

# MOTHER INDIA

FEBRUARY 21, 1969: THE MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY

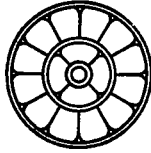
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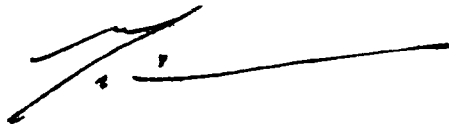


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXI

No. 1

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"*

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## FEBRUARY 21

### TWO WAYS OF "PRANAM" TO THE MOTHER

THERE are two ways of bowing  
To you, O Splendour sweet!  
One craves the boon of blessedness,  
One gives the soul to your feet.

Pulling your touch to ourselves we feel  
Holy and happy—we think huge heaven  
Comes close with you so we may pluck  
A redder dawn, a purpler even.

This is but rapturous robbery  
Deaf to infinity's call  
That we should leap and plunge in you  
Our aching empty all

And, in the surge of being your own,  
Grow blind and quite forget  
Whether our day be a richer rose,  
A wealthier violet.

Precious each moment laid in your hands,  
Whatever the hue it bear—  
A flame and fragrance just because  
Your fingers hold it dear.

Make me your nothing, my whole life  
I would drown in your vastnesses—  
A cry to be ruled by your flawless touch,  
Your will alone my peace.

AMAL KIRAN

## RÉPONSES DE LA MÈRE AU SUJET D'AUROVILLE

1) *Est-il besoin pour construire Auroville de méthode de travail, d'organisation, de coordination ?*

LA MÈRE : "La discipline est nécessaire pour vivre. Pour vivre, le corps lui-même est soumis dans toutes ses fonctions à une discipline rigoureuse. Un relâchement quelconque de cette discipline produit la maladie."

2) *Quelle devrait être la nature de cette organisation ? Dans le Présent. Dans le Futur.*

LA MÈRE : "L'organisation est une discipline de l'action mais pour Auroville nous aspirons à dépasser les organisations qui sont arbitraires et artificielles. Nous voulons une organisation qui soit l'expression d'une conscience supérieure travaillant à manifester la Vérité de l'Avenir."

3) *En attendant une conscience commune, que la vraie et juste manière de travailler collectivement soit à l'œuvre, que faire ?*

LA MÈRE : "Une organisation hiérarchique groupée autour du centre le plus éclairé et se soumettant à une discipline collective."

4) *Faut-il utiliser les méthodes d'organisation ayant fait leur preuves d'efficacité, mais basées sur la logique humaine et l'utilisation de machines ?*

LA MÈRE : "Ceci est un pis aller auquel il ne faudrait se soumettre que tout à fait provisoirement."

5) *Faut-il laisser l'initiative individuelle se manifester librement; l'inspiration, l'intuition, être le moteur de l'action personnelle, et refuser toute suggestion n'étant pas ressentie bonne par l'intéressé ?*

LA MÈRE : "Ceci pour être viable, exigerait que tous les travailleurs d'Auroville soient des yoguis, conscients de la Vérité Divine."

6) *Le temps est-il venu de vouloir, de mettre en place, de tenter une organisation générale, ou faut-il attendre l'attitude juste et les hommes ?*

LA MÈRE : "Il faut une organisation pour que le travail soit fait. Mais l'organisation elle-même doit être souple et progressive."

7) *Si l'attente est la solution est-il néanmoins nécessaire de définir des principes d'organisation et d'empêcher que ne se produise un désordre incontrôlable ?*

LA MÈRE : "Tous ceux qui veulent vivre et travailler à Auroville doivent avoir :

## THE MOTHER'S ANSWERS ABOUT AUROVILLE

1) *Does the construction of Auroville require a working method, organisation and co-ordination?*

THE MOTHER: "Discipline is necessary for life. To live, the body itself is subjected, in all its functions, to a rigorous discipline. Any relaxing of this discipline produces illness."

2) *What should be the nature of this organisation, in the present and in the future?*

THE MOTHER: "Organisation is a discipline of action but for Auroville we aspire to go beyond arbitrary and artificial organisations. We want an organisation which is the expression of a higher consciousness working to manifest the truth of the future."

3) *Until such time as a common consciousness appears and until the true and right manner of collective work begins to function, what must one do?*

THE MOTHER: "A hierarchic organisation grouped around the most enlightened centre and submitting to a collective discipline."

4) *Must one use organisational methods which have proved efficacious but which are based on human logic and the use of machines?*

THE MOTHER: "This is a makeshift to which one should only submit provisionally."

5) *Must one allow individual initiative to manifest freely and inspiration and intuition to be the moving force behind personal action and should one reject all ideas not felt as good by the interested party?*

THE MOTHER: "In order to be workable this requires all workers of Auroville to be yogis conscious of the Divine Truth."

6) *Has the time come to wish for, to set up, to try for a general organisation or should one wait for the right attitude and men?*

THE MOTHER: "An organisation is needed for the work to be done—but the organisation itself must be flexible and progressive."

7) *If to wait is the solution, is it nevertheless necessary to define organisational principles and to avoid uncontrollable disorder?*

THE MOTHER: "All those who wish to live and work at Auroville must have:

Une bonne volonté intégrale, une aspiration constante à connaître la Vérité et à se soumettre à elle.

Une plasticité suffisante pour faire face aux exigences du travail et une volonté incessante de progrès pour avancer toujours vers l'ultime Vérité.

Un petit conseil pour finir :

Soyez plus préoccupés de vos propres défauts que de ceux des autres.

Si chacun travaillait sérieusement à se perfectionner lui-même, la perfection de l'ensemble suivrait automatiquement.”

Le 6 Février 1969

RAPPORT DE ROGER ANGER



an integral good will, a constant aspiration to know the Truth and to submit to it; enough plasticity to confront the exigencies of work and an endless will to progress so as to move forward towards the Ultimate Truth.

“And finally a word of advice:

Be more concerned with your own faults than with those of others.

If each one worked seriously at his own self-perfection, the perfection of the whole would follow automatically.”

6th February 1969

REPORT BY ROGER ANGER  
( *English translation by Maggi* )

## THE MOTHER REPLIES TO A YOUNG SADHAKA

Si c'est de l'Amour Divin que tu veux parler, on ne peut l'avoir qu'en renonçant à l'amour humain qui est son travestissement et caricature.

If it is Divine Love you mean, you can only get it by renouncing human love which is only its disguise and caricature. (29.9.1934)

Puisque tu veux tant que cela la Vie Divine, tu n'a pas à craindre d'échouer, car une aspiration sincère et continue est toujours exaucée.

Since you want the Divine Life so much, you need not be afraid of failing, for a sincere and constant aspiration is always fulfilled. (29.9.1934)

L'Amour est là dans le fond silencieux de ton cœur, c'est à toi de le découvrir.

Love is there in the silent depth of your heart. It is for you to discover it.

(4.10.1934)

Quand vient la tentation, résiste et ne cède pas.

When temptation comes, resist, do not yield to it.

(9.10.1934)

A a tort de croire que je suis venue sur terre pour créer un Ashram! Ce serait un bien petit objectif vraiment. .

A is wrong in thinking that I have come on earth to create an Ashram! It would be a very small objective indeed. . . (8.12.1934)

Tout cela ce sont de fausses imaginations. Si tu te disais, au contraire, que je suis toujours avec toi (ce qui est vrai) cela t'aiderait à devenir conscient de ma présence.

All these are false imaginations. If you told yourself, on the contrary, that I am always with you (which is true), this would help you to grow conscious of my presence. (9.11.1934)

Oui, patience et tranquillité, pas de crainte et d'agitation, mais une foi confiante que tout ira bien.

Ainsi, tout sera bien en très peu de temps.

Yes, patience and quietness, no fear and no restlessness, but a trustful faith that all will be well.

Thus all will be well in a very short time.

(19.9.1934)

Oui, il ne faut jamais céder à la nature inférieure non seulement quand elle se manifeste en toi, mais aussi quand elle se manifeste dans les autres.

Yes, you must never yield to your lower nature, not only when it manifests in yourself but also when it manifests in others. (30.10.1934)

N'écoute jamais les mauvais conseils et ne suis jamais les mauvais exemples, n'accepte aucune influence que celle du Divin et ton malaise disparaîtra.

Never listen to wrong advice, neither follow bad examples, do not accept whatever influence comes, and your uneasiness will vanish. (30.10.1934)

Il ne faut pas se tourmenter pour les erreurs qu'on peut faire, il faut seulement garder la *parfaite sincérité de son aspiration*, et à la fin tout sera bien.

You must not worry about the mistakes you make, you must only keep the *perfect sincerity of your aspiration* and in the end all will be well. (4.1.1934)

Dans ton être psychique—j'y suis toujours présente. C'est là que tu peux et dois me trouver et quand tu m'auras trouvée là, dans les profondeurs de ton cœur, tu me reconnaîtras aussi dans ma forme physique.

In your psychic being, I am always present. It is there that you can and must find me and when you have found me there, you will also recognise me in my physical form. (31-10-1934)

P vient de m'écrire la quantité considérable de romans que tu lis. Je ne crois pas que ce genre de lecture soit bien bon pour toi et si c'est pour étudier le style, comme tu me l'as dit, l'étude attentive d'un bon livre écrit par un bon auteur, fait avec soin, apprend bien davantage que cette lecture hâtive et superficielle.

P has just written to me about the huge quantity of novels which you read. I do not think this kind of reading is very good for you, and if it is to study the style, as you told me, the careful study of a good book, well written by a good writer, teaches much more than this hasty and superficial reading. (25-10-1934)

Faire des efforts consiste à refuser de faire quoique que ce soit qui t'éloigne du Divin.

To make effort consists in refusing to do anything whatsoever that takes you away from the Divine. (28-10-1934)

Être très sincère et très droit, ne rien tolérer au dedans de vous que vous ne puissiez me montrer sans crainte, ne rien faire dont vous puissiez avoir honte devant moi.

To be very sincere and straightforward, not to tolerate within yourself anything that you cannot show me without fear, not to do anything which you would be ashamed of in front of me. (7-11-1934)

Tu trouveras toujours mes bénédictions avec toi quand tu seras attentif et appliqué dans tes études.

You will always find my blessings with you when you are attentive and diligent in your studies. (9-12-1934)

*Q. Maman, veux-tu m'expliquer comment les images nuisent ?*

Naturellement cela dépend de ce que sont les images; mais le plus souvent elles ne concernent que les choses de la vie ordinaire et ainsi elles tirent la conscience vers cela.

*Q. Mother, will you explain to me how pictures can be harmful?*

Naturally it depends on the kind of pictures but usually they only deal with things of the ordinary life and so they pull down the consciousness towards them.

(10-12-1934)

Je ne comprends pas pourquoi ton vital ne s'intéresse pas à l'étude? C'est pourtant passionnant d'apprendre!

I cannot understand why your vital is not interested in studies? Yet to learn is a fascinating thing (13-12-1934)

*Q. Le travail physique ne m'est pas difficile même lorsque j'éprouve un malaise, mais pour l'étude il m'est difficile d'obéir à la discipline. Tout de même j'ai décidé que le jour où je n'étudierai pas, je ne prendrai pas mon déjeuner.*

Quelle drôle d'idée! Tu vas punir ton corps pour une faute que le vital a commise! Ce n'est pas juste.

*Q. As far as physical work is concerned, it is not difficult, even if I feel uneasy, but in my studies I find it difficult to follow the discipline. However, I have made up my mind that when I do not study properly, I will not eat my lunch.*

What a ludicrous idea! You will punish your body for a fault the vital has committed. That's not just. (21-12-1934)

*Q. Maman, veux-tu me dire la raison pour laquelle j'ai passé une nuit agitée hier?*

R. Sans doute n'avais-tu pas calmé tes pensées avant de t'endormir. Il faut toujours, lorsqu'on se couche, commencer par calmer ses pensées.

*Q. Mother, will you let me know why I have had such a restless night?*

A. Obviously you did not quiet your thoughts before going to sleep. When you go to bed, you must always begin by quieting your thoughts. (28-1-1935)

Les études fortifient le mental et détournent l'attention de sa concentration sur les impulsions et les désirs du vital. La concentration sur l'étude est un des plus puissants moyens de contrôler le mental et le vital, voilà pourquoi c'est si important d'étudier.

Studies strengthen the mind and take away your attention from its concentration on the impulses and desires of the vital. Concentration on one's studies is one of the most powerful means to control the mind and the vital; that is why studying is so important. (28-1-1935)

*Q. Que dois-je faire? L'étude ne me donne beaucoup de plaisir.*

R. On n'étudie pas pour avoir du plaisir — on étudie pour apprendre et se développer cérébralement.

*Q. What shall I do? I find little pleasure in studying.*

A. One does not study in order to have pleasure—one studies in order to learn things and to develop mentally. (1-2-1935)

*From the Note-books of SHANTI DOSHI*

## CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the January issue)

15-7-1934

*Q: At about 5 p.m. yesterday I was taking some physical exercise. In the course of it I experienced as if you were doing the exercise for me! That happened only for a short while and yet seemed so delightful. But when I tried to keep up with that imagination continuously, it vanished. I am at a loss to understand what it meant.*

**SRI AUROBINDO:** It was not an imagination, but an experience. When such an experience occurs, the attempt to take hold of it mentally and continue it may on the contrary interrupt it. It is best to let it continue of itself—if it ceases, it is likely to recur.

*Q: This morning while sitting on my terrace I was offering my prayers to God. All on a sudden I got into this vision:*

*An earthen pot black in colour surged up before me. Flames were coming out of it. They went on increasing and with them some black things were coming out in large numbers. These things assembled on a wall and seemed to be some beings. Then the flames went on decreasing. The black things lessened. Later on all the flames vanished and there remained no black things within them. The final appearance of the flames was reddish golden yellow free from any impurity. Afterwards the pot burst into pieces and Lord Krishna and Radha appeared. The light seemed to be very intense around them.*

*My own explanation of the vision:*

*The earthen pot was my body. The black things the weaknesses and the hostile forces. The fire was the Divine's love. Lord Krishna represented the Divine and Radha the Mother.*

**SRI AUROBINDO:** Your explanation is fairly correct. But the pot was not the body, it was the old physical consciousness, and the flame was the flame of purification, Agni Pavaka. The reddish golden yellow colour indicates the flame of the Truth in the physical.

