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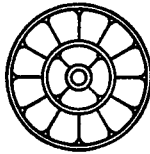
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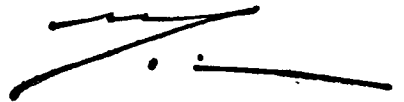


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

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No. 2

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail".

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TWO WAYS OF "PRANAM" TO THE MOTHER

(This poem has appeared before in Mother India, but it can bear being republished because of the attention the Mother bestowed on it when it was first shown to her nearly twenty years ago. There were several people around her at the time. After reading it she passed it on to all of them, asking them to give it a reading. On her ninety-sixth birthday, its author offers it to her once again, for it is a cry of the soul to the Eternal who took birth for us on February 21, 1878, the Eternal whose living relation with us remains unaffected by the withdrawal she has made from her body. There can be for the soul no end to the true way of making "pranam" to the Divine.)

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 that 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

THE MOTHER—

MY LOVE

Huta

(Editor's Note: — This article, written from the deep heart by one whom the Mother granted the boon of a great closeness to her, is sure to go deep into the heart of the reader. Especially will it do so since Huta has enshrined in it several letters of the Mother in the original, inscribed in her artistic and forceful hand. These letters, some of which have never been published before, shed a revelatory light on a number of questions that have arisen in our minds after the passing away of the Mother. They serve also to evoke in our souls a Presence that will never pass away.)

I HAVE the pleasure to share a few of The Mother's letters with all.

To express the Work and the Will of the Supreme through mind, through words, is indeed difficult. To imagine through mental conception the Vision of the Divine is truly in vain.

The Mother has said in the *Bulletin* of August 1972 (page 93), "Notes on the Way":

"... We are so stupid that we even come to say (*Mother assumes a tone of offended dignity*): 'The Divine is wrong, he should not do like that.' It is comical, my child.

(Silence)

"For me, the best remedy (that is to say, the easiest) is: Whatever You will. Whatever You will, in all sincerity. And then — then comes understanding. Then

you understand. But you do not understand mentally, it is not there (*Mother touches her head*). As Thou wiltest."

When I did one of the paintings of *Savitri* according to The Mother's sketch and instructions, She said:

"Every day I see and deal with this fellow — the little mind ..." And She put Her hand on Her forehead as if it were a tough job.

The lines illustrated were:

"First, smallest of the three, but strong of limb,
A low-brow with square and heavy jowl,
A pigmy Thought needing to live in bounds
For ever stooped to hammer fact and form."

Bk. 2, C. 10.

In one of Her earlier talks to me, the report of which She corrected, The Mother said:

"... I do not really care what people say, think or imagine. I am untouched by falsehood ...

"... People think that they know much more than the Lord. But Sri Aurobindo wrote in one of His books:

"The Power that governs the world is at least as wise as you and it is not absolutely necessary that you should be consulted or indulged in its management, God is seeing to it."

This too She told me in one of Her conversations:

"... Justice, truth, peace, harmony, order — these cannot come in a day. Nevertheless, everyone has to transform himself and that is why all these defects and falsehoods of nature come out and show themselves for the Divine Consciousness to act upon them. If everybody were perfect, why should I come upon this earth? I would have remained in my Heaven ..."

Here I recall the lines from *Savitri*, Bk. 2, C. 1:

"Once in the vigil of a deathless gaze
These grades had marked her giant downward plunge
The wide and prone leap of a godhead's fall.
Our life is a holocaust of the Supreme.
The great World-Mother by her sacrifice
Has made her soul the body of our state ..."

What has She not done for us? — that is the question.

According to the promptings of our human nature, I wrote to The Mother something about immortality, and She answered:

on one side you say you
 want to die and on the
 other you are anxious because
 you are not sure that my
 body is immortal - What is
 this logic - You can be interested
 in my body's immortality only
 if yourself you wished to
 acquire immortality and need
 my help and presence for that
 purpose. Otherwise, just because
 you wish for death, you
 ought to try to acquire the
 consciousness in which it
 matters little if you have or
 have not a body, and the
 relations of love and closeness
 established with one do
 not suffer from the loss of
 the physical material sheath -

It is obvious that human beings are not yet trained to think and feel consistently in profound matters touching on our future with The Mother.

Doubt, disbelief and suspense still persisted in me.

I read in the November 1965 *Bulletin*, Her "Notes on the Way", bearing on physical transformation and the experiences The Mother was having. The closing words were:

"If it remains ..."

I expressed my feeling to Her asking why there was that "If". Then I mentioned the world of Falsehood by which we are surrounded, and questioned Her, "What will happen to sincere aspirants when You are no more?"

The Mother replied:

6-12-63

My dear little child Huta
 you have just voiced the thoughts of so
 many people - And I have only one
 answer to make - It is the Will of
 The Lord that will be realised - And the
 sincere people must know that men

they are steady and
 ardent in their
 faith, more easy
 and quick will be
 the Realisation.

LOVE J.

Months passed by. Once again I asked Her why She did not lay the first stone of the Matri Mandir at Auroville. She answered:



7-3-64

My very dear little child Huta,
 I have left everything to the Lord.
 He is He who decides and will always
 decide for this body - As yet, for
 this matter, He has not let me know
 His will - That is why I have not
 answered.

With all my love J.

Later, time and again She took suddenly ill, of which we failed to understand the reason.

I cannot resist quoting a few lines from *Savitri*, Bk. 6, C. 2:

“The Eternal suffers in a human form,
He has signed salvation’s testament with his blood:
He has opened the doors of his undying peace ...
How shall he cure the ills he never felt? ...
He carries the suffering world in his own breast.”

The Mother wrote to me this beautiful letter:

15-4-68

My very dear little child Huta
Keep the certificate of the final Victory
constantly present in your mind
and the way will be much
shorter

The final Victory is already there
present in the deed, waiting for the earth
to become aware of it.

With all my love

I prayed to The Mother: “Let Your supreme work be accomplished in spite of everything”, and She replied:

Hate, my very dear little child,
My work is being accomplished

it is not a sickness.

My love and blessings
 are constantly with you.

Whatever She willed was done. She certainly knew much more than we did. She also knew what She had done in order to hasten Her work. Once She told me with one of Her sweetest smiles:

“Child, the Supreme does not boast. The Supreme has the supreme humility ...”

I used to tape-record The Mother’s recitations of *Savitri*. I remember very vividly Her expression when She recited one of the passages of Bk. 1, C. 4:

“In Matter shall be lit the spirit’s glow ...
 A few shall see what none yet understands;
 God shall grow up while the wise men talk and sleep;
 For man shall not know the coming till its hour
 And belief shall be not till the work is done.”

She put stress on “talk and sleep”, and laughed softly. She was much amused.

It was a Grace and a sheer joy to work with The Mother. But often I got restless when I heard about Her ill-health. She wrote:

It is not a question of
health, it is a question of
transformation.
 and it is always the
Supreme's Will that is
realised. Never forget
 that, and you will be
 in peace.

With love and
 blessings

Indeed, The Mother is with us. Her work is ceaseless till the final Victory. And what Nolinida has expressed in his message of 17th November 1973 is true: "... The New Body will come ..."

These lines from *Savitri*, Bk. 11, C. 1, are appropriate to the future:

"But when the hour of the Divine draws near,
 The Mighty Mother shall take birth in Time
 And God be born into the human clay
 In forms made ready by your human lives.
 Then shall the Truth supreme be given to men ..."

Let us all pray sincerely, faithfully to the Supreme with living hope and intensity of aspiration for this wonderful day.

"One day I shall return, His hands in mine,
 And thou shalt see the face of the Absolute."

Savitri, Bk. 7, C. 4.

THE MOTHER

SOME GENERAL TRUTHS AND PERSONAL FACTS

(This article is an adaptation and expansion of the one that appeared in the Mother India of February 21, 1958. The partial recasting has been necessary mostly in view of the event of November 17, 1973.)

THE One whom we call the Supreme is the utter Unmanifest. The creative Conscious Force of the Supreme is the Divine Mother in Her transcendent poise, *Aditi*, holding the Truths that have to be manifested out of the absolute Mystery. Through the transcendent Mother and by Her creativity the whole universe has taken birth. And when the Supreme manifests in the world His own personal being, He does it also through Her transcendence. In Her universal aspect She is *Mahāśakti*. All the Gods and Goddesses are of Her making — they are but powers that express Her.

There are many powers of the universal Mother which are not yet made manifest to us, and many universes too which are still in the Unmanifest and which the Divine Mother can create. What has been created is just one system of possibilities out of the innumerable that She and the Supreme can realise.

Time and again this Divine Creatrix takes a direct hand in the workings of the world. Through individual forms she manifests some ray of herself: being Supernature, the truth of all that Nature here strives to express, she makes one aspect or another of her light descend in all the ages of history and, when the hour is ripe, even a full individual embodiment can come forth.

It is such an embodiment, amidst a world of human beings, that Sri Aurobindo set before us when, on November 24, 1926, he charged with the care of his Ashram the radiant personality whom he called the Mother and into whose shaping hands he asked us to put ourselves as children.

For forty-seven years she played her mighty part to perfection. Now she is no more in her body: she passed away on November 17, 1973. And her ninety-sixth birthday falls on February 21 this year without her bodily presence. But no! we should only say “bodily existence”. For, if ever there was a bodily presence which could never be effaced, it was the Mother’s. Timeless was she not only in her inmost being but also in all the expressions of it in her outermost activity. During the last few years she was not up and about in the same way as before, but we must remember what she said to some disciples gathered in her room on April 2, 1972: “The body has some difficulty, so I can’t be active, alas. It is not because I am old — I am not old.... I am younger than most of you. If I am here inactive, it is because the body has given itself definitively to prepare the transformation. But the consciousness is clear and we are here to work — rest and enjoyment will come afterwards. Let us do our work here.” That is the typical Mother. And even in her last days, when her body

had become exceedingly weak, she would say: "Make me walk." As late as November 14 she made her attendants lift her out of her bed. She tried to walk but staggered and almost collapsed. She took about 20 minutes to recover. But the moment she felt better she started saying: "Lift me up again, I shall walk." The constant urge towards activity of such an indomitable spirit could not help rendering her bodily presence a perennial part of our awareness. Naturally, therefore, she is in our memory most as we knew her before an acute form was taken by the difficulties of the body which she attributed to the exacting incalculable experiment of what she and Sri Aurobindo called "supramentalisation" — that is, the total "divinisation" of the physical being.

Right up to her ninety-third year the Mother was visibly true to her role of Divine Shakti on earth, but her best manifestation as the Ageless One was round about her eightieth year. For, contrary to expectation, it would have been the extreme of ineptitude to say on her eightieth birthday that she was eighty years old. Few of her disciples were up in the morning as early as she, few turned to repose as late. And it was hardly four or five years before this time that she used to be on her feet, without a moment's respite, from five in the morning to nearly two in the afternoon — meeting people, ministering to their spiritual needs, considering their physical requirements, attending to the reports of numerous departments, giving flowers charged with the soul's secrets, making those secrets breathe out more sweetly with that flower of flowers, her smile. In the evening again, from four she would be active, with a little recreation by way of tennis for an hour and then with a large amount of re-creation of lost joy or clouded light in the thousand disciples who would move past her for a couple of hours to receive from her hands a nut or a sweet through which their very bodies could absorb grace. Even after eighty, her manifold activity was of one young, and at the day's end there was none who left the Ashram Playground with a fresher face and a brisker step.

Watching her, day after day, we realised that more than mere words were what she had once spoken on old age. She had said, in effect: "The coming of old age is due to two suggestions. First, the general collective suggestion — people telling you that you are getting old and can't do one thing or another. There is also the individual suggestion which keeps repeating, 'I am getting old, I mustn't attempt this or that.' The truth is quite different. Before thirty, the energy goes out in a spendthrift way because of the play of impulses. After thirty, there is a settling down and one is expected to have a plenitude of energy. At fifty, blossoming begins. At eighty, one becomes capable of full production."

Marvellously full indeed has been the Mother's productiveness, for it is rich with the power of a consciousness more than human. Even at the age of five she was aware that she did not belong to this world, that she did not have a merely human consciousness. Her Yoga may be said to have begun in that early period. Her parents had a small chair, with a little back, made for her — she would sit in it and meditate. She used to see a column of light above her head. As her brain was yet a child's and there-

fore insufficiently developed, she could not make out what it was, however much she tried. But the general sense of a high and vast mission accompanied always that experience.

Neither of her parents knew anything about this or who she was. And she did not tell them anything. On rare occasions, at a little later period, she tried to give some hint, but they failed to understand; nor, if they had caught its meaning, would they have believed her. Her mother was a positivist and materialist, in keeping with the tendency of those days, and wanted her and her brother to be ideal children according to her own notions. As for her father, he did not care one way or the other: he was a businessman.

All during her girlhood she was conscious of a more than human force behind her and often entering her body and working there in a supernormal way. This force she knew to be her own secret being. A few instances of its working may be given. She was about seven. There was a boy of nearly thirteen, a bully who always used to mock at girls, saying that they were good for nothing. One day she asked him, "Will you shut up?" He kept mocking. Suddenly she took hold of him, lifted him up from the ground and threw him down with a thump though she was so much smaller than he. The force that had come down into her and made her tremendously strong was recognised by her later in life as Mahakali.

Another instance. She had gone to play in a forest near Fontainebleu. She was climbing a steep hill, when her foot slipped and she began to fall down. The road below was strewn with sharp black stones. As she was falling, she felt somebody supporting her in a lap, as it were, and slowly bringing her down. When she reached the ground she was standing safely on her two feet, to the glad astonishment of all her companions.

In her sixteenth year she joined a Studio to learn painting. It was one of the biggest studios in Paris. She happened to be the youngest there. All the other people used to talk and quarrel among themselves, but she never took part in these things — she was always grave and busy with her work. They called her the Sphinx. Whenever they had any trouble or wrangle, they would come to her to settle their affairs. She could read their thoughts and, as she replied more often to their thoughts than to their words, they felt very uncomfortable. She would also make her decisions without the least fear, even if the authorities were concerned. Once a girl who had been appointed monitrice of the Studio got into the bad books of the elderly lady who was the Head of the place. This lady wanted to send away the monitrice. So the Sphinx was sought out by the young for help. She felt sympathy for the girl, knowing how poor she was and that if she left the place it would be the end of her painting career. The Head of the Studio had now to confront a determined little champion. Sensible pleading was first tried, but when it fell on deaf ears the champion took another line. With a bit of anger she caught the elderly woman's hand and held it in a firm grip as if the very bones would be crushed. It was soon agreed that the monitrice would be allowed to stay on. Mahakali had been at work again.

The Sphinx of the Studio was also the same serious self at home. She rarely smiled or laughed. And for this, once when she was about twenty, she got a scolding from her mother. She simply replied that she had to bear all the sorrows of the world. Her mother thought she had gone crazy. On another occasion she was scolded by her for not listening to what she had been ordered to do. Then she answered that no earthly power could command her obedience.

