind of communion with the Divine. One shuts out all movements—whether of the mind, life-force or body—which are contrary to the spirit of the undertaking. One is concerned to see that what one offers in work is the best he is capable of ; and this best changes from day to day. That is because in this work it is not merely as the object of dedication that the Divine comes in, but also as the sustaining and executive Force. Once the Mother allots a work, She gives also the necessary Force of Her Consciousness to do it. The worker has only to learn to put himself in the proper poise of receptivity and instrumentality. The Higher Force works through him and in the process it floods his being, accustoms the system to its own nature and opens the way to an eventual transmutation. The Consciousness-Force adjusts itself to

¹ In this connection I may mention in passing how jarring it is when some people visiting the Ashram propose to "do work" in lieu of payment for their boarding and lodging expenses. Work in the Ashram is not that kind of utility at all ; it is not meant to do duty for money. If it is done that way, it goes just that far and no further.

the capacity of the instrument but also it helps to increase its capacity, its range and its heights. As long as one is in tune with this growing Force of Consciousness, one does not feel the flow of time, there is no flagging of the energy or enthusiasm. The moment one feels tired, it is time to look inward and see where there has been a lapse. It was a few years ago that there was an extraordinary rush of work in the section where I serve. For days together, from morning till late at night, things would crowd one upon another and the whole batch of us was exhausted. I approached the Mother and informed Her of the situation. Her reply was thrilling : Think only of the work and not of yourselves. Needless to say we were instantly lifted up and saw where we had gone wrong.

There are certainly some limitations of the physical body and there is a line beyond which it cannot be safely stretched ; but within these limits it is possible to work without fatigue for longer periods than normally held to be possible. And it is found in Yoga that even these limits are not fixed. They can be pushed farther and farther. All depends upon the extent to which one is in tune with the presiding Yogic Consciousness.

I have spoken of work as a means of growth, of sadhana in our Yoga. There is another side, the aspect of work as an expression of progress of the inner consciousness. It is quite a subject by itself.

PRABUDDHA

KEEP ENKIRTLED THY LOVE

INTERSET, intimate grows with world our life,
 Nature's clutch, unfelt, intractable,
 Dogs our winged efforts with a nameless strife,
 Impounds our gains that years of love endowed.
 Relentless dark abyss enveloping all
 Aborts in our slumbering cells the light of God.

Keep Thy protection, O Mother, enkirtled around
 Against aping lures in garbs of wideness, growth,
 Plaguing our lucent sense, our faith profound,
 Eluding dense light, dear love our depths conceived.
 Lever our will aloft, till in Thy troth
 A deathless Birth is in bosom and bones achieved.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

THE FLOWER

A SHORT STORY

RUMMAGING around his father's library, Tolya found an old leather bound book with lots of illustrations in it, and captions to every illustration but one : a picture of a beautiful flower. The boy took a very special liking to this flower and he could even sense its delicate fragrance. He asked his mother if she knew this flower, and she replied, after some hesitation, that this was surely a dream-flower.

Later the boy took his cherished book to school and asked the teacher if he knew anything about this flower, but the teacher only shook his head saying that this was a very nice illustration indeed, but of a flower totally unknown to him.

In order to discover the origin of his beloved flower, Tolya began to study botany. But when he showed the book, the professors told him that the flower pictured there was a composition ; though they completely disagreed among themselves as to its nature. Some said it had the leaves of *Psyidium Guajava*, but for their size; and the petals of *Acalypha Sanderiana*, but for their shape ; and the colour of *Helioropum Peruvianum*, but for the blue, all mixed with a good deal of free fantasy. Whereas others insisted on some even weirder names and made no allowance for fantasy at all. But they all did agree that this flower could not possibly exist—anywhere—because it did not belong to any known species.

This answer did not satisfy Tolya, as to his heart a flower that had a scent of its own was a flower that existed—somewhere.

Tolya left his studies, packed together into a bag his book, a map of the world, a magnifying glass, a pair of binoculars and some clothing, and he set out in search of his flower.