*Q: After the above experience the vision changed. Now I was talking with the Mother just as I had done yesterday (during my interview). The whole arrangement of her room was the same. At a distance from this room I noticed a temple of Goddess Durga in which there appeared many lights before the feet of the Goddess. These lights were sometimes four, sometimes one, sometimes many in number. The single light was very very white, and in size bigger than all the others.*

**SRI AUROBINDO:** The lights are the Mother's Powers—many in number. The white light is her own characteristic power, that of the Divine Consciousness in its essence—the four are probably those of her four principal powers described in the book "The Mother".

What you see is a symbolic image of the Mother in the various action of her Powers, one, fourfold and manifold.

From DR. R. S. AGARWAL

# KNOWLEDGE AND MENTAL INFORMATION

## LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

*Self: Yesterday's experience was more intense, solid and powerful than ever before. Calm and silence were its background. Will you kindly tell me what it was? It seemed too profound for me to understand.*

SRI AUROBINDO: You must get the knowledge by developing the experience.

5-2-1934

*Self: Generally the experiences come by themselves, I only try to live within and go on aspiring and receiving them. What is actually meant by "developing the experience"?*

SRI AUROBINDO: Let it develop of itself—then it must become sufficiently precise for you to know what it is.

5-2-1934

*Self: From the beginning the power of my intellect has been very weak. I generally live in the physical mind only. Is not the growth of intellect important to our Yoga?*

SRI AUROBINDO: If your sadhana develops, knowledge will come with it and there will be the necessary development

13-2-1934

*Self: In connection with becoming conscious of the Mother's working in me, you write: "Yes. But it will probably bring the pressure on the forehead centre, of which you complain." What is the connection between getting knowledge and the pressure on the forehead?*

SRI AUROBINDO: You asked I believe about knowing what comes. The knowledge you speak of comes most easily when the inner mind centre is open.

19-4-1934

*Self: You want me to observe and understand the movements of my nature and the working of the Mother within me. But I do not know how to do it exactly and correctly. For instance, when something descends I feel simply that a new thing is coming down into me. But I cannot distinguish its particular aspect. Would you kindly tell me how to learn the art of doing so?*

SRI AUROBINDO: You must aspire for the conscious knowledge—not mental but the knowledge which comes with the experience itself. Nothing elaborate is needed. But if something comes from the psychic, you must know that it is psychic—or if something comes from above, you must know what it is—just as you know when the peace is there.

2-5-1934

*Self: My friend Naik inquired about the exact meaning of what you wrote to me yesterday, " ..Nothing elaborate is needed."*

SRI AUROBINDO: I mean that what is needed for you is to be conscious of the nature of the movements that take place—you need not make your mind active to try to know elaborately all details. But knowledge will come of itself once there is the consciousness. 3-5-1934

*Self: Naik told me, "This (subtle) smell faculty is perhaps something like an occult thing opening the consciousness, similar to seeing visions." Is it true?*

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

*Self: Visions help sadhana; does this faculty also help me?*

SRI AUROBINDO: If it is accompanied with knowledge 25-5-1934

*Self: I don't think any knowledge about subtle sounds can come by itself.*

SRI AUROBINDO: All knowledge can come by itself. 12-7-1934

*Self: Even now (it is about two months since I asked you last for it) I do not possess even some elementary ideas of experiences and descents. So often they come and pass through me without getting the proper value they deserve. Please tell me something about them at least from the general point of view.*

SRI AUROBINDO: You have to learn by experience. Mental information (badly understood, as it always is without experience) might rather hamper than help. In fact there is no fixed mental knowledge for these things which vary infinitely. You must learn to go beyond the hankering for mental information and open to the true way of knowledge. 13-7-1934

*Self: You wrote the other day, "...there is the condition in which all comes automatically and only a certain knowledge and assent is necessary for the development." What is that knowledge?*

SRI AUROBINDO: You have not got it yet. It is a knowledge which comes from above. 31-1-1934

*Self: But why does the knowledge not come since there is silence to receive it?*

SRI AUROBINDO: The knowledge will come in its time. 5-9-1934

*Self: Before the higher knowledge begins to enlighten me, how will I understand new experiences?*

SRI AUROBINDO: You have to watch and see how they develop. For the most part they carry their own meaning and if you go on observing them with a silent and vigilant mind you will understand more than if you were in a constant turmoil of thought about them. 7-9-1934



*Self: Daily I report to you the experiences and other movements of my sadhana. Sometimes you give your illuminating comments, sometimes you are silent. Does your latter reaction indicate any exaggeration on my part?*

SRI AUROBINDO: It means that I accept what you write—or when what you write is not explicit enough, I wait for the experience to develop. Silence does not mean that there is any exaggeration. 29-9-1934

*Self: I am now thinking to ask you no more questions on either difficulties or experiences. Let me simply dedicate myself through writing to you and to the Mother.*

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, that is the best. You must let your power of observation grow and your mind be prepared from within for knowledge. 19-10-1934

*Self: As the Brahmic passage remains widely open all the time I have begun to feel now the Mother's working precisely. So when she grants me something I shall experience it as clearly as if she were pouring water into a glass!*

SRI AUROBINDO: That is good also. 27-10-1934

*Self: Often during a good receptivity, my consciousness feels clearly a free flow of what the Mother gives me. And yet I am so ignorant of the exact nature of the thing received! I am only aware that something from above has descended.*

SRI AUROBINDO: The knowledge from above has to descend before there can be precise knowledge of that kind. 18-8-1934

To be conscious is the first step—the exact knowledge will come afterwards. 27-10-1934

*Self: At each step I used to ask you about every detail of my sadhana. That is to say, your mental advice was needed so often. But now I don't think it would be so very necessary; because my consciousness has begun to get your help through the inner being.*

SRI AUROBINDO: That is a very good change. Whenever necessary the external advice will be given, but it should not be indispensable. 8-12-1934

*Self: I am at a loss to know how to tackle the present spiritual thoughts. They are almost all about the Divine Mother and her new creation. They may be very good and helpful for active-minded writers, as they carry some higher truth. But for me, they come at once in a great number and occupy my inner mind. Unless a strong will is put to stop them, they go on forming and shaping this and that. And sometimes they create images after images for expressing this truth as if I were writing poetry!<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> That mood actually inspired me to write some verses. I was about to send them to Sri Aurobindo (as every budding poet in the Ashram used to do) for his comments. But I had a second thought what if he asks me to continue and develop into a poet? That would demand such a lot of my precious time and energy out of the inner sadhana. So I tore off the verses and said nothing to Sri Aurobindo. But

SRI AUROBINDO: Where do they come from?

I mean that if they come from above they may be something of the knowledge coming down. 20-12-1934

*Self: You asked, "Where do they come from?" My own mind has fallen silent. If there is any mental activity from it, it is of the mechanical mind.*

*I don't think this mind could give birth to such thoughts!*

SRI AUROBINDO: No. They may come from the universal Mind or they may come from above. 22-12-1934

*Self: The other day you wrote to me: "The knowledge can come without disturbing the silence and peace of the mind." That is actually what has begun to happen. When the inner or higher thoughts come the mind remains only as a channel. Occasionally there is even a feeling that there is no mind at all—only blankness.*

SRI AUROBINDO: That is the right way of reception of the thoughts. 24-12-1934

*Self: In any case, I think, the mind must be there, if not active at least passive. Were it not so how could the knowledge take a form?*

SRI AUROBINDO: It uses the substance of mind (for of course the mind is there), but the mind remains passive and does not try to form or originate thoughts for itself. 24-12-1934

*Self: When one is plunged in the immutable Brahman, does one not usually prefer to keep oneself all still, unmoved even by the higher knowledge?*

SRI AUROBINDO: Not necessarily. The immutable Brahman is only a base for the transcendent action which comes down into its peace and silence and fills it with power also and Ananda and the light of knowledge. 24-12-1934

*Self: If my mind is right, the Mother has opened me to some higher plane. And that is why my inner being remains in constant touch with the above-world.*

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

*Self: Is it not the first of the higher planes?*

SRI AUROBINDO: That is right. It is the first of the planes above the ordinary human mind. 29-12-1934

*From NAGIN DOSHI*

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who could obliterate his fate? I was forced to succumb to versification in 1955 when our professor of English poetry asked all his students to write a poem as home-work!

## 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.)*

MARCH 17, 1940

THERE was a letter from an outside sadhaka regarding his election affair. It was read out to Sri Aurobindo. It said, "You may not be interested in politics..."

P: We are interested.

SRI AUROBINDO: We are very much interested though we don't take part in it.

The letter further read: "The allegation of newspapers is not true that I voted against the release of political prisoners. I voted for it. Neither is it true that I sided with Government against the censure motion by Congress..."

SRI AUROBINDO: Why doesn't he contradict the allegation then? It is absurd to remain quiet when the papers are spreading false news.

The letter went on to say: "I have spoken to my friends and other members about it."

SRI AUROBINDO: He may have spoken to them but he didn't speak to the papers.

Then the letter elucidated why he had taken part in politics, etc., etc. On all this there was no comment from Sri Aurobindo.

P: You seem to have relaxed the rule that the disciple shouldn't take part in politics.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is meant for inmates, not for those who are outside. But there also, if they take part in politics, they shouldn't join any revolutionary activities, as that would bring trouble to the Ashram.

EVENING

B: Can one get liberation with desire still present in the lower nature?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, why not? One can realise the Self and attain moksha or liberation in spite of desires.

B: Won't one have to take birth again because of the desires?

SRI AUROBINDO: No; the desires fall off with the death of the body.

C: When one snores in meditation, does it mean that one is sleeping instead of meditating?

SRI AUROBINDO: One may be meditating. One's consciousness may have gone within—it is not quite Samadhi—while the body falls asleep.

C: I ask because very often I have felt that I have gone somewhere and was feeling nice, calm and peaceful but when I wake up I myself find I was snoring or others tell me I was doing so.

SRI AUROBINDO: When you feel peace and calm it means you have gone within. But aren't you conscious of where you have gone?

C: No; only a feeling of going very deep into a pleasant region. And this has been happening for many years. What is the further stage and how is one to get it?

SRI AUROBINDO: The further stage is to be conscious and there is no device for it. One has to aspire and to will in one's waking moments to be conscious.

SRI AUROBINDO (*looking at N*): You are wondering how they feel calm and peaceful?

N: No, because you have said about me that first the physical crust has to go. (*Laughter*)

P: In my case, when I dream, I am very conscious but just as I wake up I forget all about it. But if some clue remains, I can work it up and get back the full dream.

SRI AUROBINDO: One has to acquire the habit of keeping the mind quiet after waking. Then the memory comes back.

N: X accosted me suddenly and said, "Do you know the cause of Sri Aurobindo's accident? It is due to our mistakes, our egoism."

SRI AUROBINDO: She means I broke my leg and took the sins of all of you upon my thigh?

S: That is the general belief. It seems the Mother also said something to that effect.

P: If this was said of Universal Nature, it would be more correct perhaps. Of course we also come in there.

S (*to Sri Aurobindo*): What do you say, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: Even in the old Yogas there is such a belief. Some Yogi told another in the South, "If you take disciples, then you will have the difficulties of your disciples to take up, added to your own." Christ said that he took up the sins of the world.

N: But the accident appears to have come as a blessing because X says everybody is now feeling a push, there is a tremendous progress.

SRI AUROBINDO: They couldn't feel the push without my breaking my thigh? (*Laughter*)

N: X herself is flying.

SRI AUROBINDO: Flying where?

N: She says she feels free now because of a great suffering she went through soon after the accident: her egoism seems to have become ripe and burst!

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh an abscess? Does she actually say her egoism has disappeared?

N: Yes. It has burst, she says.

SRI AUROBINDO: Burst in what sense? (*Laughter*)

P: She seems to be trying to cure Y of his egoism. I told her that it would be a big job for her.

SRI AUROBINDO: Too big an abscess, spread all over the body? (*Laughter*)

C brought in again the subject of snoring and asked: "Except for causing disturbance to others, does snoring harm in any way?"

SRI AUROBINDO: Harm? You mean if it is immoral? (*Laughter*) There is no harm; while the body sleeps, the inner being meditates. It does not mean this in all cases. All cases of snoring are not meditation.

C: Why does one snore?

SRI AUROBINDO: You mean why the physical body snores? For that you have to ask a doctor. Ask N. Why should others get disturbed by snoring?

P: One doesn't if one can get into the rhythm of the snoring. I disturb N when he goes out of the rhythm...

SRI AUROBINDO: You mean when he doesn't snore but snorts—and goes from mental into Overmind rhythm or from lyrical to epic rhythm?

NIRODBARAN

## AUROVILLE SONG

*(February 28 marks the first anniversary of the founding of Auroville, the City of Dawn)*

Auroville is the place for me,  
Land of hope and unity  
Where men and women will be free  
To live in progressive harmony.

They will come from every nation,  
They will make a new creation  
To build a city full of love  
Which will be governed from above.

*CHORUS:* Auroville Auroville  
Is a city where we will feel  
A joy, a bliss, a tenderness,  
A city of peace and happiness.

The Mother will be by our side,  
She will be our constant guide,  
She will lead us all the way  
Till the transformation day.

Universal brotherhood is our aim,  
There will be no personal gain.  
This we know we will attain  
For the Mother will always reign.

*CHORUS:* Auroville Auroville  
Is a city of work with zeal,  
A city of joy and harmony  
Realising human unity.

There will be education,  
Sports and every recreation.  
There will be great success  
In the field of free progress.

University of the world,  
Let the flag be unfurled  
At Auroville the city of dawn  
Where a new world will be born.

*CHORUS:* Auroville, Auroville  
Is a city of dawn so real,  
A city of true sincerity,  
A city of true prosperity.