We must not imagine that the Sphinx was morose or rebellious in general. She had enough of true joy and consideration. She was just weighted with the secret of the great work she had to do, and she could let nothing out of tune with it shape her actions.

Before this time, she had already arrived at a fairly precise idea of her mission. Between the ages of eleven and twelve, a series of psychic and spiritual experiences revealed to her not only the existence of God but man's possibility of uniting with Him, of realising Him integrally in consciousness and action, of manifesting Him upon earth in a life divine. And during her body's sleep occult instructions were given to her by several teachers, some of whom she met afterwards on the physical plane. Later on, as the inner and outer development proceeded, a psychic and spiritual relation with one of these beings became more and more clear and frequent and, although she knew little of the Indian philosophies and religions at that time, she was led to call him Krishna and henceforth she was aware that it was with him, whom she knew she would meet some day, that the divine work was to be done. Being a painter she made a psychically impressionist sketch of him and waited for it to spring to life some day for even her physical eyes.

A number of years she spent in Algeria, learning the higher occultism from a Polish adept, Théon by name, and his still more profoundly experienced French wife. Under them she would put her physical body into a trance and awake progressively in her subtle sheaths: putting to sleep the subtle sheath next to the physical, she would grow aware in the one on a deeper level: she thus climbed the whole grade of what occultists have charted out as supraphysical planes, and became acquainted with their laws and powers and operations, so that she might place all available means at the disposal of her spiritual ideal. On more than one occasion, so complete was her withdrawal from the body that the latter lay in a condition of temporary death. But the release, which could have absorbed her in the Divine Existence for good and plunged the embodied being into its Supreme Origin, was refused by her. She saw the world in its long travail and returned to the body by sheer force, a painful process when the connecting link between the subtle and the gross has been snapped.

In 1910 she came to hear of Sri Aurobindo who had settled in Pondicherry a year earlier. From then onwards her one desire was to visit India, the land which she had always cherished as her true mother country. And in 1914 the joy of seeing India was granted her — and the very heart of that joy was the meeting with Sri Aurobindo. But even before she caught sight of him she knew the touch of his presence at Pondicherry. For, as she drew closer to the town, she had the occult experience of a great light

shining from some centre in it. In the town itself, she was more intensely aware of the light. Soon she was face to face with its centre. And when she saw Sri Aurobindo she recognised the original of her visionary sketch. This was enough to convince her fully that her place and her work were near him in India.

Here we may remark that the whole truth about her choice to reside in India is not told when we have noted this meeting with Sri Aurobindo. The whole truth is compassed only when we realise why Sri Aurobindo himself, who had a wide Western education in England and wrote creatively in English and could have easily made his mark in Europe in whose culture he had been steeped, took India for his field, not only politically but also culturally and spiritually, assimilated the whole genius of this country and made it the central fount of his own future. India holds within her a supreme potentiality of spiritual response and development because of an extraordinary history of soul-culture: a vibrant psychological atmosphere is there, breathing life and vigour into all formations of the soul and rendering possible new evolutions of the Spirit's power. That is why Sri Aurobindo came an Indian and went to the West to bring the West to India for a novel world-wide synthesis of spiritual aspiration; that is also why the Mother came a Westerner but with the eternal Indian within her, the born God-seeker and God-realiser, and joined forces with Sri Aurobindo to complete by her Indianised West his Westernised India, so that all mankind might grow to supermanhood with secret sustenance drawn from the soil where the wonderful seed of Avatarhood had often been sown.

The Mother saw the all-consummating Avatar in Sri Aurobindo, and Sri Aurobindo saw in her the Shakti that would make his Yoga an organised starting-point of a new chapter of earth's history. In the meeting on March 29, 1914, the true relationship between her and him, which she later expressed in a pithy sentence, must have flashed into awareness: "Without him, I do not exist; without me, he remains unmanifest."

But the master-means of manifestation, no less than the One who was to be manifested, was directly approached only on that day. Before meeting Sri Aurobindo the Mother used to find for her various spiritual experiences and realisations a poise for life-work by giving them a mould with the enlightened mind. All kinds of powerful ideas she had for world-upliftment — ideas artistic, social, religious. At sight of Sri Aurobindo she aspired to a total cessation of all mental moulds. She did not speak a word nor did he: she just sat at his feet and closed her eyes, keeping her mind open to him. After a while there came, from above, an infinite silence that settled in her mind. Everything was gone, all those fine and great ideas vanished and there was only a vacant imperturbable waiting for what was beyond mind. For days and days she carefully guarded her absolute silence and then slowly the Truth began to flow down from above. The Truth alone grew the substance of consciousness. No mental activity was left. And from that day in 1914 she never lived in the mind. Ideas got formed not on a mental initiative but in response to the Truth and in order to make the Truth mentally comprehensible and in order to transmit some experience

of the Truth to the ordinary world.

Sri Aurobindo had known in 1908 the cessation of all mental activity in an utter Nirvana which became the basis on which the dynamic and creative side of his Yoga proceeded. Although he experienced this cessation six years before the Mother, both of them soon found on comparing notes that they had worked essentially on the same lines of an integral development, seeking to gather together all the movements of the spiritual life and carry them to a new goal. Only, a question that had haunted her from humanity's past had remained unanswered till she met Sri Aurobindo: Must always the attempt to establish a Kingdom of Heaven on earth fall tragically short of fruition? When she put the question to Sri Aurobindo he looked tranquilly at her and said, "This time it will not be so."

The secret of averting failure was what he called the Supermind, the Divine's own self-dynamism that had never before been brought into action in the world — the Supermind not only reached in its free and sovereign height but also carried down from there into Matter's depths to release in them its own hidden counterpart which is the buried source of all evolutionary striving towards divinity.

In those first few months of the Mother's stay in India, the mission of which she had been aware since childhood grew increasingly clear. She has hinted at this in the entry dated June 26, 1914, of her *Prayers and Meditations*:

"O Lord, grant that we may rise above the ordinary forms of manifestation, so that Thou mayst find the instruments necessary for Thy new manifestation.

"Let us not lose sight of the goal; grant that we may be always in union with Thy force, the force which the earth does not yet know and which Thou hast given us the mission to reveal to her."

An idea of the intensity with which the Mother devoted herself, from 1914 onwards, to her work for the world can be faintly formed if we remember what Sri Aurobindo remarked later to a disciple. He said that he had never known what spiritual self-surrender could be until she had thrown her whole being at his feet.

It was in 1914 too that she experienced an identification of even her most outer consciousness with the Universal Mother. She has written about this in her *Prayers and Meditations*. She has described there two successive identifications. Of course, she had known, long before, that she was the Mother: only the complete identification took place now, after her coming to India. This was but natural, since no other country has felt and known the universal aspect so intensely.

Her diary which comprised the *Prayers and Meditations* was started two years earlier. Every day at 5 a.m. she used to sit down to meditate near her window with a Kashmiri shawl wrapped round her. The meditation being over, she would note down her thoughts and experiences; but they were meant only for herself and she always used to lock up her diary. In 1916 she stopped writing, but on her final arrival at Pondicherry in 1920 she took it up again. Later, it was only occasionally that she wrote. What she wrote covered five big volumes. The first to see them was Sri Aurobindo and it was he who asked her to get them published as they were sure to be

of immense help to others and would at the same time show what the physical consciousness is capable of achieving. So he made a selection and she got it printed. She had the rest burnt in a boiler which is still in use at the Ashram.

The utter absence of self-attachment which is in this act impresses us in all the acts of the Mother. She never seemed to think of her own ends or comfort or satisfaction. For many years ago she did not have a regular bed to rest in. There was hardly even any privacy. Then some disciples pleaded with her to let them build a room of her own. Her constant gesture was to give and give, and there was no regret if the giving bore no palpable fruit. Nor did her vision admit failure. Once she indicated how Sri Aurobindo and she worked. She said that even when they saw that a disciple was acting under wrong forces or was about to revolt and leave the Ashram they would not envisage a dark end for him but set the delicate balance so that the other side, the spiritually receptive part, might not go down. The Mother and Sri Aurobindo never saw things in small blocks of time and space: a boundless vista was ever in their eyes. And even beyond time and space their sense of being extended. Vividly does one of her disciples remember what she spoke apropos of her own paintings. Himself an amateur with the brush, he was acutely concerned about the almost thoughtless scatter of her best work over many countries. She mentioned a decade in which she had done her finest pieces and said that most of them had been given away to various people at different times and in different places. The disciple said: "Should we not do something to collect them again?" The Mother calmly replied: "Why? Is it so important?" "Surely, such masterpieces deserve to be found and kept safely. You took so much pains over them." "It does not matter." "But, Mother, don't you think there will be a loss if they are not preserved?" Then the Mother, with eyes far away yet full of tenderness for the agitated disciple, said in a quiet half-whisper: "You know, we live in eternity."

Suddenly the disciple woke up to the truth of the Mother's being. "Of course, of course," he broke out, realising how often, seeing her walk our little ways, we forgot the ineffable Plenitude that was she behind and beyond her dealings with us, the Plenitude which yet took on itself the difficulties and limitations that were ours, so that passing through them she might be the exemplar of not only a divine victory but also a human fulfilment.

An open reminder of the truth of her being came most emphatically in 1926 when Sri Aurobindo put the Ashram in her charge. To be precise, there was on November 24 of that year a descent of what Sri Aurobindo terms the Overmind, the highest dynamic divine consciousness that had been realised so far in the world: he brought it down into the very material being, thus carrying one step forward the work done by the previous Avatar Sri Krishna who had brought down its influence into earth-life. With the descent of this consciousness into Sri Aurobindo the ground was prepared for the future descent of the Supermind, the integral Truth-Consciousness of the Divine in which lies the secret power of a complete transformation of earth-existence, even to the very cells of the body. When the Overmind was brought down,

Sri Aurobindo summoned all those who were staying near him and told them that the time had come for him to withdraw into seclusion for concentrated work towards the Supermind's descent and that henceforth the Mother would be in the forefront, his Shakti and their Guru.

The nine or ten months after the Overmind's descent were a history of spectacular spiritual events. All who were present have testified that miracles were the order of the day. What can be called miracles happen every day even now in the Ashram — wherever a great spiritual Force is at work the miraculous is inevitable — but many such events occur without any *éclat* and often wear even the appearance of natural phenomena. Those which were common occurrences in those ten months were most strikingly miraculous and, if they had continued, a new religion could have been established with the whole world's eyes focussed in wonder on Pondicherry. But the spectacular period terminated with an incident of profound significance. The Mother received one day what she has called the Word of Creation. Just as the God Brahma is said to have brought forth the world with his Word of Creation, the fiat of a new world that could be marvellously built lay ready with the Mother. A superhuman world was on the verge of being materialised.

With this power the Mother went to Sri Aurobindo's room and told him: "I have got the Word of Creation." Sri Aurobindo sat silent for a while and then said: "This Creation is from the Overmind. And we do not want that. We have to build the Supermind's world." The Mother went back to her own room. She concentrated intensely for two hours and at the end of them she had completely dissolved the whole new Creation that had been on the brink of precipitation on earth. The greatest power in any hands during human history was set aside as if it were a trifle — and all because Sri Aurobindo had said that nothing short of the highest divine Truth was the ideal of manifestation for him and her. Miraculously grand though the manifestation would have been of the Overmind deities, it would not have been an utter transformation of life and would have stood in the way of a still greater glory. The very grandeur of it would have filled the aspiring gaze of mankind and checked it from straining for anything beyond it — at least for millennia.

With that unparalleled act of obedience and surrender by the Mother at one gesture from Sri Aurobindo the long laborious period of gradual preparation for the Supermind's world started—on the one hand the drawing down of the supreme Truth-Consciousness from above and on the other the digging into what Sri Aurobindo designates the Inconscient, the apparent origin of evolution on earth, the seeming negation of the Divine within which the integral Divinity has to be manifested, converting all the painful terms of the Ignorance into the terms of Knowledge and Bliss.

Twelve years after the descent of the Overmind into the physical being of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother the greater aim seemed on the point of achievement. The Mother remarked in 1954 that even as far back as 1938 she used to see the Supermind descending into Sri Aurobindo's body but what could not be done at that time was to fix it in the physical being. The first fixing took place in circumstances mind-

bafflingly dramatic. Twelve more years elapsed, and then Sri Aurobindo gave up his body, went through what appeared to be a disease with a fatal ending but what, in consideration of the extraordinary concomitants of that illness and that death, can only be regarded as a supreme strategic sacrifice. Sri Aurobindo, in view of the lack of preparedness in the world to receive and hold the descending Supermind, gathered as it were the whole force of mortal fate into his semi-divinised body and in the act of giving up this body exhausted that force in essence and principle and drew down to earth and fixed there the supramental Light. He took a drastic short cut towards a goal which otherwise would have taken decades to approach. As soon as he withdrew from his physical envelope the supramental Light made its permanent base in the Mother's body, beginning with the brain-mind. This is what is known as "the Mind of Light".

From then onward a deeper and deeper digging-in by the Light continued. In reaction against the invasion by the Truth-Consciousness the powers of the Ignorance attempted a desperate obstruction again and again. But Sri Aurobindo's sacrifice had already delivered the first of the finishing strokes to them. And with the Supramental Manifestation on February 29, 1956, when the Consciousness and Power of the Supermind became part of the earth's atmosphere, as it were — a power subtly yet directly at work on a universal scale in the midst of the old forces — the complete victory was assured, whose ultimate outer sign would be what the Mother called in her New Year Message of 1957 "the glorified body" which can conquer all Evil.

The process of the "glorified body" went on in the Mother — visible to a few whose sight, piercing through the outer eyes' blindness, could catch the descended *kāraṇa śarīra*, the causal sheath, at work within the Mother, a white glory into which the outer substance was gradually being absorbed or, rather, which slowly projected itself into that substance to transform it. The Light played about in the limbs, coming forward, drawing back, now a soft beauty enshrined in the flesh, now a great power possessing bone and tissue till one beheld no longer the familiar shape we adored but a perfect Goddess suffusing it and for a while blotting it from the gaze. But not rapidly enough could the supramental sheath exteriorise itself, for the Mother stood in no immune isolation, she took hundreds of imperfect consciousnesses into herself, worked out their defects, repaired in her own body the constant damage which this comprehensive compassion inevitably brought: her aim was to carry the world with her and to prepare it for the full manifestation which it would scarcely have been able to bear if she had sought her own perfection to the neglect of humanity's cry for inner help and divinity's call to live for a collective triumph instead of an individual achievement.

A farther step towards the conquest of all Evil was disclosed in the Message of January 1, 1958, in which she spoke of the consent of material Nature to the demand for transformation. Nature has always been rejected by spiritual seekers and left to her own devices of slow circuitous development and aeonic travail with ill-lit forces. Nature, by being thrown back on herself, has avenged the rejection by obstructing with

those forces the occasional pull on her for collaboration by seekers of the Spirit. The Mother's mission was to take Nature into herself, for indeed she was in essence all that is here in the very stone of material existence: a saviour love has been hers that shirks nothing, uplifts everything and makes even dust divine without annulling it, since even dust has its counterpart in the Supreme and a destiny of fulfilment here and now.