For many years he went through many, many countries, and he searched on hills and in valleys, in woods and fields, in marshland as well as desert, until growing weary of wandering he built a simple hut for himself out of bamboo and clay, in a lovely lonely place, somewhere, far away, even beyond the hills of China. It was near a murmuring brook and right opposite a very big and very, very old tree.

There he settled and he asked the brook, showing it the illustration, if it had ever seen the flower. The brook replied hastily that it was in much too much of a hurry to reach the great river down yonder and never had the time to look left and right at lowers that might grow on its banks.

Tolya then asked the fishes, but the fishes all shook their heads and tails and some even their fins, and did not answer at all, but for one big old trout, who said with a peculiarly croaking voice that he once had made a very long and adventurous journey, right to the sea, and there he had seen at the very bottom some amazingly beautiful flowers growing. One of them had been nearly like this one, yes, but not quite, since it

had no leaves and the petals were entirely different, yes,—still there was a certain resemblance, there certainly was...and so he continued muttering to himself as he sauntered off on his way downstream.

Tolya liked the old trout and thought him particularly amiable, but did not think the information very useful ; so he asked the tree. The tree took his time in answering and only when a slight breeze made his leaves tremble did he answer in a deep husky voice, No, he did not know what was growing on the earth below him. Ever since he had been born, he had looked up—heavenwards—and he advised the boy to do the same, for it was only up there one should look for true beauty.

But Tolya, after having gazed up to heaven as the tree had advised, for a very long while, found his neck stiffening and had pains to move it again.

Then he asked the wind, but the wind sang back in reply that whenever he tried to caress the beautiful flowers, they all turned their heads away and he had never seen the face of a single one as yet.

Finally he asked the birds ; but they wanted to savour the flower's nectar and see if they could recall ever having tasted the like before. His flower, which did have its own fragrance, did not have nectar, anyway not in the book, so the birds could not help him either.

Tolya contented himself and was happy that he did at least have a picture of his flower and decided not to search any longer.

Then, as the hot summer approached, he thought of the lovely cool shade underneath the very big tree on the other side of the brook. He would have liked to go across and looked upstream and downstream, but there was no crossing anywhere. That is how it came to pass that he built a bridge, and because he loved and appreciated all the beauty and harmony of nature around him, he succeeded in building a very fine bridge, arching high in the air from one bank to the other, and so delicate that the bridge itself had pleasure to see its image reflected in the water below.

Tolya crossed over, one very hot day in mid-summer, to sit in the shade of the big old tree, taking his precious book over with him. The heat, the humming of the insects and the murmuring of the brook made him soon fall asleep, and the fragrance of his flower accompanied him into his dreams.

And Tolya followed this fragrance through a world of shades and shadows and many-coloured lights, up higher and higher, until he found himself on a clearing of transparent blue among white and golden clouds. There he saw a person, all luminous.

“So, you want to know about your flower ?” Tolya heard himself addressed in a voice that sounded like a loving smile. “It is called ‘Truth’ and that is the reason it cannot yet grow on earth. But if you can make your love boundless, the flower's origin will surely be revealed to you.”

These magic words resounded from cloud to cloud like an echo, and they were still ringing in Tolya's ears when he awoke. He looked at the illustration with new eyes.

So your name is Truth, he reflected, and let his eyes rest on the image in deep admiration. And then a wondrous thing happened. The flower slowly came to life. It lifted itself from the paper and a slight tremor ran through its petals like a sigh. He felt an enchantment emanating from it, an enchantment to which his heart so completely responded that he and the flower became ONE in all its beatitude.

A sunray found its way through the foliage of the big old tree, carrying on its beam all the wisdom of the light, it touched the petals of the flower and thus penetrated deep into his heart, revealing to Tolya the knowledge of its Divine Origin.