HENRY BELL

## PRAYER TO THE MOTHER

WHEN first I saw Thee, Mother, so struck was I  
And so dumbfounded, I only gazed and gazed  
Into Thine eyes of inexpressible vasts  
Fathomless, calm, one with the Vast beyond—  
Beyond all oceans, the earth and the skies around.  
How far I gazed, entering new heights and deeps!  
How long, transfixed, I stood before Thee! Then  
I saw Thy Form of Mystery turned to Grace,  
Divine Dignity, from the Creator's Self  
Plunged into blinded and expectant clay,  
An Angel from afar descended here  
To light the earth, the dim aspiring earth.  
Adoringly, I bowed and felt Thy bliss  
Pouring within, surrounding me with Love.  
Awaking, I cried: "Thy Blessing, Mother, I pray."  
Thou and Sri Aurobindo are my path, my goal—  
My life, my all. Then Thou didst look awhile  
Into my eyes and I was lost in Thy smile.  
Divinely thrilled I was, and blest indeed—  
For all that Vision, imprinted on my Soul,  
Has been these many years my beacon light.  
I seek again Thy touch, O Mother mine,  
That I may dwell within Thy Self forever,  
Forever to be Thy humblest servitor.  
Naught else I want, but pray, Thy blessings grant.

V. CHIDANANDAM

## THE DARK ABYSS

ON November 24, 1931, the Mother records:

“O My Lord, my sweet Master, for the accomplishment of Thy work I have sunk down into the unfathomable depths of Matter, I have touched with my finger the horror of the falsehood and the inconscience, I have reached the seat of oblivion and a supreme obscurity!”

The work, we are told, is the work of illumining the supreme obscurity, making the most inconscient conscient and manifesting the deployment of the Truth-Consciousness, *rita-chit*. Many are those who, aided by vision and imagination, have painted the black, horrifying and torturing picture of evil, darkness and hell. Several are those who have had experience of them. But rare are the souls who would like to visit their very den and seat and work for the transformation there too, so that “Matter’s depths be illumined with a soul”, and who could say as Sri Aurobindo does in a sonnet :

I made an assignation with the Night;  
In the abyss was fixed our rendez-vous:  
In my breast carrying God’s deathless light  
I came her dark and dangerous heart to woo.

This is the “grey shore” where the Night’s “ignorant waters roll,” where  
Lost is the lustrous godhead beyond Time,  
There comes no voice of the celestial Friend.

\*  
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In *Savitri* the Yogi king Aswapathy, in the course of his journey through the various realms and planes, came to a point, where

He saw the fount of the world’s lasting pain  
And the mouth of the black pit of Ignorance;

and there

The air was full of treachery and ruse;  
Truth-speaking was a stratagem in that place...  
Falsehood came laughing with the eyes of truth...  
Truth was exiled lest she should dare to speak...  
A lie was there the truth and truth a lie.

Naturally,

Truth in that stifling atmosphere could not live.

Nor could hope either, as Aswapathy found:

Hope strangled perished in his empty soul,



Belief and memory abolished died  
 And all that helps the spirit in its course...  
 An incapacity for faith and hope  
 And the dread conviction of a vanquished soul  
 Immortal still but with its godhead lost,  
 Self lost and God and touch of happier worlds.

Here safety lies in remembrance of the Name:

Here must the traveller of the upward way—  
 For daring Hell's kingdoms winds the heavenly route—  
 Pause or pass slowly through that perilous space,  
 A prayer upon his lips and the great Name...  
 Only were safe who kept God in their hearts.

And indeed a mighty safety is here:

Mighty and mute the Godhead in him woke  
 And faced the pain and danger of the world.  
 He mastered the tides of Nature with a look:  
 He met with his bare spirit naked Hell.

The Pilgrim of the Night had the right vision when he said in that sonnet of Sri Aurobindo's,

And yet I know my footprints' track shall be  
 A pathway towards Immortality.

\*  
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The Mother continues to describe further her state:

“But in my heart was the Remembrance, from my heart there leaped the call which could arrive to Thee: ‘Lord, Lord, everywhere Thy enemies are triumphant; falsehood is the monarch of the world, life without Thee is death, a perpetual hell; doubt has usurped the place of Hope and revolt has pushed out submission; Faith is spent, Gratitude is not born; blind passions and murderous instincts and a guilty weakness have covered and stifled Thy sweet law of love; Lord, wilt Thou permit Thy enemies to prevail, falsehood and ugliness and suffering to triumph? Lord, give the command to conquer and victory will be there. I know we are unworthy, I know the world is not yet ready. But I cry to Thee with an absolute faith in Thy Grace and I know that Thy Grace will save us.’

“Thus, my prayer rushed up towards Thee; and, from the depths of the abyss, I beheld Thee in Thy radiant splendour; Thou didst appear and Thou saidst to me: ‘Lose not courage, be firm, be confident,—I COME.’ ”

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In 1959 the Mother's New Year message was:

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

In the course of a talk on this message the Mother said:

“Generally the inconscience gives an impression of something amorphous, inert, formless, neutral and grey—when I entered formerly into the zones of inconscience, it was the first thing that I met; but in my experience of yesterday, it was an inconscience hard, rigid, coagulated, as if coagulated for a resistance: it was a mental inconscience, all efforts slip away, nothing can penetrate. And this inconscience is much worse than the purely material inconscience. It was not the original inconscient; it was, if one might say so, a mentalised inconscient. All this rigidity, hardness, narrowness, fixity, opposition comes from a mental presence in the creation, that is what the mind has brought into the inconscient. When the mind had not manifested, the inconscient was not like that. It was formless and it had the plasticity of formless things—that plasticity has disappeared.

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

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

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

“Finally I have said, ‘a formless limitless immensity vibrating with the seeds of the new world’. There is no question of the primary creation, but of the supramental creation. This experience does not correspond to a return into the Supreme, origin of all; I had altogether the impression that I was projected into the origin of the supramental creation: something of the Supreme that has already been objectified in view

of the supramental creation.

“There was in fact all this impression of power, warmth and gold colour. It was not fluid, but like a pulverisation. And each one of these things (they cannot be called particles or fragments nor even points, unless point is taken in the mathematical sense, a point that does not occupy any place in space) was something like living gold, a scattering of warm gold—one cannot call it bright, nor can one call it dark, neither was it light: a multitude of small points of gold, nothing but that,—it could be said that they touched my eyes, my face...and with a tremendous force! At the same time, there was the feeling of a plenitude, of an all-powerful peace—it was rich, it was full. It was movement at its maximum, infinitely more swift than anything that one can imagine and at the same time it was peace absolute, stillness perfect.

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

One could feel assured,

The darkness was the Omnipotent's abode,  
Hood of omniscience, a blind mask of God.

SHYAM SUNDAR

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## AMRITA: A HOMAGE

K. AMRITA, Manager, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, passed away on Friday the 31st January at 8-40 p.m. He was born on 19th September 1895. His original name was Aravamuda Iyengar. His father, Rajagopalachari, was a respected village Munsiff of Kazhipervembakam.

An insatiable desire to serve the country brought Amrita to Pondicherry in 1914. Here he met a galaxy of refugees from British India, like poet Bharathi, V. Ramaswamy Iyengar and others. From that time onward, he used to visit Sri Aurobindo. Finally in the year 1919 he was accepted by the Master as his disciple. Since then up to the last day of his earthly life he was a dedicated servitor of the Master, the Mother and their Ashram.

For fifty years he filled the role of the Ashram's Manager. Lord Acton wrote: "Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely." Had he seen our Amrita, he would have changed his view. For here was a Yogi who was serving the Divine egolessly and without any earthly ambition—offering his work as an oblation to the Supreme.

Never have I seen him spending time uselessly; nor was he ever weighed down by work. Warrior-like he faced all trials and troubles. The burden of responsibility that he carried on his shoulders would have crushed a lesser being. With a joyful heart and a constant twinkle in his eyes he would address himself even to the toughest of jobs.

In the very midst of work he would gladly listen to anybody who approached him. He was friend to all, philosopher to many, enemy to none. Not once did I catch him in a temper. His spontaneous amiability disarmed even the most hardened heart.

He was simplicity incarnate; it was a delight to see him bare-torsoed, going about his daily business without any show. In Kipling's words, he could "walk with kings and never lose the common touch".

Looking at his unassuming behaviour, one would not guess he was quite a learned man. Master of Tamil and fluent in English, he was also admirably conversant with Bengali and French. In all these languages the range of his reading was pretty wide. His early English book, *Visions and Voices*, is full of a lyrical quality. But what distinguishes it is not only lyricism: there is, throughout, an intuitive turn, a subtle insight born of a Yogi's inspiration. Latterly he wrote his reminiscences for *Mother India*: they brought his Yogic life nearer to a larger circle of people.

And, of course, it is as a Yogi that we essentially know him. It is as a Yogi full of "sweetness and light" that his presence still pervades the Ashram, a constant reminder to us of what whole-hearted surrender to the Divine Mother could be like.

In closing, we may note a trait which endeared him all the more to his friends. He had a lively wit, a fondness for the sunny "wisecrack". Whoever met him, at any

time of the day, came back with some joke ringing in his ears. Perhaps the last one was when somebody asked him how he was. Amrita had been having heart-trouble. He replied: "Everything right, but I am having some trouble with my sweetheart." Even with the Mother he could indulge in humour—and the Mother always appreciated this leap of happy spray on the surface of the sea of Ananda in which her love and grace kept him. Not for nothing did he come to bear the name "Amrita"—"the Immortals' nectar".

KAMALAKANTO

## SAVITRI, BOOK ONE CANTO ONE

### SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

2

*There is a new point arising out of your explanatory Note. You have taken the Dawn and the "Ambadress twixt eternity and change" to be the same. I thought they were different. The Deity, that comes after the Dawn departs burying her "seed of grandeur in the hours", is called the Goddess of eternal Light by Sri Aurobindo in a letter to you. The Dawn is always brief; it is followed by LIGHT continuous. That is how I understood. Would you again help?*

No doubt, the Dawn is brief, but can it, for that reason, be debarred from being the Goddess of eternal Light? The function of the Spiritual Dawn, like the operation of the physical dawn, is to come as a herald and then withdraw. But merely because Usha—to use the Rigvedic name and figure—appears for a short duration to do her work, is she herself a short-lived entity? She is surely an emanation or manifestation of eternal Light. Eternal Light briefly revealing itself does not cease to be eternal. In a general way not only Dawn but all experiences of spiritual luminosity last a short time under the conditions of the present natural and mortal life in the cosmos. Does not Sri Aurobindo state this truth when he writes:

Only a little the God-light can stay?<sup>1</sup>

Can we affirm that by staying only a little the God-light is disqualified from being in itself eternal or, as you put it, continuous?

To come directly to your own terms of opposition: the Dawn and the Ambadress. You say the Dawn departs after burying her seed of grandeur in the hours. I believe you do so on the strength of the lines:

An instant's visitor the godhead shone:

On life's thin borders awhile the Vision stood...<sup>2</sup>

A slightly earlier support for you may be the verse in the same context:

The brief perpetual sign recurred above.<sup>3</sup>

Your very word "brief" is here. But it is coupled with what seems its contradiction: "perpetual". Of course, we can say that the sign is perpetual in that it is recurrent, it is brief again and again: the recurring brevity is its sole perpetualness. Quite true, but let us see what the Vision did as it stood awhile, an instant's visitor:

<sup>1</sup> *Savitri* (Followed by the Author's Letters on the Poem), Sri Aurobindo International University Centre Collection, 1954, p. 8

<sup>2</sup> P. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

Interpreting a recondite beauty and bliss  
 In colour's hieroglyphs of mystic sense,  
 It wrote the lines of a significant myth  
 Telling of a greatness of spiritual dawns...<sup>1</sup>

With the old Vedic word "greatness" (*mahimā*) ringing in my ears, I suspect that in "perpetual" there is also a subtle shade of "eternal", a suggestion of something from the Everlasting: the brief sign is itself eternity packed in a moment. This is but natural when that Dawn is called

A message from the unknown immortal Light.<sup>2</sup>

And, after all, what is it that shone as an instant's visitor? The reply from the poem itself is: "the godhead." Are we to think that this godhead is not of eternal Light? In the line just quoted, "immortal Light" is declared to have sent the Dawn as its "message". The message may have lasted for a brief duration, yet it must have been made of the stuff of immortality if it came from the Light that is immortal.

Further, even supposing the Dawn to have been essentially non-continuous and to have departed, does the Ambassadors whom you identify as the Goddess of eternal Light fare really any better? First we may observe that, like the Dawn, she is also called a "vision" as well as a mere fore-glimpse:

Here too the vision and prophetic gleam...<sup>3</sup>

Next we may realise that the general truth couched in the verse already quoted—

Only a little the God-light can stay—

is uttered in the context of none else than your Goddess of eternal Light. And it is about her we read:

Then the divine afflatus, spent, withdrew,  
 Unwanted, fading from the mortal's range.<sup>4</sup>

The Ambassador's life is hardly Methuselahite: very soon it is "spent" and starts "fading". This sad truth is confirmed by other verses:

That transitory glow of magic fire  
 So now dissolved in bright accustomed air.  
 The message ceased and waned the messenger...  
 Her body of glory was expunged from heaven:  
 The rarity and wonder lived no more.<sup>5</sup>

The light of the Ambassador is termed "that transitory glow" and is said to dissolve, cease, wane and get expunged, yet all this does not prevent it from being not only "magic fire", "body of glory", "rarity and wonder" but also—as some previous lines imply—"spiritual beauty" which "squanders eternity on a beat of Time".<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> P. 8.

<sup>3</sup> P. 7.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

The Ambadress and the Dawn are essentially in the same case: the "brief" is the "eternal" as well, and the "eternal" is the "brief" too. The pair are, as a colloquialism would put it, much of a muchness. A ground is thus initially created for identifying them. And this ground is seen to be veritable *terra firma* as soon as we ask: "What phase of time, after the Night, is represented by the Ambadress?" If she is different from the Dawn, what is she? Sunrise is the only phenomenon succeeding the Dawn. Is the Ambadress the Day itself? That is impossible since precisely of her Sri Aurobindo writes:

Once she half looked behind for her veiled sun .<sup>1</sup>

She "went to her immortal work" before the sun was unveiled: she thus cannot be any part of the Day. And, if she cannot, she has to be nothing save the Dawn.

The fact is: the Dawn, however brief, has several phases or "transitions". Commenting on a certain passage Sri Aurobindo<sup>2</sup> indicates some of them coming on the heels of the darkness: "There is first a black quietude, then the persistent touch, then the first 'beauty and wonder' leading to the magical gate and the 'lucent corner'. Then comes the falling of the darkness, the simile used ('a falling cloak') suggesting the rapidity of the change. Then as a result the change of what was once a rift into a wide luminous gap. .. Then all changes into a 'brief perpetual sign', the iridescence, then the blaze and the magnificent aura." The next phase is

A brilliant code penned with the sky for page<sup>3</sup>

and the statement is made:

Almost that day the epiphany was disclosed...