Nearly ninety-six years has the saviour love been the earth's companion. A blessed day is February 21 in its reminder to us of the long labour and of the fateful moment which saw its beginning. May our hearts beat in tune with that moment and be re-born from the sweetness and strength of this day that is effulgent with the Spirit's own sun — the Mother's face.

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Perhaps the intensest impetus towards the required re-birth has come from the moment that saw what looked like a catastrophic cutting-short of the Mother's long labour: 7.25 p.m. of November 17 last year. Mind-bewildering as well as heart-shattering though it seemed at first, an understanding has grown steadily that the Mother did something tremendous when she left her body — an act comparable to the *grande finale* of Sri Aurobindo's life on December 5, 1950.

She has said time and again that he gave up his individual supramentalisation, abandoned the process of divinising completely his body, for the sake of hastening the hour of the earth's collective supramental realisation. And repeatedly too she has said that Sri Aurobindo had asked her to complete his Yoga of Transformation. Her "death", therefore, must be Aurobindonian in its own way. It can only be seen as simultaneously one more push to the mighty project of divinising the human race and a further step towards materialising the supramental sheath which was waiting on the plane closest to the earth, the plane known in Sri Aurobindo's system of spiritual experience as the subtle-physical.

The plan so far was to fuse with that sheath the gross-physical envelope whose cells had been fast opening up to the Supermind's luminous force. Lately the Supermind itself had once possessed the Mother's most external consciousness for a few seconds. Her physical being was proceeding rapidly to absorb the causal body's influence, but the shock of the master-power was also immense and the physical being came on more than one occasion to the verge of literally dying so as to make room for the new life. In spite of all dangers she never stopped her fight for transformation. But she declared too that the final Will of the Supreme had not yet been disclosed to the body — whether her fight would be directly crowned with success or the fighting instrument would have to be given up in order to serve the Lord who always knows best how to accomplish His work. Evidently, the Divine Will was found by her to go against a direct triumph. Without a moment's hesitation she exercised the Supramental Avatar's right consciously to decide her own departure. She took her station in the waiting causal body, in which during the last few months of tranced

inner withdrawal she must have stayed continually. Staying there, while still keeping her physical sheath alive, she must have assimilated the essence of the latter's achievement into the causal body and thus rendered that body denser and brought its subtle substance nearer to gross matter. Now, in place of matter becoming supramentalised in the Mother, the Supermind stands ready to be materialised as the Mother.

From that dynamic poise it carries on the long labour of terrestrial evolution which the Mother and Sri Aurobindo undertook. As the material form of the Mother, no less than that of Sri Aurobindo, has gone, the phenomenon of matter becoming supramentalised, which is the central insight of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga, has to occur first in material forms other than theirs. Neither the Master nor the Mother was attached to their own forms being the prime exemplars of supramentalisation: if they sought to supramentalise these, it was in order to take the perilous pioneer adventure upon their own selves and facilitate the spiritual task of their children. Their true concern is simply to actualise, in whoever is available, the phenomenon they have visioned as the fulfilment of evolutionary earth.

The desired actualisation would certainly come sooner if the Supermind attained the new Mother-manifestation for which it now waits. But for the Supermind's swift success, we have to prove our little world of sadhana here worthy. Already the sacrificial fall the Mother has allowed of her wonderful body has given us a sense as if not only we but the whole earth had obtained a secret uplift. We should ensure that the intense impetus received by us to be re-born does not run to waste. Concentratedly we should lend our entire selves to it. Just as the Mother's constant cry was "As You will, as You will", so also our hearts should quicken, every moment, with a radiant feeling of the destiny she paradoxically compassed when, according to medical reports, her heart failed — the destiny for which she had taken birth. Let us never forget those lines of Sri Aurobindo's about Savitri:

Even though all falters and falls and sees an end
And the heart fails and only are death and night,
God-given her strength can battle against doom ...¹

K. D. SETHNA

¹ *Savitri* (Centenary Edition, Vol 29, 1972), p 462

THE SUPRAMENTAL MANIFESTATION OF FEBRUARY 29, 1956

EXTRACTS FROM DR. INDRA SEN'S NOTES OF TWO INTERVIEWS WITH THE MOTHER

May 13, 1956

THE MOTHER: Were you here on the 29th February?

Yes, Mother, I was here. I arrived the same day in the morning and I was present at the Questions and Answers and the Meditation.

THE MOTHER: Did you feel anything then?

No, Mother. All I was aware of is that it was a calm and quiet meditation. It is only on the Darshan Day, the 24th April, that a vague and faint sense of reality of the New Force came to me. And since then the feeling of it has been growing, but I don't have a clear and concrete sense of its existence.

THE MOTHER: Well, what happened was something tremendous. Suddenly a flood of light came pouring forth, as if the divine gate had been thrown wide open. It continued for twenty minutes. Or, rather, I watched it for twenty minutes and then stopped the meditation. I could not carry on the meditation indefinitely — you know how restless people become.

When the light was pouring, I thought that at the end of the meditation I would find everybody knocked out, lying flat. But when I opened my eyes I found them as after any meditation. I myself had to make a special effort to come into my external being and it was with great difficulty that I could utter a word.

Was this advent unexpected?

THE MOTHER: Absolutely. But all my greatest experiences have come like that. I am in my usual consciousness and they come suddenly, as if to show their reality in the fullest contrast and vividness. They have the best value when first received in this way. When one is informed beforehand, the mind begins to play a part. On the present occasion, when the mind came I was on our side of the divine gate: there was then just a magnificent light, nothing more. Those who live in their emotions had a better chance to feel things than those who live in their minds.

What should I do to acquire a sense of the Supermind?

THE MOTHER: The Supermind will work itself out — by the decision of the Supreme. Sri Aurobindo was instrumental in bringing it. The working of the Super-

mind in my body has gone on since the 5th December, 1950. It has been a progressive individual working; so I thought things would go on like that. But in January this year Sri Aurobindo appeared to me two or three times and it was as if he indicated that the Supermind was coming on a universal scale.

What has come has got engulfed at present and it has to work itself out. Nature did not reject it—she could not. The Supreme decided that the time had come and He released the Force. But the Inconscient has covered it up. It can be felt in the subtle-physical, but in the physical there is hardly anything yet. The manifestation is only a little more than two months old and it will show itself gradually. I can definitely feel it in the subtle-physical, but my sensitiveness is perhaps a little unusual.... Two disciples here in the Ashram and three outside simultaneously had rare experiences as a result of what had happened.

A marked difference has come in our Yoga. Things that were easy are now achieved without effort. Things that appeared difficult appear easy. Things impossible seem now achievable and likely.

The pouring of the Supermind is constant, but at Balcony time every morning it is more concentrated.

People have been here twenty to thirty years — talking of the Supermind's coming and prepared for it, as it were — yet they did not notice it when it came!

The manifestation was a cosmic phenomenon and I took time to return to this individual self and it was difficult to speak the first word.

In half an hour I formulated the whole experience and wrote it down.

May 22, 1956

THE MOTHER: Things are now all changed for me — radically changed.

How, Mother?

THE MOTHER: Previously everything worked under the pressure of the Mind of Light. Sri Aurobindo secured this working when he left his body. Now it is the Supermind that directly guides and governs. The manifestation is just over two and a half months old and yet a new situation — an absolutely new situation — has come into being.

What has happened now I call a manifestation and not a descent, because it is not an individual event: the Supermind has burst forth into universal play. It has become a principle at constant work upon all earth — a possibility of a general order, as when the mind was first diffused over the earth.

WHAT THE MOTHER ENDURED AND ACHIEVED FOR THE EARTH IN 1962

I

INTRODUCTORY REPORT¹

THE Mother was not well for some time in early 1962. But she kept on working. She even came to the Balcony now and again to give the morning Darshan as usual. But the 18th of March was the last day. After that, she fell seriously ill and did not come down from her room on the second floor.

She began to have heart-attacks. One day she had them twice in twenty-four hours. They were severe. A third followed the next day. Some time later she recounted to a disciple the experience connected with the heart-attacks. No definitive version is available, but the following account seems nearest the truth. She saw a huge being who looked exactly like Sri Aurobindo. This being asked her, "Will you surrender yourself to me?" The Mother, recognising that he was not Sri Aurobindo but an Asura, replied, "I surrender to the Lord. This body has been given over to His Supreme Will." It may be surmised that the pretending being started his hostile work against her and that Sri Aurobindo fought with him and saved her. The Mother remarked that the fight had been a crucial one in the course of the Integral Yoga.

A report has it that the same Asura in the shape of Sri Aurobindo appeared to a disciple and asked him to do pranam to him. When the disciple was about to get down on his knees he saw the being's feet and at once realised that this was not Sri Aurobindo but a demon with a characteristic recorded in Indian tradition: the feet had the position of their toes and heels reversed. The disciple stopped himself and the demon vanished. The experience was told to the Mother, who found it significant in view of what had happened to her.

From the medical standpoint the Mother's life seemed to have hung by a thread during her illness. Once, at 2 a.m., her condition grew exceedingly bad. Her breathing was very difficult and she repeatedly put her hand on her chest and looked as if she might faint. Her doctor was sent for. According to reports, the Mother lay in a dead swoon for quite a time, and the doctor could barely feel her pulse. As the Mother had forbidden him to give any drug or injection, he could do absolutely nothing. He felt his responsibility terribly. Here he was, the Mother's special doctor, and could not take a step. What would people say if anything should happen?

The whole critical period came to an end on the 5th of May. A disciple had a vision in which Sri Aurobindo appeared to him. He asked Sri Aurobindo why the Mother had to go through such dire suffering. Sri Aurobindo said that she had had to pay almost as high a price as he had done for the future of humanity, but that now she had come out victorious.

¹ Based on notes made on the 9th of May 1962

The culmination of the Mother's experience of victory came on the night of the 12th April. On the 13th, in spite of extreme weakness, she made a tape-record of her experience. On the evening of the 15th the tape-record was played to the members of the Ashram at the Playground.

Soon after the heart-attacks the Mother was utterly in-drawn. One day she sat stiff for six hours in a deep trance, opening her eyes only at rare intervals. When asked whether she would take any food or drink, she signed with her head that she would take nothing. Even later on, she kept concentrating on her inner work and mostly seemed not to notice the people around her. But gradually she began to take interest in things. At certain hours she let a couple of sadhaks take their routine work to her. One of them reported that he had found her skin unusually shining.

The Mother astonished her doctor by the rapidity of her recovery. From such weakness that she could hardly lift a finger and from a state of constant heart-irregularity for days, she commenced moving by herself, though slowly, in her room. Her emaciated body was also fast picking up.

When her heart-attacks were over, she told an attendant, "You thought I was going. How could I go? Have I completed my work?" The attendant said, "Mother, you are not eating properly and have grown so very weak. Naturally we have fears." The Mother replied, "Do you think I depend on food and drink for my strength and life? I don't depend even on my lungs and heart."

After the great experience of April 12 she had the long passage on the Supreme Love in Book Eleven, "The Book of Everlasting Day", of Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* read out to her — the passage beginning

O beautiful body of the incarnate Word

and ending

Built is the golden tower, the flame-child born.¹

It gave some idea of what she had become in relation to the Lord and to the world.

The Victory marked by the Mother's experience may be understood as a very decisive step further in her world-work. It was a great sequel to the achievement of the 29th February 1956 when the Manifestation of the Supermind on a universal scale had taken place in what the Mother had then called the earth's subtle atmosphere. At that time the Supramental Light, Consciousness and Force had come. The experience of April 12 seems to have speeded up the future evolution of the world by bringing in the Supramental Love whose presence would keep impelling the earth towards a divine destiny in spite of all obstacles and apparent setbacks.

K. D. S

¹ Pp 698-702 of the Centenary Edition, Vol. 29 (1972)

THE MOTHER'S EXPERIENCE ON THE NIGHT OF APRIL 12, 1962

After a month of grave illness which had threatened her life, the Mother spoke for the first time on April 13, 1962. She lay stretched on her bed, in her room upstairs, very thin. Dr. Sanyal, Nolini, Vasudha and Pavitra were present. It was round about 10 o'clock in the morning.

Suddenly in the night I woke with the full awareness of what we could call the Yoga of the World. The Supreme Love was manifesting through big pulsations, and each pulsation was bringing the world further in its manifestation. It was the formidable pulsations of the eternal stupendous Love, only Love: each pulsation of the Love was carrying the universe further in its manifestation.

And the certitude that what is to be done is done and the Supramental Manifestation is realised.

Everything was personal, nothing was individual.

This was going on, and on, and on, and on.

The certitude that what is to be done is *done*.

All the results of the falsehood had disappeared: Death was an illusion, Sickness was an illusion, Ignorance was an illusion — something that had no reality, no existence.... Only Love, and Love, and Love, and Love, — immense, formidable, stupendous, carrying everything.

And how to express in the world? It was like an impossibility, because of the contradiction ... But then it came: "You have accepted that the world should know the Supramental Truth ... and it will be expressed totally, integrally." Yes, yes ...

And the thing is *done*.

(Long silence)

The individual consciousness came back, just the sense of a limitation, limitation of pain; without that no individual¹.

And we set out again on the way, sure of Victory.

The skies are full of the songs of Victory.

The Truth alone exists; it alone shall be manifested, Forward!...

Glory to Thee, Lord, supreme Triumpher!

(Silence)

¹ All that follows was originally spoken in French and subsequently translated by the Mother into English. The French version runs:

Et nous repartons sur la route, sûrs de la Victoire.
Les cieux sont pleins de chants de Victoire

Now, to the work.

Patience, endurance, perfect equality, and an absolute faith.

(Silence)

What I am saying is nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing but words, if I compare to the experience.

And our consciousness is the same, absolutely the same as that of the Lord. There was no difference, no difference ...

We are That, we are That, we are That.

(Silence)

Later I shall explain better. The instrument is not yet ready.

Afterwards the Mother added:

The experience lasted at least four hours.

There are many things which I shall say later.

Seule la Vérité existe, elle seule sera manifestée. En avant! . .
Gloire à Toi, Seigneur, Triomphateur suprême!

(Silence)

Maintenant, au travail.

Patience, endurance, égalité, et une foi absolue.

(Silence)

Ce que je dis n'est rien, rien, rien, rien que des mots, si je compare à l'expérience.
Et notre conscience est la même, absolument la même que celle du Seigneur. Il n'y avait aucune différence, aucune différence ...

Nous sommes Cela, nous sommes Cela, nous sommes Cela.

(Silence)

Plus tard j'expliquerai mieux. L'outil n'est pas encore prêt. C'est seulement le début.

L'expérience a duré au moins quatre heures.

Il y a beaucoup de choses que je dirai plus tard.

SOME UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO

The Mother's Letters

LOOK for the inner causes of disharmony much more than the outer ones. It is the inside which governs the outside. 4-7-1966

The only way out of your difficulty is to find the psychic being and to live entirely in its consciousness.

Life upon earth as it is now is full of miseries and any sensitive heart is full of sorrow because of that.

