

# MOTHER INDIA

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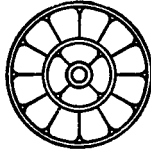
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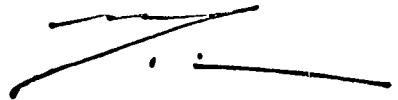


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

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

Vol. XXX

No. 2

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."*

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### AN APPEAL TO OUR WELL-WISHERS

*Mother India* has again to call for financial help. Our last appeal brought a very good response and we are deeply thankful. Costs have been steadily rising in everything. Our immediate need was to stock paper for a year. We have now paid Rs. 10,000. This has made a big gap in our resources. So we badly require donations of any amount that can be spared by our well-wishers.

The scheme of Life-Membership is still in force. If attended to, it can also help. Advertisements too can be a good contribution. Tariff cards can be had on application.

Increase in the number of subscribers is always welcome.

We shall be grateful for help in any form, and particularly in the form of donations.

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## THE EARLIEST DECLARATION BY THE MOTHER ABOUT HER TRUE SELF

*(This note, hitherto unpublished but included in the Birth Centenary Edition of the Mother's works, was found among her manuscripts dating back to 1912 and perhaps relating to the group formed in Paris around Abdul Baha )*

That which is speaking to you now is a faithful servant of the Divine. From all time, since the beginning of the earth, as a faithful servant of the Divine, it has spoken in the name of its Master. And as long as earth and men exist, it will be there in a body to preach the divine word.

So, wherever I am asked to speak, I do my best, as a servant of the Divine.

But to speak in the name of a particular doctrine or of a man, however great he may be, that I cannot do!

The Eternal Transcendent forbids me.

1912

# OUR LIGHT AND DELIGHT

## RECOLLECTIONS OF LIFE WITH THE MOTHER

### 1

#### The Mother and Sri Aurobindo

“The Mother is not ‘a disciple of Sri Aurobindo’. She has had the same experiences and realisations as myself. She was an adept in the Buddhist Yoga and the Yoga of the Gita before she came to India. She has had all possible experiences and realisations that have been vouchsafed to humanity till now. My work would not have been done without her by my side.”

There could be no better tribute to our Mother than these words, unpublished before, of Sri Aurobindo written in a letter of 1941 to my friend and fellow-sadhaka Arabinda Basu.

The Mother herself, in various places, has alluded to the truths of occultism and spirituality compassed by her both before and after coming to take her place by the side of Sri Aurobindo. In a many-faceted article entitled *Spiritual and Occult Truths*, contributed to the present issue, Huta has included, amidst a host of other new material, a most astonishing piece of information the Mother conveyed to her in 1961. The Mother disclosed “how she had achieved in her tender age the highest occult truths, how she had realised and seen all the visions set forth in *Savitri*”. Here is indeed a marvellous flash of psychic autobiography. Huta continues the report based on the Mother’s words: “Actually, she had experienced the poem’s fundamental revelations before she arrived in Pondicherry and before Sri Aurobindo read out *Savitri* to her early in the morning day after day at a certain period of the Ashram. She also said to me that she had never told Sri Aurobindo all that she had seen beforehand.”

I am especially interested in this information, for it touches on an unforgettable phase of my own life in the Ashram. Owing to my sustained aspiration to write what Sri Aurobindo has termed “overhead poetry”, that is, poetic inspiration caught from secret levels of consciousness above the mind, levels of a superhuman light and delight, Sri Aurobindo generously granted the incredible favour of letting me see portions of his epic, which was then still in the making. Without letting anyone know, he started sending me, every morning, in sealed envelopes the opening cantos. On October 25, 1936, written in his own fine and sensitive yet forceful hand, there burst upon me the beauty and amplitude of the first sixteen lines of the poem’s prelude of “symbol dawn” as it stood at that time. The precious gift of passages kept coming to me in private for months and months and a happy discussion of them went to and fro. Before enclosing them, usually with the Mother’s “Amal” inscribed on the covers, Sri Aurobindo must have daily read the verse out to her prior to breaking up their joint sessions of correspondence with the sadhakas through the small hours of the night. Some time in early 1938 the Amal-ward stream of *Savitri* ceased like the fabled river Sarasvati of the Rigvedic symbolism. I went on a visit to Bombay. Sri Aurobindo still wrote to me about the poem, mentioning its progress, but no passages were sent. Not long afterwards, he suffered an accident to his right leg and his old routine of sitting

with the Mother to tackle the copious correspondence stopped and so did letter-writing, except to Dilip and me. Now the poet was surrounded by a small number of attendants, to one of whom — Nirodbaran — he accorded a privilege whose gloriousness I most envy, for he started dictating to him revisions and extensions of the poem. The year and a half from nearly October's end in 1936 to almost the close of February 1938 must have been the "certain period of the Ashram" to which Huta's article refers, a period of shining surprise not only to the Grace-inundated disciple to whom *Savitri* was sent but also on a far deeper plane to the Mother for the wonderful language in which the Master unveiled his high visions and to the Master himself because the Mother had anticipated them in mystic silence some thirty years in advance.

Side by side though Sri Aurobindo and the Mother stood, she often took the position as of a "disciple" and spoke of carrying out a work allotted to her and of promulgating his message to the world. On the other hand, he never tired of declaring her to be not only equal to him but also indispensable for his mission and even suggested that if she were not there as his counterpart he would be incomplete. Many of his utterances about her are well known, but a few of an extremely illuminating kind are liable to be overlooked because they have not yet formed part of any published collection. I shall concentrate on them as well as on one or two which, though they have had a better fate, may not have caught everybody's eye.

Answering the question, "Is complete transformation possible without having a Shakti<sup>1</sup>?", Sri Aurobindo, after some general remarks, jocular at one place, indicated the Mother's inevitable counterpart-role.<sup>2</sup>

"Why not? Transformation would be complete if one could bring down the thing that you have got in the mind and the vital being into the physical also, into the very cells of the material body. The conditions are that you should be able to keep the same deep peace, wideness, strength and power and plasticity from the mind downward to the very cells. When that basis is ready, the working from above begins. The transformation does not require a Shakti. Incarnating the Divine in the body means incarnating your own Divine Self that is in the Supermind. . . Transformation is a personal affair. I do not quite see what a Shakti has to do with it. Is your question about Shakti a prologue to an application for marriage? I do not object to a Shakti if there is a genuine case. You should not mix up your case with me.

"The function of the Shakti is something special. In my own case it was a necessary condition for the work that I had to do. If I had had to do only my own transformation or give a new yoga or a new ideal to a select few people who came into personal contact with me I could have done that without having any Shakti. But, for the work that I had to do, it was necessary that the two sides must come together. By the coming together of Mirra<sup>3</sup> and me certain conditions are created which make it easy for you to do the transformation. You can take advantage of these conditions. But it is not necessary that everybody should have a Shakti just because in my case it was necessary.

<sup>1</sup> Spiritual feminine partner

<sup>2</sup> "Sri Aurobindo at Evening Talk. Some Notes of 1920-1926" by V. Chidanandam, *Mother India* April 1970, pp. 147-8

<sup>3</sup> In the early days after the Mother's final arrival in Pondicherry in 1920 her name was still spelt this way according to its original form. She had also not taken charge of the Ashram.

You cannot generalise like that from one case. It is not a question of great or small. It is a question of your being less complex than I am. If you had to do all the things that I have done you would never be able to do it. And before you can have a Shakti you must first of all deserve a Shakti. The first condition is that you must be master of all the movements of Kama, lust. There are many other things. One thing is that there must be complete union on every plane of inner consciousness."

Further light on what Sri Aurobindo has considered the necessity of the two sides coming together is shed by the closing part of a letter in which, on March 29, 1926, Amrita communicated to a disciple Sri Aurobindo's answers to his questions<sup>1</sup>

"... it will be a mistake if you make too rigid a separation between A.G.<sup>2</sup> and Mirra. Both influences are necessary for the complete development of the Sadhana. The work of the two together alone brings down the supramental Truth into the physical plane. A.G. acts directly on the mental and on the vital being through the illumined mind, he represents the Purusha element whose strength is predominantly in illumined knowledge (intuition, supramental or spiritual) and the power that acts in this knowledge, while the psychic being supports this action and helps to transform the physical and vital plane. Mirra acts directly on the psychic and on the emotional vital and physical being through the illumined psychic consciousness, while the illumined intuitions of the supramental being give her the necessary knowledge to act on the right lines and at the right moment. Her force representing the Shakti element is directly psychic, vital, physical and her spiritual knowledge is predominantly practical in its nature. It is, that is to say, a large and detailed knowledge and experience of the mental, vital and physical forces at play and, with the knowledge, the power to handle them for the purposes of life and of Yoga."

A very crucial pointer to the Mother's central place in Sri Aurobindo's world-work is in four pronouncements of his. In a letter of September 16, 1935 he writes<sup>3</sup> "It is not clear what your Guru meant by my sitting on the path, that could have been true of the period between 1915 and 1920 when I was writing the *Arya*, but the sadhana and the work were waiting for the Mother's coming. In 1923 or 1924, I could not be described as sitting on the path, so far as the sadhana was concerned, but it may perhaps be only a metaphor or symbol for the outward form of the work not yet being ready." Another letter, dated July 27, 1934, says among other things:<sup>4</sup> "Before the Mother came... I was still seeking my way for the transformation and the passage to the Supramental (all the part of the Yoga that goes beyond the ordinary Vedanta) and acted very much on a principle of *laissez faire* with the few sadhaks who were there." Nirodbaran, in the talk of December 10, 1938 between Sri Aurobindo and his attendants after the accident seventeen days earlier, said to him<sup>5</sup> "The Mother's coming must have greatly helped you in your work and in your sadhana." Sri Aurobindo answered enthusiastically: "Of course, of course. All my realisations — Nirvana and others — would have remained theoretical, as it were, so far as the outer world was concerned.

<sup>1</sup> *Mother India*, December 5, 1970, p 613

<sup>2</sup> The abbreviation for Aurobindo Ghose, which the disciples used at that time

<sup>3</sup> *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1953), p 366

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p 367

<sup>5</sup> *Talks with Sri Aurobindo* (Sri Aurobindo Pathamandir, Calcutta, 1966), p 6

It is the Mother who showed the way to a practical form. Without her no organised manifestation would have been possible. She has been doing this kind of work from her very childhood ” But perhaps the most sweeping as well as startling compliment to the Mother — a compliment charged with a humility possible only to a supreme instrument of the Divine such as Sri Aurobindo — occurs in one of the months just before the Descent of the Overmind in the physical beings of both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. He is recorded as saying:<sup>1</sup> “The inner guide may fail after a time in the Sadhana. I had attained an inner calm, before I took help from Lele. But when I came to Pondicherry, there was no help from within, and I was seeking for some illumination from an outside thing or person. Then Mirra came, and, had she not come here, I would have been still fumbling . ”

The same luminous humility overwhelms us in the words Amrita once reported to me in the early days of my Ashram-stay. He told me that after the Mother’s arrival in Pondicherry Sri Aurobindo declared to the young men with him at the time, of whom Amrita was one: “I never knew the meaning of ‘surrender’ until Mirra surrendered herself to me.”

We might assert that in the first meeting of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo at 3.30 p.m. on March 29, 1914 the typical Aurobindonian Yoga, with its insistence primarily on Surrender to the Divine, found for the wide world the true seed of its call to life to break from the common hold of earth and thrust upward in self-abandonment towards the Light without yet losing its root in terrestrial existence, so that ultimately the Light may be drawn into the very depths of Matter and transform them.

Balancing this fact, we can discern in that inner gesture of the Mother throwing her whole self at the feet of Sri Aurobindo — a gesture which often took an outer shape in the days to come — her recognition of his absolute mastery over her life and of the beginning of a new epoch of spirituality even for so extraordinary and so richly experienced a Truth-seeker as she. What she felt about him could be seen every time she spoke his name. A taste of some ineffable nectar seemed to be on her lips when with a musical blend of invocation of his presence from afar and evocation of it from her own profundities she pronounced it like a Mantra of mantras in a half French half English accent — the *S* of “Sri” becoming invariably *Sh* and the *r* of it as well as of “Aurobindo” emerging with a kind of golden gurgle from the throat. Utter devotion and utter identification appeared to be simultaneous in the sound Her governance of the Ashram which he had put totally in her hands and which she moulded and expanded and brought to a multi-aspected creativeness was as if that Great Name were taking on Great Form everywhere. Although from the evening of November 24, 1926 he withdrew into a background of “dynamic meditation” to expedite his work of bringing about the descent of the hitherto-unmanifest Supermind into the blind-seeming long-suffering physical substance of the world and although the Mother was to all intents and purposes our sole Guru, she ever acted out the verity enshrined in the letter of probably 1930 which was recently published in *Mother India*, a letter written by a sadhaka under Sri Aurobindo’s directions and corrected by him.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Sri Aurobindo at Evening Talk Some Notes of May-to-November 1926” by V Chidanandam, *Mother India*, August 1971, p 453

<sup>2</sup> November 1977, p 780

“I am afraid that you labour under a fundamental misconception regarding the Ashram. It is not an institution planned by Sri Aurobindo with certain rules of management, laws or regulations fixed and made to order. It has grown up of itself out of the force of the Truth he manifests and can follow only the movements of that Truth. Sri Aurobindo and the Ashram form one integral whole. His being is spread out in the Ashram, gathers and takes up the entire life of the latter into itself and into one harmonious spiritual unity. Its life is the life of the Spirit; its growth is the growth of the Spirit. It is entirely wrong to look at the Ashram as a group or collection of Sadhakas or to look at it as having a life or an aspiration or an aim that does or can exist apart from Sri Aurobindo. Its life and movements and activities are an expression, integrally, of its growth and development from within. It has no laws, rules or regulations, except the one law of spiritual growth and development in and through Sri Aurobindo.”

After Sri Aurobindo withdrew from his body, the Mother may be said to have become physically even more Aurobindonian than before. Once, when some recent photographs of her were under scrutiny, she told us that her very face and particularly the manner in which she smiled were becoming like Sri Aurobindo's. Before his passing, there were two bodies to establish the Supermind's victory, now there was only one and Sri Aurobindo was packing everything into it as if it were at the same time his own and the Mother's. A clue to this biune fact came to me on my birthday in 1968. She had occasion to mention the event of December 5, 1950. She said:

“You see, when he left his body, he gave his whole supramental force to me. It came to me most concretely.”

Then she touched the skin and flesh of her left arm to convey the sense of the concreteness, as if even flesh and skin had felt that supramental force. She added. “His force passed from his body into mine. Its passage was like a wind blowing upon and into my body.”

The point about the intensified and redoubled presence of Sri Aurobindo in her was driven home to me on two other occasions. On April 30, 1953 I spoke to the Mother about a friend who had left the Ashram. “He claims that Sri Aurobindo is all the time present with him, communicating with him and guiding him.” The Mother replied. “The fact simply is that Sri Aurobindo made an emanation of himself for him. And this emanation Sri Aurobindo has not withdrawn. That is an act of Grace. It does not mean that the central Sri Aurobindo, Sri Aurobindo himself, is there. He is here with me all the time and working through me.”

The book *Champakal Speaks* quotes a direct letter to the person concerned, written on 5.5.1953:<sup>1</sup>

“I do not deny that you have got a connection with something of Sri Aurobindo, the something that was interested in you and in what you are doing. This something might have remained with you to inspire and help you in your work in America and elsewhere. But it is only a part, a very, very small part of the Sri Aurobindo whom I know and with whom I lived physically for thirty years, and who has not left me, not for a moment — for He is still with me, day and night, thinking through my brain,

<sup>1</sup> *Champakal Speaks* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1975), p. 251



writing through my pen, speaking through my mouth and acting through my organising power ”

The truth expressed here came to be reaffirmed by her in general when I raised an issue apropos of a message she gave on her birthday in 1958. Both the French and the English versions were published in the March issue of *Mother India*. The Message consisted of three sentences. In the original the first ran

“Fêter la naissance d’un corps transitoire peut satisfaire certains sentiments fidèles ”

The Mother’s English translation was:

“To celebrate the birth of a transitory body can satisfy some faithful feelings.”

The remainder of the Message in English read:

“To celebrate the manifestation of the eternal Consciousness can be done at every moment of the universal history.

“But to celebrate the advent of a new world, the supramental world, is a marvellous and exceptional privilege.”

Evidently, the Mother was pulling us beyond the disciples’ devoted urge to make overmuch of the annually returning single day on which the Guru’s physical being had been born. With a natural modesty and an impersonal insight her emphasis fell more on the entry into time of the larger non-individual reality of the everlasting inner Divine within that being, and most on the transcendent Supermind’s becoming now, through this reality and that being, a part of the earth’s future and creating the possibility of an earthly heaven. The last allusion was to the Supramental Manifestation that had occurred on February 29, 1956 in the earth’s subtle-physical layer. But I was rather disturbed by the word “transitory”. I wrote to the Mother that it suggested that her present body would perish and she would pass away from our midst. I added “Such a suggestion cannot but be quite upsetting to your disciples. Surely, if Sri Aurobindo were here to guide us he would never let you use the adjective ‘transitoire’.” I concluded with my conviction that Sri Aurobindo, who had asked her, as she herself had stated, to complete the Yoga of Supramental Descent and Transformation, would choose the French equivalent of “transitional”.

After the Mother had read my note, she came to me where I sat on the floor as usual, waiting for her to finish her lunch and then meet me before she took her short siesta and I left for my house. Very quietly she looked at me and said in a low yet firm voice. “You have been impertinent. How can you dare to say what Sri Aurobindo would choose or not choose? Do you know where Sri Aurobindo is?” I saw in a flash the mistake I had committed. I said “I am sorry, Mother. I did not realise the truth. I know where he is.” At once she had tenderness in her eyes. She said quite simply “He is all the time with me and directing my actions.”