A lonely splendour from the invisible goal

Almost was flung on the opaque Inane.<sup>4</sup>

The epiphanic phase leads on to a greater nearness or brightness of the Dawn-Goddess. Her very tread is heard and her Face opens heaven and her Form brings beatitude close. She is now called "the omniscient Goddess" and she soon

Kindled to fire the silence of the worlds<sup>5</sup>

and

Lit into miracles common meaningless shapes<sup>6</sup>

and completed her symbolic job:

The prescience of a marvellous birth to come.<sup>7</sup>

But the divinity, the earth-transforming supernal Power, which she, images forth through the process of time, is unwanted by the mortal's world and so she fades away into "the common light of earthly day".

A gloss of particular pertinence, that emerges from Sri Aurobindo's catalogue of phases, is: the line on the "brief perpetual sign" is not an all-covering one for the Dawn's nature, it is just a single phase among many—a phase succeeded by the "iridescence" and then the "blaze" and the "magnificent aura". What is intended

<sup>1</sup> P. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Pp. 828-9.

<sup>3</sup> P. 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> P. 7

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> P. 8.



by the line is, as it were, an announcement—very short in its duration though everlasting in its process and purpose—of the multi-coloured glamour and the wide-burning message. Neither of the two epithets—“brief perpetual”—are directly meant to characterise the whole Dawn any more than the substantive “sign” is meant to do so. To make the whole Dawn brief, one would have to fall back only upon the words “instant” and “awhile” coming a little later.

However, you will notice that, although the Dawn is designated “an instant’s visitor” who is also a “VISION” that stood “awhile”, she is nowhere explicitly said to fade or dissolve. On the contrary, she goes on doing things: bending over earth’s forehead curve, interpreting hidden beauty and unfamiliar bliss, writing the lines of a myth, penning a brilliant code on the sky-page. Where do you find that the Dawn “departs”? To bury her seed of grandeur in the hours is surely not tantamount to the Dawn herself getting buried! The Dawn merely impregnates with a spark of the Divine the world of time and space and she does this not by herself disappearing but by building her aura of magnificent hues. The disappearance of the light preceding the sunrise—the fading of the Dawn, that is to say—comes only when the

Ambassadress twixt eternity and change<sup>1</sup>

has carried out certain revelatory functions. Hence the Ambassadress cannot be other than the Dawn herself in her most developed and final God-goldeness.

To “cap, crown and clinch” all that I have said I shall turn to Sri Aurobindo’s letter, to which you have referred. He does mention “the Goddess of eternal Light” but there is no distinction made between her and the Dawn-Goddess. In fact, the clear implication is just the opposite. Here is the text:<sup>2</sup> “that passage in my symbolic vision of Night and Dawn in which there is recorded the conscious adoration of Nature when it feels the passage of the omniscient Goddess of eternal Light.” The Goddess in question is here said to figure in Sri Aurobindo’s “symbolic vision of Night and Dawn”. There is no going beyond the Dawn. Whatever follows the Night in the vision falls within the Dawn-category. Again, in the same letter, when he is discussing “the conscious adoration of Nature” which is connected with the Goddess of eternal Light, he<sup>3</sup> remarks apropos of the line—

The high boughs prayed in a revealing sky:<sup>4</sup>

“This last line is an expression of an experience which I often had whether in the mountains or on the plains of Gujarat or looking from my window in Pondicherry not only in the dawn but at other times....” The phrase—“not only in the dawn”—means in the first place that the phenomenon of “all grew a consecration and a rite”<sup>5</sup> as a result of the Goddess’s “luminous smile” can happen in the dawn. It means in the second place that, although in the poem it happens in the dawn, it can happen also in other phases of our 24-hour cycle. So, as far as the poem is concerned, there is no going beyond Usha to some “Deity” coming after her. At a later place in the same letter we get one more indication of what I have been trying to demonstrate. Sri Aurobindo<sup>6</sup> writes in reply to a certain aspect of the criticism my friend M made:

<sup>1</sup> P. 7.

<sup>2</sup> P. 901.

<sup>3</sup> P. 904.

<sup>4</sup> P. 7

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> P. 907

“His objection of *longueur* would be perfectly just if the description of the night and the dawn had been simply of physical night and physical dawn; but here the physical night and physical dawn are, as the title of the canto clearly suggests, a symbol, although what may be called a real symbol of an inner reality and the main purpose is to describe by suggestion the thing symbolised; here it is a relapse into Inconscience broken by a slow and difficult return of consciousness followed by a brief but splendid and prophetic outbreak of spiritual light leaving behind it the ‘day’ of ordinary human consciousness in which the prophecy has to be worked out.” Mark that Sri Aurobindo talks only of night and dawn and refers to the former as “a relapse into Inconscience” and to the latter in terms that combine adjectives and nouns such as the Canto uses at both the beginning and the end of the account of the growing spiritual luminousness magically preceding the common daylight. “Brief” and “splendid” remind us of your “Dawn”: “prophetic outbreak of spiritual light” recalls your “Goddess of eternal Light”. The whole inevitable impression left is that your two entities are one, in a varied progression of self-disclosure.

Of course, as we find from Sri Aurobindo’s list of “transitions” or phases, the epithet “brief” occurring in the beginning of the account has a bearing different from the same epithet in the above sentence. The former applied merely to a particular step in the progression, the latter serves to give a characteristic of the whole movement. But my point is that what you define as “brief”—namely, the phenomenon prior to the Ambassador’s arrival—gets equated here, by the employment of the same defining term, with what includes this arrival no less than that phenomenon. Sri Aurobindo has put both parts of the account together as the story of a single divine manifestation through a series of Nature-moments, both that phenomenon and this arrival being called “outbreak of spiritual light”.

The continuing identity of a single process, the developing disclosure of no more than one divine entity, Usha the spiritual Dawn, can be yet again established from another observation of Sri Aurobindo’s in the very letter we are drawing upon. He is discoursing on my friend’s objection to repetition of the cognates “sombre Vast”, “unsounded Void”, “opaque Inane”, “vacant Vasts”, especially as they fall into the same place at the end of the line. Sri Aurobindo<sup>1</sup> writes: “What was important for me was to keep constantly before the view of the reader...the ever-present sense of the Inconscience in which everything is occurring. It is the frame as well as the background without which all the details would either fall apart or stand out only as separate incidents. That necessity lasts until there is the full outburst of the dawn and then it disappears; each phrase gives a feature of this Inconscience proper to its place and context. It is the entrance of the ‘lonely splendour’ into an otherwise inconscient obstructing and unreceptive world that has to be brought out and that cannot be done without the image of the ‘opaque Inane’ of the Inconscience which is the scene and cause of the resistance. There is the same necessity for reminding the reader that

<sup>1</sup> P. 908.

the 'tread' of the Divine Mother was an intrusion on the vacancy of the Inconscience and the herald of deliverance from it."

I have cited Sri Aurobindo's observation in full in order precisely to bring out the apparent opposition of the "lonely splendour" (which you attribute to the Dawn) and the "Divine Mother" (whom you would identify with a Deity coming after the Dawn and acting as the "Ambassadress")—yes, to bring out this "opposition" and then show the complete reconciliation. I want to prove that the Divine Mother is herself the Dawn and that the "opposition" is just the succession of different aspects of the Dawn who is the Divine Mother. Take the verse about the Divine Mother's advent:

Once more a tread perturbed the vacant Vasts...<sup>1</sup>

Now, "vacant Vasts" is set by Sri Aurobindo along with "sombre Vast", "unsounded Void" and "opaque Inane" as one of the cognate expressions whose "necessity lasts until there is the full outburst of the dawn". It is the Dawn and nothing else but the Dawn that is continuing all through and the tread of the Divine Mother is a portion of the process before the Dawn's full outburst: it is a phase of the Dawn-Goddess's gradual unfoldment of her "eternal Light".

I am afraid I have over-laboured my thesis. I have done so because I felt you wanted the answer to your new point to be completely convincing to your understanding. An all-round treatment seemed desirable. And perhaps the final touch to the needed all-roundness will be given if in conclusion I hark back to the Rigveda for some descriptions of the Dawn as being no other than the Goddess of eternal Light and as doing what Sri Aurobindo's Ambassadress does—the Rigveda whose imagery so often gleams out in *Savitri*.

Usha is described in I, 113.19, *mātā devānām aditer anīkam*, "Mother of the gods, form (or power) of Aditi." A Rik (80 1) of the fifth Mandala presents Usha as "a form from far beatitudes" coming near: it describes her as *dytad-yāmānam bṛhatim ṛtena rtāverim svar āvahantīm*, "of a luminous movement, vast with the Truth, supreme in (or possessed of) the Truth, bringing with her Swar." The same role is played in VII, 81.3: *yā vahasī puru sparham na dāsuṣe mayah*, "thou who bearest to the giver the beatitude as a manifold and desirable ecstasy." Then we have an analogue of the "face of rapturous calm" parting "the eternal lids that open heaven",<sup>2</sup> in VII, 75 1: *vyusā āvo dvijā rtena, āviskrnvānā mahimānam agāt*, "Dawn born in heaven opens out things by the Truth, she comes manifesting the greatness." *Savitri*'s "omniscient Goddess" kindling the silent worlds to fire is the Rigveda's "young and ancient goddess of many thoughts, shining out on us immortal,... uttering the words of Truth", she who fronting "the worlds of the becoming stands aloft over them all as the vision of Immortality" (III, 61-3).

13-12-1968

K. D. SETHNA

<sup>1</sup> P 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*

## TWO POEMS

### THE TIME TO OPEN

UNFOLD and bloom.  
For light there is  
and warmth there is,  
and sun is waiting.  
Leaves are furled,  
flowers are tight.  
What is seen is right  
enough for most...  
but not for me.  
Unfolding must be done.  
To reach the centre of the flower  
is the purpose of the sun.

### YOU EVERYWHERE

The waters  
are breaded with flowers  
blown by the moon:  
the fields  
are settled with towers  
born of the wind.  
Nothing  
is conveyed here  
but every glorious beauty:  
nothing  
is ever sung here  
but every song of God.  
Oh I am born of the wind  
and, nightly yielded,  
taken in wonder.  
Now glory-flowered  
and sunrise-fielded,  
wakened to love.  
At last my heart's new sun  
shines out, shines out,  
and shows me where you are.

NORMAN THOMAS

## SKYSCAPES

THE Eternal's bosom is each soul's repose:  
Each star in the firmament with that message glows;  
And that is why the spell of the spangled heaven  
As one perpetual feast to man was given.

\*  
\*\*

The blue sky is the psyche's bliss-calm sea,  
The pale sky silent mind's infinity,  
The turbid dome the haunt of the restless brood  
Of impulse, passion, thought the cells exude.

\*  
\*\*

Behold a sea's commotion mount on high,  
Huge cloud-armadas move across the sky,  
Or titan-hordes and phantom-chariots dash,  
All round sword-lightnings dazzle, war-thunders crash.

\*  
\*\*

Is this vast murky stream of shuffling clouds  
The garb wherein its dream the cosmos shrouds?  
Or hieroglyph-archetypes in faded hue  
From which new abstract painting took its cue?

Earth's scenic pictures shot on heaven's screen  
(Save when its own nude stars possess the scene)?  
Or a one-Man show by Art's presiding Spirit?  
Exploiting both the worlds his days inherit

A bare elemental technique he evolves;—  
To get a staple pigment he dissolves  
Sunlight in water, and for shade and tone  
In the vapour-splash a pinch of slime is thrown.

But by a prismatic 'tapas' of the sun  
 The bright iridescent colours too are won  
 For live effect—for which Earth's blazing flowers  
 Are also made to yield their richest dowers.

For a canvas broad he adopts the azure vault,  
 And since first Dawn there marches art-assault;  
 In the image of the hue and texture of Earth  
 The ubiquitous dabbler's brush sends out into birth

A whole panorama of mere passing puff  
 Set off against a foil of enduring stuff;  
 Cloud-cadences of scenes from land and sea—  
 Lone silhouette, mass-formation, fantasy—

Highlight the drabness, beauty, grandeur, awe  
 Of what's below; to look for a replica  
 Is to be intrigued—the artist has his ways  
 And moods, peak hours, a season, and free days.

As his brush-wand bids, a crowd of pageants crawl,  
 Processions fleet apace, limb-patches sprawl,  
 Apparitions through each other's body run ..  
 Now all is washed, now all afresh begun!

At the irised showpiece of his etheric art  
 Shall always leap up every childlike heart,  
 But his dainties are the daubs at morn and eve—  
 Each view with a strange enchanting warmth aheave.

Silver-grey shades, the flush of pink and gold,  
 Crimson and purple splash—all these enfold  
 Some freak, some island, peaks or mansion-spires  
 That blaze the while with sunset's ravishing fires  
 And lift the soul before being gathered by  
 The infinite all-absorbing limpid sky.

Yet the wise ones say there never was a sky,  
 That the beautiful backdrop is a visual lie!  
 But the farthest has ever tempted sight and thought,  
 Heaven and horizon always have been sought,  
 For Earth's out-look and up-look Sky was wrought

Things, too, we see or do or fail to do  
 Linger and leave a trail which we pursue  
 Through in-look at a subtle inner sky  
 Awake or asleep until they wither and die,  
 When into the boundless leaps the inmost eye.

NARESH

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## DARSHAN

I SAT at the gate of Thy ever open shrine,  
 Exposing my "Self" to the sun and the rain.  
 Just for a call to Thy resplendent sight,  
 I waited and waited from morning till night.

I craved for the thrill of this long-yearned meet,  
 To be lifted aloft at the touch of Thy feet.  
 Oh for a momentary glance at Thy face,  
 To be blest by the merciful smile in Thy gaze!

Thou'st called me, Thou'st called me to Thy altar sweet.  
 I touched and I touched Thy soul-stirring feet.  
 It thrilled me! It thrilled me! Oh what can I say  
 Of the boon to behold Thy enthralling ray?

Thy look and Thy smile, so gracious, my Lord!  
 To sing of Thy love I'm too unlettered a bard.  
 Thou'st touched me in turn. By touch didst Thou lift,  
 I venture to sing. It's all by Thy gift.