To get in contact with the Divine Consciousness and to live in its mercy, its strength and its light is the only true effective way to get out of this difficulty and suffering. And by uniting with the psychic we can obtain this condition.

My help and blessings are with you for this purpose. 6-4-1969

Sri Aurobindo's Letters

It is not possible to change what you have already said to him.

It is not possible for me to speak with him for I speak with no one. Evidently, too, the Mother is not going to talk about philosophy with him — that is not her way and she has no time for such things.

In the Ashram there is very little room nowadays and what is there must be kept for disciples — for those who have been accepted and come for the practice of the Yoga and to profit by quiet meditation in the Ashram atmosphere.

All that we can offer him is, if he comes to Pondicherry, that he can see the Ashram and meet people who will speak to him of the “philosophy” and the Yoga. At first more cannot be done.

This is not an Ashram like others. It has a special life of its own and only those can live it who have entered into the spirit of the Yoga and are ready to assimilate its atmosphere.

As to your question about his sincerity, it is quite evident that his interest is mental — it may be mentally sincere, but that does not carry one very far. If we were to admit everyone who is to be that, we should soon have a thousand people here and there would be no yoga and no spiritual life left. 24-2-1932

It is right to want to be completely consecrated, but completeness means that you must be consecrated in *all* circumstances. It is not only one part of your being, but all that must take the right attitude.

From LALITA

SOME LETTERS OF THE MOTHER

Published and Unpublished

HERE sensibleness is indispensable and the integral yoga is based on balance, calm and peace and not on an unhealthy need to suffer. 12-5-1969

I am not in the habit of imposing my will on others.
If they, themselves, ask for help, the help will be given.

24-10-1967

Usually I give no “meaning” to dreams, because each one has his own symbolism which has a meaning only for himself.

Q: Chubb has written again. Two letters to you from his friend Miss Nergis Bandrewalla (who had met you on her last visit here some months back) have gone unnoticed — to all appearance at least. She had asked for a blessing-packet for some trouble of hers. She got none. But in her second letter she reported good news.

How “unnoticed”? She got cured! Man of small faith!

31-5-1967

Q: How is one to represent the four aspects (Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati) of the Mother? How do they stand? How many arms do they have? What is the expression of their faces? On what are they seated? I pray to you to give me some indications on these points.

In their aspect above the Overmind, in the higher regions these aspects of the Mother have very simple forms and do not have multiple limbs.

All the details and complications are appearances mostly added by men in order to give a symbolic expression to invisible qualities.

31-1-1968

Q: May I know if the miraculous elevation of Jesus Christ to heaven celebrated by the Roman Catholics on Thursday 4th May has any sort of connection with the great day we have marked out in this year 1967 of the Supermind’s “Realising Power” — the day of serial numbers: 4. 5. 67?¹ Or else would it be simply a pure coincidence?

¹ See Huta’s *White Roses*, Parts 1, 2 & 3 (1973), pp. 165-6

“In 1967 the Supermind will enter the phase of Realising Power.” What does “Realising Power” mean exactly?

Acting decisively on the mind of men and the course of events.

Does this date — 4.5.67 — mark the beginning of what the Mother and Sri Aurobindo have called the New Race — the Race of Supermen?

Since a few months ago the children born, amongst our people mostly, are of a very special kind.

15 May 1967

For Sri Aurobindo “coincidences” do not exist. All that happens is the result of the action of the Divine Consciousness. The Force which is at work at this moment is a Force of harmony that makes for unity — the unification of all the symbols that express the Divine Truth.

THE MOTHER ON TRUE LOVE

LE vrai amour, celui qui comble et illumine, ce n'est pas l'amour qu'on reçoit mais celui qu'on donne.

Et le suprême Amour est un amour sans objet défini — l'amour qui aime parce qu'il ne peut faire autrement que d'aimer.

15 Mai 1968

True love, that which fulfils and illumines, is not the love one receives but the love one gives.

And the supreme Love is a love without any definite object — the love which loves because it cannot do otherwise.

May 1968

THE MOTHER ON THE ASHRAM AND AUROVILLE

Q: Quelle est la différence entre l'Ashram et Auroville?

R: L'Ashram gardera son rôle de pionnier, d'inspirateur et de guide. Auroville sera une tentative de réalisation collective.

Q: What is the difference between the Ashram and Auroville?

A: The Ashram will keep its role as pioneer, inspirer and guide. Auroville will be an experiment in collective realisation.

June 1968

A TALK OF THE MOTHER FOR AUROVILIANS

THERE should be an absolutely transparent sincerity. Lack of sincerity is the cause of the difficulties we meet with at present. Insincerity is in all men. There are perhaps a hundred men on the earth who may be totally sincere. It is man's very nature that makes him insincere — it is very complicated, for he is constantly tricking himself, hiding the truth from himself, excusing himself. Yoga is the means to become sincere in all the parts of the being.

It is difficult to be sincere, but you can at least do so mentally; it is this that one can demand of Aurovilians.

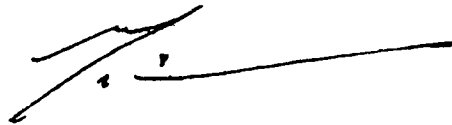
The force is there, present as never before, it is the insincerity of men that prevents it from descending, from being felt. The world is in falsehood, all the relations between men have so far been based only on falsehood and fraud. The diplomacy among nations is founded on lies. They claim to desire peace and, on the other hand, arm themselves. Only transparent sincerity in men and among nations will permit the advent of a transformed world.

Auroville is the first attempt of the experiment. A new world will be born if men are willing to make the effort of a transformation and of a quest for sincerity; it is possible. From animal to man thousands of years were necessary; today man, thanks to his mind, can speed up and will a transformation towards a Man who shall be Divine.

This transformation with the help of the mind (by analysing oneself) is the first stage, afterwards we have to transform the vital impulses. That is much more difficult, and, above all, to transform the physical: each cell of our body has to become conscious. This is the work I am doing here; it will permit the conquest of death. That is another story; that will be the humanity of the future, perhaps in centuries, perhaps more rapidly. It will depend on men, on peoples.

Auroville is the first step towards this goal.

February 1968



THE GOLDEN TOWER

“O Word, cry out the immortal litany:

Built is the golden tower, the flame-child born.” — Savitri

An account of certain events at Matrimandir construction, May 16 to November 17, 1973, with excerpts from a Diary kept at Peace, Auroville

THE news had come to Matrimandir Workers Camp in the pre-dawn dark of Sunday, November 18th. A tap at each of the 12 straw-mat doors; a tight young voice coming through: “Mother has left her body. They just telephoned from Ashram.” “*What?*” “She left her body at 7:25 yesterday evening.”

Yesterday. That had been ... Saturday. Evening. Something else had happened ... Saturday evening. The seven-day-long concreting of the foundation-slab for the Matrimandir Sphere and the summits completing the four Pillars to support the Sphere, the four aspects of The Mother: Wisdom, Strength, Harmony, Perfection ... “four of her leading Powers and Personalities that have stood in front in her guidance of this Universe and in her dealings with the terrestrial play ...”

Yes. Completion of the four Pillars. Yesterday, Saturday evening. A victory over many odds. And this — ?

Posted on the Notice Board of the Camp in the settlement *Peace* some time later:

Message of Nolini : 17th November 1973:

The Mother's body belonged to the old creation. It was not meant to be the New Body. It was meant to be the pedestal of the New Body. It served its purpose well. The New Body will come ...

And the official notice:

The Mother left Her body on 17-11-73 at 7:25 p.m. The immediate cause of Her passing away was heart failure. The body is kept in state for the last darshan of the disciples, devotees and the general public. It will remain in state as long as it is possible to keep it. Her message is well known in Her living utterances: a new humanity shall arise. Let Her will be done. — NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

During the dazed and unforgettable day and night “watches” that followed at Samadhi and Matrimandir construction site, through the stifled outbursts of her children's grief, tears for the loss of our Mother's physical person — that fragile flowerlike sheath which yet had housed transcendent power and sustained the pressure of the new, the supramental *golden* consciousness of Truth — through all the vigils and massive comings-together at the last darshan and interment, one word or sense of it emerged, persisted. Unclear at first, then startling in its clarity. *Victory.*

There had been her signal of it to us. What had it been?

We began to remember, to go back through notes, records. Like the No. 9 Matrimandir Progress Report:

“Construction of the Sphere of the Matrimandir was begun on the 16th May 1973 with the cutting, painting, and fitting of 8 kilometres of steel tubes for a heavy duty scaffolding able to take the weight of the lower region of the Sphere (about 400 tons).”

May 16th 1973 — Hadn't that been the date of The Mother's withdrawal into complete seclusion to do the Yoga of transformation? We had been assured, and reassured, that she had been given a medical examination showing that her heart was strong; she was not “ill” in the sense that the newspaper accounts had reported. She had been experiencing, according to the BULLETIN, *Notes on the Way*, all the assaults of the world's falsehoods on the body which had taken upon itself the human process of aging for the work of the avatar of the new humanity, the evolving new race.

And previous to that date, May 16th, the body of Matrimandir workers with our egos, contraries, falsehoods assaulting our own aspirations towards change, had been like a battlefield, forces of the undivine against the Divine. *We thirst for perfection, not this human perfection which is a perfection of the ego and bars the way to the divine perfection, but that one perfection which has the power to manifest upon earth the eternal truth.* The very front-line of the battle against the inner darkness was at Matrimandir — to be “the soul of Auroville”, city “which belongs to humanity as a whole.” *Matrimandir wants to be the symbol of the Divine's answer to man's aspiration for perfection. The Union with the Divine manifesting Himself in a progressive human unity.* And we had been anything but an example of unity ... a failure reflected in work and material delays, even one near-accident when a wooden scaffolding collapsed — and only a divine intervention prevented anyone's being hurt.... We could actually feel The Mother holding up the scaffolding until all could get to safety! During that period, a diary entry: “A lowering of group consciousness is felt in the Camp along with a sense of one's own inadequacies.... Another sifting at work in this turn of the Play....” With many entries, The Mother's words, giving help:

What was necessary? — *To be sincere. Because sincerity is a Force infinitely... powerful...able to change no matter what in the wink of an eye. It takes hold, it holds fast, it plucks out — (whatever the problem) — and it is finished: you must pursue it into the subconscious...the inconscient.... When you shall have attained a certain height of consciousness...realised this consciousness in the material world...transforming it into the image of the (new-to-you) consciousness...you shall begin the Ascent again... to another realisation.*

The challenge to become “a channel of the mighty Mother's choice” and Force was taken up; after a period of inner crises, a change became evident “in the material world.” Supplies began to arrive, new workers to appear, a new harmony to be forged. A diary entry marks a new beginning: “May 16, 1973. There is a feeling of a new movement at work.... We all went into Matrimandir excavation with Piero

(Aurovilian architect in charge of the Matrimandir construction) to begin raising the inner-circle tubular scaffolding. As we held the 6 metre-tall black-painted steel tubes erect to be clamped in place, it seemed as if an army were raising its standards of victory. Each Matrimandir worker took up his post: an awesome moment...” on the battlefield — without as within.

One felt then it was The Mother’s victory. Her force. Remembering her telling of it: *“It is not merely a force, it is Consciousness-Force ... like a smile ... a smile that knows everything.... A wonder of Light, of Consciousness, of Power — ... Oh! ... a Power!”* It had been experienced by someone near The Mother as “a power which seems to take up all the parts of the body and ... fill them with an intense aspiration to the brim.... It makes the body pray.... It is like glowing gold that lifts up everything.” Yes, The Mother had answered, *there* (gesture upward and wide) *there it is ... yes, it is a golden vastness.* (BULLETIN, November 1972)

What were we building? Ourselves and ... “The Matrimandir, being a concrete expression of The Mother’s Consciousness and Force, will always stand as a reservoir of inspiration, a light-house radiating continually the manifestation of Truth as embodied in The Mother.” During a Study Circle session of THE SYNTHESIS OF YOGA conducted regularly at Matrimandir Workers Camp by Madhav P. Pandit, the question had been raised: “What is the role of the Matrimandir in the spiritual evolution?” That had been his answer, and:

“What The Mother’s embodiment has been to us here, the full-fledged Matrimandir will be to the whole of humanity. In the course of her life on earth, The Mother has established links with many levels of Cosmic Existence. Each of these helps the parts of the Cosmic Being to relate themselves to the Truth-Light. This ‘spiritual mechanism’ will also be embodied in the Matrimandir. Not only the Truth-Light and Consciousness will be radiating from Matrimandir, but the means of realising them will remain dynamic.”

The Golden Tower.

The aspiration, the thirst for “that one perfection which has the power to manifest” truth began the preparatory work for the Sphere 1st level slab and Pillar summits with renewed intensity. It was to be a massive concreting. From the No. 9 Progress Report: “About 70 tons of steel had to be bent and fitted precisely to provide reinforcement in the slab and lower part of the ribs (in the Pillar summits).” The outside diameter of the slab alone is 16 metres. “During the 5 months needed to execute this exacting work, the main activities of the new Matrimandir workshop were fabrication of tubular frames for scaffolding, machining of cast-iron plugs for anchorage of the Sphere discs, machining and fitting of cast-iron pre-stressed anchorages, fabrication of 4 jib-cranes, threading of bolts for shutterings, fabrications of clamps, etc. Recently Harpagon workshop (Ashram) has helped to prepare two anchorage plates for the spiral ramps. Three new machines have joined the work: a bulldozer contributed by the father of an American Aurovilian, a stone-crushing machine purchased to meet the increased demand for granite-aggregate, and an earth-rammer needed

to compact outside areas. Installation, checking, and repair of mixers, vibrators, vehicles, winches and other machines has also been done by the new workshop. A new electricity section has provided control-panels and new lighting for the entire work area."

But the new upward surge of action had taken us right into the height of the Monsoon season. Downpours of rain in the midst of concreting? And this particular phase of the construction was estimated to take 72 consecutive hours of work, day and night.... In Camp there was talk of the coming Comet, taking up one-sixth of the heavens, which, attracted into orbit around the Earth's Sun, would cause great magnetic disturbances, floods, earthquakes. Remembering the devastating cyclone of the previous year during this time, we were not surprised to receive news from Pondicherry of an impending storm about which the radio had issued alarming warnings. The speaker from Ashram for the Nov. 7th Study Circle telephoned in to cancel the session, with good reason. The already difficult roads to Auroville would become impassable. *Aspiration*, like other settlements, was taking all precautions — their Community Kitchen had been levelled during last year's cyclone; and Matrimandir Camp residents, having experienced the destruction in camp and gardens, grimly prepared for the worst. The air was indeed still and ominous, heavy with premonitory darkness. And then ...

Inexplicably the weather changed, the darkness lifted. In place of the expected storm the diary records the arrival of an *Entretiens* tape recording of The Mother's comments on a selection from THE SYNTHESIS OF YOGA: "The Ascent of the Sacrifice." There is a note of gratitude addressed to The Mother after the Camp's Thursday night Meditation for which the tape was played: "And I hear Your inner voice; and it is smiling — and it lifts and lightens as it enlightens *with love*." What had happened to the oncoming storm? It was a mystery ...