CARMEN NEVILLE

LA FLEUR

UN CONTE

FOUILLANT dans la bibliothèque de son père, Tolya avait trouvé un vieux livre relié de peau, contenant une foule d'illustrations. Sous chacune de ces illustrations, une légende ; à l'exception d'une image pourtant, qui, elle, n'en comportait pas : celle d'une fleur merveilleuse. L'enfant se prit pour cette fleur d'un amour tout particulier ; son délicat parfum même lui devenait perceptible.

Il demanda à sa mère si elle connaissait cette fleur ; mais après quelque hésitation, elle lui répondit que c'était sans doute là une fleur de rêve.

Plus tard, Tolya emporta son précieux livre à l'école et il interrogea son maître : pouvait-il lui dire quoi que ce soit au sujet de cette fleur ? Mais le maître se contenta de hocher la tête, en disant que l'illustration était très belle en vérité, mais que la fleur qu'elle représentait lui était totalement inconnue.

Afin de découvrir l'origine de sa fleur bien-aimée, Tolya se mit à étudier la botanique. Mais quand il montra son livre à ses professeurs, ceux-ci lui expliquèrent que cette image était le fruit d'un composé, sur la nature duquel ils étaient d'ailleurs tous en complet désaccord. Certains affirmaient que ses feuilles avait tout de celles du *Psidium Guajava*, sauf la taille ; et ses pétales tout de celles l'*Alcalypha Sanderiama* sauf la forme ; et sa couleur tout de celle de l'*Héliotropum Péruvianum*, sauf le bleu ; l'ensemble lui-même assaisonné d'une large dose de fantaisie. D'autres enfin, ne laissant aucune marge à l'imagination, s'obstinaient à prononcer des noms bien plus mystérieux encore. Mais ils s'accordaient tous sur un point au moins : la fleur n'existait pas, et ne pouvait exister nulle part, puisqu'elle n'appartenait à aucune espèce classifiée.

Tolya ne fut pas du tout satisfait de cette réponse. Une fleur qui possédait un parfum bien elle, auquel son cœur répondait, ne pouvait pas ne pas exister—quelque part—.

Il abandonna donc ses études, fourra dans un sac son livre, une carte du monde, une loupe, une paire de jumelles et quelques vêtements, puis il partit à la recherche de sa fleur.

Pendant des années et des années il voyagea de pays en pays, par monts et par vaux, à travers bois, à travers champs, dans les marais, dans les déserts, cherchant toujours, mais en vain.

Enfin, las d'errer, il se construisit une petite hutte faite de bambous et de terre, située en un lieu charmant et solitaire, quelque part très très loin, au delà même des montagnes de la Chine. Auprès, coulait un ruisseau chuchotant, et, juste en face, s'élevait un très grand, très très vieil arbre.

Voilà donc où il s'installa ; et puis, ouvrant son livre pour lui montrer l'image,

il demanda au ruisseau s'il avait déjà vu cette fleur. Mais le ruisseau répondit précipitamment qu'il était beaucoup trop pressé d'aller se jeter dans les bras du grand fleuve tout là-bas en-bas, pour s'attarder à regarder à droite ou à gauche quelles fleurs pouvaient bien pousser sur ses rives.

Alors Tolya interrogea les poissons. Mais les poissons secouaient tous la tête et la queue, et quelquefois même les nageoires, sans jamais répondre à sa question. Sauf une très vieille et très grosse truite, qui de son étrange voix rauque lui raconta qu'elle avait un jour entrepris un long et périlleux voyage jusqu'à la mer, et que là, tout au fond, elle avait vu pousser des fleurs extraordinairement belles. L'une d'entre elles ressemblait presque exactement à celle-ci, oui... mais quand même pas tout à fait, car d'abord elle n'avait pas de feuilles, et puis ses pétales étaient complètement différents, oui... mais il y avait cependant une certaine ressemblance, oui, oui, une ressemblance certaine... Et tout en continuant à marmotter, elle s'éloigna en se dandinant au gré du courant.

Tolya trouva la truite particulièrement aimable, mais ne jugea pas son renseignement très utile; aussi décida-t-il de consulter l'arbre.