Touching on the word to which I had objected, she remarked: “All bodies are transitory.” I understood her to mean that no physical form ever retains any character permanently or is such as to be by its very nature indissoluble. Perhaps the English “mutable” would best render the immediate sense, implying that at the moment her body belonged to the same class as those of the rest of humanity. In an ultimate sense she could be taken to have intended that even at its maximum future development her body would not be the final result of evolution but only the pioneer of an “intermediate” race which a talk of hers on April 16, 1958 categorises with the very word I wanted

her to use. "A transitional species"<sup>1</sup> The Mother, in my opinion, could not have meant that her present body was subject to death and therefore bound to be given up by her. Death was not envisaged as a possibility in the circumstances of the Yogic process going on at that time. On September 25, 1957, the year of the February Message, she asserts in connection with a passage in Sri Aurobindo's book, *The Supramental Manifestation*:<sup>2</sup>

"I think — I know — that it is now certain that we shall realise what he expects of us. It has become no longer a hope but a certainty. Only the time necessary for this realisation will be longer or shorter according to our individual effort, our concentration, our goodwill . . . and the *importance* we give to this fact. For the inattentive observer things may appear very much what they were before, but for one who knows how to see and is not deceived by appearances things are going well.

"Let each one do his best and perhaps not many years will have to elapse before the first visible results become apparent to all."

The general reference is to what in the same talk she has termed "the Superman" who must serve as a link "between humanity as it is and the supramental being created in the supramental way" — that is, created not by the animal mode of birth to which all of us, including the Mother, have owed our bodies, but by a direct "materialisation", an occult method to be found by the transformed human being. The talk of April 16 in the next year returns to the theme of discovering "the means of producing new beings without going through the old animal method", and says "these beings — who will have a truly spiritual birth — will constitute the elements of the new race, the supramental race"<sup>3</sup> rather than a race of intermediate beings. In this talk too the Mother looks forward to the superman's rapid advent: "This new realisation is proceeding with what one might call a lightning speed"<sup>4</sup>.

Here, as in the earlier conclusion, she must have had in mind not a general reference but a particular one — namely, her own body moving onward to commence a super-humanity, the human supramentalised as distinct from the supramental assuming a human-looking shape. Not that she attached any importance, in a self-regarding way, to the body she possessed nor that she considered it a paragon of health and on that account a just claimant for the physical divinisation which is the crowning consequence of the Integral Yoga. True, many of the illnesses she went through came of her dealings with the world's impurities and of her throwing herself wide-open to contacts with the unregenerate consciousness of the people she was nurturing towards the Life Divine. But she never made any secret of certain defects in her health. They were inevitable, for "*la condition humaine*" had been accepted by her in right earnest: the aim was to cope with actual physical nature in both its strength and its weakness in order to take Mr. Everyman to the status of Superman. The "human condition" could be seen clearly from a remark she made in my presence. Navajata had had a severe attack of renal colic. One morning, when he met her, she asked him how he felt. He answered in a somewhat sad tone that a little pain still persisted in the kidney-

<sup>1</sup> *Questions and Answers 1957-58* (Collected Works of the Mother — The Centenary Edition, 1977), p. 314

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 314

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 315

region. The Mother, wanting to take away his attention from this slight symptom, calmly declared "From the beginning of this century there has not been a day when I haven't had a pain in my abdomen."

Sri Aurobindo has written of some deep-seated chronic troubles in his body, which he had Yogically tackled. The Mother's body, besides this abdominal weakness, had two abnormal characteristics. Udar once reported to me that she had told him of her body's tendency to giddiness at a height and a spontaneous aversion to the proximity of fire. Possibly the latter characteristic was the subtle-physical being's "carry-over" of the intense experience of burning at the stake to which Joan of Arc had been condemned: the Mother is believed to have been in one of her past births the Maid of Orleans who had come inwardly charged with the Soul of France. The Mother had herself hinted to me at the possibility of some sort of "carry-over" of even very outward physical formations when I on one occasion remarked how in a certain position her hand looked exactly like Mona Lisa's in the painting by Leonardo.

Of course, heredity too is responsible for some bodily traits and we do not know what she derived from parentage when she took birth in 1878 in the family of Maurice Alfassa, a Turk from Adrianople who had come to settle in Paris two years before with his wife Mathilde Ismaloun of Cairo, who had Egyptian Pharaonic blood in her veins. But, whatever the inheritance or the "carry-over", negative or positive, we can have no doubt that her body had been so organised in its subtle qualities as to be the fit field for the supernormal experiment of supramental transformation. It had an openness in nerve and cell to the spiritual light, a supple strength which allowed her to play tennis every afternoon even when past eighty, and a resolute endurance which made light of the common ills of the flesh. Above all, it was a body responding to the Divine's demand for surrender, a demand met in its entirety by even the physical consciousness and not only the inner self. Both its humility and its uniqueness come through in that passage written on September 8, 1954:

"The body repeats constantly and with a poignant sincerity: 'What am I to demand anything whatsoever from anyone at all? Left to myself I am nothing, I know nothing, I can do nothing. Unless the truth penetrates into me and directs me, I am incapable of taking even the minutest decision and of knowing what is the best thing to do and to live even in the most insignificant circumstances. Shall I ever be capable of being transformed to the point of becoming What I ought to be and of manifesting What wants to manifest upon earth?' But why does this answer always come from the depths, from You, Lord, with an indisputable certitude. 'If you cannot do it, no other body upon earth can do it.' There is but one conclusion: I shall persist in my effort, without giving in, I shall persist until death or until victory."

The last two sentences remind us of two statements of Sri Aurobindo in 1935: " . . . If I am seeking after supramentalisation, it is because it is a thing that has to be done for the earth-consciousness and if it is not done in myself, it cannot be done in others. <sup>2</sup> It is not for personal greatness that I am seeking the Supermind. I care nothing for greatness or littleness in the human sense. I am seeking to bring some principle of inner Truth, Light, Harmony, Peace into the earth-consciousness. . . . If

<sup>1</sup> *Champaklal Speaks*, p. 92

<sup>2</sup> *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother*, p. 216

greater men than myself have not had this vision and this ideal before them, that is no reason why I should not follow my Truth-sense and Truth-vision. Let all men jeer at me if they will or all Hell fall upon me if it will for my presumption, — I go on till I conquer or perish. This is the spirit in which I seek the Supermind, no hunting for greatness for myself or others”<sup>1</sup>

In the article which I wrote after Sri Aurobindo had passed away and which received the Mother’s full approval, I tried to lay out the objectives and details of what I termed the Sacrifice of Sri Aurobindo marking a change of Yogic strategy to accelerate humanity’s evolution. I said that Sri Aurobindo changed his old formula “I conquer or perish” into a new paradox: “I perish to conquer”. The Mother’s cry of “death” or “victory” can lead an Aurobindonian worker like her to nothing save the same paradox in a new key. But her change mystifies us, in spite of all that the inner vision can descry, because there is none to confirm what is seen and because it is difficult to reconcile with it the fact that Sri Aurobindo, unlike the Mother, could afford to sacrifice himself knowing his counterpart was there for him to pack in that unique survivor the Supermind’s final triumph.

Let me not, however, end this chapter about the relationship between the two Avatars on a semi-tragic note. Apropos of the supernormality of the bodies they occupied and used, I should like to touch on a topic which within a limited area at the same time illustrates this supernormality and brings the two personalities together. I take my point of departure from that extremely valuable book, *Champaklal Speaks*, on which I have already drawn and which, along with its sequel *Champaklal’s Treasures*, conjures up the Mother and Sri Aurobindo to our hearts and minds in the most vivid and intimate way, while evoking without intention the instinctively wise, expansively warm and ever-helpful figure of the life-long disciple himself, ever-helpful not only to the Master and the Mother but also to the groping and stumbling humans who sought their saviour feet.

Yes, the books have extreme value, yet here and there one may take the liberty to fault it. At places, Sri Aurobindo is reported as talking not as a born master of English would but in a mode of Champaklalese. The editing should have been more careful. At one place at least, there is a wrong attribution: an early poem of mine, which Sri Aurobindo had corrected and commented on, has assumed Radhanand as its author! At another place I believe there is an inaccuracy owing to a misunderstanding, and my closing anecdote starts from the event concerned in it.

Champaklal reports on page 85 of his first book that the Mother told Satyakarma, in the presence of Amrita and Champaklal, that when in 1920 she had fasted for ten days she had not taken anything, “not even a drop of water”. I expressed to Champaklal my doubt about this. I said a fast of such a kind was not possible. He countered by asking how I could consider anything to be impossible for the Mother. I still remain unconvinced, especially as Champaklal did not obtain a confirmation from either Satyakarma or Amrita. I hold that she must have said somewhat dramatically “nothing but a drop of water at times”. Fasting, as any dictionary will enlighten us, consists in not taking food. Water is always taken, unless the fast is a short religious one as at the Muslim Ramazan — from sunrise to sunset. The idea of not taking water during

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, pp 214-15

a prolonged abstention from food never arises — unless one deliberately risks death, as in some cases of hunger-strike. In most cases even of hunger-strike, it is imbibed, though perhaps on a small scale. Sri Aurobindo went on a fast twice, once in Alipore Jail and again in Pondicherry. At neither time was there any question of abstention from water. And I am all the more positive about the Mother because I have myself heard her speak of this fast of hers. Both Champaklal and Amrita were present when she spoke, but Champaklal has perhaps forgotten the talk. It was in the "Stores" (Prosperity Room) on the first floor of the Library House one evening before the Soup-distribution downstairs.

The Mother never referred to not drinking water. Had she kept away from water, she would certainly have emphasised that remarkable feat. Her story was concerned only with food. And she said that one of the effects of her fast was that when she held a cup or anything else with her fingers, the hand kept shaking. I think the word "cup" is rather significant for our controversy. But the drinking of water or any other liquid does not lessen the extraordinariness of the fact that, just like Sri Aurobindo, she continued her normal routine of daily activities all through the fasting period. I am sure she could have equalled Sri Aurobindo's number of fasting days — twenty-one or so — without feeling any debility. But she had to stop with a mere ten days for a special reason. A little shyly she told us that she ended her fast when Sri Aurobindo remarked "You are not looking very pretty."

I surmise that if she had undergone a ten-days' dehydration, Sri Aurobindo's comment would have been less of an understatement.

## 2

### Some Ways of the Mother's Working

All of us have enchanting memories of the Mother's sweetness and understanding — a divine enfolding of us and entry into the most sensitive chambers of our hearts. But the Mother was no ordinary spiritual Guru. The Supramental Divine acts from a level which can often leave us a-gape at its unclassifiable originality.

A very unusual feature at times was the Mother's reception of physical facts reported by the sadhakas. Physical facts so impress and obsess us that we find any disrespect to them, or brushing away of them, a very disturbing if not incomprehensible matter. I have heard Champaklal say to me that these things mean much to our exterior consciousness but from the Mother's inner and higher viewpoint they can become very small and insignificant. This was said after observing the manner in which the Mother had faced some issue involving directly or indirectly a plant known to have been of Pujalal's rearing. She had shaken her head as if saying "No" to that information. The reason for her queer-seeming behaviour was, as both Champaklal and I realised, her concern primarily with spiritual truth, the true God-touched consciousness she was bent on evoking, encouraging and strengthening in us. If she found a sadhaka reporting something physically factual with a wrong attitude or un-eeemly loss of inner poise due to resentment against somebody, she would either ignore the excited reportage or even go to the extent of saying "No" to what our normal senses had certified as undeniable. She was concentrated on our inner development. If a surprising negation of what seemed clear as daylight to our eyes could serve to give

a jolt sending us bewildered from the too-outward-gazing mind into a sudden search of inner reality, she would not hesitate to do what we might ordinarily consider as calling day night and night day.

Not that she was indifferent to "truth-telling". She frequently insisted that a sadhak should never tell a lie. The supreme Truth-Consciousness, which is Supermind and which secretly holds the perfect divine original of everything here and gradually works itself out in an evolving manifestation, cannot find a full and permanent home in a being addicted to lying or even prone to be lax in accuracy. But that did not necessarily imply that every so-called accurate account was acceptable to the Mother at all moments. Even though she might take it as a genuine statement she was not bound to show herself to be receiving it as such at all times. At any particular instant when it came with the aura of an inner condition out of touch with the equanimity and impersonality characteristic of the supreme Truth-Consciousness's influence on our being, her spiritual mission could impel her to deny importance to it and set it aside as if it were not worth crediting

Of course, there is also the ancient right of the Guru to test the faith of the disciple by — as it is said in Indian parlance — dubbing the sun moon and the moon sun. Whatever word falls from the Guru's lips has to be accepted by the disciple without question. Every command of his has to be carried out and every statement taken as God's truth. Thus alone can the disciple open himself thoroughly to the Divine Power streaming through the Guru and put away the gross physical consciousness which is the main obstacle to the growth of the inner being. I do not know whether the Mother ever exercised the right of faith-test in the strict sense. She was too modern to go in for traditional methods. I have found her always ready to be corrected even when she had previously made a sweeping declaration. But the correction proposed by the sadhaka had also to come with an approach proper from the spiritual standpoint. If there was uppishness on the part of the sadhaka she ignored the offered idea — not because the uppishness offended any egoistic sense in her but simply because it arose from such a sense in the sadhaka. I once pointed out to her what I regarded as a mistake in a geographical detail in a statement she had made for publication, but she refused to accept my correction and said I was not being compelled to reproduce in print the interview with Chamanlal in which the detail had occurred. I realised later that I had made an elaborate, schoolmasterish and rather showy approach and had been scorned on account of it. At another time she wrote to me that mistakes should always be admitted and set right and herself made some changes I had proposed in a writing of hers on Auroville

What a difference is made in result between the right approach and the wrong I knew when the University Centre edition of *Savitri* was to be published practically under my editorship. Perhaps her action had also a tinge of the other movement. I noted the whole incident in my diary soon after its occurrence.

It was April 10, 1954. The day proved one of the most decisive in my inner life. I took to the Mother some suggestions with regard to *Savitri*. I had written them down. The Mother looked strange and said: "I can answer without even reading your note. I won't allow you to change even a comma in *Savitri*."

I knew she was striking out at something which in the past had led me to make some "editorial" adjustments in three letters of Sri Aurobindo in *Mother India*. There

had been three related questions about the Mother, to each of which he had simply answered "Yes". I put the questions together, followed by only one "Yes". I realised afterwards that a needed affirmative emphasis had been watered down by my misguided sense of economical elegance. Later, when the second volume of the first edition of *Savitri* was under preparation, a sadhaka had stressed to the Mother the "danger" of sending the proofs to me. The Mother seems even to have passed an order against sending them. But Prithwisingh and Nirod had made urgent representations to her, saying that it would be a great mistake not to let me see the proofs, for I had made very appropriate suggestions in the past, which had been found correct when the typed copy had been compared with the original manuscript. So the Mother cancelled her order but left, of course, the final decision in the hands of Nolini and Nirod. In fact, I, being in Bombay at that period, had no power over what the press would print since whatever I might propose would have to pass under their eyes. The press was not dealing directly with me.

When the proof-reading was finished, Nolini wrote to me thanking me for the important and valuable work I had done. Now, before the new single-volume edition of *Savitri* was started, I made another long list of suggestions, many of which came to be accepted. The proofs of the new edition were passing through my hands as I was in the Ashram at the time, and suggestions again were being made by me.

"Mother," I said, "I am not wanting you to sanction the changing of commas and such things. All I want is that in some sort of Publishers' Note we should say that certain passages in Parts II and III did not receive final revision. otherwise critics will think that they are what Sri Aurobindo intended them finally to be."

The Mother exclaimed: "Do you think there is anybody in the world who can judge Sri Aurobindo? And how do you know what Sri Aurobindo intended or did not intend? He may have wanted just what he has left behind. How can you say that he did not give the final revision? How can you judge?"

I said: "It is not only my own opinion. Nirod agrees with me, and I think Nolini also."

"It is presumptuous for anyone to have such an opinion. Who can enter into Sri Aurobindo's consciousness? It is a consciousness beyond everything and what it has decided how can anyone know?"

"Mother, from the fact that Sri Aurobindo sometimes corrected his own things on our pointing out oversights we conclude that passages may be there which needed revision."

At this, the Mother exploded like a veritable Mahakali. "Yes, I know. People used to pester him with letters, pointing out grammatical mistakes and other things. He used to make changes just for the sake of peace. He was very polite and did not let people see what a nuisance they were. But when he and I were together and alone and like this" — here she put her two palms together two or three times to show the intimacy — "he used to say: 'What a bother, what a nuisance!' And once he said: 'But I had a purpose in putting the thing in this way. I wanted it like this.' Sri Aurobindo made many concessions out of politeness and a wish to be left in peace. When a great being comes down here to work he wants peace and not botheration. Yes, he was very polite, and people took advantage of his compassion and misunderstood it and got all sorts of ideas. Sri Aurobindo was polite — but I have made it a point not to

be polite. I am not polite at all. The other day Pavitra brought me somebody's idea about Sri Aurobindo's passing. Somebody said Sri Aurobindo had died because of this or that. I told Pavitra 'Let him think anything — I simply don't care. The truth will remain what it is.'"

I raised the question: "Take the Epilogue to *Savitri*, Mother. It comes from an early version and is not equal to the rest of the poem. In some places it is almost like a sort of anticlimax as regards the plane of spiritual inspiration."

At this moment Nirod walked in and said. "Sri Aurobindo asked me. 'What remains now to be done in *Savitri*?' I replied. 'The Book of Death and the Epilogue.' He remarked. 'We shall see about them later.'"

The Mother turned to Nirod and said. "That may be his way of saying that nothing more needed to be done. We can't form any conclusions. At most you may write a Publishers' Note to say. 'We poor blind ignorant human beings think Sri Aurobindo did not intend certain things to be the final version. And we are giving our opinion for what it may be worth.'"