By November 11th the preparations for the monumental task of concreting were finished and inspection of the steel reinforcement made by Mr. Santhanam, scientist, of the Structural Engineering Research Centre in Madras consulting with the Matrimandir construction work. Time for the concreting to begin was set at 3:00 p.m. after the inspection-verdict of the engineer-scientist, "Excellent; very satisfied." And the diary entry continues: "We work at last-minute wire-binding of steel; at 12 noon it begins to drizzle from an overcast sky. This on Sunday — November 11th, World Armistice Day." And the concreting was to start in three hours. Yet something was at work above, around, within us. The night before the diary entry had been:

"The movement of Force, the dynamis felt today all through the Matrimandir preparations was so strong that D (a Canadian Aurovilian at Matrimandir Camp) felt the surge near to breaking through small human barriers.... The 'Pillars team' of Vibrators (of the poured concrete) will include W (a German Aurovilian) who refuses to go to Ashram Nursing Home with his bad leg until after." And a note concerning a phone call from the speaker cancelling the Study Circle four days

previously:

“The threatening cyclone was reported to Champaklal who informed The Mother ...”

So that was why the storm had never struck!

The diary entry continues:

“The morning of November 11th Shyamsunder sent up a letter with Champaklal informing The Mother that concreting of the Matrimandir slab foundation and ribs of the Sphere, the four Pillar summits, would begin at 3 p.m. after a five minute Meditation; and that clear weather was needed for a perfect completion of the work for 72 consecutive hours, with one eight hour interval for concrete-settling. At 2:30 p.m. Shyamsunder comes bringing from The Mother’s quarters to Piero for the concreting the flowers Divine Presence, Divine Grace, Psychic Love. — A meditation of five minutes — and we begin.”

From the No. 9 Progress Report: “The concreting operation continued through the night with Ashramites joining Aurovilians in the work until the next morning 10:30 a.m. The first layer of concrete was poured. A day’s interval was taken to clean the machines and to sleep, and the work was resumed on Tuesday 13th November at 3:30 p.m. continuing through the night with more and more people collaborating in a perfect execution. The slab was finished with a meditation at 6:20 a.m. At this time the workers observed a ‘bow’ of deep blue light in the clear morning sky joining East and West.” A perfect bow of the Puissant Archer spanned Matrimandir.

“The weather, wonderful until the work’s completion, changed; and during the day a continuous strong rain came to provide the first needed ‘curing’ of the settled concrete.”

From the diary: “Following the ‘high’ climax of the long arduous night that completed the slab for base of the Sphere, an in-drawing ... re-construction, re-assembling of one’s parts of being ... trying to bring into constant play the unmatched experience of having been ‘in union’ ‘with the smiling Consciousness, the Force felt in the others’ — ‘no longer *others*’ — from Ashram or Auroville, but parts of oneself, of the One Self — Its hands working trowel and mumpsti, Its concrete-covered feet, Its bowed back and cement-dust-marked forehead as at a Puja — All of this One moved by Your Shakti in a moved rhythm of love and karma-yoga — The labor of the Journey towards Transformation.”

The final phase of the concreting, that of the last summit portions of the Pillars above slab level, began with the South Pillar on November 15th. The East Pillar summits were begun and finished on Friday, November 16th. For some unknown reason we had begun to take precise time-readings on each Pillar completion; and on Saturday, November 17th, the diary records, under a heading in capitals, “*All Pillar Summits Completed*”:

“We began concreting North Pillar Summit this morning at 11:10 a.m. and after lunch concreted its west side and all of West Pillar Summit by 7:07 p.m.” (for the vibration; after which the levelling and cleaning completed the work — at 7:25 p.m.).

As the Progress Report notes: "The entire work was finished on 17th November precisely between 7:07 and 7:25 p.m. When information came to the Matrimandir that The Mother had left her body, it was seen that all Pillars of the Matrimandir had been completed by, and simultancously with, the time of her physical withdrawal."

It dawned on us. The Mother had been with us in her Consciousness-Force actively from beginning to end of the work. Supporting our small but unified efforts with the four of her leading Powers and Personalities that stand in front "in her guidance of this Universe and in her dealings with the terrestrial play," she had held up the sky and achieved the impossible through whatever human instruments aspired to truth and, receptive, acted in harmony. "... *Fire of an ardent aspiration to know Thee and totally to live Thee ... always there mounts the scented flame that no storm-wind can force to vacillate ..*"

It was this *Flame-Child*, hers, the new consciousness — new to us — who was building the golden tower. It had set the blue bow of the Archer's aim towards perfection spanning the sky over Matrimandir to join East and West, promise of "*the Union with the Divine manifesting Himself in a progressive human unity.*" But it was to be not only over Matrimandir, physical embodiment of The Mother's Consciousness. It would be active over the earth in response to the aspiring flame. Already there were indications in the letters, telegrams, cables pouring into Ashram and Auroville. Like news of the "strange experience in East Hampton" (New York) and the conclusion drawn from it: "I think the Mother's consciousness is going to spread all over the world and that she will be even more active than she was before passing." As The Mother had said of Sri Aurobindo's passing away:

"He himself — possesses more action, more power for action now than when in his body. Besides, it is for that that he left, because it was necessary to act in that way. It is very concrete. His action has become very concrete. Evidently it is something which is not at all mental. It is from another region. But it is not ethereal nor... — it is concrete. One could almost say that it is material." (BULLETIN, February 1973)

After interment of The Mother's physical envelope above that of Sri Aurobindo in the Samadhi, November 20th, 8:00 a.m. continuing experiences are noted.... "And everything is different now. We are different now. As if there were taking place an infinitely vast release of Your Energy, Your Consciousness-Force everywhere.... These are days of uncanny brightness...and everything seems filled with Your smiling presence, from the Mona Lisa tacked upon the kitchen wall to the new stars at night." And at our November 22nd Matrimandir Camp meditation, first after the interment, she spoke to our hushed hearts directly as she would more and more be calling to all seeking the truth,

"A new world, based on Truth and refusing the old slavery to falsehood, wants to take birth. In all countries there are people who know it, at least feel it. To them all we call: Will you collaborate?"

As Aurovilians we recalled her other words to us, "The whole earth must prepare itself for the advent of the new species, and Auroville wants to work consciously to-

wards hastening that advent. Little by little it will be revealed to us what this new species should be, and meanwhile the best measure to take is to consecrate oneself entirely to the Divine.”

“Higher it climbs and higher...

*And so pure, so erect, so proud
is the flame that suddenly
the (last) obstacle is dissolved.*

*Then Thou appearest in all Thy splendour,
in the dazzling force of Thy infinite glory;*

*at Thy contact the flame changes into
a column of light...*

*And the Word leaps forth,
a supreme revelation.”*

(Prayers and Meditations, November 8, 1914)

S.
Peace, Auroville

THE MOTHER: A TRIBUTE

A BROADCAST BY MISS RUTTY PATEL

ON ALL INDIA RADIO, BOMBAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1973

AN illustrious and luminous light in India was dimmed by the hands of death on Saturday the 17th November evening in Pondicherry. Known all over the world as the Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, a beautiful daughter of France came to our soil and spent over half a century in India devoting her time and energy to the service of the Divine.

Mira Alfassa met Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry in 1914 and recognised her destiny.

The Mother made the Ashram her home and her base for the work of transformation of earth and human nature. Sri Aurobindo gave her the entire charge and responsibility of the Ashram and went into seclusion to carry on his work.

The Mother actively participated in day-to-day life and mingled freely with everybody. To the Ashram came people from all over the world and thus humanity became represented for a spiritual change to bring about the supramental transformation, and for this work the Ashram is described as a field — a laboratory. As families came with children to settle in the Ashram, the needs of the children became a matter of paramount importance to the Mother, and her foremost thoughts went to them for their well-being, physical and spiritual — and their all-round education. The Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education is a unique gift by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo to the children of the Ashram. The Mother — with the heart of a true mother — made the life of a resident and a visiting sadhak so compact and attractive that it became possible for them to be free from all petty stress. Thus unburdening them from that heavy load, she set them free to give themselves for the work to serve the Divine.

The Mother widened the life and the horizon of the Ashram and all those who are connected with it. As years passed by, a dream and a vision took concrete form and the concept of Auroville began to be realised. Auroville will be a centre of international living of the highest standard in the years to come.

To each the Mother gave in the fullest measure according to one's needs and capacities, and no one left empty-handed. Out of the common mould of man and woman she created with a silent hand writers, authors, poets, musicians, artists, and manifold lights became lit in the human mind and heart.

Very often I am asked: "Does the Mother perform miracles?" Yes, she does. All those who have been blessed by the Mother are her miracles. Her smile, her eyes, her love, her hand upon one's head — all these bring about a subtle change. But there must be the willingness to change. Never is she known to have imposed her will on another, and never has she given a command in absolute authority — and yet, by some unseen touch within one's inner being, one feels the direction given by the

Mother — to become a new being — to venture for another conquest of the self. Above all, her presence, her guidance and her protection are given in abundance to all those whether they stay in the Ashram or anywhere in the world. I have known of a friend for whom the Mother gave a handwritten message after two days of concentration as she wished to bring about a certain change, and this message was sent to Europe for him.

In my utter desolation today many events pass before my eyes — many incidents of my meetings with the Mother. They are beautiful recollections and so consoling. The first day I saw the Mother in 1956 on the “atham” of the Durga Puja Darshan — and then several times playing tennis and in the evenings at the Playground. I remember going up to her room, having conversation with her — her care and concern in my moments of grief when I was bereaved and she held both my hands and poured strength into my being — her smile and at times her deep silence and concentration — all most wonderful and vivid memories. It was possible to behave with ease and freedom with the Mother, because she was the Mother — to talk freely, to come to a more personal and human level with her, even to laugh and joke with her. She never put a barrier between her and another soul, and yet there was the air of restraint — some reserve — an ethereal dignity and charm and, what was more, a unique discipline.

A lover of art and a woman of high aesthetic taste, she was a friend, a companion and a guide and guru to all.

The sad void which we all have in our hearts today is a physical sensation. The Mother is always with us — with all those whom she has received and whose responsibility she has taken upon herself for the supramental change. She has only laid down her physical tools to gain eternal strength to work in higher and wider realms to accomplish the task she and Sri Aurobindo have promised to the world. In her *Prayers and Meditations* the Mother has written:

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

DARSHAN MISSED

April 24, 1972

THE room is scented and your pictures are flower-adorned
Since this morning. I laid out my ornaments of loveliness
And spread them everywhere for your coming.
Your seat is prepared with precious cloth and I called in the flowers
To sit at your feet today. 'My love will come,' I said to them.
They bowed and laughed, they already knew.
My gown should please you, its lilac hued through misty white,
Each fold I carefully placed and I am wearing the pearl brooch
You gave me for the day of your birth, not too long ago;
For I dropped and missed it that day and in your loving
You looked in my heart and gave it to me again.
My hair is shiny-smooth and sweet-smelling from the jasmin band
The servant bought this morning, and now I must wait.

Today, you will reveal your beautiful person to the waiting crowd
Which gathers below your house terrace
From everywhere coming to receive your grace
And I won't be there.
How sad I grew when you told me not to come
And bade me to wait for your coming at my home.
I dried my foolish tears, for you would not like them,
And adorned my chamber with patience and with better love
Than before

Now I sit here in my waiting, drowsy with ceremony
And await for the honey to gather inside me
Like a warm flow, flowing for you.
I wait unmoving, ready for your calling,
I must not stir lest I miss the softness of your steps
To find me here drowsing or half awake
When you will come and call me by my name
To lift me out of long waiting
And to take your pleasure of me today.

GEORGETTE COTY

SHE ALONE

The Darshan of August 15, 1973

WHO knows thee, Lord,
Wrapt within thy subtle blue,
Sole robed in thy silent hue?
She alone knows who thou art
And bears thy Form from some unfathomed mystic heart.

Who knows thee, Lord,
Plunged within earth's molten core of pain
Thy touch sublime transforms — a golden rain?
She alone has seen thy Face
And with her simplest act thy Smile does trace.

Who knows thee, Lord,
Poised within thy hush profound,
Vibrant vast, creative sound?
She alone transcribes thy Trance,
The Timeless caught in rhythms of her rapture's Dance.

SAVITRA

OUTER—INNER

November 17, 1973

A DREAM shattered. Gone
The cherished Refuge of life's last days!
A loss unutterable of earthly heaven,
Our hope of unending love and grace.

Now a confused sky without a Sun,
Groping for radiance without real Light —
A desolate realm without a Ruler —
A heart-breaking climb to a wondrous Height.

Teach us the Solace to abide within, an inner quiet —
To draw on that blissful fount of eternity!
Your Sweet Face, our Sun and Moon and glowing Star —
An ever-present Divine in our heart's secrecy!

MINNIE N. CANTEENWALLA

ADITAYE ANAGASAH

(*“Blameless before the Supreme Mother” — Rigveda*)

WHEN, before your gaze, my Mother,
All the veils can fall
And I can stand before you without blame;
When, beneath the rays, O Mother,
Of your sun-smile all
My imperfections vanish as in flame;

And when, each step I take, my Mother,
Is a step to you
And all my sin and stumblings disappear,
And every move that I make, O Mother,
Without thought is true,
And vanished are uncertainty and fear;

Then my life will be an anthem
Chanted in your praise,
A song of perfect action and delight;
Unrestrained and free, an anthem
Of my nights and days
A paean to the Truth, the Vast, the Right.

PETER HEEHS

WAVERING

WHEN first with glimmer of morning
One steps light-shy in the way,
And stands against the scorning
The old man spits at the day,
So easy is it to falter,
And turn back hand-over-eye,
Slipping into the halter
Again, bent down from the sky:
And the shadows are lengthened
Thus in the flickering gleam,
Confusion pampered and strengthened,
All the treacherous dream.
But the sun is the ruler,
Never to be denied,
Life-fount, former and schooler
For all the stumbling aside:
And surely it shall be rising,
Though pulsate promise and fade
So many times, man prizing
The nothing his freedom has made,
False in its fretful seeming —
And, hesitant though, forth free
At last he shall walk in the teeming
And vibrant ecstasy
So calm, to the radiant paling
Of all little shine he knew,
Only enough for failing
And mocking assumption and view.
He is dull and weak, but detection
Comes and curing with time,
As into the heart of perfection
He treads, all rhythm and rhyme.

JESSE ROARKE

YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW

AUROVILLE could not exist without the Ashram, the Ashram could not have existed without the Mother, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are essentially One.

The first two statements are known facts, the third is in Sri Aurobindo's words:¹ "The Mother's consciousness and mine are the same, the one Divine Consciousness in two... if anybody really feels her consciousness, he should know that I am there behind it and if he feels me it is the same with hers."