GEORGE MOSES

# KAVI CHAKRAVARTI KAMBAN

## CAUSERIES ON TAMIL NAD'S GREATEST POET

### KAMBAN'S REFINEMENT

WE may here pause to consider the character of Kaikeyi as portrayed by Valmiki. She is, according to that earlier poet, a cruel-hearted and self-conceited woman. Evil is in her blood; she is the ignoble daughter of an ignoble mother. She is given to lying and jealousy. Domineering by temperament, she turns her husband round her little finger and stamps her co-wives under her feet. She is, in short, a most unlovely character and therefore easily susceptible to the evil counsel of Mandarai.

But Kamban casts Kaikeyi, as in fact he casts every other character in his epic, in a radically different mould. She is chaste, lovable, gracious, magnanimous and generous. According to Kamban, while Kausalya subconsciously discriminated between her son, Rama, and her step-sons and overcame the distinction only by making special efforts, Kaikeyi was so wholesomely constituted that she never entertained the least discrimination between her son, Bharata, and her step-sons. She was an ideal woman and mother and she loved Rama as dearly as Bharata. By introducing this refinement, Kamban arms Kaikeyi more strongly against the wily onslaughts of Mandarai and creates more challenging problems for himself. But he meets the challenge convincingly by solving the problems at a deeper and subtler level of psychology.

### GALLANT RESISTANCE

As Mandarai enters the bed-chamber, she finds Kaikeyi fast asleep. Even in deep slumber her eyes exude grace and peace. As golden-hued Kaikeyi, with her ruddy lips, feet and hands, lies on a snow-white bed-spread, she looks like a coral vine, floating in a sea of whitish milk, blossoming with lotus flowers. Like a snaky meteor portending evil, Mandarai touches her feet. At once Kaikeyi, whose chastity is so godly that she would wake up at the slightest touch, opens her eyes. Before slumber could take leave of her languorous eyes, Mandarai started talking to her, egged on by an overpowering sense of revenge. She tells her:

“As the unsuspecting Moon  
keeps radiating her cool beams  
in all her innocent splendour  
till the very moment  
the poisoning snake approaches



to eclipse her,  
 so do you sleep blissfully,  
 without a trace of care,  
 whilst formidable disaster  
 waits  
 to overwhelm you.”

Kaikeyi replies, “I have no cause for sorrow. I have for my son spotless Rama, whose very conduct is scripture for all the world. What worry can I have?” This statement, which reveals Kaikeyi’s spontaneous affection for Rama, disconcerts Mandarai, who, however, pulls herself up and continues,

“Gone is your influence  
 and gone is your wealth.  
 Crafty Kausalya  
 will flourish for ever.”

Kaikeyi ignores Mandarai’s insinuation. She identifies herself with Kausalya and believes that Kausalya’s life is rich enough and nothing can happen to make it any the richer. She tells Mandarai,

“Kausalya has for her husband  
 the King of Kings,  
 and for her son,  
 Bharata of far-flung fame;  
 a richer and happier life  
 she can’t hope for  
 on this Earth.”

Mandarai is irritated that Kaikeyi should call Bharata the son of Kausalya and thereby rub out a distinction which she seeks to rub in. She starts attacking Rama’s honour:

“To the scorn of warriors and to the disgrace of chivalry,  
 Rama has used his crooked bow  
 and killed a frail woman—Thadakai;  
 And it is this warrior of the crooked bow  
 that is to be crowned tomorrow  
 and it is this prosperity  
 that will descend upon your co-wife.”

Contrary to Mandarai’s expectation, the news of the coronation struck no discordant note in Kaikeyi’s heart, because, according to the Poet,

Kaikeyi's heart beat in unison  
 with Kausalya's love  
 and Rama sat equally  
 enthroned in her heart.

Her great love surging like the sea and her face, which was like the unwaning Moon, beaming with an ampler radiance, she joyously gifted to Mandarai a necklace of gems, which outshone the stars.

That the distasteful news should have been hailed and even rewarded with a gift roused the ire of the hunch-back.

Menacingly, the wicked one shrieked,  
 opened wide her slit-like eyes,  
 which emitted fire;  
 weeping and wincing,  
 she let out long-drawn sobs;  
 down she flung the necklace,  
 and it made a deep dent on the floor,

She added, "You, fool! you and your son are going to suffer for numberless years, but I won't let you become a slave of your co-wife's slaves. The son of Kausalya has gained the wealth of wealths. Without dying, poor Bharata lives. How will he console himself? Because you bore him, he remains unborn."

Bharata had gone to Kekaya country at the invitation of his maternal grandfather after getting the permission of Dasaratha. But Mandarai tries to make out that his departure for Kekaya was the result of palace intrigue. She says,

"Ah! now I realize  
 why, by order of the King,  
 luckless Bharata  
 was hastily despatched  
 to a far-off land  
 across mountain passes  
 overhung with towering teak."

Apostrophizing Bharata, Mandarai laments: "Poor boy! your father has become cruel to you; so has your mother. What on earth could you do?" Turning to Kaikeyi, she says,

"Born in a royal palace,  
 bred in the mansion of a King  
 and married into a royal family

you have become a Queen of Queens;  
 yet you are sinking  
 in a shoreless sea of sorrow.  
 You wouldn't listen to reason either,  
 you, senseless one!"

The mouth that uttered these harsh words tasted bitter. The one who heard these words grew wild, her anger leaping like a flame on which ghee is poured; the daughter of Kekaya's King looked at Mandarai, with her lovely eyes, criss-crossed with tender streaks of red, becoming redder. She said:

"You are good  
 neither to me nor to my son Bharata,  
 and from the standpoint of punishment,  
 you are good not even to yourself;  
 you have uttered words  
 that please but your own mind,  
 you, mindless fool!

Get out of my presence;  
 I pardon you and let you go  
 without clipping that silly tongue of yours.  
 Should others know what you have uttered,  
 you would be deemed a traitor  
 who has thought of violating Law and Justice.  
 Shut up, you fool!  
 and repress yourself."

But Mandarai was not a woman who would put a gag upon herself. She was unafraid and she would not quit; she was like poison, which, though averted, would still remain poisonous. "I seek refuge in you," she pleaded, "I wouldn't desist from telling what is good for you. What a dainty creeper you look like!" Holding Kaikeyi's attention by flattery, Mandarai changes her mode of attack. She realizes that her appeal to the avarice of Kaikeyi is ineffective. She, therefore, decides to work upon her innate sense of generosity and virtue. She says, "Undreamt-of wealth turns even the head of Saints, who are filled with virtue and spiritual grace. They may not harass you wantonly, but they will give you unceasing trouble which will break your heart." She continues:

"If her son is to take over the kingdom,  
 If the whole world is to become  
 that of Kausalya—that woman

of ever-widening ambition—,  
 what will be left to you  
 and your noble but victimized son  
 except  
 what she doles out to you both?"

#### FORCES OF DESTINY

Even this argument fails to turn the mind of Kaikeyi. Now, Mandarai appeals to the softest portions of her heart:

"When the indigent and the poor,  
 pursued by distress and poverty,  
 go to you and beg for alms,  
 will you, in your turn,  
 beg of Kausalya  
 to give you gold to help those in distress?  
 Or, unwilling to beg,  
 will you grow wild?  
 Or will you die of frustration and impotent rage?  
 Or will you have the heart  
 to say 'No' to those who beg for succour,  
 and yet survive?"

This formidable argument, based not upon the base cupidity of the human heart but upon its exalted nobility, turned the mind of Kaikeyi. Kamban feels that Kaikeyi is too noble a character to be taken in even by this argument of enlightened charitable-ness. So he invokes the forces of Destiny to justify this change of heart and says:

As wicked Mandarai uttered these words,  
 even the sacred heart of the noble Queen  
 turned profane,  
 by force of the boons obtained by the gods  
 for the destruction of Evil  
 and by force of the austere penance  
 performed by Sages and Saints.

With this conversion Kaikeyi's attitude towards Mandarai changed radically. She cast loving eyes upon her and said, "You are sweet to me and sweet to my son, too. Tell me how to secure the crown for Bharata." Hearing this, Mandarai fell at the feet of Kaikeyi and said, "My darling, you are sensible; my dear, you are sensible." She assured her that if she would only act up to her advice, she would secure

the seven worlds for Bharata. She proceeded to remind Kaikeyi of the two boons Dasaratha had given her at the time of his conquest of Samparan, a Rakshasa. The woman, whose mind was as crooked as her body, suggested, "With one boon you get the kingdom for your son, and with the other you banish Rama to the forest for fourteen years."

Clasping tight the body and soul  
of the hunch-back, who gave this advice,  
Kaikeyi eulogized her.  
Giving her gold coins and a necklace of gems,  
she added,  
"The sea-girt Earth you have given unto my son  
And henceforth  
shall you be the mother  
of the Lord of this Earth."

Then she requested her to leave the palace, after assuring her that she would execute her plan without further loss of time.

#### IMPERIAL HUFF

After Mandarai's exit, Kaikeyi dismounts from her bed which is overspread with the choicest flowers. She plucks out the cluster of white blossoms tucked-up in her black hair and dashes it down on the floor, as if plucking out the white Moon from amidst a cluster of black clouds and throwing it down in a huff. She wrenches her gemmed waistlet from her waist as if wrenching the tender creeper of her Fame by the roots, and spills it on the ground. She strips herself of her anklets and her bangles; she rubs the *tilak* off her crescent-shaped forehead as if rubbing the dark spot off the Moon. With her jewels lying scattered all around, with her perfumed hair dishevelled and lying spread out on the floor, with the paint of her eyes mingling with her tears and tinting them black, she rolls on the ground like a creeper denuded of all its flowers. What a cornucopia of similes and metaphors serves Kamban to paint this scene of imperial huff!

It is midnight now. Dasaratha enters the bed-chamber of his youngest wife and is shocked to find her in this wretched plight. He wonders if she is ill, and with an anxious heart he lifts her up. The towering masculine figure of the King lifting the slender dainty figure of Kaikeyi provokes the Poet to indulge in an uncommon but just simile—"he looks like an elephant lifting a deer." The Queen pushes aside the arms of the King and falls down on the floor and keeps curling up like an arc of lightning. Without uttering a word, she keeps emitting long-drawn-out sobs.

Kamban, who is a master of dramatic irony, makes Dasaratha swear in the name of Rama that he would grant Kaikeyi whatever she desired. Kaikeyi feels assured that

the King is in dead earnest. Shedding copious tears, which leap on her breasts and drench them, Kaikeyi tells Dasaratha, "If it is true that you have love for me, pray grant me the boons you promised long ago." Little suspecting the design of Kaikeyi, Dasaratha laughed, with his teeth glistening like lightning, and said, "I will grant you those boons ungrudgingly. I swear, in the name of your son Rama, that I will do so." These words of assurance wipe out the doubts from Kaikeyi's mind. She makes bold to say,

"By one of those two boons  
my son shall become King of this Realm.  
By the other  
Sita's groom shall go into the wilderness."  
So said the one  
who out-evilled all evil.

#### THE ELEPHANT AND THE COBRA

The moment he hears these venomous words Dasaratha falls down, motionless, like a mighty elephant bitten by a cobra. He lets out sighs of agony as hot and fuming as the flame blown up by the blacksmith's bellows.

The King rolls on the ground in anguish. He sits up, rises on his feet and falls down. He becomes exhausted, and lies breathless like a painting. He would think of catching hold of the wicked woman and kicking her. Writhing in agony, he looks at the resolute woman and asks, "Have you become perverted? Or have you been tutored by some scheming persons who are rooted in falsehood? Speak the truth. This is my royal command."

"I've turned no pervert," she said  
"Nor have I been tutored by evil ones.  
Grant me, oh! Gallant rider of the maned horse!  
Grant me the boons you promised long ago.  
If you grant them, I'll take them;  
if you don't, I will perish  
leaving you to bear  
the disgrace of it all."

Hearing these deliberate words, Dasaratha, who had no soul other than Rama, falls down, dazed and stunned and stupefied.

"Oh! wicked one!"  
he would shout and faint;  
"Ah! how cruel is Virtue!"  
he would lament;

Shouting,

“May Truth die, out and out,”  
 he would rise, totter and fall down—  
 the one, who had vanquished with his sword  
 the upper, nether and the middle worlds.

“I shall become one with the barbarians  
 and, with my sharp sword,  
 kill,  
 till the species of woman  
 is wiped off the seven worlds.”  
 Thus raved the one,  
 Whose spear had sucked  
 the valour of a myriad warriors.

He would knock one fist against the other and bite his lips and cry in despair, “Failure to keep the pledged word is sin.” Thinking that cringing and begging at the proper time would be as heroic as fighting a battle for righting a wrong, he falls at the feet of Kaikeyi—he, at whose feet mighty Kings would vie with one another to prostrate themselves. He tells the Queen, “Never will your son accept the crown and, even if he did, the world would not approve of his conduct. Why should you prefer eternal infamy to eternal fame?” In this strain he appeals and entreats and begs, but the wicked woman would not yield. “You have already pledged your word,” she says. “If you lose your temper and break your word, who is there to champion the Cause of Truth?” The King relents but he makes one more attempt to persuade Kaikeyi to withhold the latter part of her request and says,

“Your son shall rule the kingdom.  
 Merrily shall you rule it, too;  
 the entire Earth shall be yours to rule.  
 I give it unto you and you may take it,  
 I shall not break my plighted word.  
 May it please you to grant me one request:  
 for Heaven’s sake, insist not on sending  
 my son, my darling son,  
 the beloved son of all mankind,  
 into exile.”

Kaikeyi turned a deaf ear to this plaintive request. Her heart had become wooden. “Oh Mighty Archer!” she said, “To ask me to renounce the boon you have given me may be clever but not just.” The King, who heard these words, said, “My soul will

depart with Rama's departure to the forest." So saying, he fell down and lamented over the meanness of the woman, who had with her words split his very heart. He wails:

"It is the reputation of loving wives  
to die before their husbands.  
Hitherto, no woman has killed  
her lord.  
Dare you do so, oh wicked one?  
I have been the hero of a hundred battles,  
defeating the Kings of the Earth,  
vanquishing the celestials,  
scoring victories over them by my wit and might.  
Should it be said of me  
that Death came to me  
on account of a woman living in my own home?"