Just then a black lizard came and stood at Nirod's feet and looked up at him. The Mother saw it and said: "It seems to have a fascination for your feet. Why? Could it be symbolic?"

Nirod. "That is for you to say."

The Mother's whole outburst made me wonder about my long, years-long, discussions with Sri Aurobindo about *Savitri*, the innumerable comments I used to make and he used to welcome and consider patiently. Was he just being polite with me? It hurt very much to think that. It also seemed impossible, non-factual. But I tried to open my being to the Mother and to accept wholly what she had said. I thanked her for the new outlook she had given me, and bowed down to her. She smiled and blessed me. She had made in me a wide opening. I opened out into a sense of Sri Aurobindo's vastness and divineness. Something in the physical mind seemed broken and to make room for the higher and wider Consciousness.

Later, the physical mind attempted a strong come-back and I passed through a whole afternoon of severe conflict. Should I accept the Mother's statement without reservation? May it not be that Sri Aurobindo's discussions with me on *Savitri* were an exception to his practice of being merely polite? But to insist on an exception and to refuse to accept the opposite showed only the resistance of ego, of *amour propre*, the intellect's pride and vanity. I felt I must reject all these self-regarding attitudes and truly grant that Sri Aurobindo might have been nothing more than polite and compassionate in considering all my suggestions to him. Then my ego would be thrown out and my physical mind become clear and grow receptive to the vast divine Consciousness of both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. I chose to take without any question her words, however contrary they might appear to my own sense of factuality. Moreover, I said to myself: "Your heart will not go anywhere else in search of a Guru. All your hope and help are in this Ashram. Whatever the pain, submit. You have no alternative. But at the end you will surely find light and delight as the Mother's gift through every move of hers."

Now for the first time, even in my most outer awareness, I realised what she and Sri Aurobindo truly were. The whole poise of physical being experienced a change.



A new life began, and I knew then that a fundamental obstacle — intellectual self-esteem — had essentially disappeared

What is of extreme interest to note is the sequel to the whole incident. Some time afterwards, when I was putting together the letters which Sri Aurobindo had written to me on *Savitri* to serve as a supplement in the last part of the volume, I spoke to the Mother of an introductory note to them. She consented to listen to what I had a mind to write. In that note most of the points which I had previously put to her but which she had rejected came in again, amidst some other matters. She approved of all of them unconditionally. And when I proposed that this note might go as a footnote in small print she expressed her wish that it should go as a real introduction in its own right.

I learned how the state of mind in which we approach the Mother and the attitude we bring to any situation related to her determines the consequences.

A second lesson was that the Mother's actions, no matter how bewildering, are directed always towards the flowering of our true soul.

Another danger to guard against is leaping to conclusions about the Mother's decisions by taking the face-value of any chain of events. There was a resident of Pondicherry, known to many of us, who had turned critical of the Ashram and of the Mother's way with sadhakas. Several reports had been conveyed to the Mother about him and she had even come to learn that he had been speaking against her. But she did not stop him from coming to the daily pranam and taking her blessings. This went on for quite a long time. Then one of the four darshan days arrived. He came to the darshan and Sri Aurobindo saw him. After he had left, Sri Aurobindo remarked to the Mother: "Are you still letting this humbug come to you?" Once Sri Aurobindo had spoken thus, she could no longer allow the man to continue at the pranam. Word was sent to him that he should keep away.

He took the prohibition as the result of an adverse report having been made after a certain incident before the darshan. At that time the daughter of the poet Sarojini Naidu was on a visit to Pondicherry. She had a friend in the Ashram who took Purani and me as well as the man in question to see her. At a meeting the last-named had aired some unfriendly views about the Ashram. Purani was present. When the order not to attend pranam was conveyed to the man, he inferred that Purani had complained about him and this brought on the Mother's disfavour. When I reported this opinion to the Mother, she said: "My order has nothing to do with any report." And then she recounted to me what had happened after the man had had darshan of Sri Aurobindo.

An incident which taught me never to make snap judgments as well as focused a facet of the Mother's incalculableness took place after Sehra had prepared for her a lovely set of curtains and chair-covers. The Mother admired them and had them put to use in her bathroom. A little later several holes were found in several of them as if somebody had stuck sharp pins in them just to spoil them. Pujalal who used to sweep and clean the bathroom noticed them too and felt rather distressed. There was only one other person who had access to the bathroom in the natural course of the day's work. It struck both Sehra and me as obvious that out of some freak of jealousy this person had done the disfigurement. I mentioned our condemnatory conclusion to Champaklal. He did not seem convinced. But I asked him "Is there any other possible

person on the scene?" Pujalal and I put our heads together and decided that the matter should be brought to the Mother's notice.

When the Mother, after her lunch, came to see me where I had been waiting for her outside the bathroom, Pujalal who was ready to go into it reported that very strangely a number of holes had been found in the set of new hangings. At once the Mother exclaimed. "Yes, several times I found it very convenient to stick my pins in the cloths." I was extremely surprised and at the same time very ashamed indeed to have jumped to a condemnation. I made a resolve never to judge anybody without proper inquiry and also oriented my mind to expect the unexpected of the Mother.

The field where perhaps the unexpected is most to be expected is that of the Divine's Grace. Grace is understood to occur without rhyme or reason for the thinking mind; else it would be not Grace but justice. Actually the Aurobindonian Yoga may be described as essentially one of Grace. The Supreme Consciousness of the Mother offers to take up our sadhana and asks of us simply not to stand in its way but to let it handle all our difficulties and remove all our obscurities. This could be taken as the self-surrender which is at the heart of the dynamics of the Integral Yoga. The Integral Yoga is also known as the Supramental Yoga. Sri Aurobindo has said that nobody by his own efforts can reach the Supermind. One can rise to the Overmind by one's personal spiritual endeavour but one can only implore the Supermind to be realised and the realisation of the Supermind would be an act of the Divine's Grace. The power of the Transcendent Mother alone can lift us up to it or bring it down into us.

Before the supramental experience, there is also the constant play of Grace. Our whole residence in the Ashram is itself the Grace choosing us. Once when somebody complained that justice was not being done as it should in the Ashram, the Mother said: "The Ashram is not a place of justice, it is a place of Grace. Otherwise how many would have the right to be here?" When we stumble on the way, the Mother has never preached a sermon or even attached importance to the difficulty that caused the stumbling. She has only extended her hand to pick us up — provided, of course, we have wanted to be picked up. Sometimes even without our wanting it she has set us moving again. I would even go so far as to say. "There is no hole so deep that the Mother cannot lift us out of it sky-high." Our own little capacities are not concerned, the infinite capacity of the Divine who incarnated amongst us is the deciding factor. So while there is no call for complacency, there is also no room for despair and depression. There would be room if we depended for our progress on ourselves exclusively and the Divine Grace were not ever at work. Despair and depression would be signs of an inverted egoism, for not only would we be unduly concentrated on ourselves but we would be regarding our own powers as the sole possible agent of success.

I have said there is no rhyme or reason to Grace but perhaps we might venture to say that though there is no reason there can be rhyme. A certain happy harmony in our consciousness, a natural ringing of deep responses — in short, the unison of the various parts of us around the spontaneous sweetness and light and strength of what Sri Aurobindo has termed the psychic being, the inmost soul, in us — can be designated the rhyme that creates the condition in which the Grace is likely to vibrate towards us most often. Even this, however, cannot be considered an absolute determinant. The emergence of the psychic being may itself be a result of the Grace. The Grace looks at some secret within its own radiant heart rather than on any pinpointable

fact of our lives. Or, if some fact or other appears to be prominent in any situation where Grace operates, the operation still looks so enormously out of proportion to it

From the numerous instances possible to cite relating to various people I may quote one or two connected with my own self. I have already written elsewhere of how on the night of the Supramental Manifestation on February 29, 1956 the Mother appeared to me in the railway compartment in which I was travelling from Madras to Bombay after leaving Pondicherry the same morning. She told me afterwards that she had come to intimate to me the Great Event in fulfilment of a promise given eighteen years earlier when the same manifestation had been first visioned as coming though it did not materialise that year. At that time too I was to leave Pondicherry for a while and the Mother, after hinting at the wonderful future, assured me that she would immediately let me know of the happening. Her tremendous Grace on that night was beyond anything a poor erring disciple could deserve.

A fresh example may be offered. One morning, meditating in my room (which by the way had been Sri Aurobindo's own room for nine years and was itself a gift of Grace), I felt a keen urge in the heart to go to the Ashram and up the staircase leading to the apartment on the first floor where all heaven seemed situated because the Mother and Sri Aurobindo lived there. I just went and stood on the landing between the two sections of the staircase and looked at the door upstairs. Suddenly the door opened and the Mother stood on the threshold. She looked down and softly said: "Would you like to come in?" I was surprised beyond words for a second. Then I stammered out: "Oh, yes. May I?" She took me inside and let me do a pranam to her. She gave her blessing and a flower and saw me to the door. After this it became a daily event that after the general pranam I should go up to her. She would hold my hand and take me right inside to what used to be a small dressing-room. She would sit down on a *pouf* and, after my pranam, do again the hand-in-hand walk and see me out. Lalita was also taken inside in the same way. Why such a windfall of intoxicating Grace had come to me is still — in a phrase *à la* Churchill — a riddle within an enigma wrapped in a mystery

I may add a second small episode where not only I but also a friend of mine was involved. Owing to a disturbance in the established management of *Mother India* the whole responsibility of running it fell practically on my shoulders, with Navajata appointed by the Mother as a background support. As I was all alone he provided to me a young man from Orissa as a helper. He was a very good-hearted and willing assistant, but his future was unsure because he had not yet been accepted by the Mother. He had been asked to make an application, give his history, detail his intentions, attach a photograph and so on. All these routine procedures, though gone through, had not borne any fruit yet because of some delay due to over-pressure on the channel by which they had to reach the Mother. On one of the periodic occasions when I saw the Mother I mentioned this young man to her and asked her whether he could be admitted into the Ashram. She just asked me: "Do you need him?" I said he would certainly be of use to me but she had to attend to his application, see him and then be the judge of the case and approve or not. How could I determine her decision merely by my need? Again she asked: "Do you want him?" I answered: "Yes, but..." Before I could speak any further she said: "He is to be admitted." Thus at one stroke the

long technical bother was cut short and the Mother, without troubling to know any particulars or even look at the photograph, took the young man into her fold.

I should like to relate at some length a Grace-story which has a greater touch on my own life, carries many shades of significance and compasses a more striking sequence of ups and downs. I shall tell it by some extracts from my diary-notes.

### 3

#### What Came Out of an Easter Egg

On a visit from Bombay in 1953 I reached Pondicherry on the 11th April. The whole journey had been a passage from state to state of aspiration — particularly aspiration in the head, a mounting movement which sought God with a passion eager to pierce through the skull — symbolising, of course, what Sri Aurobindo calls in *Savitri* “the intellect’s hard and lustrous lid” — and grasp the infinities that seemed to brood overhead. This movement pulled at the heart also, lifting it up, though not quite deepening it into a discovery of its own inmost God-possession. Bombay drifted away like mist — only a few vivid impressions remained, a startle of faces now and then, especially one face. Except for this face, my entire life in Bombay seemed to be over. But even this face had the look of not belonging really to that city. Its future seemed merged in my own future in the Ashram and there was one single light enveloping both it and myself, a light which laughed, as it were, at time, for it could hold, in a miraculous present, periods that were separated according to earth’s calendar.

As soon as I stepped in Pondicherry, a peace came and surrounded me. I did everything with a profound quiet as if nothing had been left to worry over. “All shall be taken care of” — this was the sense of the peace.

I went to the Samadhi, knelt before the Supreme Presence and took his invisible blessing and got wrapped in his love. Then I went to the Balcony Darshan. Only a few people were there, scattered in small knots. Suddenly the Mother appeared. She was in a pink-gold dress. She looked at me, recognised me, smiled and jerked her head to one side in playful acknowledgment. Her eyes swept on to others, but again they came back to me and affectionately rested on my face. It was as if she were caressing it in order to find out what signs it bore of being dedicated. She did not seem displeased. For once more, after turning elsewhere, her eyes returned to me. Oh it was blessedness indeed to be lit up so often by those blue-green-gold stars.

I had taken Sehra’s parcel with me when I had gone to the Samadhi. I had kept it in Amrita’s room. After the Balcony Darshan I picked it up and went to the staircase. Quite a long “sit” I had there. The Mother seemed busy somewhere along the passage between the balcony and the staircase. At last the incomparable melody of her voice floated down to where I was seated together with some others. We got up, but again we had to wait. Finally, the movement of people up and down the stairs started. On that day the Mother was standing not at the head of the stairs but in the inside room where the girls work. When she saw me, she lifted her right arm and bending it towards her own face beckoned me joyously. I hurried to her with my parcel. I put the latter on the mat and clasped her hand and kissed it. The hand was wet with perspiration, but I found it wonderful to touch my lips to the moisture. Then I knelt and practised my “special discovery” — the ecstasy of hugging her legs. I would not

let go the old ecstasy even — that of touching my head to her feet. Twice the Mother blessed me, her fingers brushing through my hair gently.

When I got up, she pointed to the parcel: "What's this?" I replied: "Sehra has sent it with a note. It is an Easter Egg." "How nice!" the Mother exclaimed. I gave her the note. She at once opened it and read it through. When she came to the last sentence which had run: "When I am sending this Egg, my prayer is: 'May I be your chick!'" — she gave a loud chuckle. She took the note and stood near an inside table near the wall as if she wanted to reply to it. I went over to her. She said softly: "You were under the impression, it seems, that *Mother India* would be published here in April only. But how can that be? It has to be published here always if you are to come and stay here permanently." I answered: "Yes, of course, but what about Sehra? Is she ready to come?" "Oh, I'll write to her that I expect her to come with you." I explained to her that Sehra had her job in Bombay. "Job!" the Mother exclaimed as though she deemed it a small matter. Then she asked me: "How much does she earn?" "A hundred and fifty rupees a month plus the commission she gets on the chocolates she personally sells. Sehra feels we don't have enough money to come and stay here. But I believe that if you directly ask her to come, she will." The Mother said: "I have never asked anybody directly to come and stay here." I ventured to suggest. "Why not make a good beginning now? Do invite her." The Mother kept quiet, with a thoughtful face.

We then came back to the Easter Egg. "Open it up," she said, looking at the box. I untied the string and carefully pulled out the straw packing. I explained that the wings of the bird on the egg were delicately projected outwards and they might easily break. "Oh, there is a bird also?" the Mother asked in surprise. As the straw was removed, the bird came into view. Unfortunately, a chip had somehow come off the left wing, a part of its surface plaster had got rubbed away. "It's made in plaster," the Mother remarked. Then, as I was trying to lift the egg out, she stopped my fumbling hands and, with her own most sensitive and protective fingers, picked up the egg herself. It was marvellous the way she lavished an intense quiet care on the egg. After picking it out with infinite tenderness she took it to her inner room — her dressing-room, of which Jayantilal had made a painting in that collection of nine pictures which I had once reviewed in *Mother India*. I saw this room for the first time. The Mother placed the egg on a glass-top table.

We came back to the front room. I said: "Roshan, Mina's daughter, has asked me to tell you that today is her examination in History of Philosophy." The Mother made a sound as if to indicate the toughness of the subject. I continued: "Mina has given a message too. She says that she is holding you tight within her heart, but she hopes also to come here soon." Next, I gave Shrin's "lots of love." Finally, as if to crown my messages, I mentioned my sister Minnie and the deep warmth of her feeling for the Mother. The Mother picked out packets of blessings — "How many shall I give you?" "Five." She gave them to me.

In the evening I went to the French-translation class at the Playground. I sat there and meditated while the Mother went on translating Sri Aurobindo's *Ideal of Human Unity*. I noticed that no Easter Egg could be more perfect than the Mother's own head. It had the most attractive oval shape possible.

Later, at 7.15 there was the distribution of groundnuts at the Playground. All

the time, I felt I was face to face with an unknown future, a story whose details were hidden from me — a fascinating adventure which I had just to watch without fear. Inwardly I surrendered to the Mother the whole matter of Sehra's coming.

The next day, at the staircase, the Mother said: "I have prepared my reply to Sehra. Most probably I'll give it to you in the evening." There was music in the afternoon. I heard it sitting in the Ashram courtyard. It was a very soft but deep and moving and widely ranging music — it seemed as if something came down with some vehemence into my head, especially the back of the head. This created a genuine headache. Later, at the Mother's tennis-court I had the feeling that an immense egglike dome was above my head, entering the head with its lower curved base. Within the immense skylike egg there were faint far vibrations.

The Mother's letter for Sehra did not come that day. But the next evening at the Playground she handed me an open envelope with "Sehra" written on it in pencil. When I went home for dinner I read the letter. It was in reference to the last sentence in Sehra's note in which she had expressed her prayer to be the Mother's chick. On the same sheet of paper and exactly under that sentence the Mother had written her answer: "Surely, my child, this is quite possible. Won't you join the 'nest' and do your bit of work here? With my love and blessings."

Before this reply could have reached her, Sehra wrote to me a letter. At the staircase on the 16th I told the Mother: "Sehra has asked me to put my head on your feet on her behalf. She says that putting her head on your feet used to be the one thing she loved most." The Mother looked very pleased and said "Bon!" ("Good!") I did the head-feet touching and the Mother blessed Sehra through me.

On the afternoon of the 17th I had an inner movement of complete self-offering. But there was also a strange hardness emerging somewhere in the being, which I didn't like — it was as if I were taking it upon myself to force things, ride roughshod over people and clear my way without any scruple. I had told the Mother that I could not come without Sehra, but the new feeling indicated a likelihood that I might even come without her, waiting for her to follow. In one way this was good, because it made my life and work independent of everybody. But it seemed contrary to the movement the Mother had set going from the first day of my visit. At night all of a sudden I felt very human and the whole difficulty of giving up things rushed over me. I imagined vividly how Sehra must be feeling on receipt of the Mother's letter which must have come into her hands that very evening. The whole of the next day I was in a strange mood. I was still shaken inside but I did not encourage myself at all in the weakness. I told myself what Mina had said: "Now, Amal, you must do or die." Yes, she was right. There was no other way. I offered my whole difficulty to the Mother inwardly and went on as quietly as I could.