This identity is essential: it affirms that with the inseparable double manifestation of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo we reach the summit, the One without a second: the One Divine Consciousness; the scheme with which we started is therefore complete. From the practical point of view it is an itinerary for the individual's evolution. We can follow it in two opposite yet complementary directions. One leaps toward the Ashram, then Auroville, and the universe. The other leads away from the world, to abandon the manifestation. The first leads to the transformation of the body by the Spirit, the world by the Divine, to the accomplishment of the Great Work: it is the path indicated by Sri Aurobindo.

Today is precisely the hour of choice. The two accessible physical aspects of our Instructor have been taken away from us, a necessary departure so that we may know if we have acquired the capacity to find once again that dynamic inspiration in our consciousness and to apply it in our lives. Placing this intuition to the test of experience, often our tastes, preferences and desires which are tied to our past serve to deform the inner perception: the future will show us this, and by successive corrections, a powerful and persevering aspiration, the light will manifest more and more directly in our being and our acts.

Let us look back. In his three principal works Sri Aurobindo has given us the following: in *The Life Divine*, the significance of the World and Man; in *The Synthesis of Yoga*, the corresponding technique, leading to the union of our individual consciousness with the Divine Consciousness manifest; finally, in *Savitri*, the vision of the path leading to the victory over Death. Three pillars to sustain the construction of the future, which should be our work.

Let us try to look ahead: three creations, only outlined in the work of Sri Aurobindo, wait for us to bring them from the domain of Ideas to that of Facts: a spirituality without religion, a society without the power cult, an economy without the money cult.

The Mother has left us the only authentic commentaries on Sri Aurobindo: her *Conversations*. One finds in them the elements for the beginning of these great enterprises. Regarding the first, a spirituality without religion, the Ashram itself is an example. Those who have had a spiritual experience do not need either to label it, or to have it directed by an institution. About the second enterprise, the Mother

¹ Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother (1953), page 361.

has not said much since Sri Aurobindo left two works — *The Human Cycle* and *The Ideal of Human Unity* — which give an outline of the path to be followed. The third remains, which, in reality, cannot be separated from the second: the socio-economic architecture of the future is to be created, and it is surely this, that is the major task for Auroville.

December, 1973

GABRIEL MONOD-HERZEN

A DAWN-FOOTED GODDESS

A DAWN-FOOTED Goddess from the blue-heart Vision,
Intruder in dark murmuring abysses,
A luminous ray from the Ancient Sun-Worlds,
Lifted the veils of a mute mind of Night:
Now the self rolled in waves of wide silences,
Disclosed in wonder-hues the secret skies of Bliss.
And our lives held the mighty heart throbs of the Eternal's Day.

VINAY

THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF *MOTHER INDIA*

FEBRUARY 21, this year, marks *Mother India's* "Silver Jubilee". It may be of interest to recall how this periodical was launched and to note some of the vicissitudes through which it passed. Considering the initial difficulties in its way, one may well designate it a child of Divine Grace.

In its origin it was the idea of a young businessman, Keshavdeo R. Poddar, now known as Navajata but even at that time secretly what the name signifies: "The New-born." For, although not yet a resident of the Ashram, he was devoted to the cause of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Feeling the need to bring into the dust and heat of the common world's arena the breath of the New Life which they embodied, he conceived a paper which would busy itself with that world's problems without any narrow business-concern. It was meant to make current the gold of a spiritual light at any material expense, and no calculation was made about the length of time it might take for this celestial coinage to be accepted.

Poddar put his project before the Mother. She, in consultation with Sri Aurobindo, approved it. Then he proposed Amal Kiran (originally K.D. Sethna but known to the Aurobindonians by the name the Master, during Sethna's stay in the Ashram, had given him, meaning "A Clear Ray") as Editor. With the Master's and the Mother's sanction he asked Amal Kiran to assume charge under the name familiar to the city of Bombay where both of them resided at the time. As the two Gurus had said "Yes", Sethna could not say "No". Forthwith, the periodical was fixed to be a fortnightly and the date of first publication planned to coincide with February 21, 1949, the Mother's seventy-first birthday.

The crucial question of the title was very appropriately settled by a brain-wave of the Editor's wife. What she brought up answered at once to the truth behind the publication-date by harmonising with (1) the fact that the base of operations, besides being the motherland of Sri Aurobindo, was the country which the Mother, while hailing from the West, had still made her own by soul's choice, and (2) the vision of the Ashram-Mother as incarnating not only the "Wisdom-Splendour" that is the universe's fount—

Creatrix, the Eternal's artist Bride —¹

but also that particular face and front of the Infinite, the Goddess Bharat-Shakti

Who watches over India till the end —²

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri* (Centenary Edition, 1972), p. 345.

² Sri Aurobindo, *Collected poems* (Centenary Edition, 1972), p. 291.

mothering especially the India of the Rishis, the Yogis, the Saints and, above all, the Avatars.

How would a fortnightly with a spiritual background fare in the commercial capital of India where the word "spirit", if it meant anything at all, might connote simply what Prohibition puts out of the way of celebrating or relaxing commercialists? Bombay was also a centre of furious political activity, with culture and idealism no more than a suggestion of infra-red and ultra-violet beyond the multi-passioned spectrum of contending or co-operating shades of opinion in practical politics. The despatch of the proposed venture and its need of Grace from the Divine was finely hit off by the message (dated January 29, 1949) received from Aldous Huxley for the first issue:

"I wish you all success in your venture. You will, of course, be a voice crying in the wilderness. But if a few individuals pay attention, something will have been accomplished."

Some time before the date of publication the Mother gave an interview at Pondicherry to all the Aurobindonians concerned: Poddar, Sethna, Soli Albless who had been appointed the Editor's associate, and Yogendra Rastogi who was Poddar's right-hand man for management. The Editor was rather worried over that part of his job which was to consist in writing thousands of words on various political themes in a manner that would be clear, cogent, penetrating, widely informed, easily authoritative, enlightened by a view of national and international situations from the height of Sri Aurobindo's thought. Although conversant with this thought, the crowded and chequered field, to which he was expected to apply it with full cognisance of what was going on there, was mostly foreign to him. More than a little puzzled, he unburdened his mind to the Mother: "Mother, I have to be an expert political thinker and writer. But I have no turn for politics and no touch with it." She smiled a cool sweet smile and answered: "Neither have I." The Editor got a start. "Well, then what shall I do?" Again the imperturbable sweetness and then the reply: "There is Sri Aurobindo. He will guide you in everything." A sudden flood of power swept over the hearer. "Oh, yes," he said, "Sri Aurobindo will surely do the impossible." And Sri Aurobindo did.

Not only did he put from afar his mighty spiritual force to the task of "politicising" the Editor's grey cells. He also got every editorial, however lengthy, read out to him before publication and sent a telegram of approval or modification. Matter for *Mother India* received preferential treatment among the sundry calls on the precious time of the Avatar of Supermind. And his interest in it had a directly personal touch. On one occasion, when a sadhaka's sceptical attitude to the opinions expressed in the fortnightly was reported to him, he said: "Doesn't he know that *Mother India* is my paper?" Here was Grace in abundance and without stint—initiating, fostering, shaping, supporting, championing.

When the main articles for the first issue — written by the Editor and Albless — were sent to Pondicherry, not only Sri Aurobindo but also the Mother listened to Nolini's reading out of them. Both the Gurus sent words of praise and total sanction. However, in the Bombay-office where various practitioners of journalism dropped in for a close look at the experiment, a crisis arose. The office had been set up only six or seven weeks before the projected date for the opening number. There were no materials in reserve except for two or three issues. Several newspapermen raised their eyebrows to convey that this would never do. One day a veteran journalist appeared and clinched the others' contention. He told the small staff that they were heading for the rocks: unless they had six months' matter in hand it was foolhardy to start on February 21, 1949. They said their opening number would be a brilliant one and it would be a shame to suppress it. A warning finger was wagged in front of the novice Editor's nose: "Better to lie quiet for a few months than go up a rocket and come down a stick!" The Editor and his companions swore they would work frenziedly and keep things going. "Impossible! All journalistic experience is against you. Mass your forces sufficiently — six months' stuff in hand — and then make your entrance."

Mother India was in a quandary. To commence and then flop was an unbearable prospect. The Editor had at times the apparently irrational feeling that if hard-pressed he could write the whole periodical single-handed. But could one rely on such delusions of grandeur? Not to be published according to the original plan was galling. Poddar, Rastogi and Albless were no chicken-hearts and they were in full sympathy. Yet the Editor could not bring himself to involve everything in a rapturous risk. He thought it best to consult the Mother. So he despatched to her an urgent note: "All journalists advise us to postpone publication for some months. They say we must be well-stocked with articles: otherwise we are doomed. My own instinct is that of Foch at the Battle of the Marne in 1914. When he was asked by his superior at headquarters for a report from the field, he sent the message: 'Mon centre cède, ma droite recule, situation excellente, j'attaque.'¹ But what do you say?"

On January 27, 1949, the Editor received the telegram: "Stick to the date. Live on faith. Blessings. — Mother." With a whoop the office went into action — and faith in the Mother's Grace has kept *Mother India* in action up to now.

During Sri Aurobindo's life-time this Grace, though often directly bestowed in response to questions, was frequently operative from behind the scenes, as it were. For, the Mother was extremely busy on many occasions and left matters entirely to Sri Aurobindo: her support was tacitly present, his actively at work. The decisions about the editorials were sometimes taken when both she and he were together; but generally it was he who gave judgment. And this was in the fitness of things in regard to political pieces. He had been a great politician and had still his finger on the nation's pulse. And sometimes he let his disciple-editor be as audacious as he had himself been in the famous old days of *Bandemataram* and *Karmayogin*. Once, in the period

¹ 'My centre is giving way, my right wing is in retreat, situation excellent, I am attacking!'

when whether or not to recognise Red China was a vital issue, an editorial came out in strong criticism of the current national policy. The Mother looked at the opening sentence in the printed copy that came into her hands. It is reported that she was rather surprised at the way the thoughts had been voiced. She went to Sri Aurobindo's room and said: "Amal has written very violently. Did you see and pass the expressions before he printed them?" Sri Aurobindo, with his Himalayan calm, just smiled and said: "Yes." This was enough for her: the Master was in sole charge of politics. She never took his disciple to task over any editorial. And when once he got into a little trouble with the authorities for a somewhat slashing article on Kashmir and was called up to be questioned, both she and Sri Aurobindo, on being informed, assured him of their spiritual support. The confrontation with the authorities got happily resolved.

Two days before Sri Aurobindo passed away, the disciple had an interview with the Mother late in the evening. As the Master could not do his usual job, the Mother listened to the new editorial. She let it stand, but asked the writer to be cautious in certain matters. On her own responsibility she would not like to allow extremist expressions on some points. There should be no fear or faltering, but forces of a particular sort were not to be encouraged. After the passing of Sri Aurobindo, all editorials were necessarily read out to her. At the end of a year or so she expressed her boredom with political writing. Then *Mother India* was converted wholly into a cultural review and from a fortnightly it became a monthly, altering its format in the process. This was in February 1952.

Suddenly some time in 1953 the Mother decided to shift the office from Bombay to Pondicherry and to get the monthly printed at the Ashram Press. The Editor was not himself yet ready to settle in the Ashram. So he had to do his work from Bombay, leaving the final arrangements in the hands of his editorial associate who was in Pondicherry. When, on a visit, he asked the Mother why she had effected the sudden shift while he was still making preparations for a move to the Ashram, she replied: "I did not want anybody to create obstacles in your way. If your office, your work are here, you have every reason to say that you should be in Pondicherry. I have made your path of Yoga clear."

From February 1954 the Editor was helped to get fixed where his office had been moved. Now the Mother could be consulted directly at all times, and she presided most generously over the month-by-month run of the periodical, giving "Words" each time, and other contributions now and again, attending to diverse problems of cultural policy and practical management. Questioned on the issue of becoming more "popular", she ruled that wanting to please readers as a means of obtaining a larger circulation was a form of vulgarity: one must write at one's highest and give the readers what, according to one's best lights, one believes they should have. This did not exclude making the field as wide as possible. *Mother India* need not restrict itself to being philosophical or to dealing with spiritual topics. Its appeal could be vast and varied, but there should be consonance, however subtle and implicit,

with the great ideal of refining no less than sharpening all of man's faculties. And, of course, topics concerned with the Integral Yoga were to hold the centre of the stage.

At the end of twenty-five years *Mother India* cannot do better than turn in deep gratitude to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo and so comport itself as to be able to carry on building the Mother's India within us and without, and, through that loveliness, help the whole earth to aspire for

What most she needs, what most exceeds her scope,
A Mind unvisited by illusion's gleams,
A Will expressive of soul's deity,
A Strength not forced to stumble by its speed,
A Joy that drags not sorrow as its shade.¹

Yes, one must strive always to write at one's highest and, with the Yoga which the Gita describes as "skill in works", all the workers involved must see that they do not fail the conviction the Mother expressed in the last letter she wrote to the Editor about the periodical at a recent time of difficulty:

"I fully agree with you that *Mother India* should continue..."

EDITOR

¹ *Savitri*, pp. 51-2

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of December 5, 1973)

(This new series of answers by the Mother to questions put by the children of the Ashram appeared for the first time in the Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education but in a somewhat incomplete form. We now give, in a new English translation, the full text as it was taped, with here and there a few special additions or modifications made by the Mother at the time of its first publication in French in February 1968).

NOVEMBER 21, 1956

The Mother distributes copies of *Thoughts and Glimpses*, then glances through the one in her hands and starts speaking.

Five paragraphs dealing with five modes of being or five states of being, and it is the same thing that recurs in all the different domains:

“When we have passed beyond knowings, then we shall have Knowledge. Reason was the helper, Reason is the bar.”

(Sri Aurobindo, *Thoughts and Glimpses*)

This is about the mental being in man, that is, his mental activities; and Sri Aurobindo opposes knowings to Knowledge.

Actually it is I who should ask you if you know what Sri Aurobindo means by “knowings”, and why he opposes them to Knowledge. For if I explain all this to you without your making any effort, it is (*laughing*) spoon-feeding you, giving you a cooked meal without your taking the trouble to cook it! And the result will be that sooner or later, in half an hour or in a day’s time, you will have completely forgotten what I have told you and it will have had no effect on you. I should like someone to tell me what he understands by “knowings”. (*To a child*) Tell me, come along.

It is the knowledge acquired through outer studies.

It is obviously that. It is everything that can be learnt through the study of outer phenomena and in all fields of mental activity; all that may be learnt by material observation and technical studies in different subjects, scientific, artistic, philosophical, literary; in fact all that the human mind has created through the external study of life and things: all that can be found in books, all that can be found through the direct study of Nature and all that can be found by reasoning, deduction, analysis and the speculative activities of the human mind.

And Sri Aurobindo puts reason at the top of man's mental activity; he tells us that in the development of the mind, reason is the surest guide, the master, so to speak, who prevents you from deviating from the path or mistaking it, from wandering away and losing your common sense. He makes reason the arbiter of man's mental activity, who guides and controls; and so long as you have to deal with mental activities, even the most speculative, it is reason which must guide you and prevent you from going astray from the right path and entering more or less fantastic and unhealthy imaginations.