Thus and thus he lamented and wailed  
and stained and steeped himself in anguish;  
conflicting sorrows attacked and assailed his mind;  
he fainted and swooned as if struck with Death.  
Thus did he break down—the heroic one  
whose towering shoulders looked  
like two hillocks, one merging with the other.

As the sorrowing Emperor rolled in the dust, the unmoved woman said, "I shall accept the boons if you grant them; else, Oh King! I shall kill myself." It was clear to Dasaratha that Kaikeyi was bent on getting what she wanted. In exasperation, he grants her the boons.

"Fallen is this wretch," cried he,  
"Granted, granted is your request.  
Let my son rule over the forest,  
and, dying, let me rule over Heaven.  
Never, never shall you and your son  
swim ashore from the Sea of Infamy."

#### KAIKEYI SLEEPS

As he said these words, a great sorrow, which was as sharp and fatal as a well-tempered and sharpened dagger, stabbed his heart and he became unconscious. As for the woman with the unmoved heart, a sense of fulfilment stole into her and she fell



fast asleep. It is a subtle truth of psychology that an overwrought mind, which is suddenly released from great tension, slides quickly into a state of deep sleep. The Poet gives dramatic expression to this truth by sending Kaikeyi into the peace of slumber after sending Dasaratha into an agonized stupor.

#### NATURE PROTESTS

Though Kaikeyi finds repose in sleep, all Nature, according to Kamban, rebels against her great act of treachery.

The Night breaks into Dawn. The cool Night-Maid, says the Poet, hurried away as if ashamed to show her face before men and as if abashed at the conduct of the woman, who since her wedding day had acted as the soul of Dasaratha, but who, when her lord was struck with sorrow, showed him no pity whatever.

With day-break the stars disappear into the sky. The star-studded firmament looked like a far-spreading *pandal* hung with lustrous pearly hangings, which bathed the entire Earth with their white radiance. Now that the Coronation of Rama (whose crimson eye looked like a laughing lotus) has been put off, where is the need for the *pandal*? As the stars hid themselves in the sky, it looked as though the *pandal* was being hurriedly dismantled before Rama could wear the coronation armlet around his arm.

The Sun rises. The hostile darkness that was like dense overhanging smoke was put to flight. The life of Dasaratha (the descendant of the Sun) was wearing out like the fading lamps in the palace. As if infuriated by the sinful wickedness of treacherous Kaikeyi, the blazing Sun rose above the Eastern hill, reddening with anger.

#### THE CORONATION CROWD

The people of Ayodhya, who know nothing of the bed-chamber scene, were ecstatically looking forward to the coronation of Rama. Each enjoyed the prospect of the coronation according to his or her temperament and maturity. Women, mature in age, regarded Rama's elevation with the mother-heart of Kausalya. The saints looked upon the event with the detached enlightenment of Vasishta. The younger women resembled Sita in their attunement to the joyous occasion. Sita in her joy looked like Lakshmi herself. The older men, who had become other-worldly, resembled Dasaratha in their serenity.

Princes and Kings from all over the globe flooded Ayodhya to witness the coronation of the spouse of Sita of the budding breasts.

Here comes a throng of women who look like a flock of dancing peacocks. They have swinging fragile waists. What faces they have! Two cool eyes planted in the white radiance of the Moon! And eyes painted with what they call black unguent but which is really some poison-stuff intended to give pungency to their penetrating eyes! They have abstracted the charm of the *Kuvalai* flower and the ferocity of the spear

and, compounding both, have ground them into a paste and applied it to their eyes!  
Each segment of the mammoth crowd looked bigger than the others.

“The crowd of Kings is biggest,” said some,  
“The warrior crowd is bigger,” said others;  
“The men outnumber the women,” said some,  
“The women outnumber the men,” said others;  
“The standing crowd is biggest,” said some,  
“The flowing crowd is bigger,” said others.  
Thus did they mistake the seeming for the Real;  
none could grasp the totality of Truth.

It is the custom of Kamban, while keeping us engrossed in innocent descriptions of external phenomena, to suddenly plunge us into a mood of profound reflection upon the incompatibility between Semblance and Reality, between the truncated nature of sensorial perception and the fullness of spiritual apperception.

*(To be continued)*

S. MAHARAJAN

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## THE TRUE MEANING OF KARMA\*

FROM very ancient times there has been—in one form or another, in the East as well as in the West—a belief in the law of Karma. And as is usually the case with popular beliefs, several misconceptions have disfigured its true meaning. I propose to rectify briefly some of these in the light of Sri Aurobindo's views on the subject.

People have the idea that the nature of one's actions, or Karma, in the past birth determines the conditions and happenings of his next life. If in his past life on this earth a man has been virtuous, the coming life for him will be successful, prosperous and happy. And if he has committed vile acts, his following birth will be full of misery. Many also believe in the principle of double reward and double punishment. They think that if a man is virtuous, he will, after his death, get all the pleasures in heaven and also lead a very prosperous and happy subsequent life on earth. And, if he is a sinner, then first he will burn in the hot cauldrons of hell and again be a miserable creature in his next birth.

This reduction of the whole action of Karma to a very simple moral law is an extreme simplification of a very deep and complex process. The sole significance of the universe is not the antinomy of good and evil. The Universal Spirit is not simply a rigid moralist. The Universal Will has a myriad other elements in it which it allows to manifest. This world is not guided by a mere ethical-hedonistic law. As Sri Aurobindo says: "If the soul is passing through an evolution by a many-sided and complex experience, any law of Karma...if it is to fit itself into that experience, must also be complex and cannot be of a simple and exiguous texture or rigid and one-sided in its incidence."<sup>1</sup>

The popular interpretation of the Karmic Law, as I have already mentioned, is an oversimplification of its complex truth. Let us now view this from another angle. The basic idea behind the law of Karma is the action-reaction theory. All actions have their consequences: rather the famous principle of "as you sow, so shall you reap." Now, there are not only moral actions committed by man, but also various kinds of mental, vital and physical ones, which are mostly omitted in the popular notion. Into these categories can be placed a multiple of actions, all of which can have their appropriate results in this or future births. The pursuit of truth, beauty, knowledge, good, etc., can have as an outcome a great development and growth in their own fields. Similarly, the pursuit of ignorance will more and more engulfed one in a great ignorance.

Let me explain this point by providing an example. Suppose X is a man of very high morals, but, and this 'but' is of cardinal importance, he is a very tamasic and

\* A speech delivered at the Fifth Annual Conference of the New Age Association held on the 16th August 1968.

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine* (American Edition), p 724

lethargic person. Now the popular complaint is: why is X not rewarded by worldly prosperity? But people tend to forget that even the simplest interpretation of the Karmic Law would mean that each action would have its natural consequence. The high ethical pursuits of X are liable to get rewarded by a natural happiness, a sunny felicity, a purity and a poise in him. But an indulgence in *tamas* can by no means bring worldly prosperity. If it did, then it would be an injustice on the part of Universal Nature. But it can so happen that a man is very *tamasic* in his present life and yet he enjoys a formidable wealth. We can arbitrarily say that in his past birth he was a very active and hard-working man and at present he is cashing-in on his past balance of sincere labour. But, of course, this is a very narrow and misleading view of the whole phenomenon.

It is held by many that the law of Karma is the determinant and the governor of the evolution of the life and soul in the universe. Let us see what Sri Aurobindo has to say about this: "A law of chain of Karma is only an outward machinery and cannot be elevated to a greater position as the sole and absolute determinant of the life-workings of the cosmos, unless the cosmos is itself entirely mechanical in its character... But all is not Law and Process, there is also Being and Consciousness; there is not only a machinery but a Spirit in things, not only Nature and law of cosmos but a cosmic Spirit, not only a process of mind and life and body but a soul in the natural creature. If it were not so, there could be no rebirth of a soul and no field for a law of Karma."<sup>1</sup> If in our essential being we are the Spirit and not a machinery, and if our soul determines its own path in evolution, then the law of Karma is only an instrument of the soul for the purpose of evolution. Our Self is greater than its Karma.

In this connection a question may arise in some inquiring minds: whether rebirth is necessary for the working of Karma and also whether Karma is needed for rebirth. Says Sri Aurobindo, "These two things are the soul side and the nature side of one and the same cosmic sequence."<sup>2</sup> Both are quite indispensable to each other. If we believe in the evolution of the soul through repeated births we must accept that there is a link between successive lives. "The past of the soul has an effect on its future; and that is the spiritual essence of the law of Karma.... This evolution is not possible if there is not a connected sequence from life to life, a result of action and experience, an evolutionary consequence to the soul, a law of Karma."<sup>3</sup> Before taking a new outward personality, the soul decides about the acceptance or elimination of the effects of Karma. Whatever it feels necessary it accepts and whatever it considers useless it discards. The soul has the final word, Karma is only its instrument.

There are many who doubt the truth of rebirth. One of their main reasons for not believing in it is the absence of memory of the Karma of previous lives. To convince people of the phenomenon of rebirth is not my task here. But I would like

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 719-20.

<sup>2,3</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *The Problem of Rebirth*, p. 116.

to mention a few points. Even in our present life we do not remember so many happenings of our childhood and also other periods. But that does not mean that we are not the same human beings as we were in our infancy. The memory of previous lives is absent from our surface mind, because our soul takes up a new mental, vital and physical consciousness. The psychic, no doubt, retains the memory of the essence of the experience of past lives but as it is not in contact with our surface being, we naturally do not remember anything of our past lives. And as a matter of fact the absence of memory of our preceding births is a boon to us. Here are the Master's own words: "A clear and detailed memory of past lives, hatreds, rancours, attachments, connections would be...a stupendous inconvenience; for it would bind the reborn being to a useless repetition or a compulsory continuation of his surface past and stand heavily in the way of his bringing out new possibilities from the depths of the spirit."<sup>1</sup>

TARUN VISHNU CHOWDHURY

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine* (American Edition), p. 729.

# HEART TO HEART

## A SHORT STORY

MADHURI noticed that when her little daughter Gita came home from school that evening she was rather late and looked sad and absent-minded. But she refrained from asking her any questions till the girl had put away her books, had a wash, and her tea. Then taking her gently by the hand, Madhuri led her to the Study, and closed the door behind her. Happily the boys were out today, watching a cricket match, and the servant was busy preparing the evening meal. So they had the house to themselves for a while.

Madhuri sat down on a long seat in a corner and drew her daughter close to her. "Heart to heart?" she asked. This was a little game she often played with the children, who had been brought up to feel a sort of companionship with their parents. And there was scarcely anything that the little ones cared to hide from them. On the contrary they were eager to share all their little joys and sorrows, their successes and failures, their hopes and frustrations with their elders, and look up to them for help and guidance. Their parents were their best friends, and both Madhuri and her husband, had taken care to listen to everything the little ones had to say, with great sympathy and understanding. And they had never beaten or scolded them unnecessarily. For they believed that it was not by beating or scolding that one could hope to gain the children's confidence, but by coming down to their level and becoming their best friends.

They had always preferred to tell their children what they themselves would have done or said had they been put in similar circumstances. They would spare no trouble to explain to the child where he or she had been wrong, and how he or she could correct their conduct in future. This not only won the trust of the little ones, but helped to build their character. They learnt to be frank and truthful, loyal and sincere. And they were the admiration of all their teachers in school, and it was a pleasure to work or play with them.

"Heart to heart," repeated Gita shyly, and Madhuri drew her daughter close and gave her a tender kiss.

"Now let us hear all about it right from the beginning," she said.

"Mamma, you have told me so often never to be afraid of speaking the truth, haven't you?" asked Gita.

"Of course, darling," said the mother. "It is always best to be truthful; for truth is only ONE, and no matter how many times you may be obliged to repeat it, it will always be the same. Falsehood on the other hand can be numerous. For when you have uttered a lie, you are often obliged to tell more and more lies in its support. And in the end you are so confused that you do not know how to get out of it. But

what happened in School, darling? Won't you tell me everything so that I can help you?"

"Yes, Mamma, I will," replied Gita, and both mother and daughter took hold of each other's hands like two dear friends.

"You know the girl Nini who is in my class, Mamma. Well, she pinched our teacher's blue-and-gold ball-point pen today," said Gita. "And when we went into the classroom after the lunch-time break, teacher told us it was missing. She asked us if any of us had seen it anywhere, but everybody kept quiet, though some of the girls knew about it. Then suddenly teacher turned to me and said, 'Well, Gita, do you know anything about it? You always speak the truth, so tell me what you know.'"

"And what did you say?" asked Madhuri.

"I stood up and told teacher how I had seen Nini during the lunch-break go up to our teacher's desk, under the pretence of dusting it, and pocket the pen."

"And what did teacher do after she heard this?"

"Teacher went up to Nini quietly and asked her if this was true. But Nini said it was a lie, and that I should be ashamed of myself for telling a false thing like that. She started to shout at me. And teacher told her to keep quiet. Then all her pockets were examined, and even her desk was emptied completely. But the pen was nowhere to be found. And I felt so bad, Mamma, though I had spoken the truth. Happily, when teacher was replacing the books, the pen slipped out of an exercise book, and fell at teacher's feet."

"And then?" asked the mother.

"Then teacher took Nini to the Head Mistress, and I don't know what happened there, but when she came back she asked me again if anybody else was present when Nini took the pen. And I had to give their names. After that we were told to get on with our work, which we did. But when School was over, and we went to the toilet room, the girls started pulling my hair and pushing me about and shouting 'Tale tattle tit, your tongue shall be split' and so on. And they shoved me into the bathroom and locked the door and ran away."

"My poor little girl," said Madhuri. "I hope you didn't use any bad words, or scream and shout, did you?"

"No, Mamma. I waited till the sweeper came, and then asked him to unlock the door from outside, and let me out."

"My brave little lass! I am proud of you! And so will Papa be when he hears of this. But go and play with Sheila now, who must be waiting for you. And mind, not a word of this to anybody." Madhuri hugged and kissed her daughter and led her out of the room...

That night she discussed the matter with her husband, and decided to go early next day and speak to the teacher. For if the matter was not taken in hand immediately, the girls might continue to tease and harass her child till finally Gita might lose her courage and commence to tell falsehoods another time. She made an appointment over the phone and set out quite early next morning. A long discussion was what

they had, but Gita never knew of it. She was all smiles when she returned home that evening.