The next day, at 1 p.m., for the first time I went to Pavitra's room with the Mother's permission to hear her play on the organ. She came in, gave a few looks around, noticed me and sat on her stool and immediately started playing. She was quite absorbed and her arms were tense with inspiration. The music had a varied mingling of melodies. It seemed to me the archetype, the divine counterpart, of the music of Schubert and others like him. Not strictly classical music *à la* Bach, but semi-classical with a more distinguishable tune about it. It gave me great delight and the manner in which the

theme developed and modulated and went from key to key and once started moving backwards, as it were, to match the forward movement with which it had begun — all this enchanted me. I had never enjoyed music so much in my life.

At night the aspiration which had gone on increasing was intense. An opening deepened in the mind and heart and I began hearing distinctly the far-off universal sound which is for me the measure of the inner silence.

The following day was a mixed bag. As the plan of staying here permanently took shape more and more in the mind, all sorts of reactions came from the various parts of the being. Sometimes it seemed impossible to go on here — life appeared dull and uninteresting. Then all of a sudden a breath from the Samadhi or the staircase-meeting with the Mother — and all doubts and dejections vanished. The psychic being is the true key to the life in the Ashram. If it is all the time in the front, there is no problem. But when after a long stay in Bombay, one tackles the situation in a “realistic” way, issues rise up which have no place at all when it is merely a question of a short visit. The Mother would have to help a lot.

On the 29th Sehra’s letter arrived. It was full of surface thoughts and fears and a lot of annoyance at so precipitate a prospect of settling in the Ashram. The Mother said that there had been no response to the Grace that had gone out to her. The whole thing had been looked at from the viewpoint of insufficient money and material discomforts. The Mother passed the verdict: “Neither of you can come now. I am not rejecting either of you, for, if I reject, that will mean an end. But I am putting the whole thing aside. I have done for Sehra what I have never done before in my life — and the exact opposite of what should have been the effect has happened in her. This closes the entire chapter.”

“Mother, be with me. Help me to bring not only myself but also Sehra.”

“Of course, I’ll help you.”

“Mother, if you want that I . . .” The Mother put her hand on my mouth and said “No, don’t say it. Let things be what they are at present.”

“You probably remember that when once in your presence I referred to our future, Sehra said: ‘Why talk of the future? I know our future. We shall settle in the Ashram.’ So this shows that she is not really against staying here.”

“That is quite a different matter. Staying here when you think you can afford everything and you are sure of your position — this is one thing. It is another to rise in response to the Divine’s direct call, to be moved by the Divine Grace and come without thinking of how one will live. The situation being what it is, I think it is inadvisable for you two or even you alone to come now. If I let you come and if somehow Sehra comes for your sake, she will be very unhappy. Even good sadhakas become unhappy at times, missing the things to which they were accustomed.”

In the very last interview I had with the Mother before I left on the 2nd of May, I reported to her:

“Sehra says that if I had the courage I would tell you the truth about a certain thing. I have the courage. She argues that it is not her fault that she cannot come now. That last sentence in her letter, to which you replied, had been suggested by me and accepted by her on my persuasion. It was not originally her own.”

“Oh, I see,” said the Mother. “That sentence was so nice that I immediately felt like writing to Sehra.”

“Perhaps I should have told you the history of that sentence. But I did not realise any need to do so.”

“That’s all right,” said the Mother and, with a smile, added: “Tell Sehra that I understand. Say that now there is no question of coming. The whole thing is postponed until she herself feels like coming.”

Then the Mother added: “I must say that what happened did not show much sense of gratitude.”

I said: “Mother, what I feel is this — whether that sentence was mine or hers, your Grace flowed out to her in an extraordinary way. Evidently she did not realise the fact. If she had, she would have written a word of thanks and then mentioned all the difficulties and obstacles. I don’t understand what has gone wrong.”

When the talk ended, Amrita arrived after a frantic search for a flat for Sehra and me. The Mother, expecting that all would come right, had sent him out to keep everything ready for us. Amrita sadly reported: “Nothing is available.”

Well, this was to be expected in the occult dispensation of things.

On the 5th of May I started for Bombay. I was wondering how my meeting with Sehra would turn out. She came to the station to receive me. We exchanged smiles. During the car-drive home, the topic of going to Pondicherry arose. She was still agitated over being blamed for everything and not being properly understood. “I am not against coming there,” she said, “I am prepared to come. But we must have the necessary money.”

At night before going to sleep I told her that I had explained to the Mother her inner willingness. I then told her what the Mother had said about coming at the call of the Divine Grace and coming at one’s convenience and how the two things were worlds apart. This went straight to her soul. She said she would come. The whole problem was immediately solved.

She said: “I thought Mother wrote to me only because of that sentence inspired by you. I never thought she wanted me for myself. If I know that she wants me without that sentence being there, I am ready to come. Oh I would like so much to fly to Pondi and put my head on Mother’s feet. Mother thinks I am most ungrateful. Would I want to do this if I were ungrateful? I have inwardly suffered so much all these days. You have confused me very much.”

We decided that Sehra should write to the Mother and tell her that she would gladly come with me. The letter was written, a very good one, in which she explained her willingness, expressed her gratitude and love for the special Grace of the Mother’s direct call to her and asked for forgiveness.

The certitude of our settling in the Ashram for good — an event which happened on 19th February 1954 — was ultimately what came out of the Easter Egg. The fact that apropos of the words accompanying that present, the Mother had done what she herself considered an unusual act — namely, a direct invitation — proved to have been no accidental gesture. And there was another occurrence which showed how profoundly meaningful it had been. Sehra, after a few months of stay in the Ashram, opened very beautifully to the Mother. The Mother even said that Sehra’s soul had taken lodging in the Mother’s being. She pointed to the middle of her own chest and declared with a smile that Sehra’s soul was dwelling there quite snugly all the time. Act upon act of Grace followed and a lot of love was showered upon her. Sehra once



thanked me for bringing her to the Ashram the utmost happiness possible had been found.

Of course, the psychic being's keenly devotional move towards the Divine does not always change one's whole nature. The rest of the being has itself to consent to change. In measuring progress, many factors have to be weighed. Still, intense love for the Mother is — if I may use an imagery in tune with my narrative — a golden egg holding all divine possibilities and can lead to every progress desirable, provided one knows how to make the shell of the outer self break and let out the inner luminosity to spread into all the parts of our acutely complex being.

*(To be continued)*

AMAL KIRAN

## CANTICLE

*(A First Poem on the Mother)*

With skill of mortal tongue how shall I phrase  
A mirroring glory for her glorious face? —  
The deep prefiguring halcyon of those eyes  
Assuaging with love's intimate replies  
The wounded cry of faith to destiny —  
The smile wherein eternities awake  
To human mercy, an ineffable sun's  
    August omnipotence  
Softened to rainbow-beauty for our sake,  
That we of fearful vision may behold  
What fount of delicate-hued felicity  
Hides in that far keen terrible heart of gold —  
The voice of passionate truth which beckons me  
Towards pinnacled perfection, fills my name  
With such celestial music that I rise,  
    My shattered hours made whole,  
Triumphant over the age-long grim distress  
Of life's embodiment and shackled shame;  
• For, the adorant soul  
Hearing its name turn godlike with her tone  
    Feels all its essence grown  
• A gleam of her ecstatic loveliness!  
  
O ineffectual words, the endless tale  
Of her transmuting miracles you fail  
    To imprison in melody.  
    Needs must the soul express  
Its thrilled response to her divinity?  
    In silence 'twere more meet  
To touch with lips of fervour those earth-sojourning feet!

June. 1931

K. D. SETHNA

# THE MOTHER ON HER OLD BODY AND THE NEW

## The Last Embodiment

“I have never left the earth since its formation,” the Mother assures us in no uncertain terms <sup>1</sup> “If ever I leave my body, my Consciousness will remain with you,” she once told Nolini.<sup>2</sup> We have it on record from her that Sri Aurobindo “possesses . . . more power for action now than when in his body. Besides, it was for this that he left, because it was necessary to act like that.”<sup>3</sup> If that was the case with the Master, it cannot be otherwise with the Mother.

The Mother took the body in the incarnation we have known, because, as Sri Aurobindo tells us, “a work of a physical nature (i.e. including a change in the physical world) has to be done.”<sup>4</sup> The Mother herself has said, “I am here because my body has been given for the first attempt at transformation. Sri Aurobindo told me so. Well, I am doing it. I do not wish anyone to do it for me because . . . because, it is not very pleasant, but I do it willingly because of the results; everybody will be able to benefit from it. . .”<sup>5</sup>

## A Symbol and Support

She was faced with a problem while she was still in France: “must one withdraw from life and action until one has reached the goal, — that is to say, become conscious of the Supramental and realise it in oneself — or must one embrace the whole creation and with the whole creation advance progressively towards the Supramental?”<sup>6</sup> Evidently enough, like Sri Aurobindo, she chose the second alternative. “It is by living in the inner heart of an organisation that one can help it to become enlightened and rise towards the Truth,” she explains <sup>7</sup> This organisation is the Ashram which has been created in order to “concretise and synthesise the work of transformation of the earth and prepare the new creation.”<sup>8</sup>

The Mother, while she lived in her body, was visibly the heart and centre of this organisation. Now that she has left her body, her Presence continues to guide and govern. Her Power and her Consciousness can be felt concretely in all its activities.

Many of us were apt to look upon her as a human mother behaving with us in a familiar and even indulgent manner, letting us have our way. “You consider me as a human being and you act in such a way as if I am a human being. . . You have been accustomed to see me, hear me — I speak to you as one speaks to all children, I have even played with you as one plays with children . . .”<sup>9</sup> Regarding the games which she played with youngsters, she once noted, “You believe you are giving a game or even helping to play, a good old lady for whom you feel a little gratefulness and some kind of affection!”<sup>10</sup>

It is very likely that the situation changed for the better as the years passed, “And in any case,” she writes in 1951, “my physical existence can be interesting only for those who have faith and who, by virtue of this faith, can through me, enter into contact with the Supreme Consciousness”<sup>11</sup> One purpose of her staying in a body was to fix the attention of men. “You know,” she says in one of her last Talks, “I have an impression that this person is like an image for fixing the attention. Men have need of something — they always had the need of something that was of their own dimension, in

order to be able to fix their attention. And so, this body does all it can in order not to make an obstruction to the Divine Force that passes through, and at the same time it sees that it is . . . like an image that men need in order fix their attention.”<sup>12</sup>

### A Phantom of Delight

The body must look beautiful in order that men may fix their gaze on it. And the Mother's body was extremely beautiful. Everybody who is keenly sensitive to beauty has noted that

“She came to us first in this garb of Beauty,” says Nolini in his *Reminiscences*. Amal Kiran had the same first impression. “She is very beautiful.”<sup>13</sup> Vasudha first saw the Mother at the same age of fifty as Amal did and she found “she looked very young . . . She was tall and slim and had a beautiful figure. She looked startlingly beautiful.”<sup>13</sup> “You move like a young girl,” remarked Champaklal to the Mother in 1944, when she was sixty-six.<sup>14</sup> Ten years later, at seventy-six, the Mother herself noted, “My body is strong and healthy, full of energy and life, supple and harmonious.”<sup>15</sup> It is a common experience that she looked glorious during the Darshans, except towards the end; but at the last Darshan, in August 1973, she looked extraordinarily beautiful. In the late sixties and early seventies, her body suffered tremendously — a suffering brought on herself voluntarily — and much of the old beauty and suppleness was gone. That was because she had made it “the image of the world”,<sup>16</sup> with all its imperfections; they were as if made to concentrate themselves in her physical frame, in order to get transformed. A little later, in June 1969, she avows that a *corps glorieux* would be a “marvellous solution” to the problem of evil and world-pain. “But,” she adds, “this body has not at all, not at all, either the ambition or the desire, or even the aspiration of becoming that (*the corps glorieux*) . . . I have looked very attentively, not for a single minute have I had the idea that this should become that (*Mother pinches the skin of her hands*), you understand?”<sup>17</sup>

### Perfection of the Living Form

Does this imply that she did not care about her body at all — a body that, according to her own statement, “was prepared by Mahasaraswati” before she was born, that the great Work be accomplished?<sup>18</sup> This is unthinkable, considering the care she gave it during her adolescence and youth to make it a fine and fully conscious instrument. Her “passion” for tennis at the age of eighty,<sup>19</sup> her walking trips across the hills of France,<sup>20</sup> her old habit of getting up from bed at a bounce to the astonishment of her young companions,<sup>21</sup> her experiments with making the hands conscious without the intervention of the brain, by playing on the piano, doing painting and so on,<sup>22</sup> are some of the things she has mentioned herself.

Her body consciousness became vast as the universe, in the experience she has described in the *Prayers and Meditations* (November 26, 1915).

She did not obviously have an attachment to her body like us ordinary mortals. But there is evidence she did not want it to die before it had done its work.

Champaklal made a startling discovery on the afternoon of the day when she was to leave her body. “All on a sudden — without any forethought — I took Mother's hand in mine and saw her life line. Kumud asked what I was doing. I told her that

I saw Mother's life line, and added, 'Oh, there is a very short life line. I was very much surprised'”<sup>23</sup>

The Mother was a great palmist, and must have seen her own life short — and must have determined to make it long. She has left us some account of her encounters with death. Once it was in Paris, before she came to Pondicherry. She was crossing a busy thoroughfare, thinking exclusively of the Divine Presence in the psychic; “it is not a place to cross interiorised,” as she puts it. A tramcar passed by, within an arm's distance, and she jumped back just in time. “The aura of protection had been touched and that had literally thrown me back.”<sup>24</sup> Again, — this time it was on her return to France, in 1915, — she was “narrowly saved from death. I had an inflammation of the nerves. . .” The interesting thing was, “I could see that nothing could stop the work. Even without the body the work could go on.”<sup>25</sup>

On another occasion, in January 1919, while she was in Japan, it was once again a matter of life and death. She has told the story in full detail in one of her Talks.<sup>26</sup> A severe epidemic was raging in Tokyo; people died like fleas, of a peculiar kind of fever, within three days, a panic had seized the populace. The Mother was being pestered by friends to tell them what was behind this peculiar malady. At first she did not bother, and then she began to wonder what after all this malady was. Suddenly she took ill — the thing had caught her. After a couple of days of high fever, she lay in bed alone, “when I saw clearly a being, one part of his head chopped off, in a military uniform (or rather the remnants of a military uniform). It came near me and suddenly threw itself upon my chest, with that half a head, to suck my strength. I had a good look, then I saw that I was dying — it was drawing out all my life. . . I thought ‘now it is the end’. Then I called on my occult power, I gave a big battle and I succeeded in turning it back so that it might not remain there any more. And I woke up. . . I know what an amount of knowledge and power I needed in order to resist!” This vampire was one of the legacies of the First Great War, and the Mother destroyed it for ever. The epidemic stopped at once.

### Possibility of Death

Did the Mother ever contemplate death? That is a difficult question to answer, for us who know practically nothing about her. One can make only a surmise on the basis of what hints she has left. She has referred to a talk she had with Sri Aurobindo.

“About a year ago,” she says in 1950, “while I was discussing things, I remarked that I felt like leaving this body of mine. He spoke out in a very firm tone, ‘No, this can never be. If necessary for this transformation, I might go, you will have to fulfil our Yoga of supramental descent and transformation.’”<sup>27</sup>

Speaking to children in one of her evening Talks in 1956, she threw out an indirect hint at the possibility of her quitting the body around her hundredth year. She was referring to the creation of the Ashram at the end of 1926, when she was nearing her forty-ninth year. “Well, towards the middle of my life — anyway, what is usually the middle of a human life — the means were given to me and I could realise this. . .”<sup>28</sup>

In her Birthday Message of 1958, she refers to her body as “a transitory body.”<sup>29</sup> Perhaps a little earlier, possibly soon after the Supramental Manifestation of 1956, a Prayer rises from her heart, “My Lord, what Thou hast wanted me to do I have done. Now that the Supramental is there . . . is it that the mission of this form is

ended and that another form is to take up the work in its place? I am putting the question to Thee and ask for an answer. . . Whatever is the sign, I do not care, but it must be *obvious*.”<sup>30</sup>

Did she not declare, as early as 1934, “We live only because Thou willest it. We do not die unless Thou willest it?”<sup>31</sup> In 1969, she says with reference to her body, “It is long since that the desire to remain has left. The possible desire to go away when it becomes a little . . . suffocating, has gone with the idea that this will not change anything at all. . .”<sup>32</sup>

A lot of things had happened to her body since this was spoken — the frightfully painful experiences of which we get some glimpses in her recorded talks; many more things remain either unrecorded or yet unpublished. But at the end of 1972, when asked about the “prospects” for the new year, she seemed to leave little doubt about the matter. “Things have taken an extreme form. There is as if an uplift of the atmosphere towards a splendour almost inconceivable, and at the same time a feeling that at any moment one may . . . one may die — not ‘die’, but the body may be dissolved . . . Nothing is impossible”<sup>33</sup>

### The New Body and Its Work

What most of us regarded as “impossible” did actually happen towards the end of the year — so suddenly indeed that even her close attendants were taken by surprise.