But if you want to attain true knowledge, that is, spiritual knowledge, which can be obtained only through identification, you must go beyond this reason and enter a domain higher than the mind where one is in direct contact with the Light either of the Overmind or the Supermind. And Sri Aurobindo says this, that so long as you are in the mental field, reason helps you, it is your helper, your guide; but if you want to have the true knowledge by identity, reason becomes a limitation and a bar. That is not to say that you should lose it! — but it must be subordinated to your movement of ascent. Sri Aurobindo does not tell you to become unreasonable, he says you must pass beyond reason into a higher Truth and Light.

And what is interesting in the structure of this section is that the reflection Sri Aurobindo makes about the mental being, the intellectual activity of man, he makes also for the vital activity, the power of action and realisation. He takes mental activity as the basis of human life, for it belongs to man in his own right, exclusively, and in the process of life, that is, of human existence, human realisation, normally thought comes first, man being a thinking creature gets an idea at first, then he clothes this idea with a force, a vital power, a power for action, and changes it, transforms it into will. This will is then concentrated on the object to be realised, and with the vital force and effort added to the thought, the conception, it becomes the lever of action.

But here Sri Aurobindo uses a word which is not "will", he speaks of "willings":

"When we have passed beyond willings, then we shall have Power. Effort was the helper, Effort is the bar."

And he opposes these "willings" — that is, all these superficial wills, opposite and contradictory and without any lasting basis because they are founded on what he calls a "knowing" and not on knowledge — to the true will. These willings are necessarily fragmentary, passing, and often in opposition to one another, and it is this which gives to individual life and even to the collective its nature of incoherence, illogicality and confusion.... Generally the word "will" is reserved for indicating what comes from the deeper being or the higher reality and what expresses in action the true knowledge which Sri Aurobindo opposes to knowings. So, when this will which expresses the true knowledge manifests in action, it manifests through the intervention of a deep and *direct* power which dispenses with all effort. And that is why Sri Aurobindo says here that the true power for action cannot come until one has gone

beyond the stage of willings, that is, until the motive of action is the result not of a mere mental activity but of true knowledge.

True knowledge acting in the outer being gives true power.

That seems to be an explanation, the real explanation of that very familiar saying which is not understood in its essence but expresses a truth: "Where there's a will, there's a way", to will is to have the power. It is quite evident that this does not refer to "willings", that is, to the more or less incoherent expression of desires but to the true will expressing a true knowledge; for this true will carries in itself the force of truth which gives power — an invincible power. And so, when one expresses "willings", to be able to apply them in life and make them effective, effort must intervene — it is through personal effort that one progresses, and it is with effort that one imposes his willings upon life to bend it to their demands — but when these are no longer willings, when it is the true will expressing the true knowledge, effort is no longer required, for the force is all-powerful.

Now, I should like you to ask me questions on what I have just told you.

Nothing?

Mother, what is the first step to take to have knowledge?

The first step? ... To get rid of the illusion of the absolute value of "knowings", that is, of human knowledge and mental activity. First, to come out of the illusion that they really have a concrete and absolute value.

And you will notice that perhaps this is the most difficult thing to do; it is the most difficult step, for, when you study general subjects like science, the different branches of science or philosophy and all such activities, when you study them a little seriously and deeply, you reach very easily the sense of the relativity of this knowledge. But when you come down a step again, just the next step of mental activity and see the different problems of life — for example, what should be done in this case or that, the conditions for realising something, a work one wants to learn, or even the different necessities of life, the conditions of living, of health — you will find that generally a reasoning being, or one becoming so, forms a set of ideas for himself, which are really knowings: this thing will produce this effect, or in order to obtain that thing that other must be done, etc. and you have a whole mental construction in yourself, made of observations, studies, experiments; and the more you advance in age, the greater becomes the number of experiments and results of study and observation. You make for yourself a sort of mental structure in which you live. And unless you are powerfully intelligent, with an opening to the higher worlds, you have an innate, spontaneous, unshakable conviction of the absolute worth of your observations, and without even your needing to reflect a little, it acts automatically in your being by a sort of habit: that thing perforce brings that result. So for you, when this has happened quite often, naturally the habit of associating the two movements gives rise within you to the feeling of the absolute value of your ideas or your knowings about yourself

and your life. And there it is *infinitely* more difficult to come to an understanding of the relativity — the uncertainty approaching almost illusion — of that knowledge. You find this out only if, with a will for spiritual discipline and progress, you look at these things with a deep critical sense and see the kind of slavery into which you have put yourself, a slavery which acts without any need of intervention from you, automatically, with the support of the subconscious and that strange automatism of reflexes which makes causes and effects follow each other in a habitual order without your being in the least aware of it all.

Well, if you want to attain knowledge, the first thing, the first indispensable step is not to believe in the validity of those things. And if you observe yourself, you will realise that this belief in the validity of these observations and deductions is almost absolute in you. It translates itself through all sorts of ideas which reasonably enough appear evident to you, and yet are exactly the limitations which prevent you from reaching the knowledge by identity. For instance, that if a man plunges into water without knowing how to swim, he will be drowned; if there is a fairly powerful wind, it will upset things; when it rains, you get wet, etc. — you see, there are instances like this at every second, it is like that. And this seems so obvious to you that when you are told: “Well, but no, this is a relative knowledge, it is like that but it could be otherwise”, the one who tells you that seems to you *a priori* half-mad. And you say: “But still those things are concrete! These are things we can see, touch, feel, these are proofs our senses give to us every minute, and if we do not take our stand upon that, we are sure to go astray and enter the unreasonable.”

So, if you remember what Sri Aurobindo has said, you will understand that the first condition for having knowledge is to go beyond reason. That is why he says: reason was the helper — yes, during the whole childhood of humanity and the whole period of growth of the individual being — but if you want to go beyond the mere human being, ordinary human nature, well, you must go beyond reason; and those things which seemed to you *so* evident that they were indisputable, you should be able to understand, feel from within yourself that they are *absolutely* relative and that what seemed completely similar, identical in the experience of everybody, these very things, if seen from above with a higher consciousness, become absolutely subjective and relative and are only individual formations adapted to individual needs and consciousness, and that instead of having an absolute reality, they have only an altogether relative reality which disappears completely as soon as you rise to a higher level.

So now, if you look at the nature of your thought under that light, you will see that it is not so easy to take even this first step.

Examples may be given, but they are superficial examples, themselves very fragmentary, and have only an altogether relative value, as for instance this, which I have many a time given you, about the viewpoint of medical knowledge in the world: if you have studied enough or lived long enough, you will find that with the same authority, the same certitude, the same conviction, at one time certain things are not only

considered bad, but on the ground of an absolute knowledge, an unquestionable observation, they are reputed to have a certain effect, and at another time, these very unquestionable observations lead to diametrically opposite results. Very often I give an example which I happened to observe, specially as regards the value of food articles and their effects on the body, as those of certain fruits or vegetables: at a particular moment in medical history (not so long ago, about fifty or sixty years ago), when you had a certain illness, there was a list of things the doctor gave you, recommending to you with absolute seriousness not to touch any of these lest you become still more ill (I could give you the list, but it is not interesting) — well, about these very things, fifty or sixty years later, not the same doctor perhaps but another one will tell you with the same seriousness, the same unquestionable certitude and authority that these are the things you must eat if you want to be cured! So if you have observed things well and have a slightly critical spirit, you could tell yourself: “Oh! that must depend on people or perhaps on the period.” And I shall say what the doctor-friend I knew in France forty or fifty years ago used to tell all his patients: “Take the remedy that is in fashion, for at that moment it will cure you.” *Voilà*.

Well, there is a state with a little discernment, in which one understands this extraordinary relativity of things, a state in which this becomes so acute, that to affirm something, to say “this is like that” or “such a thing has that particular result”, seems to you spontaneously a stupidity.... But before reaching that point, one may reflect a little and say: “After all, we believe in a particular thing so long as it is in fashion.”

Is that all?

Mother, this question arises because in our school-studies we feel at times a great dislike and tell ourselves: “What’s the use of all this !” So with what attitude should we study?

I have always said that studies have on the brain the same effect as gymnastics on the muscles. For example, mental gymnastics are quite necessary to make one’s mental activity supple, to strengthen and enrich it and give it a subtlety of understanding it would not have without your doing these gymnastics. Of late (indeed for quite a long time already), I have noticed, for instance, that if I have the misfortune of reading to you something with philosophical terms or to speak to you about a slightly philosophical point of view, you cannot follow. And that is simply because you have not done philosophical gymnastics. It is not because you are not intelligent, it is not because you don’t have the capacity to understand: it is because you haven’t done the proper gymnastics. I could tell you the same thing in another way: you have not learnt the language. But it is the same words that are used, only with a slightly different relation between them, with different turns of phrases, with a different mental attitude to things. Well, this difference of attitude you cannot have unless you have done the corresponding gymnastics. And it is very easy for you to understand this example, for you all know very well that you could never do your athletic exercises if you were

not trained. Even if you have special abilities, even if you are gifted, if you do not practise and train yourself, you cannot do them. Consider: all your agility exercises, were you to be asked on the first day to do them, you could not, it would be quite impossible, and you know it very well. If someone were to tell you spontaneously: "Ah! now do this" — say, a certain jump, what was once called the somersault — you would say: "This person is truly unreasonable, it is impossible!" Well, this is the same thing; if I take certain books and read them to you, you cannot follow because you have completely neglected philosophical mental gymnastics. It is exactly the same thing if someone who has not done mathematics is asked to follow a mathematical reasoning — he won't be able to.... And so, that means that if you want to express fully, totally, the deeper reality of your being, you will express it much more richly, much more variously, much more productively, if all the parts of your being are fully developed in this way through their appropriate gymnastics.

I believe I have explained this to you once already. If it were a question of leading what was considered till today the true spiritual life, that is, of giving up all physical activities integrally in order to unite with the supreme divine Reality and remain in this union, of leaving life and all outer expression and going away into Nirvana, into an identity which not only will no longer be expressed in the world, but which takes you out of the world completely, then it is obvious that all these gymnastics, whether physical, vital, sensorial or mental, are absolutely useless, and that those people would consider all this simply a waste of time and quite futile. But *for us* who want to realise almost the very opposite, that is, who, after having identified ourselves with the supreme Reality, want to make It descend into life to transform the world, if we offer to this Reality instruments which are refined, rich, developed, fully conscious, the work of transformation will be more effective.

And that is why instead of telling you when you are a little mite, to do (*laughing*) what those children are asked to do, to sit still and enter or pretend to enter into meditation; instead of telling you that you must be in a constant contemplation and totally indifferent to all things in the world, that you must have only one thought, to prepare yourself to receive the divine Grace; instead of that you are told: "No, try to become developed and conscious beings who know things and have healthy, strong, agile bodies capable of doing exceptional things, an adequate will and a rich, supple, agile mind; these will be useful for the future realisation."

It is because of this, moreover, that people who are used to judging from appearances and without knowing what they are talking about, say that in the Ashram there is no spiritual life, that it is an altogether material life. That's how it is! But that is so much the worse for them, it is not any worse for us; to us, indeed, it is the same.

Voilà. No more questions? Nobody has anything to say?

PEACE AND SILENCE

LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

Q: There is much pressure for quietude. But it makes me too passive to aspire or offer myself to the Mother. How is it so?

SRI AUROBINDO: The pressure for quietude may bring a certain kind of passivity with it at first. 5-1-34

Q: P says that what I am having now is not silence but quietness or peace only.

SRI AUROBINDO: Silence of the mind, peace or calm in the mind are three things which are very close together and bring each other. It must have been one of these, so there must have been at least the beginning of silence. 18-1-34

If there is any fatigue, it is as well to rest in the quietude for a time. 20-1-34

Q: How to tackle the thoughts when they come during silence?

SRI AUROBINDO: Be detached and indifferent to the thoughts. 17-1-34

Q: While looking at the Mother, should I keep my mind still or aspiring?

SRI AUROBINDO: Either will do. 18-1-34

Q: If one has silence, does it not mean that it includes all the other three (quietness, peace and calm)?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, it usually does if it is complete. 25-1-34

Q: Today inwardly I conveyed to the Mother that I had lost my happy state of peace and calm.

SRI AUROBINDO: If you feel like that, it must be that it is covered up for the time being. These things do not really get lost — they return in a stronger form afterwards. 25-1-34

Q: I often experience the condition of silence, but not so frequently peace and calm. Are they really so difficult to get?

SRI AUROBINDO: No. It must be because the whole being is not silent — otherwise there would be no disturbance anywhere. 25-1-34

Silence and no disturbance usually brings calm.

Quiet means to keep the inner quietude and keep turned to the Mother with the aspiration, will or call for the return of the right condition. 29-1-34

One can go forward even if there is no peace — quietude and concentration are necessary. Peace is necessary for the higher states to develop. 4-6-34

Q: What is sattwo-tamasic?

SRI AUROBINDO: Peace, etc. are sattwic things, — inertia and inaction are tamasic. So the combination is sattwo-tamasic. 2-7-34

Q: My experience of silence or self-realisation is purely static, that is to say, in meditation only. As soon as I plunge myself in the work it vanishes.

SRI AUROBINDO: Get it first in meditation always — then we will see about work. When the silence or self-realisation is achieved, it can remain in spite of the work. 25-7-34

Q: When the intensity of the peace withdrew, I presumed there was no more the peace! Somehow I could not associate real peace with the absence of intensity.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is quite wrong to expect that always. That was only a preparatory experience and the intensity of the first experience does not remain all the time. Peace is peace whether it is intense or not. One has to be accurate in one's self-observation and not establish wrong notions like that. 27-7-34

There can be peace in the mind even when the vital is not quite at rest, or peace in the inner being even if the surface is disturbed. Consciousness cannot feel at rest and free if there is no peace. 27-7-34

There ought to be no difficulty in getting the experiences in the silence and peace. 6-2-34

Q: The whole being — except the most mechanical part of the mind — is submerged in the Mother's peace and silence. It is experienced not only during the static state but also during action. Only it is not felt as deep and intense during my intellectual pursuits as during physical ones.

SRI AUROBINDO: All that is quite natural at first. It is only afterwards that one can feel the silence with equal intensity even when the mind is occupied with other things. 6-2-34

Q: When the peace and silence is deep and intense, what does it mean?

SRI AUROBINDO: It means only that its power on the adhar is increasing. 6-2-34

Q: When there is an established peace and silence in the being, do not the sexual suggestions fall off naturally?

SRI AUROBINDO: If it is established *all through*, then it brings purity and the purity throws off the sexual suggestions. 7-2-34

Q: I feel as if the peace and silence were established in the being except in the mechanical mind. Is that usual?