“You look happy today my pet,” said Madhuri.

“Yes, Mamma. I should be. Do you know what happened today? As soon as School started, teacher told us that she had the names of all the girls who had behaved nastily towards me last evening, and unless all of them came up to me and apologized, they would be disgraced in front of the whole School, and even punished if necessary. So almost all of them came up to me where I was standing near teacher, and said that they were sorry, and that they would never do such a thing again.”

“Now that’s wonderful! Isn’t it, darling?” asked Madhuri.

“Yes, Mamma, and now we are all friends again.”

A few days after this, Gita informed her mother that a classmate had lost a pretty new handkerchief. And this time the teacher had not asked them if anybody knew who had taken it, but she had quietly gone and brought a box with a slot in the centre. And then handing a slip of paper to each one of them, she told them to write down if they had seen the kerchief anywhere. Or if they had seen anyone picking it up or hiding it. They were to write their names at the bottom of the slip which she said would be kept secret. And when they had all finished, she told them to fold the slips and drop them into the box “Don’t you think this was a splendid idea, Mamma?” asked Gita.

“I should think so,” replied her mother. “For in this way no name is given out, and still the teacher can know the culprit.”

“I was getting scared of telling the truth another time, Mamma,” said Gita. “The girls do not appreciate it. But now I can always do so.”

“You must never be afraid of speaking the truth, dear child, for in the end it is victorious over everything, as you have seen. I want all my children to be brave and upright,” said the mother. And they both hugged each other with joy.

LALITA



# GIFTS OF GRACE

## JOY OF MEDITATION

(Continued from the issue of January)

As said earlier, Sri Aurobindo had written to me, "You can go on with your meditation and see what develops in you." A few words about later developments may not be out of place here.

From my childhood I cherished in me a search—an intense search for the way to establish a relation with Sri Krishna, *i.e.*, The Divine Love. Even today my search is not for happiness or bliss but for the Divine Himself. There is no spirit of bargaining as far as I am conscious.

On coming in touch with the Mother all my energies got turned towards bringing the psychic being—the true soul—to the front. It was a small beginning of another voyage, which would be made, I hope, in future not in ignorance but in purer consciousness.

In this pursuit meditation is a means and not an end. My spare time is not spent much in reading. I love to read mystical books by saints and eminent men but something in me feels the uselessness of reading tons of books. Is it not better to meditate on, digest and practise what little is read? Hence, the work over, the first thing that comes to my mind is meditation.

Real taste of meditation I had in 1951. In the *Words of the Mother* the Mother has said that true meditation is that when you have to make an effort to stop it. I had the luck to have a clear experience of this state for days together. Again and again the consciousness soared high. On occasions I found it difficult to keep the consciousness down in the body. Going into samadhi did not require much effort. Sleep reduced itself to two or three hours. But instead of peace, silence and joy, I had a burning all over the body because of the obscurities in the *ādhār*. The fruit seemed to precede the flower. What obscurities were there will be clear as we proceed.

To someone the Master wrote:

"It is the confinement in the physical consciousness that makes you (and everybody) narrow and selfish and miserable. Hitherto the higher consciousness with its peace etc. has been descending with great difficulty and fighting out the vital and physical resistance..."<sup>1</sup>

Such was the case with me.

From one mode of experience I passed on to another. After a time came a period when I could pull my consciousness out from the body and station it at the crown

<sup>1</sup> *On Yoga*, Tome II, p. 242.

of the head. The body would appear like an empty vessel and I would keep on looking at it like a witness.

There is nothing unusual in all this. At one place Sri Aurobindo writes of the experience:

“Many sadhaks here have had it.”<sup>1</sup>

One of us once wrote:

“How beautiful, calm and still all seems—as if in water there were not even a wave. But it is not nothingness. I feel a Presence steeped in life but absolutely silent and quiet in meditation.”

In reply he was told:

“...There could hardly be a better description of this experience... I suppose it is only a contact but a very true and vivid contact... a very good beginning.”

For me also the contact proved to be only a good start. If the experience could have settled in the being it would have given me a taste of something great, but the “physical consciousness came across”.

Except on arid days I have been always blessed with various kinds of experiences.

Once I saw “Ma” in Bengali characters—মা—inscribed upon my heart in dark blue colour. When I prayed to be enlightened the Master wrote:

“It was the impression of the Name with its power in some part of the being (vital mental).”

Question: Is it that I am pulling more than I can bear?

SRI AUROBINDO: I don't think so.

One day I saw a funnel of flaming light shooting forth from the centre between the eyebrows. On several occasions at dead of night I saw the sun, the moon and the stars at different levels of my body.

A vision between the eyebrows I had only once or twice but many times from the top-back of the head.

Once I felt my consciousness fixed at the top-back of the head. At another time I saw a hollow there into which the rays of the sun were falling from a distance. Once it looked as if my consciousness had entered into the *sahasrāra* and was poised there. One day it appeared that I was sitting cross-legged on the crown of the head. There was no trace of the body-consciousness. Two or three times I experienced a light joining the heart with the head but only partially.

The halo shooting arrows of rays, the crown of pearls, the sun round the head in the pictures of the Buddha and other men of God, all these I had taken to be art and literature and not history. When I saw them myself in vision then I realised they were not mere imaginations.

If the meditation becomes sound no pinch of appetite is felt. Rarely do I coerce the mind to go into meditation. Unless there is an inner urge and an easy flow one cannot have the joy of meditation. Many a time it so happened that I retired for some

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 248.

rest and got plunged into meditation even if I was hungry. A heavy stomach might induce sleep. So I preferred meditation and in no time all thought of food faded away.

When the period of struggle intervened I lost the capacity to do all this. From a note in my 1960 diary I learn that on October 1, I could neither lull myself to sleep nor meditate. This led to a tension in the head. To relieve the tension I resorted to Pranayama which I had learnt: I could keep seated for an hour doing it. This helped me to fix my consciousness in the head. When fully absorbed, I saw the luminous figure of the Mother between the eyebrows. After a time the figure of Shiva came floating to my vision.

This also proved to be only a passing phase and not all that the Master says about seeing Shiva:

“Shiva...is the Power that pours the light but also scrutinises the sadhak to see whether he is ready for the farther advance. When he lets him pass, then is the rush of new and higher experiences, the march and progress of the divine forces, the Gods and their powers, the transformation in the nature into a higher consciousness.”<sup>1</sup>

Before closing there is something more to add:

When I acquired the strength to clear at will the mind of all thoughts and make the vital quiet, the one thing that proved disturbing was the breathing. There was all quiet within and without at dead of night, but the moment my consciousness turned to breathing, it grew faster. Now, how to stop it, I did not know.

Somewhere, perhaps in the *Ideal of the Karmayogin*, Sri Aurobindo has written that when the mind falls quiet and there is not a trace of thought, breathing stops. But my case was just the opposite. I could not detect where the fault was. It took me four more years to unravel the mystery.

Formerly the mind would not allow the heart to concentrate. When the mind became all quiet it became easier to concentrate in the heart or on both at a time. This helped me to reach the stage of a void, with occasional vision of a bluish space, each time its scope increasing in vastness. This vision seemed to carry in its womb a promising future. Here it calls for alertness.

“...We are oriented, we are going somewhere instead of going nowhere.... We are in quest of another country... the one we leave behind and the one which is not yet found.... This transitional position would lead easily to a sort of absurd nihilism—nothing outside but nothing within either. And it is here that we must be very careful, after demolishing our outer mental constructions not to become enclosed again in a false profundity, under another construction. If we let go the thread we risk never finding it again. Here indeed is the trial. Only, the seeker must understand that he is being born to another life and that his new eyes, his new senses are not yet formed, like those of the new-born child who alights in the world.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On reading the chapter on Rajayoga in *The Synthesis of Yoga* a desire arose to practise *Pranayama* and see the result.

<sup>2</sup> Satprem, *Sri Aurobindo—The Adventure of Consciousness*.

One day before I reached this stage my head and heart had got fully concentrated, I had lost the sense of breathing for two or three hours. If it remained it must have been too feeble to catch my notice. Even when I was attentive, my breathing did not grow fast as before. Inwardly concentrated, in a sitting position, eyes open, fully conscious, I remained looking at myself without any thought, apparently without any breathing.

Now this is not a very rare phenomenon. There is a growing tendency to remain always inwardly concentrated. When concentration deepens, that state is reached with ease. This inner state slowly leads to a stage when there is one desire, one thought, one will to move forward. Perhaps here is just a feeling and not yet a living experience but all this shows the direction in which I am being led by the Gift of the Mother's Grace.

If a weak-willed man like me who had embarked on this rough and rugged path of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga without any equipment could be blessed with such happy times, does it not hold forth a hope, a promise to all who are equally devoid of high qualities?

A DISCIPLE

*(To be continued)*

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**SRI AUROBINDO BIRTH CENTENARY LIBRARY**  
**SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM : PONDICHERRY 2 : INDIA**

## **FOCUS**

### **1. Publication**

The Birth Centenary of Sri Aurobindo is to be celebrated on August 15, 1972. To commemorate the event it has been proposed to bring out all of his major and minor writings, including those unpublished yet, in a large and uniform library edition under the name 'Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library'.

This collection will include essays, editorials, speeches, different series of articles, plays and poetry, translations, messages, comments and a vast multitude of letters. They will be classified and rearranged under different subject heads—Philosophy, Yoga, Social and Political Thought, Studies in the Ancient Scriptures, Indian Culture, Poetry and Literature, Early Writings, Autobiographical Notes and Comments, Writings in Bengali with their translations in English, etc.

### **2. Prospectus**

A prospectus has been published, giving the present scheme of publication, in which a few alterations might become necessary as the work proceeds. This Library will have more than 25 volumes covering over 14,000 pages. The first volume is expected to be issued in early 1970 and others will follow at regular intervals.

### **3. Sponsorship**

The project is undertaken by Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press with the blessings of the Mother and with world-wide sponsorship. The sponsors will contribute a sum of Rupees One Thousand (Rs. 1000/-) each, as a token of their faith in the importance of the work. They will receive a complete set of the Library in De Luxe edition, volume by volume, as and when they are released from the Press.

### **4. Donations**

As befitting the commemoration, a fund, designated 'Sri Aurobindo Centenary Fund', is opened. Donations to the Fund will be free from Income Tax under Section 88 of the Income-Tax Act, 1961, subject to the limits and conditions prescribed therein. Cheques and Drafts should be drawn in favour of 'Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library' and forwarded to the Mother, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry 2. (\*)

\* Enquiries and Correspondence to be addressed as above.

## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**Your Innate Power:** by Olive L. Brown, Publishers: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.,  
Price Shillings 21/—

*“A spiritual consciousness is emerging and it is through this spiritual consciousness that one can meet the Divine.”*

SRI AUROBINDO

*“Spirituality can only come by opening of the mind, vital and physical to the inmost soul, to the higher Self, to the Divine, and their subordination to the spiritual forces and instrumentations as channels of the inner Light, the higher Knowledge and Power. Other things mental, aesthetic, vital are often misnamed spirituality, but they lack the essential character without which the word loses its true significance.”*

SRI AUROBINDO

WHILE I was reading the book of Olive L. Brown, there was a sort of exultation in me because few even in the medical field have found Indian thinking helpful and useful. But when I went still deeper in the study of the book something in me started brooding. Fundamentally what Miss Brown states is correct, she is on the right path, but there is surely a limitation. The quotations from Sri Aurobindo given above aptly answer the questions in myself.

The author has mainly based her thoughts on the writings and methods of Dr. Roger Vittoz, Dr. Wm. Bates and F. N. Alexander. The book is more an assembly of a number of thoughts rather than a discussion and exposition. In view of this, very little remains to mention, except a few principles which can be commented upon.

It seems to me that the words ‘Spirituality’ and ‘Consciousness’ have been used in a very loose sense. They are here concerned with the body, the vital being and the mind; perhaps not even the pure mind and pure vital being. Whatever that may be, the fact remains that the authorities on whom Miss Brown depends lead one to believe:

- (1) That one has to exteriorise the mind through the senses.
- (2) That one must become consciously aware and receptive of what the senses bring into the body, vital being and mind.
- (3) That one should unite the conscious with the Unconscious, thereby opening up and liberating the innate power of the Unconscious (vital and mental).
- (4) That one should practise detachment while remaining aware and receptive of what the senses bring in.
- (5) That growth should come from within the integrated Self. Anything super-

imposed from without is apt to interfere with nature and cause imbalance.

All these points sound good. For those who are followers of Sri Aurobindo's teaching they are not new. However, it is difficult to understand a number of facts. For the writer and her sources, the usual human awareness seems to be the highest spiritual force. What we call the Soul, "the psychic being", and other higher parts of our complex constitution appear secondary to this awareness. The authors do not even directly consider the possibility of uniting this awareness with the Divine Existence. Would not the opening of the mental, the vital and the physical into nothing higher bring a flux of forces which might in all probability be dark? What is being here desired is to unite the conscious with the Unconscious. But to be detached in the direction of the Unconscious and then to exteriorise oneself through the senses may still mean the enjoyment of the senses in what Indian philosophy calls the Ignorance, though the centre may be somewhere in the mind instead of in the heart.

Normally in philosophical and spiritual thinking and teaching, the emphasis is on the withdrawal of consciousness from exteriorising itself through the senses and on uniting with the Divine Consciousness to bring in Light, Power and Peace.

A quotation from Sri Aurobindo may be useful here:

"There can be no mental rule or definition. One has first to live in the Divine and attain to the Truth, the Will and awareness of the Truth will organise the life."

The Truth will integrate the different personalities of the man, thereby giving him new health, vigour and a mind full of light, purity and harmonious consciousness.

Yet we cannot say that what Miss Brown has written has no meaning and no worth. Dr. Vittoz and Dr. Bates have lived and practised these principles. In the pragmatic field they have been fairly useful where the elements of the physical being and its nature are concerned.

The book hardly describes any set methods, except that one should practise under an experienced teacher. Such teacher is expected to know how to judge the vibrations by keeping his hands on the brow and the skull. It is almost like a medical practitioner judging the patient's health by feeling the pulse beating in the wrist. I have known a doctor who was practising what may be termed diagnosis by pulse-feeling and I have seen his efficiency by putting myself under his fingers. At that time I understood little of this therapy in principle. Now, after reading Miss Brown, I have gained a better idea of it.