L'arbre prit son temps, et ne répondit qu'au moment où une légère brise fit frémir son feuillage. D'une voix basse et enrouée, il donna sa réponse : non, il ne savait pas du tout ce qui poussait sur la terre au-dessous de lui. Depuis le jour de sa naissance, il n'avait jamais regardé que là-haut, vers le ciel; et il conseillait vivement au jeune garçon d'en faire autant, car là-haut, et là-haut seulement se devait-on de chercher la vraie beauté.

Mais Tolya, après qu'il eût, sur les conseils de l'arbre, contemplé le ciel pendant bien longtemps, sentit son cou se raidir dangereusement, et il eut toutes les peines du monde à le changer de position.

Alors il se tourna vers le vent, mais en réponse, le vent lui chanta qu'il n'avait jamais pu voir le visage d'une seule fleur, car à peine essayait-il de les caresser, qu'elles détournaient la tête.

Finalement il s'adressa aux oiseaux. Mais ceux-ci, pour essayer de reconnaître la fleur, auraient eu besoin de goûter à son nectar, afin de retrouver si dans leur souvenir cette saveur leur était familière. Or la fleur, malgré son arôme pourtant très personnel, ne possédait pas de nectar, tout au moins pas dans ce livre. Les oiseaux, eux non plus, ne pouvaient donc l'aider.

Alors Tolya finit par se résigner, heureux d'avoir au moins une image de sa fleur, et il décida d'abandonner ses recherches.

Puis, vint l'été brûlant. Tolya songea à l'ombre fraîche et douce sous le grand arbre de l'autre côté de la rivière. Il aurait aimé la traverser, mais il eut beau explorer en amont et en aval, impossible de trouver un gué. Forcé lui fut de se décider à construire lui un pont tout seul. Et comme il savait aimer et apprécier la beauté et l'harmonie de la nature qui l'entourait, il réussit à construire un très beau pont, qui s'élançait haut dans le ciel, joignant une rive à l'autre en un arc audacieux. Et ce pont était bâti de si belle et délicate manière, que lui même prit plaisir à contempler

dans l'eau son reflet miroitant.

Un beau jour de plein été, son précieux livre sous le bras, Tolya traversa la rivière pour aller s'asseoir à l'ombre du grand arbre. bercé par la chaleur, le bourdonnement des insectes et le murmure de la rivière, il ne tarda pas à s'endormir. Et le parfum de sa fleur l'accompagna dans son rêve.

Tolya suivit ce parfum à travers un monde d'ombres, de formes et de lumières multicolores, toujours et toujours plus haut, et voilà qu'enfin il se trouva dans une clairière d'un bleu transparent, entourée de nuages blancs et or. Là se tenait une personne toute faite de lumière.

"Ainsi, tu veux apprendre le secret de ta fleur.. " Une voix qui semblait un sourire plein d'amour s'adressait à lui. "Elle s'appelle la Vérité, et c'est pourquoi elle ne peut encore croître sur la terre. Mais si tu laisses grandir ton amour à l'infini, l'origine de ta fleur te sera sûrement révélée..."

Et ces paroles résonnèrent comme un écho, de nuage en nuage. Elles sonnaient encore en lui lorsque Tolya se réveilla. Et quand il regarda l'image, ce fut avec de nouveaux yeux.

Ainsi, tu es la Vérité, songea-t-il en la contemplant avec une profonde admiration. Et alors, il se passa quelque chose d'extraordinaire. Lentement, la fleur s'ouvrit à la vie. Elle se détacha du livre, monta, et un léger frémissement parcourut ses pétales, comme un soupir. Il émanait d'elle comme un enchantement, enchantement auquel le cœur de Tolya répondit avec une telle plénitude, que lui et la fleur devinrent UN dans la même béatitude.

Un trait de soleil tout chargé de sagesse lumineuse se fraya un chemin à travers le feuillage du vieil arbre, et, touchant de son rayon les pétales de la fleur, il pénétra dans le cœur de Tolya, lui révélant la connaissance de sa Divine Origine.

*Translation by SVETLANA
from the English of Carmen Neville*