But before letting the body drop — we shall assume that it was deliberate — the Mother had already found for herself, in the subtle physical, an entirely new type of body which she could use, perhaps better and more freely for her work which could never stop. She has left a fairly precise description of this new-body. We may quote:

“I had a body altogether new in the sense that it was sexless — it was not a woman and it was not a man. It was very white . . . It was very slim — it was nice, truly a harmonious form . . . I saw myself like that . . . I was . . . I was like that. . . It was the trunk that was quite different from the chest down to the waist: neither man nor woman. . . I had a figure, very very slim, very slender — very slender but not thin. And the skin was very white, the skin was like my skin. But a very nice figure. But sex . . . sex had disappeared. So to say, no belly, no stomach — all that was emaciated. . . And the outline, the silhouette was almost the same as that of a very very young person. There was as it were a recollection of human forms. . . But there was not much difference in the appearance. . . There were shoulders, arms, a body, a figure like that, legs. All that was the same . . . The shoulders were broad. Only the chest was neither feminine nor masculine, but just a semblance. And then all that — stomach, belly, etc. were just an outline. . . The two things that were very very different were procreation which had no longer any possibility there, and then, food. . . I do not know at all how the face was. But it did not seem to be very different from what it is now. Evidently what will change a great deal, what had become very important, was the respiration. It was on this that this being depended a lot.”<sup>34</sup>

Will this new body take a physical form, in this material world?

“If what I was the night before yesterday . . . if it materialised! But how? I don’t know anything. It is strange how one does not know anything. . .”<sup>35</sup>

These were the Mother’s last comments on her new body.

If she does not know, how can we?

But this much we know, that she once wrote to a young aspirant, "I shall always be with you, my dear little child, — in the struggle and the victory" <sup>36</sup>

SANAT K. BANERJI

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# THE MOTHER'S BEING AND WORK

## My Best Moments with the Mother

Leave aside spirituality, I had no bent even for religion. Perhaps it was not so surprising for a young boy of 14 years in the third decade of this century. Moreover, I came here not for a higher life but just for seeing my father who had settled in Pondicherry some time earlier. During my summer vacation I merely wanted to spend a month far away from my native place.

Those days the Mother used to see visitors in the room which is now called the Reading Room of the Ashram but at that time was the Ashram Library. With other visitors I waited at the Ashram-gate. The Mother came down from her room and entered the Library from the northern door, unseen by us. We were called in one by one. The Mother was seated in a chair with a big photo of Sri Aurobindo behind her, which is still in the same place.

As I was very young my father accompanied me to the Mother. It may be interesting to note that those days the Mother was not generally permitting boys of my age even to meet her! There were only three boys of my age residing in the Ashram. As soon as I entered the room I saw a figure full of light and love. Her look penetrated right into my depths before I could even see her fully. Her smile did not seem earthly. It was as if all Eternity had concentrated itself on her two little lips! Her very body manifested tenderness and Ananda most spontaneously and ceaselessly.

I had come here only as a tourist, yet it was not possible to escape her. I approached her and prostrated myself at her feet, as is our traditional custom. But our soul has no tradition, it has its own ways and visions, it at once recognised in her its own Mother-Soul from whom it had descended long ago. And once it had visualised this fact its future course upon the earth was well laid out. To speak more in human terms, it was as if a boy, who had seen his mother only during his childhood and then separated from her for many years, had suddenly come across her whom he had never expected to see again. So I was dumbfounded at my first sight of the Mother.

This state deepened to such an extent that my external being became unaware and I did not know what questions the Mother asked my father who all along was standing behind me. I think it was during those few auspicious moments that my soul, in a direct consultation with her, made its final decision for this life. It is still a paradox to me how she managed to cut asunder age-old crusts that lay between her and me, but my outer self knew nothing of what took place within. It was simply stunned. The soul's dialogue with the Mother over, I came out of the Library. But it was no more the same "I" who had entered the room a few moments earlier. The cursory tourist had now become a permanent pilgrim! This fact proved what I learnt later, that the Mother sees first our soul, the psychic being, and only later our outer self. And it is that perception which decides whether one is ready for the Integral Yoga.

In the middle fifties I was once watching the Mother during the Blessings ceremony at the Ashram Playground. I was not in meditation, as sometimes I enjoyed looking at her with my external self. Suddenly I perceived with my eyes wide open the plane from which the Mother had come down to this earth. It was a height I had never even



conceived for her before. So when next I met her at an interview I told her about my vision and particularly about the plane of her origin. When she said it was true, I wept before her, realising how little even the old sadhaks of the Ashram know of her and how meagre a benefit we were deriving from her great sacrifice of being with us on the earth. When the Mother used to play on the organ the higher Gods and Goddesses, so said Sri Aurobindo, used to come down to listen to her music.

Her life on earth was always a paradox for us. We could not understand her actions however much we tried with good intention, it was perhaps because she held three divine aspects in her single self. This truth is well explained by Sri Aurobindo in reply to one of my numerous queries about her. I asked "Does the Mother carry the full divine Shakti in Her?" Sri Aurobindo answered:

"There is one divine Force which acts in the universe and in the individual and is also beyond the individual and the universe. The Mother stands for all these, but she is working here in the body to bring down something not yet expressed in this material world so as to transform life here — it is so that you should regard her as the divine Shakti working here for that purpose. She is that in the body, but in her whole consciousness she is also identified with all the other aspects of the divine Force."

### The Mother's Role in Our Sadhana

All those who are doing Sri Aurobindo's Yoga know that it cannot be done except with the Mother's help. In fact, as the sadhana progresses, one becomes conscious that it is she who is doing the sadhana in him and bearing the burden of his transformation. Truly speaking, to become conscious of the Mother's working in us is itself a part of the Yoga.

The Mother stands before us as a being at once individual, cosmic and transcendent. It is just this triplicity that creates in our limited human mind a problem. We try in vain for long to solve this riddle — how she in a human frame could contain in herself these three different aspects, and not only contain but also manifest them in action.

The vision of the Mother doing sadhana in us begins to be clear as we get liberated more and more from the ego's bondage into the cosmic self. Then the Mother appears like an infinite Being holding us in herself like the blood-cells in a body and feeding us with her consciousness, force and bliss and love.

In the 1930's Sri Aurobindo explained a little of the Mother's sadhana in us

MYSELF

Why do we hear that the Mother experiences this or that? Has she still to go on experiencing?

SRI AUROBINDO:

Experiencing what? She has her own experiences in bringing down the things that have to be brought down — but what the sadhaks experience she had long ago. The Divine does the sadhana first for the world and then in others.

MYSELF.

Sometimes a sadhak feels as if not only he but also the Mother goes through a certain experience in him. The poet Harin often speaks of such a happening — "I am thrilled by Thee and Thou art thrilled by me" — "I am happy by Thee and so art Thou by me", etc. I cannot understand how such experiences take place.

SRI AUROBINDO :

Naturally, the Mother does the sadhana in each sadhak — only it is conditioned by their need and their receptivity.

MYSELF :

I request a little more elaboration of your answer. "She has her own experiences in bringing down the things that have to be brought down. . ."

SRI AUROBINDO :

I have said that the Divine does the sadhana first for the world and then gives what is brought down to others. There can be no sadhana without realisations and experiences. Both myself and the Mother have done sadhana. The Prayers and Meditations are a record of the Mother's experiences.

MYSELF :

Is not the Mother far above what we feel as experience?

SRI AUROBINDO :

The Mother is not an "experience", she is the Being and the Consciousness and the Power that contains the experience.

### The Three Aspects of The Mother

#### A Vision

First I saw before me our Mother, the individualised embodied form of the Divine Mother, kneeling on the ground. She was sad because of the suffering in the world. It seemed as if the misery of the whole world was in her, and she was praying that it be worked out in herself and the world be relieved of it. Beside her sat in an absolute trance-like concentration the Universal Mother. She was clothed in pure white.

A few seconds later, I saw also the third form of our Mother, the transcendent Mother appearing on something that looked like a balcony. She had taken human form and features; only, she was much bigger in size. She looked vast and all-pervading. The Supreme Consciousness was flowing even from her body. First she looked at me — I was standing in a corner unseen by the individual and the universal Mothers — and then just below at the two forms of her own self. The most important thing in the vision was the mysterious or the divinely significant smile she gave me while looking at the individual and the universal forms. It seemed to say: "I am here behind them both and, though the world is afflicted with all sorts of adverse things, it will be saved."

#### The Mother's Birthday

Q: Only two days back I felt a huge working all around as a preparatory stage for the great event of the 21st. What is then meant by the last two days of constant darkness? This has brought me down to the most material consciousness. How am I to prepare myself now for the grand descent?

SRI AUROBINDO :

Let the descent come when it can, 20th or 22nd or any other day of the month or year. On the 21st only offer yourself to the Divine Mother and consecrate everything.

17-2-1936

NAGIN DOSHI

# EDUCATION TOWARDS PROGRESS

## THE MOTHER'S VIEWS

October 23, 1966

Douce Mère,

With regard to what you explained to me this afternoon about education towards progress, these are the points of what I have understood. Please correct me where I have not understood correctly or have understood wrongly.

1. It is neither the 'system' nor the 'teacher' that is only important. Both are of equal importance. No matter how good a system may be, if the teacher in it is not good, the system becomes bad, and so also, no matter how good a teacher may be, if he has to teach in a system that is not good, he cannot teach well.

2. Labels and names are of no value. It is the idea and spirit in each that matters. So, if any one wants to really progress and to follow new and progressive methods, then one is going forward — but if one wants to remain in old methods because they are safe and well tried and accepted by the world, then one does not progress. So, no matter in what section a teacher is, if the teacher is following truly progressive methods, then the class of that teacher is leading towards perfection.

3. If any student says that he or she wants to leave a class or system and go to another because he really feels that he can progress better there, then that student will receive Mother's support and blessings. But if one wants to change just because the method is difficult, or strange — or not what the student is used to — or because it is not what is done elsewhere — then that student is turning his back on the truth and is going to laziness.

4. By progressive methods are meant those new and challenging and imaginative methods, wherever they may be employed, that carry one forward at a great pace. The non-progressive method is the old, stagnant, time-worn and stereotyped — content to follow the accepted patterns only.

5. In India there had always been a tendency to decry Matter as of lesser importance than the Spirit, and so we have lagged behind in material development and the methods of such development. Now we want to catch up with the materially developed people; and if we want to do it, we should not traverse the tedious paths they have followed (as we are now doing), but should jump to what they have already achieved and move forward from there. So if we find any new, imaginative and progressive ways of teaching, say, logic or mathematics or languages, etc., we should use such methods instead of the old methods by which we ourselves were taught.

*this is correctly  
stated*

*Always at thy feet*

*Nedar*

*blessings*

## SUPPLICATION

*(A First Poem to the Mother)*

Will you not pour into me  
The ancient peace that lights your face?  
I do not want it all for me,  
But just a drop — a tiny trace.

It is in the vast and silent valleys,  
In the purple shades of the aged hills;  
It is in the tremble of a dying leaf  
And in the murmur of low-toned rills.

On a calm and moonlit night  
Through tree-traceries the stars are soft-cool.  
Give me a little of that perfect coolness  
To dip my eyes in its healing pool.

When day is perfumed with its earthy scent,  
And my face caressed by the far sea-breeze,  
My heart stops beating and turns truant  
To mingle with the quiet of cloud-kissed trees.

It wants to embrace the wet sweet earth  
And lie on her dampness, cheek to cheek,  
It yearns to shout from the highest hill-top,  
For ever roaming your heaven to seek.

I need no touch to feel your arms;  
I need no eyes to see your face;  
I gather your light in the cup of my heart,  
And drink deep draughts from its secret place.

Let me but enter into your presence,  
And the incense of your breath absorb;  
Let me be drenched in its utter sweetness,  
And feel in my blood its glowing throb.

My only gesture is to give you all,  
Whatever I cherish I place in your hand,  
For I know that your touch is boundless safety  
And my fears shall vanish like script on sand.

11-3-36

Minnie

### Sri Aurobindo's Comment

It is a very good poem — “joli” in the French sense (not merely “pretty” in the English). Mother finds it exquisite.

## THE MOTHER'S WRITINGS THEIR INSPIRATION, THEIR JOY -

The Mother was essentially a spiritual-seeker, a realiser, a promoter of the spiritual pursuit and an executor of things in pursuance of her goal of the integral transformation of being — the progressive realisation and manifestation of the Divine in individuals and the world. Her writings all reflect this quality of life. They normally pertain to 'doing' and 'living', they arise out of practical situations and promote achievement of greater and higher things. Explanations of things come in as means to this end. Her writings are, therefore, concise, simple, straight and easy to understand. They all proceed from her experience, clear and actually lived, have in view the experience and life of the person or persons addressed and intently aim at promoting the desired growth. Further, they proceed from a warm profound feeling and carry a rich content of the same — a clear and intense joy of the truth conveyed and of love and compassion for those to whom it is conveyed. And very often it touches the reader or the hearer deeply, he is able to receive and assimilate it easily.

One has to make an experience of it oneself to get the full joy and benefit of it. One should let the writing and its thought and feeling and spiritual vibration play upon him in a relaxed and a joyous frame of mind and then watch how it affects him, creates an aspiration, a joy, a harmonious feeling and a clearer understanding in him.

The earliest writings of the Mother belong to the year 1912. They are short essays on some practical issues which were presented to a group of seekers in Paris for a collective contemplation. Besides these there were a few longer essays entitled, 'The Supreme Discovery', 'On Thought', 'On Dreams', etc. The first is specially elevating and heartening to aspirants and is available separately too. These were published much later in the year 1952 in book-form under the title *Words of Long Ago*.

About the same time i.e. 1912 the Mother started recording as Diary her experiences of the intensive Sadhana she was following then. These experiences are a marvellous guidance for those who seek a genuine spiritual growth in life. They were published later, in part under the title *Prayers and Meditations of the Mother*.

Her *Tales of All Time* is a book of stories, most interesting and elevating, intended for children. These tales present incidents of the life of great men of human history as a whole. India, Arabia, Europe, China and Japan are all there. And there are personal touches and comments too which are particularly illuminating. It is a work of selection and editing which young and old read again and again with much joy.

During her stay in Japan the Mother gave a talk, which was later on published as *The Mother's Talk to the Women of Japan*. It involves an appeal and a message that a woman has to create the future man in a conscious and a deliberate manner, to will the quality of his character, his personality, his consciousness. This is the Mother's spiritual ideal of maternity.

From 1920 to 1973, the year in which she left her body, is the most important and creative Pondicherry period of her life. And the largest writing of this period consists of letters to Sadhaks for the guidance of life, the right approach in work and the practical discipline of karma yoga. These letters have been organised and form an important part the Collected Works of the Mother, which cover Fifteen volumes.

As a book, we had in the year 1931, the Mother's *Conversations*, which over a long period remained the most popular book of the Pondicherry Ashram. This consists of questions and answers on the most varied issues of life — yoga, illness, sleep, dream, work, reading, art, reincarnation, etc. etc., which a spiritual seeker is much interested in.

At a certain stage during the Pondicherry period the Mother started taking certain classes which were attended by children and grown-ups and these continued for a very long time. Out of them have arisen the bulk of the Mother's writings. These are talks and answers to questions and are encyclopaedic in character and extremely warm personal communications, published under the title *Questions and Answers* in many volumes.

A time came when these much cherished classes ceased and then her 'Notes on the Way' which appeared regularly in the issues of the *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education* became the prominent thing. They by themselves are large in volume, of which only a part has so far appeared in the *Bulletin* issues.

The *Bulletin* started appearing in 1949 (February) and the Mother was regularly writing for it. Her book *On Education* appeared in it serially. So also her *Four Austerities and Four Liberations*. And the two plays *Towards the Future* and *A Great Secret*. Also *The Ideal Child*. There were shorter articles on 'Youth', 'Inexhaustible Energy', etc., besides.

There are three works of the Mother, which are in the nature of comments on *Dhammapada*, on *Thoughts and Aphorisms* and on *Savitri*. These comments are an experience, succinct, deep and penetrating and highly illuminating, very often giving a thrill of joy.

*Flowers and their Messages* is another work of the Mother, which gives by itself a complete approach to Yoga and to Sadhana. Beauty as a pathway to the Divine is a new Sadhana of the Mother's creation and in this work she has given the inner spiritual quality and vibration of a very large number of flowers and at times also gives an elaborative comment, which is a delightful positive direction for Sadhana.

The actual working and development of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, its department of Physical Education, to which the Mother devoted so much of her time and attention and the international township of Auroville have evoked from the Mother comments and directions in the varied situations of educational work, sports activities and social living. They are intensely practical and reveal an original approach to educational problems, those of sports life and of human unity and social organisation. They are quite large in volume and are being brought out in distinct publications.

The Mother's messages, given to individuals, institutions, organisations, visiting dignitaries, etc. on special occasions are a writing in a class by itself. They give a strikingly new direction and orientation in life-situations. They are fine topics for contemplation and realisation.

The Mother has translated Sri Aurobindo's works into French and this she was doing almost all along. The translations have been widely used in France and other French-knowing parts of the world. And they have served a large purpose in conveying the spiritual message of Sri Aurobindo to the wider world outside.

The Mother's writings have appeared in many compilations too which have been

published from Pondicherry or elsewhere and they are most illuminating on the varied issues involved.

The Mother's writings essentially bear upon the spiritual seeking of man, his life's growth and fulfilment, his right attitude and work, his progress and evolution, his highest destiny in a world of progressive harmony and divine manifestation. An integral transformation of life is the theme. Supermind, Superman and a divine fulfilment are the aim. Evidently a perennial theme and a constant inspiration for man and his future

INDRA SEN

## A STRANGE DREAM AND ITS LESSON

On the 5th of August 1974 I had a strange dream in the early hours of the morning I call it "strange" in an uncommon sense because it is unlike what a person of my kind may imagine even of the unexpected

I found myself at the entrance of a long and very large hall. The walls, which were not rigid like the walls of our earthly houses, were of a pretty pale silver-blue. I do not know how I managed to reach this place and what planes I had crossed before reaching it. Looking up at the high ceiling I found that it too was of a pale silver-blue, but, as I have mentioned already, it did not seem to have a rigid limit.