In view of this and some other points, the reader perceives that medical science has been moving in new directions that promise to be fruitful in the search for Truth. The present publication is thus of value by representing advance thinking in a sphere which cannot be neglected.

## *Students' Section*

### **THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION**

FOURTEENTH SEMINAR

25th February 1968

#### **WHAT WE EXPECT FROM THE MOTHER**

*(Continued from the issue of October 1968)*

AFTER all the speeches were over, Kishor Gandhi read out the following extracts from the writings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, bearing on the subject of the Seminar, to which he had referred in his introductory remarks:

(1)

In reality, the Divine gives to each individual exactly what he expects of Him. If you believe that the Divine is far and cruel, He will be far and cruel, because it will be necessary for your ultimate good that you feel the wrath of God; He will be Kali for the worshippers of Kali, and Beatitude for the Bhakta. And He will be the All-Knowledge of the seekers of Knowledge, the transcendent Impersonal of the illusionists; He will be atheist with the atheist and the love of the lover. He will be brotherly and close, a friend always faithful, always ready to succour for those who feel Him as the inner guide in each movement, at every moment. And if you believe that He can wipe away everything, He will wipe away all your faults, all your errors tirelessly and at every moment you can feel His infinite Grace. The Divine is indeed what you expect of Him in your deepest aspiration...

The Divine is with you according to your aspiration. Naturally that does not mean that He bends to the caprices of your outer nature,—I speak here of the truth of your being. And yet, sometimes He does fashion Himself according to your outer aspirations, and if, like the devotees, you live alternately in separation and union, ecstasy and despair, the Divine also will separate from you and unite with you, according as you believe. The attitude is thus very important, even the outer attitude. People do not know how important is faith, how faith is miracle, creator of miracles. If you expect every moment to be lifted up and pulled towards the Divine, He will come to lift you and He will be there, quite close, closer, ever closer.

THE MOTHER

*(Bulletin of Physical Education, February 1958, pp. 77-9.)*



(2)

The soul goes to the Mother-Soul in all its desires and troubles, and the Divine Mother wishes that it should be so, so that she may pour out her heart of love. It turns to her too because of the self-existent nature of this love and because that points us to the home towards which we turn from our wanderings in the world and to the bosom in which we find our rest.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*On Yoga I, The Synthesis of Yoga*, pp. 648-49.)

(3)

The love which is turned towards the Divine ought not to be the usual vital feeling which men call by that name; for that is not love, but only a vital desire, an instinct of appropriation, the impulse to possess and monopolise. Not only is this not the divine Love, but it ought not to be allowed to mix in the least degree in the Yoga. The true love for the Divine is self-giving, free of demand, full of submission and surrender; it makes no claim, imposes no condition, strikes no bargain, indulges in no violences of jealousy or pride or anger—for these things are not in its composition. In return the Divine Mother also gives herself, but freely—and this represents itself in an inner giving—her presence in your mind, your vital, your physical consciousness, her power re-creating you in the divine nature, taking up all the movements of your being and directing them towards perfection and fulfilment, her love enveloping you and carrying you in its arms Godwards. It is this that you must aspire to feel and possess in all your parts down to the very material, and here there is no limitation either of time or of completeness. If one truly aspires and gets it, there ought to be no room for any other claim or any other disappointed desire. And if one truly aspires, one does unfailingly get it, more and more as the purification proceeds and the nature undergoes its needed change.

Keep your love pure of all selfish claim and desire; you will find that you are getting all the love that you can bear and absorb in answer.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Sri Aurobindo On Himself and On the Mother*, pp. 580-81.)

(4)

Obviously, if people expect the ordinary kind of love from the Mother they must be disappointed—the love based on the vital and its moods. But that is just the kind of love that has to be overpassed in Yoga or transformed into something else.

14-3-1936

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Sri Aurobindo On Himself and On The Mother*. p. 579)

(5)

In your relations with the Divine you are concerned not with the Divine's satisfaction of your personal desires, but with being pulled out of these things and raised to your highest spiritual possibilities, so that you may become united with the Mother within and as a result in the outer being also. That cannot be done by satisfying your vital desires—to do so would only increase them and give you into the hands of the ignorance and restless confusion of the ordinary Nature. It can be done only by your inner trust and surrender and by the pressure of the Mother's peace and Force working from within and changing your vital nature. It is when you forget this that you go wrong and suffer; when you remember it you progress and the difficulties become less and less insistent.

13-9-1933

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Sri Aurobindo On Himself and On The Mother*, pp. 589-90)

(6)

As for prayer, no hard and fast rule can be laid down. Some prayers are answered, all are not. You may ask, why should not then all prayers be answered? But why should they be? it is not a machinery: put a prayer in the slot and get your asking. Besides, considering all the contradictory things mankind is praying for at the same moment, God would be in a rather awkward hole if he had to grant all of them; it wouldn't do.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*On Yoga II, Tome Two, p. 25*)

Then the following three passages from *Savitri* were read, the first by Abhijit and the next two by Kanu:

(1)

“I am charged by God to do his mighty work,  
 Uncaring I serve his will who sent me forth,  
 Reckless of peril and earthly consequence.  
 I reason not of virtue and of sin  
 But do the deed he has put into my heart.  
 I fear not for the angry frown of Heaven,  
 I flinch not from the red assault of Hell;  
 I crush the opposition of the gods,  
 Tread down a million goblin obstacles.  
 I guide man to the path of the Divine

And guard him from the red Wolf and the Snake.  
 I set in his mortal hand my heavenly sword  
 And put on him the breastplate of the gods.  
 I break the ignorant pride of human mind  
 And lead the thought to the wideness of the Truth;  
 I rend man's narrow and successful life  
 And force his sorrowful eyes to gaze at the sun  
 That he may die to earth and live in his soul.  
 I know the goal, I know the secret route:  
 I have studied the map of the invisible worlds;  
 I am the battle's head, the journey's star.  
 But the great obstinate world resists my word,  
 And the crookedness and evil in man's heart  
 Is stronger than Reason, profounder than the Pit,  
 And the malignancy of hostile Powers  
 Puts craftily back the clock of destiny  
 And mightier seems than the eternal Will.  
 The cosmic evil is too deep to unroot:  
 The cosmic suffering is too vast to heal.  
 A few I guide who pass me towards the Light;  
 A few I save, the mass falls back unsaved;  
 A few I help, the many strive and fail:  
 But my heart I have hardened and I do my work:  
 Slowly the Light grows greater in the East,  
 Slowly the world progresses on God's road.  
 His seal is on my task, it cannot fail:  
 I shall hear the silver swing of heaven's gates  
 When God comes out to meet the soul of the world."

(*Savitri*, Book VIII, Canto IV, 1951, pp. 150-51)

(2)

A day may come when she must stand unhelped  
 On a dangerous brink of the world's doom and hers.  
 Carrying the world's future on her lonely breast,  
 Carrying the human hope in a heart left sole  
 To conquer or fail on a last desperate verge;  
 Alone with death and close to extinction's edge;  
 Her single greatness in that last dire scene,  
 She must cross alone a perilous bridge in Time  
 And reach an apex of world-destiny

Where all is won or all is lost for man.  
 In that tremendous silence lone and lost  
 Of a deciding hour in the world's fate,  
 In her soul's climbing beyond mortal time  
 When she stands sole with Death or sole with God  
 Apart upon a silent desperate brink  
 Alone with her self and death and destiny  
 As on some verge between Time and Timelessness  
 When being must end or life rebuild its base,  
 Alone she must conquer or alone must fall.  
 No human aid can reach her in that hour,  
 No armoured God stand shining at her side.  
 Cry not to heaven, for she alone can save.  
 For this the silent Force came missioned down;  
 In her the conscious Will took human shape:  
 She only can save herself and save the world.

(*Savitri*, Book VI, Canto II, pp. 104-5)

(3)

"If this is she of whom the world has heard,  
 Wonder no more at any happy change.  
 Each easy miracle of felicity  
 Of her transmuting heart the alchemy is."

(*Savitri*, Book XII, p. 344)

At the end of the Seminar, Kishor Gandhi, on behalf of the Association, thanked all who had come to attend the Seminar as well as those who had participated in it.

*Compiled by* KISHOR GANDHI

# EYE EDUCATION

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*Q: What do you mean by Anatomy and Physiology of the eye?*

A: Description of the form of the eye is called Anatomy, description of the functioning of the eye is called Physiology.

*Q: What are the prospects if I join the Medical Course in Ophthalmic Science in your School?*

A: You can become a good instrument of the Divine to serve humanity as a wonderful eye specialist.

*Q: You advised me to use glasses when necessary. I thought you were totally against them.*

A: In your case I found that the best way to help you was to advise the use of glasses for distance but their disuse in reading as the near sight was quite normal.

*Q: My daughter aged 8 years has developed defective vision for distance as well as for near things. She often gets a headache. What do you advise?*

A: She can become all right. Apply Resolvent 200 to her eyes and let her face the morning sun with closed eyes for a few minutes. Then she should practise Palming and run around a chair, bouncing a ball to the ground, then read the Eye chart at 5 to 10 ft. She should be taught how to blink frequently.

*Q: I am seventeen, my eyesight began to deteriorate when I was seven. Every year the number of the glasses increased so much so that now I use-9 in the right eye, and-5 in the left eye. Can my eyes be benefited?*

A: Yes, the improvement will be evident in a week's time if you can follow the proper course of treatment.

*Q: My teacher says that I don't blink but wink. How to get the habit of blinking?*

A: Practise with concentration the simple rhythms of blinking. The following natural exercises can be employed:

1. Walk slowly step by step and blink gently at each step.
2. Play with a ball, move it from hand to hand. To follow the movement of the ball the eyes will begin to blink in a normal way.
3. Take a book of small type, shift the sight on the white lines in between the lines of print, blink once or twice on each white line.
4. Take a mirror. Look at the right eye and then at the left, blink on each side. It will keep you aware of wrong blinking.

DR. R. S. AGARWAL,  
School for Perfect Eyesight

## A REGRET

THERE was a time when fairies played  
And danced across the meadows,  
When elves would come and sometimes stayed  
Beneath the oak tree shadows !

But now those golden times seem far—  
And children dream no more—  
No longer wishing on a star  
For fantasies galore.

Where have they gone ? I'd like to know—  
Those little things so dear.  
Why don't they come and play below  
The trees, when summer's here?

Maybe some day I shall be told  
The way to fairyland.  
Or can it be I'll never hold  
Its secrets in my hand?

Somehow, some day, somewhere I'll find  
The place of children's dreams.  
Then all the rest I'll leave behind  
To drift on fairy streams!

NORMAN DOWSETT (JUNIOR)

# LEANING ON LEENA

## BOOK REVIEW

*To Raise a Laugh (Soupçons from Leena).* Price Rs. 2.00.

Now it is easy to see that I am no favourite around here! There are books written by 'chota-loks' which are lauded to the skies by top-ranking Professors and other V.I.P's. Has anyone mentioned my little gem? Well, as my old 'Buba' used to say: "If you want anything done, do it yourself and it will be done." So here I go.

First of all, there is no truth in the story that the Junior Member of the family said: "You don't have to write a book of poems to raise a laugh, just walk out in those pants, that is enough." This is 'malice-afore-and-after' sent out by a spy from a certain Planetary city!

Here are the opinions of two of our leading poets. One said: "Leena, your writing astounds me, I don't know how you do it!" The other one said: "Leena, I must tell everyone what I think of your book; after all, fore-warned is fore-armed!" Momentarily I wondered if he was casting nasturtiums [She means aspersions! Editor], but told myself: "Now, dear, Honi soit, Honi soit."

Let us now sample a 'Soupçon'—those coruscating lines to the 'All-Hyphen-Storm'... In this little Hamletian soliloquy, the writer is talking to the Storm-Forces which are dancing and gambolling with a crowd of hyphenated-words, this takes place in Dreamland and was caused through reading so many poems in the Proof-reading Office that same afternoon. In her reverie she talks to the rain, telling it to rain on her in different kinds of rhythm—but not non-stop, meaning, enough is as good as a deluge, for she does not intend (she hopes) to join the storm-dance, for now she is a *good-seed* though born a tare. She jokes with the storm as it gaily and loudly crashes through space, and then she hears beat music played from over the way. She realises that she still has much of the human in her. She then muses in a true searching manner ... *e.g.* Will she or won't she shed this coat of fur? *i.e.* rise above it all! Then she realises that she has moved on ('Tis nobler now', etc....)—then just to remind her not to be too sure, the forces crash on more loudly to let her know they still hover ('Forget-us-not' ..., etc.)

She then becomes stern but calm, and calls the rain her 'Crystal-drop' but, like other things when they become unnecessary, it must stop, and advises it for its own good (and hers, of course) to buzz-off.

To those who can read between the hyphens, there is more in this than they deserve! [Indeed High-Fun!—Editor]

Well, dear readers, if this does not make you want to buy a copy, you should see a psychiatrist, maybe you should anyway!

Let us finish with one or two letters of appreciation.

1) Frantic Father, Frankfurt, writes:

“Dear Leena,

Last month I was left alone for two weeks with our two little monsters. The first night I spent three hours trying to get them to settle down and sleep. The second night I started reading your poems out loud. After the second poem they were sound asleep. The next night at bed-time I just took the book from the shelf and then found that their eyes were closed and I never heard another sound. I had no more trouble. Now my wife is back and she also finds that producing your book at bed-time brings down a ‘pin-drop’ silence.”

2) Worried Wife, Wigan, writes:

“Dear Leena,

My husband has been lying in bed for the past two weeks.

He said that he had no interest in life, felt exhausted and was too tired to work. One day I read aloud to him some of your poems, and told him I would read one or two to him every day. The next day he arose and went back to his job. He said something about ‘Better the devil you know than the one you don’t!’”

3) Governor of a Gaol, Galway, writes:

“Dear Leena,

For the past few months a warder has been reading your poems aloud to the prisoners, twice a week.

Lately some of the prisoners have sent me notes saying that they feel something has been added to their Life.”

Now this last letter puzzled me a little so I asked the Junior Member what he thought had been added to their Life?

He replied: “Hard Labour.”

Ah well! very few families appreciate the genius in their midst, and I shall go on writing if only ‘pour faire rire.’

LEENA