SRI AUROBINDO: Mostly. 7-2-34

There may be empty silence and peace satisfied with themselves — receptivity

is a separate power. Of course all quietude of the mind makes good conditions for the receptivity to act. 8-2-34

In the evening the Mother brings down the silence, but not the silence only — also the power for transformation. But as calm and silence are the first requisite for transformation, you felt that. 8-2-34

They must be left to grow until they naturally continue in sleep. 8-2-34

Q: The silence which I experience now is deep. It comes and remains by itself even though I do not aspire for it or pay any particular attention.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is usual that the silence should become automatic like that when the being becomes habituated to its coming. 28-2-34

All experiences come in the silence but they do not come pell-mell in a crowd at the beginning. The inner silence and peace have first to be established. 10-8-34

By a strong peace I mean one with strength, Power, Force in it. 28-8-34

From NAGIN DOSHI

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Sri Aurobindo by *Jesse Roarke*. Publishers Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry. Price Rs. 18.00. P. 189.

THE author needs no introduction to the readers of *Mother India*; for he has been providing us with a rich fare both as a critic of highly developed perceptiveness and a poet of magnificent creative power. He has been a regular contributor to the sister periodical *Advent* and some other journals like the *Vishwa Bharati Quarterly*. His articles on Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita* in the *Advent* are marked by a clear insight into the core of its teaching, the true nature of its integral spiritual gospel and its grand synthesis of the yogas of action, knowledge and devotion culminating in a plenary realization vouchsafed to those who pursue it in all its entirety. The depth, clarity and vigour in his writings spring from the authenticity that comes of a sincere pursuit of the trail blazed by a spiritual guru.

Born and bred in America, he took his M.A. in philosophy from Columbia University in 1949 and then did an additional year of graduate work, but decided against any academic career. The inner being in him must have felt a need for something truer and more concrete than what speculative Western philosophy could afford and so he switched over to Chinese and Indian philosophy. He practised for some-time Zen Buddhist meditation and advanced rapidly, but then came to a sort of dead end. Sri Aurobindo's philosophy and the Yoga of Integral Transformation opened up new vistas of spiritual sadhana and brought out luminously his latent intellectual and poetical powers. The reintegration of the psyche always unseals hidden creative founts and opens the inner vision and deeper insights into human destiny and one comes in contact with a perennial outflow of divine Light, Bliss and Knowledge. All this is evident from his poems, critical essays on poets and his exposition of Sri Aurobindo's gospel of transformation. The soul has an unmistakable recognition of the Divine wherever He manifests Himself.

It is Mr. Roarke's soul that has seen in Sri Aurobindo and the Mother the twin Avatars who came down to effect the supramentalization of the human race — though not in its entirety. The author observes in his preface:

“In undertaking to approach and write about so immense and unparalleled a figure as Sri Aurobindo, the mind that is at once serious and in some degree competent must be conscious of a certain temerity. For whatever his philosophical grasp, Sri Aurobindo is not just a thinker, and whatever his power and wealth of expression he is not just a literary man. He is in fact not just a man at all, and really to read him one must be willing, at least in some part of the nature, to transcend the human bounds. Sri Aurobindo is Divine Truth: the latest and greatest of the Avatars, come to take and help the world forward in the largest step of its evolution, and to divinize the very earth.

“He is, however, a literary figure, and one of the greatest. The unexampled

largeness and richness, complexity and profundity of that part of his meaning that can be verbalized he has given to the world with a consummate artistry, keeping always the highest standards of literature. This one may acknowledge, and even enjoy, though he cannot at all thoroughly accept Sri Aurobindo for what he is, or follow him all the way."

Well, this approach of the author gives us a foretaste of the scale on which the book is written and the sweep with which this work is to be conceived and executed. He is a devotee of Sri Aurobindo but he does not allow any rhapsodical fervours to tarnish his irreproachable objectivity. The book consistently presents difficult and recondite issues to a lay audience without doing an injury to the lofty theme and places all the different facets of Sri Aurobindo's writings in the wider context of his metaphysics. Reading the book through, a run-of-the-mill reviewer like the present writer can only say that it is a solid yet inspiring work as full of insights as of erudition and it is written with warmth and lucidity, and strikes the note of affirmation with a full sense of responsibility and comprehension of the issues involved.

Mr. Roarke explains that Sri Aurobindo lacks proper recognition, "... partly no doubt because he is still relatively new in the world, and has not been studied and interpreted and made a more or less familiar figure. But there is more than that: he brings in a flood of spiritual light and flows with a tireless wealth of spiritual inspiration, and even the most learned and acute literary scholars are not yet equipped for this."

Well, this approach to his subject is significant, for in these "Buzz-and-Bruit and Mish-Mash in the Middle" times when a genius is discovered in May and consigned to everlasting oblivion in September we need as a counterpoise a right and just appraisal of personalities like Sri Aurobindo who stand as eternal suns engaged in denting the apathy of the Inconscient that drains all human ideals of their power and glory.

In the first chapter the author gives us a brief biography of Sri Aurobindo — his early education in England, his success in the I.C.S. competition, his classical scholarship and return to India and all the salient events of his later spiritual development.

In the second chapter we are given a synoptic but very lucid and complete exposition of Sri Aurobindo's major works on Yoga, Psychology and Metaphysics. The most important feature of Sri Aurobindo's yoga is complete surrender to the Divine Mother. But it calls for utmost sincerity, steadfastness and vigilance on the part of the sadhak. Mr. Roarke rightly observes, "The main thing is *surrender* to the Divine, a complete surrender in all the parts of the nature. This is by no means so easy as one may hastily suppose; for the true nature is far more complex than people know. The complexity is to be known through yoga: the depth vast and full beyond anything our depth psychologists have found or can find by their present methods; the breadth, the height, the many levels with their different characters, influences and powers. In a sense, yoga is the development of a full knowledge of human and more than human psychology; in a sense psychology is everything, all knowledge,

wisdom and being." The author devotes about eight pages of close-knit argument to Sri Aurobindo's magnum opus *The Life Divine*. The first distinctive feature of his philosophy according to Mr. Roarke is, "that he is the most thorough-going, when it comes to insisting upon the claims of 'this world'. For he not only saw the world as a manifestation of Divinity, and thus 'real'; but he found the means for working out and realizing fully its divinity, and for bringing it to an apotheosis."

The second distinctive feature is the evolutionary nature of life, ascending to higher planes of consciousness and then making them descend into the already realized planes of being. How is this to be brought about? "It is by a combination," says the author, "of aspiration from below and impingement from above of the plane to be given evolutionary expression, that the ascending planes emerge. The unfolding has proceeded through the mineral and the plant phases, and the animal; here the physical and the vital have been given increasingly full play and expression. With the advent of humanity, the mental became the dominant term. It must be noted that the new development does not displace the old; except by giving it a place in a fuller context: it enriches, refines and helps to perfect it. By his mind a man helps to improve his physical and his vital natures; he does not repudiate them." Hence the first requirement is a call and readiness of the whole being for the transforming action of the new plane of consciousness. "It requires," observes the author, "the coming forward of the Psychic Being, opening at last a blazing flower of Delight and Love, to assume the leadership of the evolution: under its lead, the so difficult and so complex development proceeds most swiftly, surely and safely. And one must realize the Atman, and station himself in the overhead consciousness. He must realize the Divine on all levels, and climb eventually to the Supramental, and bring it down."

Sri Aurobindo has often been charged with being repetitious but this criticism comes only from those who read him for mere mental knowledge. Here the author's remarks voice fully the attitude of those who turn to Sri Aurobindo for a living inspiration. "... the *ideal* reader of Sri Aurobindo is a man of spiritual aspiration, or a man who can be kindled to such aspiration; and such a man is likely to revel in the very length and scope of such a tremendous work, and to welcome gratefully the tireless solicitude of Sri Aurobindo, in approaching the subject from so many angles, and in being at such pains to make it as clear in all respects as by its nature it can be, in human language as it is presently constituted. He will rather be glad for the repetitions, than bored by them. Sri Aurobindo was not writing just a 'work of literature,' in which the style and the form are the main things, and in which there is little else. He was revealing, for the fit reader, the key to the divine consciousness; his concern was with the founding of a divine life, in this world." At the end of this discourse the author gives us a brief but very heart-warming description of the supramental life as envisaged in *The Life Divine*.

Another chapter is devoted to *The Synthesis of Yoga*. The most crucial knot in human life is that of the ego. The author gives us an exhaustive picture of this enemy of our progress. He writes, "It is the craven little knot of self-seeking, self-assertion

and self-importance, however it may disguise itself, that must be undone and cast away: the poor thing at the mercy of circumstances and contingencies, reacting to fortune 'good' or 'bad', abjectly subject to the play of opposites, to attraction and repulsion, joy and sorrow, bound by desires; the prideful and the perpetually hurt of pride, forever thirsting; that fretful thing that is never moved but by some self-hugging preference, prejudice and craving, that death-bound thing, radically fearful and radically unfit to endure." I wonder if the wicked wasp of Twickenham poured his vitriol with such a withering effect. There is a chapter each on *The Problem of Rebirth*, on the posthumous volume of essays, *Mind of Light, Essays on the Gita, Veda and Upanishad, Letters on Yoga*. The temptation to quote from all these chapters has to be kept at bay, however pressing it may be.

The third section, "The Mother and the Ashram", presents the life in the Ashram in the wider context of Sri Aurobindo's ideal of a collective spiritual outflowing. This life of the Gnostic Beings will be characterized by Unity, Harmony and Mutuality. The Mother in her Divine Wisdom has organized it in such a way that neither the individual leads a life of pure self-development indifferent to the rest of the collectivity nor does he lose his identity in the collective mass as in modern technocratic societies. The individual works for the whole but at the same time enjoys the fullest possible freedom to blossom according to his own soul-being. Behind and within this corporate life is the transforming élan of the Mother. Who is the Mother with her four aspects of Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati? In the words of the author, "She is the consort and counterpart of the Lord: but to humanity she is the Divine Mother, sustaining, helping, teaching and chastening, answering prayers and leading out of bondage, and from childhood to maturity." Here I cannot help quoting a whole passage for its sheer grandeur and nobility of vision about the eternal Divine Shakti's labour in the world. "The seven waters, the streams, flow downward from the ocean of bliss and nectar. Sat, Being or Existence; Chit-Shakti, Consciousness-Force; Ananda, Bliss; Mahas or Vijnana, Supermind; Manas, mind; Prana, the vital nature; and Anna, the body, that which needs food: these are manifested and differentiated from their divinity. The Serpent of the waters is the movement of the worlds, subtly incalculable and with untold coilings and windings. The development proceeds, in its largeness and its complexity baffling the mind; with a serpentine procession largely unseen the worlds grow and return, move forward and coil back upon themselves, close and expand and undulate in the depths on depths of their mysteries. Cycle on cycle proceeds through the aeons and ages of development; period succeeds period, not with a circular but a helical movement. The spiral ever returns, but ever a little higher. Here the straight line, the undeviating Roman progression, is not in order: a greater and larger and more perfect order precludes it, and makes a mockery of the mind's thirst for a mathematical exactness."

The next chapter, "Education and Social Development", takes up a thorough study of Sri Aurobindo's works like *The Human Cycle* which envisages a spiritual society as the culmination of the psychology of human social development; *The Ideal*

of *Human Unity* which traces the course of the political history of man and shows how through all its zigzag career it is moving towards a World-State which will be so constituted as to enshrine the ideal of unity in diversity. Sri Aurobindo considers all totalitarianism as an anti-divine movement and hence inimical to man's higher evolution. That is why he gave his full support to the Allies against Nazism and Fascism.

A better and a nobler life for humanity demands an entirely new approach to the problem of education of the young so that they grow freely and discover their divine truth and mould their lives according to that. This divine truth has to be such as creates a harmony between the inner and outer growth of the child. Hence as the author points out, "It is not just the intellect and the moral nature that must be developed and cultivated: the whole evolutionary being with all its instruments must by education become perfect. Education is not just going to school for a few years and learning a thing or two fairly well, and a few bits and pieces of others — that is, it is not what it usually becomes in practice, or is there taken to be. It is a leading forward, a leading out, which is the root meaning of the word. What is to be led out is the soul, the true central being in the developing manifestation, the self that is naturally turned towards the Divine." In such an overhauling the rôle of the teacher has also to change. "The true teacher," observes the author, "is a help and a guide, a stimulator, and he understands that nothing really can be taught. He does not impose, pour in or hammer into shape. He consults the child's own mind, helps him find his true nature and particular divine purpose here, and expand in accordance with it. Building on the past, with the materials of the present he works towards the future. The teacher attempts less to *train*, that is to coerce, than to bring out, bring forward. He shows the pupil how to develop his own instruments, and find knowledge for himself. He works by influence and example, presence and helpfulness where needed; not by a rigid, doctrinaire and standardized instruction." The author fully elaborates the meaning of Integral Education on the lines laid down by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in their writings on education and devotes a few pages each to 'Culture and the Spirit' and 'Auroville'.

The author is a creative artist and a literary critic of a high-water mark. Therefore the chapter on Poetry and Poetics is most illuminating, fascinating and stimulating. Lovers of poetry will read this account of Sri Aurobindo's poetic development, his successful experiments in quantity, his lyrics and sonnets and narrative poems, his two epics *Iliad* and *Savitri* with a freshened awareness. I shall quote only his comments on the first line of *Savitri*. Says the author, "The poem begins with the tremendous line

It was the hour before the Gods awake.

Here at once is the past and ever-present and the never-ending, the symbol and the reality: the night and the awakening that perpetually recurs, when the nature is ready.

Physical dawn itself is a symbol of the divine dawn in the consciousness; the discovery and the building of one's full nature is the creation of the world. The earth rolls abandoned, but not for ever; for the gods awake. One awakens, truly, and the old somnambulism ceases. The cover of the night falls away, to reveal the body of divinity." A brief summary of each canto is given in a language fresh and vivid as well as compact and lucid and also we have some very fruitful comments on its technique, lay-out and architectonic. "The story of Savitri," as he points out, "is that of the world, its nature and its development; the divine manifestation that can lift men to the gods, and the process of growing into one's true nature, and to divinity. This the sovereign epic is not a poem to be read once or twice and mastered; it is not to be mastered at all, it is to be grown with." Yes, it is to be made a vehicle of one's aspiration and ascent. The last chapter "Summary and Conclusion" has some very inspiring passages and also reflects the writer's own depth of soul in approaching a subject of so wide a scope.

My personal interest in the book springs from a wider consideration. Way back in 1965 J.B. Priestley lamenting the decline of cultural values wrote, "The youngsters are shown a society in which James Bond is fiction's greatest achievement, pop singers are more important than fine musicians, TV personalities are in the centre and artists, philosophers, scientists are in the dark outside, and one starlet or model is worth a thousand teachers or nurses or probation officers." On Sir Stafford Cripps's gravestone these words are engraved, "If a man neglects the things of the Spirit he will seal the doom of future generations." We of the developing countries can yet check this headlong swoosh to doom if we prescribe such highly-inspired and inspiring books in our universities, and surely many among the youth will respond to this voice of the peaks. Teilhard de Chardin said, "Something is happening to the whole structure of human consciousness. A fresh kind of life is starting. In the face of such an upheaval no one can remain indifferent." Well, a key to the mystery of that something is provided in these pages.

RAVINDRA KHANNA