There were beings here resembling our human form in the top part of their bodies, but tall and very beautiful. Almost all were wearing crowns of gold, and gazing at me in a peculiar way, as much as to say, "From where has this queer creature come?" I was wearing a plain white sari and my head was also covered with a part of it.

I asked these people, "Where is Mother? Can you take me to her?" But instead of helping me they did their best to obstruct my passage. This struck me as perplexing, because they were certainly beings of a higher world.

I was, however, determined to go to the Mother; so I pushed and dodged and managed to advance though with much difficulty.

After a long while I came to a place where I saw a wide opening on my left. I peeped into this opening and lo! there was the Mother at last, seated on a magnificent throne, the like of which can never be met with on earth.

She was surrounded by high-statured wonderful beings who also looked like Gods. They too were wearing crowns but none of them was eager to help me. Slowly I made my way to the Mother who had a white and gold sari on, and a very beautiful crown on her head.

On approaching her, I fell at her feet, then raising my head I said to her, "Mother dear, this life of mine seems to be ruined and almost at an end. Promise me that I shall be with you in my next." She looked at me for a long while and then said, "I promise." She placed her hand in mine and smiled the sweet and loving smile which all of us know.

I got up and was slowly moving away from her, when to my astonishment I saw some smaller beings on her right, who too were godlike in appearance. They were making some things for which I cannot find a name, since there is nothing like them on our earth.

I stood for a time in amazement, watching them at work. They had a marvellous skill which I greatly admired.

Gradually I withdrew from the place and woke up. I did not know where I had been or how I had managed to get there. To be sure, not my own capacity but the Mother's Grace must have uplifted me for a short time.

A friend has suggested that I must have penetrated into the Overmind plane, to which those godlike beings belong and behind or beyond which, in a central depth of the Unknown, is the Supramental Mahashakti's original and primal poise for world-action. Skirting even this depth some Overmind powers may be present. The smaller beings, who were not obstructive but were at a creative job on the Mother's right,



may be "Divine Souls" akin to the psychic self in us who is a child of the Supreme, a growing entity toiling towards a new creation under the Mother's guidance.

The lesson I learnt was this — that just as in our earthly life there are people and circumstances that do their best to hinder us from approaching the Divine, so also on the higher planes are beings who, full of their own celestial greatness, do not wish us to transcend their rule which has prevailed up till now in the world's history: they try to prevent us from reaching the utter Supreme who is the Mother and who is now humanity's goal. We have to keep up a strong aspiration and a firm will if we wish to succeed.

LALITA

## “WHAT DOES YOUR SOUL LOOK LIKE?”

### Some Answers from the Students (Age-group 11-21) of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education

My soul is golden. It is more bright than the sun. It is somewhere inside the heart. There are three *deepas*. The one on the left has a beautiful blue flame on which is sitting Sri Aurobindo in the supramental body. To his right on a beautiful white flame is sitting Mother in a supramental body. In front of them on a much tinier golden flame is sitting Hanuman.

Age 11

\*

My soul is an invisible thing. Sometimes when I am quiet and happy I hear it. It is a thing which never dies. I don't hear anything when I shout and become angry.

Age 12

\*

I think that my soul is like a small, sweet, pleasant and powerful man. It tells us nice things. It seems that it hides behind my heart. My soul wants me to be absolutely pure, obedient, to be considerate and have a good man's spirit. Everyone may leave me but my soul will never. I am sure that it loves me and I love it too.

Age 12

\*

The soul is an unknown thing to me. I never see it nor imagine it, but I feel it. It is a lighted jewel, very bright, and it burns like a long fiery flame. It is a very precious treasure to me. Around the soul's hard surface dance the black devils of the vital world. That is why it is very difficult to contact the soul. But the soul always tries to contact me and sometimes I hear the soft voice whispering through the dark weeds of the vital world.

There are moments when I can hear the soft voice of my pure soul, which echoes through my mind. It is when I am calm and silent with a high aspiration for the Divine. That's when I feel an extraordinary change in myself. The soul is a very peculiar little thing to me but the voice is very well known.

Age 12

\*

Whenever I sit still and quietly, I feel something soft in me. It purifies my mind and makes it clean again by pouring down nice things in it. It makes me happy and glad. Sometimes when I sit for the meditation I think something is glowing in me and it helps me meditate deeper and deeper on God.

Sometimes the glowing is transparent and sometimes it's blue. And once it pricked me and I could see that the light in me was fading. Sometimes I feel that I am empty and nothing is in me and I feel as light as a balloon. When I don't concentrate on anything, I feel the bad vital beings entering in me and destroying everything in me. But

my soul is strong and it fights with them I think my soul is a great helper and a guide to me. I don't really know where my soul is, but I know it is in me somewhere

Age 12

\*

What is the soul? What does it look like? How many persons have asked this question to themselves? Here, in the Ashram, Mother has taught us to meditate and go within and 'see'. But I have never tried this.

I feel the soul is a tiny flame, which is never touched by our misdeeds or other unworthy deeds. It takes a new body and comes down on earth for more experience. I feel it is a flame which burns without any misgivings in the dog as well as in me. A flame which aspires to progress, to improve on past records.

As a palm tree stretches itself towards God, so the flame in me stretches itself.

Age 13

\*

My soul is hidden deep inside my body and covered with a thick fog-like thing. It is apple-shaped, of a dark red colour, as we get older the soul also becomes older. It moves here and there like a bouncing ball and tries to get rid of those vital beings that trouble man day and night.

Age 13

\*

I think his colour is golden He attracts us to good things He is everywhere We should keep faith in him. He is inside everyone He can take any form he wants.

Age 13

\*

Perhaps my soul looks somewhat like a bluish white gas, It is immortal. It is like a seed in a fruit which, if one wants, can always go on and on existing When a fruit is eaten up or rotten the seed remains If we take it out and replant it, it can give another tree or plant.

Sometimes our soul talks to us of something higher and superior which we ought to do It always stays within ourselves and talks to no other person than us. It gives us good advice. When it talks to us, we really feel something from within which we cannot express.

It looks at us like an eye of God, on our every action whether it is good or bad. And when it thinks that we can be led on a better path, it speaks out to us.

Age 13

\*

The soul is the kiss of God in man, embodied with all the virtues It is in the form of a radiant flame, constant, never faltering in the faith of its Lord. It burns on, spiring upwards, full of devotion It is not selfish, nor egoistic. It prays to God not for itself, but for the perfection of man. It wants man to aim at the skies. It calls out to man and tries to guide him, but man lost in his pride and vanity pays no heed to that call

It is left alone in the very depths of the being, beyond the grasp of the puny mortal. It is not affected nor influenced by man's cruel and dirty actions. But it reaches upwards, enlarges and rises higher still, with each great divinely done deed. It tries to teach man to have full faith in it, and only when he silences himself completely and concentrates in his inner Self, does he hear the clear and godly voice of his soul guiding him at each step he takes. And only then after this long period does the soul succeed in making man's will one with the Divine Will.

It knows no rest or peace until it accomplishes its mission for which it came down on earth.

Age 14

\*

My soul is an enormous abode of God which is decorated with blue hanging carpets. There is a small wooden table on which a sacred book is placed open in which good points and bad points and desires, everything is written in detail with a lovely ink. The handwriting is God's handwriting. This room has a small door through which golden rays enter and keep it lighted. There is an enormous door and if you can open it, you will see a long and narrow path, climbing high and it is very steep. It is obstructed by obstacles. The whole atmosphere is different there. The lonely path has no sun, no moon yet it is still lighted with a golden light. In the abode there is a small speaker through which I and God are connected. There is a silver bell too. To see God you have to ring the bell. When God hears it he sees your sacred book, and if he finds good there, then only he descends in the abode.

Age 14

\*

My soul is always full of adoration and it can never dwell in obscurity for it is always full of light. My soul always whispers some good thing or other. It is always wanting me to be happy and gay. Thy joy can be found only in the soul and nowhere else.

Age 14

\*

He took a little of kindness, a little of joy, a little of love and a little of truth to mould a tiny flame. He took a tint of the sun, a tint of the sky to give the flame a hue. Then very tenderly He took the flame and shelled it with His protection and gently let it go from His Home. The flame dropped slowly and by and by it came and settled in every evil and virtuous man's bosom of loneliness. And there it burns immortal and eternal. Pure like the flower, frail like its petals was this flame. It got buried in the fathomless depths of man's being. Just as the sun shines and the stars twinkle, this flaming soul burns fervidly every moment. But all alone it is left there, forgotten and ignored. And at times man hears some calls which seem like the notes played on a flute and sweet as the sound of the tinkling of ankle-bells. The notes seem far, distant, soft yet clear. But man is often heedless and seals his ears to the call. But patiently, again and again, the music recurs waiting for his attention.

And the man who heeds these musical calls wakens up and strives to follow the notes of the music to reach his soul's destination. But the path has already been covered.

with the weeds of his ignorance and the notes get entangled in them and he finds it difficult to pursue the path and has to go through many obstacles. But his heart is full of hopes and so he struggles on in his pursuit, till one day he gets to the solitary cavern of the flaming soul where he surrenders himself and his whole being gets mingled with it. And then the translucent flame rises and spreads its wings and flutters away to become one with him and reunites with his soul.

Age 15

What does my soul look like? It's the most unusual question I have ever been asked. The interesting point of the soul is that, though it is imperceptible physically, I am quite aware of it mentally

(Truly confessing) I feel that my soul has no form. It's like the immaculate holy smoke that rises from the incense stick. Though frail and ethereal to look at, it has the most incredible strength to fight and this it always does until we let it down by being the mind's slave.

Age 15

There are moments when a vista opens an inner door of your being; when each object reflects something other than its physical structure. You are instantly aware of the shallow green waters, the deep heavy blue and then a clear horizon. You give more than a casual look at the lark singing on a bough or a wave curling on the beach. A grain of sand in the palm of your hand echoes the vastness of the universe.

It was a moment of peace when tribulations vanished and God's Presence became almost tangible. Over the bank a fisherman leaned across a stump and his rod swayed in the breeze. His face was etched with age, his cheeks sagged and uneven teeth shone between his lips. But his eyes glowed with delight. The old man on the bank had a few sunsets left, they weren't to be wasted. His rod moved, a fish stirred the stillness of the water, a trout decorated the hook. The man grew thoughtful and then chuckled, "This is no time for killing", and slipped the trout back in the river, where the waters splashed on the bank. An eagle circled above and glided over the trees. There was a mild rustle and the sound of the running stream. He stood up, and gave more than a passing glance at the squirrels, and chewed a blade of grass. The sunlight trapped in his hair, he sauntered and silently mingled with the shadows. It was a moment's pause.

It is at this interval of life, you confront your soul when there's more to fishing than fish. The arrogant in me is transmuted into a wide, docile ascetic Brajesh. A soul is intangible, transparent, inaudible... beyond our senses.

Age 16

My soul looks like

- a) A warm and friendly smile filling every heart with joy.
- b) The golden sunshine streaking through the veils of clouds.
- c) A sweet summer shower of silvery drops.

- d) The vast, swaying paddy fields caressed by the wind
  - e) A blade of grass which spends its beauty in a simple, unstinted life.
- In fact, my soul is like a kaleidoscope Each time I turn it, I see Him in an infinite number of forms.

Age 17

\*

- a) My soul is a pure, white swan flying towards the beckoning Light of Eternity against a stormy sky over-ridden with ferocious clouds
- b) It is a butterfly in search of the Great Flower on whose petals of eternal bliss it shall gently rest.

Age 17

\*

I have met it in one form or another but always its distinguishing characteristic has been Light, the sweetest and purest and warmest of lights

Age 19

\*

The soul is Light dimmed in our bodily vesture, trying to expand and brighten itself.

Age 20

\*

The soul for me is more of a perception, a feeling than a sight. It is for me a calm and deep delight, a delight which in its effect infuses life with a deep power of joy, of meaning. The image which would convey some aspect of life, delight and purity would be that of a young and smiling baby or, as many have put it, a concentrated flame, which would convey the aspect of deep power.

Age 21

## A RAY OF THE MOTHER'S GRACE

“Bonne Fête,” came a soft voice ringing into my ears the moment I bent my head before the Mother’s photograph, hung on the wall, just on rising from bed as usual.

“Bonne Fête!” I murmured to myself in a choked voice “Mother! you have remembered that today is my birthday ”

A lot of people had come along with a temple priest — “V”. He was running a school at his native place. Among the Darshan-seekers one was a boy of 10 or 12. All of them came to see me Drawing the boy near me I put a queer question :

“Can you tell me where the Mother lives?”

He straightened his neck, gave me a surprised look but made no reply After a moment’s pause he spoke in a low voice: “Here,” pointing to his heart with a finger.

After a spell of cyclonic weather, the sky had just cleared but the morning paper announced the coming of another cyclone from the evening of November 16. The sky became overcast, yet the clouds did not threaten with any peal of thunder. However, the fear hovered; a heavy shower might start any moment. We heaved a sign of relief when we found we could go to the Ashram without an umbrella. People had started pouring in from 4 a.m.; the queue continued except for a break at 10 for half-an-hour’s meditation to enable us to receive the Mother’s grace in the silence which pervaded the atmosphere. Those who had joined the queue at 6 could find an access to the Mother’s room at 8. The delay was due to the fact that each of us was given an opportunity to breathe the celestial air in the Mother’s room and pour his or her heart’s love and gratitude while offering a pranam. All were so gripped by a power unknown to us, that there was not the least stir The darshan lasted till 12-30 p m

What makes our heart hanker for a ray of her grace? In the future, volumes will be written on the subject. Here are just a few striking instances that have come to my knowledge

“Puranmull is sent to jail,” a wire was sent by his family.

When it was read to Sri Aurobindo he inquired: “Our Puranmull?” The return news of Sri Aurobindo’s having used the word “our” with his name made such an impact on P that it left an indelible mark in his mind. The very next day he was released.

“Pray do help me to reach Pondicherry at the Darshan time at any rate,” cried the heart of a youngster from the jail. “I don’t mind if I am put in jail again but let me not miss the chance, do grant me this favour ”

He had just joined his father’s business after finishing his studies in the Ashram Centre of Education. His father was hunted by the police for the reason that he owned a big rice-mill in Calcutta and was considered to be a hoarder. Failing to lay hands on him as he had gone underground, the authorities arrested his son. One day all of a sudden he found himself outside the jail gate and reached the Ashram in time for the Darshan.

One, in the service of the Damodar Valley Corporation, was on his way to Badrinath with his family. Just when he was to catch a bus his feet refused to move. His family members did not like to miss the bus and insisted on making him join but he said point-blank

“No. I will not.”

“But why?”

“I can't tell why ”

“You are keeping us in suspense. If we are left in this mountainous region what will be our fate? Have you no sense?”

“Don't go!” Not once but three times came a sonorous voice to his ears and he refused to budge an inch. Later it was learnt that the bus rolled down the mountainous track and not even one passenger survived.

His future mother-in-law had been in connection with the Ashram since 1940. On the Mother's approval her daughter was married to this man who rose from being a lower division clerk to the much-coveted post of Controller of Cost and Budget in the Damodar Valley Corporation by dint of his devotion to duty and sincerity. From the very beginning he was absolutely honest and remained so till the end. He won the heart of his higher officers because he never neglected his duties but was not allowed for a long time a higher grade owing to favouritism.

An attack of high blood-pressure and diabetes made him lose the sight of one eye but he carried on his duties with one eye, sitting till 10 at night. When the other eye developed a cataract he applied for resignation, three years before the year of his retirement. His subordinates and superiors persuaded him not to press for resignation and offered to carry on the work for him. He would simply have to put his signature to papers. “This I will never do,” he said straightway. “Unless I see everything myself and am assured of the authenticity of it, I will never sign any document.” When he resigned, he was given Rs.7,000 for honesty and integrity during 27 years' sincere service. Though he is living in the Ashram with his whole family at his own expense, he is considered an Ashramite.

The person through whom the family came in touch with the Mother had a letter in Bengali written through Sri Aurobindo's brother Barindra in 1925. It reads:

“On seeing the photo Sri Aurobindo has said that his vital has no solid basis. He has a weak constitution but a good psychic being. He has something in him that will sustain him all through on the path of Yoga. If he takes up other Yogas he may be blessed with the darshan of God ”

The then-student of H, now a renowned doctor, had opened a Centre. Till then H had had no connection with the Ashram. Once his youngest son got laid up with paralysis and was counting not days but hours to die. All hope of his survival was given up. It struck H: “Why not send a wire to the Mother?” A few hours later — the wire must still have been on its way — in a dying voice the child spoke, “Water ” From that moment he started to recover; though one of his legs has been very badly affected and he has to walk limping, he is now in the M.A. class. To pay homage to the Mother H regularly visits the Ashram once a year.

It was *Yoga and Its Object and Bases of Yoga* that brought R — then Inspector of Police on an Estate in Madhya Pradesh — to Pondicherry in 1938. He had read about the books in a newspaper and got them sent him by post. He availed himself of the first opportunity to visit the Ashram but he returned without darshan, as there was no darshan at the time, due to an accident to Sri Aurobindo's right leg. He did not feel the least frustrated. On return home he started a Centre at his place and celebrated the next darshan. This Centre is one of the few which have their own building and a school.

He was often asked to comb out the dacoits on his Estate. Each time he used



to seek the Mother's protection before going to encounter these heartless and ruthless fellows and each time he escaped death. Bullets would pass by his left or right side and he would come out unhurt.

When he was relieved from service because of the merger of two States, there was a standing order of the Mother that he should be allowed to join the Ashram whenever he liked. But he pleaded his inability. He felt himself unfit to be a member of the Ashram until he had paid off his debts. The gracious Mother gave him the assurance that she would see that this burden would be removed from his shoulders. Yet he could never prolong his stay. Some pretext or other dragged him back to his old life. He was beset with difficulties but nothing stifled the cry of his soul.

When he suffered from high blood-pressure and diabetes, the Mother got him admitted to JIPMER, sending word to her intermediary that he should be treated as an Ashramite.

The Mother used to bless each of us with a rose on the 1st of every month, which was known as Prosperity day. It was his earnest desire that he might be granted the joy of this service. He was very earnest that a portion of his earnings be spent in the service of the Divine.

The first man who came in touch with his Centre is now here. All facilities were granted to him on condition that besides day-time duty he would remain in his place at night and never leave it unguarded. His wife was staying in a hired house and in the evening he used to take his meal there.

Pondicherry is often visited by a cyclone in the rainy season. Once when he was returning at night, it was raining heavily but he went on cycling with the Mother's name on his lips. Suddenly his raincoat got entangled in the spokes of one of the cycle wheels. When he got down, he found that at a little distance lay the trunk of a huge tree blocking the road. Had the cycle collided with it what a tragedy would have been his lot! Who could have taken the news of his pitiable state to the Ashram?

After a year or so the same man was uprooted from the Ashram soil by an inner cyclonic storm. While coming down the staircase of his house he fell and broke his leg. All arrangements were made for his safe stay in a big hospital, as if by a secret hand, and he had to be there for more than a month. And that was the period during which he felt the presence of the Mother much more concretely than ever before. At that time he realised that though he had left the Ashram, the Mother had not left him.

To return to the story of the darshan on November 17.

Those belonging to the essential service in the Ashram were allowed by the young boys on duty to have darshan earlier without making them stand in the queue. I could easily have used this privilege, but waiting in the queue entailed the chance to allow the mind and heart to get composed and collected so that the being might be ready and open to the flow of the grace. Drawing on my experience I may say that the long waiting in a queue does not at all appear tedious. The moment one goes inward, there occurs no sense of weariness. When one is blessed with an experience — the photographs of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo springing into life or a sweet touch, flashes of light, a descent of peace, the awakening of consciousness and the like — the inner elation is so great that no price appears too high.

I reached the Ashram at 9-30 a.m. I was told by a bright young boy on duty that people were now allowed to go in and sit for meditation. If you line up in the queue

you lose the opportunity. I acted accordingly and sat in a corner. All round me there was nothing except human heads but there was utter silence. Before the meditation got over at 10-30 a.m., not once did I find any kind of stir or whispering as far as eyes could see and ears listen. All seemed to be gripped by something unknown. When my consciousness went inward, I saw a column of light stretching from my heart to the farthest end up to Bula's room (I was seated in the veranda where notice boards are set up.) Half an hour (length of appointed meditation-time) passed unnoticed. I got up and stood in the queue at the place where I had been. I thought that I must follow the discipline. Why should one shrink from a little *tapasya*?

But I found that for half an hour I remained at one spot. The line did not move. Then arose a question: Should I return to work because the closing time was approaching, or stay till I had darshan? Something in me whispered "Work first" Then came a forceful voice to my ears: "Go and come back." I attended my work and requested someone to stay at the department till I returned. When I reached the Ashram the queue had almost come to an end. This afforded me a rare opportunity to be in the Mother's room much more than expected. Here had lived the One who had brought and embodied the Eternal Light, and made it walk in the darkness of the earth.

The prayer that shot up in those unforgettable moments produced repeated thrills which made even the cells sing a victory song.

The next day I had to pass through a severe ordeal but a power was there all the time sustaining me throughout.

The third day was a holiday. While still in bed I felt something slowly rising from the heart and going up and up crossing the frontiers of the body. Before 1938 I used to have momentary experiences of the ascent, but they were a flight of consciousness giving me not more than touches and glimpses of the Divine Self, as was remarked by Sri Aurobindo

Now a portion of the inner being went on ascending up and up for a long time. It is difficult to assign a time-limit, for in such memorable moments there remains no sense of time and space

In the Tantra the power rises through the spinal cord. In the Integral Yoga the whole consciousness rises from below to higher regions, But to bring about an inner change the turning of "the ignorant human consciousness, into "a spiritual consciousness",<sup>1</sup> both ascent and descent are necessary. Sri Aurobindo is very emphatic here. Without "the ascent to the Above and the descent from the Above"<sup>2</sup> there can be no transformation.

The Author of *Towards the Higher Life*

<sup>1</sup> *On Yoga II*, Tome II, p 576

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* p 528

















## THE MOTHER, DEATH AND EVOLUTION

O Death, if thou couldst touch the Truth supreme  
Thou wouldst grow suddenly wise and cease to be.  
If our souls could see and love and clasp God's Truth,  
Its infinite radiance would seize our hearts,  
Our being in God's image be remade  
And earthly life become the life divine.

*Savitri*, Cent. Ed., Vol. 29, p. 663<sup>1</sup>

WE who live in this physical sphere of existence called earth are being progressively forced, both individually and collectively, to gaze into the eyes of Death. Of the multifaceted personalities that this Shadow projects, subtly and grossly, on life's screen physical death looms largest in Man's consciousness. And yet even this acknowledged fact of life, that each must at some time relinquish the life force, has not been easily accepted beyond its existence as an abstract idea. For example, the development of a specialized area of study in the West called Thanatology bears witness to the tremendous capacity in twentieth-century man to repress the existence of life's dark companion. The surfacing of this need to acknowledge death consciously and to study its psychological ramifications has as its object not only the individual who is about to die, but also the doctors involved, the relatives and the larger community. Why is it that in such a highly educated and technologically sophisticated society doctors cannot tell their patients or relatives admit to themselves that death is imminent? Perhaps, it is the same force that veils the consciousness of the collectivity to the ecological cancer now ravaging the planet. Is it also an outgrowth of the failure to choose the cultivation of an inner, creative life over a surface existence which is at best one of mechanical manipulation? Apart from Death's most blatant show of force in the form of the disintegration of the physical body it weaves its spell in what would seem an infinity of guises. Despite its artistry of multiplication of form and mystification its true underlying power resides in the veiling of consciousness so that the apparent disguises itself as real, ignorance looks like knowledge and falsehood wears the mask of truth.

For those who share the vision of a more highly evolved individual, from either a scientific, religious or spiritual perspective, to raise the question of a greater expanse of life or immortality necessitates an intimate knowledge of the wizardry of Death. This is to say that just as we experience an evolution of consciousness regarding life so we must also admit into our conscious existence a growing awareness of that which appears as Life's constant companion. If one accepts the psychological truth that one can conquer or overcome only those forces or formations which can be admitted into consciousness, then the burgeoning presence of Death on this planet can, perhaps, be seen from an evolutionary perspective. The enemy will be most vulnerable when all of his secret weapons will be laid bare in the Light. And this can only come to be

when we have attained the power and knowledge to look straight and unflinchingly into the eyes of Death. This is first and foremost a problem whose solution lies in the evolution of consciousness.

In this light the growing consciousness of the pervasiveness of Death in our time can be viewed from the perspective of hope rather than the ordinary reaction of repression and despair. For example, the manifestation of Thanatology as a field of study, the confrontation of ecological problems of a global nature, the preservation and transplantation of the various physical organs and the psychological and parapsychological exploration of the experience of dying all bear witness, despite their limitations, to a conscious encounter with Death. It is often the case that just before an adversary, physical or non-physical, is about to be defeated he struggles most intensely and consequently reveals his lairs of power. For those who are able to heighten and widen their field of consciousness ever so little it becomes evident that the forces of Death have chosen to press for a total victory—physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. Recognizing this to be the case, how are we to respond? How are we to decipher the message in these ominous signs?

The adherents of a “chance and necessity” interpretation of the planet’s *raison d’être* will envision the manifestation of Death as a predictable consequence of an increase in entropy. Those who peer through a religious optic will be disposed to allow for the widening Shadow as an ante-room in the passage to a higher world beyond the terrestrial. Only those who carry within their breasts the fire that will fashion for the future a perfected earth must directly confront, do battle with and ultimately pierce the masks of Death until he reveals his true identity. The central question for the vessel of this vision, whether secularist or spiritualist, is: Where will I obtain the power and knowledge necessary for the task?

The spiritual work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother has as its object nothing less than a full manifestation of the supramental consciousness on the earth which will result in the appearance of a race of gnostic beings. While this is a process which will evolve in time, the primary condition which must be fulfilled for the supramental plenitude here is the conquest of Death. On December 5, 1950 Sri Aurobindo left his body, at which time the supramental light descended into and supported his physical sheath until December 9, 1950. K. D. Sethna, with the approval of the Mother, has illuminated that unexpected event by elucidating its meaning and significance.<sup>2</sup> After Sri Aurobindo’s passing, the Mother continued the work of physical transformation with Sri Aurobindo who, by her testimony, continued the work from the subtle physical plane of existence. On November 17, 1973 the Mother also departed from her body leaving her disciples and devotees, who had envisioned her victory over Death, with, perhaps, many questions, but, at least, this one: What is the meaning of the Mother’s decision to leave her physical form?

Even a cursory glance at history reveals a certain consistency of forces that attend the departure of great spiritual beings from the physical realm of existence. First, there are numerous conjectures as to the reason for leaving which almost in-

evitably result in the formation of a number of sects or cults, each proclaiming the requisite occult knowledge. This movement has as one of its consequences the emergence of a number of leaders or teachers and a larger gathering of followers resulting in a dispersion and externalization of consciousness. The real work of removing the veils which separate the inner from the surface consciousness is relinquished in favor of an identification with outer forms. This change in direction bars the way to the attainment of an authentic spiritual and occult knowledge and perpetuates ignorance and falsehood. It is the dividing line between spirituality and religion where true inner knowledge and power are abandoned for external authority, rules and empty forms.

A corollary to this development is a memorializing and idolizing of the *past* or from another perspective a passive reliance on the teacher's return in the *future*. In either case the result is the same—an abdication of the will to collaborate in the spiritual work of the *present*. It is the refusal to become an instrument for a higher will and knowledge. The results of this general pattern of reactions can be seen in what we know today as Christianity, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, etc. But whatever their particular identification they are anti-evolutionary forces—allies of Death

The Mother's departure from a particular physical form has undoubtedly unleashed these forces along with a host of others. When Sri Aurobindo left his body the Mother was there to console and direct the sadhana down to the smallest detail as well as to give some meaning to his sacrifice. With her own passing one is forced to look within for the meaning and significance since the external guidance is no longer there. In this light there is a certain tendency to explain the Mother's decision as a result of our failure to measure up to the work of transformation. Of course we must remember that upon being asked whether her work was dependent on humanity she replied, "Happily not!" This does not mean we have no part to play in the Divine's work—we must eventually surrender completely to the higher Will and Knowledge. However, we must remember the Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's teaching that the Divine's work is done in spite of us. The difference is one of consciousness, *i.e.*, if we are conscious we take delight in the process; if we are unconscious the work is accomplished but we do not experience the delight. This strange twist of ego that interprets the Mother's decision to leave her body as punishment or displeasure in regard to our actions is a projection of our ignorance on her and is an invitation to the forces of Death to maintain their hold on earth.

This strong formation in human nature to abort spiritual work by converting it into a religion will try to manifest in relation to Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's work of transformation. As early as 1934 Sri Aurobindo recognized this danger and warned against advertising his work as a movement.

A movement like mine means the founding of a school or sect or some other damned nonsense. It means that hundreds or thousands of useless people join

in and corrupt the work or reduce it to a pompous farce from which the Truth that was coming down recedes into secrecy and silence. It is what has happened to the "religions" and is the reason of their failure.<sup>3</sup>

Their teaching is clear, namely, that the time of religions is finished but there is still the nature that wants to repeat the past for a multiplicity of motives—some of which have been referred to above. That anything less than the spiritual life is a perpetuation of a life of alienation is clearly described by Sri Aurobindo in his delineation of the ordinary, religious and spiritual lives:

The spiritual life (adhyatma-jivana), the religious life (dharma-jivana) and the ordinary human life of which morality is a part are three quite different things and one must know which one desires and not confuse the three together. The ordinary life is that of the average human consciousness separated from its own true self and from the Divine and led by the common habits of the mind, life and body which are the laws of the Ignorance. The religious life is a movement of the same ignorant human consciousness, turning or trying to turn away from the earth towards the Divine, but as yet without knowledge and led by the dogmatic tenets and rules of some sect or creed which claims to have found the way out of the bonds of the earth-consciousness into some beatific Beyond. The religious life may be the first approach to the spiritual, but very often it is only a turning about in a round of rites, ceremonies and practices or set ideas and forms without any issue. The spiritual life, on the contrary, proceeds directly by a change of consciousness, a change from the ordinary consciousness, ignorant and separated from its true self and from God, to a greater consciousness in which one finds one's true being and comes first into direct and living contact and then into union with the Divine. For the spiritual seeker this change of consciousness is the one thing he seeks and nothing else matters.<sup>4</sup>

This "change of consciousness" presses intently upon us now that the physical form of the Guru is no longer present. Of course those who have had contact with the Mother, personally or through her writings, recognize immediately that one of the true objects of her teachings through word and act was to open the inner being where the Mother is eternally present. This work remains—for each one to discover what is the vehicle most suited to his particular nature by which this goal can be attained. However, it is the absence of the physical presence of a most indulgent Mother that often confuses the mental and vital parts of the nature. The writings are there as external guides but always with the warning not to turn them into scriptures and dogma. With all of this in mind the question remains: Where can one look to find in light of the great vision of terrestrial transformation the key to the Mother's leaving?

Recognizing that an opening inward to the psychic being and upwards to the higher levels of consciousness is necessary to effect a conscious collaboration with the ongoing work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother one might still ask whether, beyond individual inspiration or revelation, there exists a bridge between the inner and outer worlds. I would like to suggest, for numerous reasons, that Sri Aurobindo's great epic poem, *Savitri*, may provide a passage way towards the harmonization of these worlds.

### *Savitri*

It can be said with some justification that among Sri Aurobindo's writings *Savitri* assumes a unique position. Of all his works it is the one that received his attention over the longest span of time and is offered as the inner mapping of the planes of consciousness leading to the Supermind. It is the authentic biography that he warned could never be written because the real significance of his life was not on the surface for man to see. He wrote the original version of *Savitri* many years before the Mother came to India and he continued to "revise" it up until the time just before he left his body in 1950. It became the chosen vehicle for ascending to and exploring the higher levels of consciousness as well as the form through which his yogic experience was expressed:

I used *Savitri* as a means of ascension. I began with it on a certain mental level, each time I could reach a higher level I rewrote from that level. Moreover I was particular—if part seemed to me to come from any lower levels I was not satisfied to leave it because it was good poetry. All had to be as far as possible of the same mint. In fact *Savitri* has not been regarded by me as a poem to be written and finished, but as a field of experimentation to see how far poetry could be written from one's own yogic consciousness and how that could be made creative. (Pp. 727-8)

In Sri Aurobindo's own words what we receive in *Savitri* is not only poetry as we ordinarily understand the term but also the direct touch of his evolving consciousness which holds the power to open us to the future of man. That one cannot overestimate the role of *Savitri* in the evolution of man is confirmed by the Mother in a message written at the beginning of a disciple's notebook containing selections from *Savitri*: "... this marvellous prophetic poem which is to be humanity's guide towards its future realisation."<sup>5</sup> These few powerful words are enough to kindle the fire of aspiration for the discovery of *Savitri*'s occult and spiritual secrets. One will be hard-pressed to find such a high role attributed to any other writing. This position of "guide" of humanity towards its future is reiterated again by the Mother in a long talk on *Savitri*:

You know it is charged, fully charged with consciousness; as though *Savitri* were a being, a real guide. I tell you, whoever, wishing to practise Yoga, tries

sincerely and feels the necessity for it will be able to climb with the help of *Savitri* to the highest step of the ladder of Yoga, will be able to find the secret *Savitri* represents. And this without the help of a Guru. And he will be able to practise it anywhere. For him *Savitri* alone will be the guide, for all that he needs he will find in *Savitri*.<sup>6</sup>

These words take on a very special meaning in regard to collaborating in the present evolutionary work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother as well as gaining some insight regarding the meaning of the Mother's decision to continue her work from another plane. This is not to say that *Savitri* can be used as an ordinary information book or scripture but, rather, it demands an extension of consciousness before it will reveal its power and knowledge. In this regard Sri Aurobindo has noted: "*Savitri* is the record of a seeing, of an experience which is not of the common kind and is often very far from what the general human mind sees and experiences."<sup>7</sup> It is an evolutionary piece of writing that contains and has the power to transmit and evoke all of the levels of consciousness that were discovered and experienced by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

In *Savitri* Sri Aurobindo adopts the legend of Satyavan and Savitri in the Mahabharata but transforms it into a symbol of the evolution of humanity towards Supermind. "Satyavan is the soul carrying the divine truth of being within itself but descended into the grip of death and ignorance; Savitri is the Divine Word, daughter of the Sun, goddess of the supreme Truth who comes down and is born to save;..."<sup>8</sup> In its original form it is the story of conjugal love conquering death but again Sri Aurobindo has elevated and widened the legend so that it has become an expression of his yoga of transformation. It is the detailed manifestation of the experiences of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on the way towards the bringing down of the supramental consciousness and its full manifestation on earth. In this regard when the Mother was asked if *Savitri* represents the Mother's Consciousness she replied in the affirmative and upon being asked what Satyavan represents she answered, "He is the Avatar, isn't he? He is the incarnation of the Supreme."<sup>9</sup> Against this background one might ask whether there is any indication, in *Savitri's* long battle with Death, of the significance of the Mother leaving the physical body.

### *Savitri and Death*

If any glimpse of the meaning of the Mother's departure from her physical body is given in *Savitri* it will manifest in Book IX, The Book of Eternal Night and Book X, The Book of the Double Twilight. This section of Sri Aurobindo's epic poem offers an occult and spiritual history of *Savitri's* battle with and victory over Death which signifies not only an individual's triumph but also humanity's attainment of immortality. To Death's charge that she is a mere human she utters what most men will not consciously entertain:

“Yes, I am human. Yet shall man by me,  
 Since in humanity waits his hour the God,  
 Trample thee down to reach the immortal heights,  
 Transcending grief and pain and fate and death. (P. 634)

Her challenge gives form to the task of each individual if humanity is to realize its future—Death must be confronted and overcome in its multiplicity of manifestations.

After the death of Satyavan in the forest the great journey begins through the realms of Death, and it is in these powerful cantos that one can experience most intimately the evolution of Death referred to in the beginning of this essay. In this evolutionary process Death is brought in his multifaceted existence fully into the Light of Consciousness, but only at the point when he asks to see the Truth does he begin to consent to his demise. As we shall see, the process is a paradigm of the surrender of our lower nature to the higher or divine nature. In this passage through “Eternal Night” the travellers proceed in a certain order which is a powerful symbol of the order of the worlds as they exist in a consciousness of Ignorance. Satyavan, the soul of the world held in the grip of death and ignorance, is in front, Savitri is behind and Death is in between:

All still compelled went gliding on unchanged,  
 Still was the order of these worlds reversed:  
 The mortal led, the god and spirit obeyed  
 And she behind was leader of their march  
 And they in front were followers of her will. (P. 639)

This embodies a powerful teaching in regard to our alienated condition in the world as it is ordinarily experienced. We are separated from the source of our consciousness, the Divine Mother, and are under the illusion that the limited consciousness in front or on the surface is the leader of the march. It is when we can look more deeply that we discover that the surface being is really controlled by the forces of Death lurking behind the veil. But this is not yet the deepest level—at the foundation of the worlds, self-veiled in the temporal evolutionary unfolding, stands the Mother who includes among her many instruments Death himself. It is in this great passage in Books IX and X that Sri Aurobindo gives his most detailed description of the warrior spirit of Savitri and her winning of immortality. All of the subtleties of Death are placed in the Light of Consciousness and the Shadow is brought to the position of asking for the Truth which renders all shadows superfluous. Here is the evolution of consciousness whereby each of our individual natures, now participating in the universal rule of Death, can be illuminated and transformed.

It is important to note that, as the great passage commences, Savitri, in order to follow Satyavan and Death, leaves the realm of Time as we perceive it:



So on a spirit's flaming outrush borne  
 She crossed the borders of dividing sense;  
 Like pale discarded sheaths dropped dully down  
 Her mortal members fell back from her soul. (P. 578)

And as she takes this momentous leap Death reminds her:

“O mortal, turn back to thy transient kind;  
 Aspire not to accompany Death to his home,  
 As if thy breath could live where Time must die.” (P. 580)

This is only the beginning of Death's tremendous effort to keep Savitri and man in a state of unconsciousness and here his warning plays upon that universal note of limitation,

“Only in human limits man lives safe...  
 Know the cold term-stones of thy hopes in life.  
 Armed vainly with the Idea's borrowed might  
 Dare not to outstep man's bound and measured force.” (P. 580)

In spite of Death's counsel Savitri dares to enter “eternal night” where time and self and thought and Satyavan and, yes, even the *form* of Death disappear until, “There was none with her in the dreadful Vast:...” (P. 584) How can the formless be rendered into form in order to convey the gravity of Savitri's experience? To give just a glimpse of her journey through the “unborn void”—

A mystery of terror's boundlessness,  
 Gathering its hungry strength the huge pitiless void  
 Surrounded slowly with its soundless depths,  
 And monstrous, cavernous, a shapeless throat  
 Devoured her into its shadowy strangling mass,  
 The fierce spiritual agony of a dream...  
 In the smothering stress of this stupendous Nought  
 Mind could not think, breath could not breathe, the soul  
 Could not remember, or feel itself;... (P. 583)

And yet, “she lived in spite of death, she conquered still” ... (P. 584) Again and again Death attempts to persuade Savitri to return to the physical realm and content herself with life's transient joys. He, recognizing her power to pierce his sphere, offers her several boons if she will return. To her charge that wherever he leads the soul of Satyavan she will follow, Death counters with a speech that bears the universal quality of the physical mind. It is on the lips of those who consciously and unconsciously conspire with Death:

"What is thy hope? to what dost thou aspire?...  
 And thou, what art thou, soul, thou glorious dream  
 Of brief emotions made and glittering thoughts,  
 A thin dance of fireflies speeding-through the night,  
 A sparkling ferment in life's sunlit mire?  
 Wilt thou claim immortality, O heart,  
 Crying against the eternal witnesses  
 That thou and he are endless powers and last?  
 Death only lasts and the inconscient Void." (P. 592)

Death in the great passage not only resorts to the gross-reminder of the law of mortality but also employs a host of much more subtle weapons against the full manifestation of Truth. For example, he exhorts Savitri to "know" and,

"...Knowing, thou shalt cease to love  
 And cease to will, delivered from thy heart,  
 So shalt thou rest forever and be still,  
 Consenting to the impermanence of things." (P. 594)

Surely it is this state of anguish and living death arising from the alienation and division of heart from mind that best describes the condition of contemporary man. It is one of the most ingrained forms of Death masquerading in the guises of our most respectable institutions, *e. g.*, our systems of education that teach children at such a tender age to separate mind from heart and soul. And to this sinister suggestion,

...Savitri replied for man to Death:  
 "When I have loved for ever, I shall know.  
 Love in me knows the truth all changings mask,  
 I know that Knowledge is a vast embrace:  
 I know that every being is myself,  
 In every heart is hidden the myriad One.  
 I know the calm Transcendent bears the world,  
 The veiled Inhabitant, the silent Lord:  
 I feel his secret act, his intimate fire;  
 I hear the murmur of the cosmic Voice.  
 I know my coming was a wave from God.  
 For all his suns were conscient in my birth.  
 And one who loves in us came veiled by death.  
 Then man was born among the monstrous stars  
 Dowered with a mind and heart to conquer thee." (P. 594)

Against Death's urge to fragment our being Savitri takes her stand on the priority of love for the deep knowledge of Oneness behind the appearance of all changings.

And even more powerfully she affirms the capacity in *man* to conquer Death. Each as he moves towards the inner Light of Knowledge must face Death as he manifests in the particular individual nature. As the shadow cast by the intense expression of Death in our time grows larger and larger the pressure to discover the shadowless Light will become overwhelming. In this regard our experience of the absence of the physical Mother contains the power to evoke an impetus to open the being to the Mother who is eternally present in the psychic being. Even when the Mother was present in her physical form she always placed priority on opening to the psychic which would provide the true foundation for knowing her in the body. Writing to a sadhak in 1934 she reminds him of this necessity:

I am always present in your psychic being. It is there that you can and ought to find me, and when you will find me there, in the depths of your heart, you will recognize me also in my physical form. (II)

Death in *Savitri* is not experienced as an eternal opposite of the Light, but is seen in its deepest sense as an instrument of evolution:

Although Death walks beside us on Life's road,  
 A dim bystander at the body's start  
 And a last judgment on man's futile works,  
 Other is the riddle of its ambiguous face:  
 Death is a stair, a door, a stumbling stride  
 The soul must take to cross from birth to birth,  
 A grey defeat pregnant with victory,  
 A whip to lash us towards our deathless state. (Pp. 600-1)

It is only through an integral vision of reality that even Death has a meaning and a purpose high enough for Savitri to call him God:

“O Death, thou too art God and yet not He,  
 But only his own black shadow on his path  
 As leaving the Night he takes the upward Way  
 And drags with him its clinging inconscient Force.” (P. 656)

It is of the utmost importance in understanding Savitri's battle with Death, which continues now in Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's great work of transformation, that Death is one of the most powerful instruments used by the Mother for evolution. Surely this must be deeply contemplated in seeking the meaning of her passing.

As Savitri, Death and Satyavan continue to journey through the Night Death employs more subtle arguments to dissuade Savitri from her quest to bring the Divine Truth fully into this physical world of name and form. He points to the illusions creat-

ed by thought and desire and insists that if a Truth eternal does exist somewhere it is surely not to be found amidst these distortions of the world. Death assumes all of the guises of those who, throughout the ages, have not allowed the Divine into their prison house of reason—sophist, hedonist, materialist, rationalist, idealist, etc. As one penetrates the different roles played by Death, soon the flash of recognition descends through the words and actions of one's closest friends and, even more shocking, on one's own lips and hands. With this experience Death moves from being a distant phantom object to being the most intimate companion—inseparable from the cherished image of self.

Failing to convince Savitri of the ultimacy of the world of mind, life and matter Death dons the garb of the arch-dualist:

“The Real with the unreal cannot mate.  
He who would turn to God, must leave the world;  
He who would live in the Spirit, must give up life;  
He who has met the Self, renounces self.” (P. 635)

Truly, all of the arguments, verbal and clothed in myriad forms, pass from Death to this warrior of immortality and the perfection of the earth.

It is in Book X, Canto IV, “The Dream Twilight of the Earthly Real” that Savitri, in the midst of what appears to be an endless battle, celebrates her most glorious hour. Warning her not to attempt to call God down into life, he encourages her to seek the bliss that lies only beyond the world, to annul herself in that immobile peace, forgetting completely the world of name and form. And with this advice Death proclaims himself as the “gate of immortality”. Savitri's reply carries with it the ineffable will and warrior spirit of the Divine Mother and illuminates in a burst of light the integral nature of Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's work of physical transformation:

“Once more wilt thou call Light to blind Truth's eyes,  
Make knowledge a catch of the snare of Ignorance  
And the Word a dart to slay my living Soul?  
Offer, O king, thy boons to tired spirits  
And hearts that could not bear the wounds of Time,  
Let those who were tied to body and to mind,  
Tear off those bonds and flee into white calm  
Crying for refuge from the play of God,  
Surely thy boons are great since thou art He!  
But how shall I seek rest in endless peace  
Who house the mighty Mother's violent force,...” (P. 647)

It would appear that Death is exhausting his store of lures to divert Savitri from her goal. He has moved full circle from the position of the materialist to that of world-

negation and self-negation in favor of the formless Spirit. And yet Savitri is one-pointed in her quest for integral Truth, equal to Death's multiplicity of subtle manipulations of truth. She cries:

"A lonely freedom cannot satisfy  
A heart that has grown one with every heart:  
I am a deputy of the aspiring world,  
My spirit's liberty I ask for all." (P. 649)

Death's next ploy is to plead with Savitri to "respect the calm of great established things". (P. 651) He acknowledges the fact that there are beings with, perhaps, too much love or too large natures—"Worshippers of force who know not her recoil,..." (P. 650). Savitri instantaneously charges him with perpetuating the fixity of mechanical energy and gives her fiery reply:

"I trample on thy law with living feet;  
For to arise in freedom I was born." (P. 652)

It is at this juncture in the cosmic battle that Death arrives at the stage in his own evolution where he asks (even if it be cynical) for the Truth:

"Eternal truth lives not with mortal men.  
Or if she dwells within thy mortal heart,  
Show me the body of the living Truth  
Or draw for me the outline of her face  
That I too may obey and worship her.  
Then will I give thee back thy Satyavan." (P. 655)

This is the crucial turning point in *Savitri* through which one can begin to understand the conditions necessary for the transformation of nature, both universal and individual. The Divine does not force realization or transformation on us against our wills—some part of us must ask and aspire for the Truth. So it is with Death who holds our lower nature in captivity—he, perhaps, unknowingly, asks for Truth which initiates the end of his *raison d'être*. In his last challenge to Savitri he asks:

"Who then art thou hiding in human guise?  
Thy voice carries the sound of infinity,  
Knowledge is with thee, Truth speaks through thy words;  
The light of things beyond shines in thy eyes.  
But where is thy strength to conquer Time and Death?  
Hast thou God's force to build heaven's values here?  
For truth and knowledge are an idle gleam,

If Knowledge brings not power to change the world,  
 If Might comes not to give to Truth her right...  
 O human claimant to immortality,  
 Reveal thy power, lay bear thy spirit's force,  
 Then will I give back to thee Satyavan.  
 Or if the Mighty Mother is with thee,  
 Show me her face that I may worship her;  
 Let deathless eyes look into the eyes of Death,  
 An imperishable Force touching brute things  
 Transform earth's death into immortal life.  
 Then can thy dead return to thee and live,  
 The prostrate earth perhaps shall lift her gaze  
 And feel near her the secret body of God  
 And love and joy overtake fleeing Time." (Pp. 663-4)

Although there is truth in all of Death's utterances one feels the power of Truth most fully in this his final speech. He is pointedly asking, not for the impotent knowledge *about* Truth, but for the *Power* of Truth which can, when given with *knowledge*, change the world in the most concrete way. It is most important to note here that if Savitri reveals her Force not only will the *individual*, Satyavan, gain immortality, but *collectively* the Force will "transform earth's death into immortal life." It is Death's world-shaking cry for the unveiling of the Divine Mother and, with this, Savitri no longer *speaks* but *acts*:

And Savitri looked on Death and answered not.  
 Almost it seemed as if in his symbol shape  
 The world-darkness had consented to Heaven-light  
 And God needed no more the Inconscient's screen. (P. 664)

Yes, Death consents and Savitri pours forth the Light that casts no Shadow. Sri Aurobindo offers next the powerful and luminous description of the opening of all the *chakras* in Savitri (Pp. 664-5) and immediately following the last speech of Savitri which may provide some opening towards understanding how the Mother's work continues now that she has put aside her physical form. Let us first see and hear the speech in its entirety:

"I hail thee, almighty and victorious Death,  
 Thou grandiose Darkness of the Infinite.  
 O Void that makest room for all to be,  
 Hunger that gnawest at the universe  
 Consuming the cold remnants of the suns  
 And eat'st the whole world with thy jaws of fire,

Waster of the energy that has made the stars,  
 Inconscience, carrier of the seeds of thought,  
 Nescience in which All-Knowledge sleeps entombed  
 And slowly emerges in its hollow breast  
 Wearing the mind's mask of bright Ignorance.  
 Thou art my shadow and my instrument.  
 I have given thee thy awful shape of dread  
 And thy sharp sword of terror and grief and pain  
 To force the soul of man to struggle for light  
 On the brevity of his half-conscious days.  
 Thou art his spur to greatness in his works,  
 The whip to his yearning for eternal bliss,  
 His poignant need for immortality.  
 Live, Death, awhile, be still my instrument.  
 One day man too shall know thy fathomless heart  
 Of silence and the brooding peace of Night  
 And grave obedience to eternal Law  
 And the calm inflexible pity in thy gaze.  
 But now, O timeless Mightiness, stand aside  
 And leave the path of my incarnate Force.  
 Relieve the radiant god from thy black mask;  
 Release the soul of the world called Satyavan  
 Free from the clutch of pain and ignorance  
 That he might stand master of life and fate,  
 Man's representative in the house of God,  
 The mate of Wisdom and the spouse of Light,  
 The eternal bridegroom of the eternal bride." (P. 666)

If one look closely at the context of this powerful speech it may appear at first paradoxical that in the midst of the consuming of Death by Her Light Savitri hails him as almighty and *victorious*. All through this great passage through eternal night towards the full manifestation of the Light Savitri, in a deep sense, submits to Death in order to learn his subtle manipulations of power and knowledge. But she takes this action always in a way that is faithful to the evolution of Truth. It is as if the essence of the action of the Mother leaving her body might be contained in this speech—always she submits only to conquer in a deeper way, and always to use Death as her instrument for a fuller manifestation of Truth. For those who were present in the Ashram at the time of her passing and indeed for many in various parts of the world, her Force was not diminished; on the contrary, it was experienced as acting in a new and even more powerful way. Yes, Death is victorious, but victorious only as an instrument of the Mother, only in the service of her evolutionary work. Let us look more closely at the speech.

In the first part of the speech she enumerates the many roles of Death in the evolutionary unfolding of the flower of Truth, culminating in the reminder that he is always her shadow and instrument. She has given him his multiplicity of forms—terror, grief, pain—*specifically* to hasten man's evolution towards great works, light and bliss. But then comes the supreme paradox in the clear context of her victory over him:

“Live, Death, awhile, be still my instrument.” (P. 666)

Savitri sees, despite her victory over Death, beyond the sphere of Time and on the more subtle planes of existence, that man has yet to learn many things from Death in order that immortality and perfection be won for the race and not just an individual. But in the very next breath she commands him:

“But now, O timeless Mightiness, stand aside  
And leave the path of my incarnate Force.” (P. 666)

What follows is the last attempt of Death to stand his ground but the Light and Will pouring from Savitri overpower him:

Afar he fled shunning her dreaded touch  
And refuge took in the retreating Night. (P. 667)

The victory is won definitively and yet Death receives the express command from Savitri to live awhile and be her instrument. Can this apparent paradox throw any light on the Mother's decision to leave her body? In the occult order of things Death has looked into the “deathless eyes” of the Divine Mother and has been made aware of her Power and Light. Although he knows that his whole existence has no more reason for being he resists:

Although he knew refusing still to know,  
Although he saw refusing still to see. (P. 667)

He is driven to take “refuge... in the retreating Night”, but he goes with Savitri's command that he should live awhile and be her instrument. It would seem that when Sri Aurobindo speaks of “retreating Night” in this context he is referring to the grossest levels of the physical plane of existence. Death is literally driven by Savitri's Force to the surface of the physical world which may well be the occult explanation of the overt and global manifestations of Death in our time. As he surfaces driven by her Light and Force he goes as her conscious instrument to do a specifically evolutionary work. Although Death in the integral vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother has always been an instrument of the Divine it is only with the vic-



tory of Savitri over him that he becomes conscious of the fact. This can only mean that the remaining evolutionary work, which will bring the Supramental Consciousness fully into matter, will be intensified and hastened.

In light of this is it possible that the Mother's departure from her physical form is intimately bound to her act of driving Death to the most outer limit of Night or the edge of the physical world? When Savitri cries, "But now, O timeless Mightiness, stand aside/ And leave the path of my incarnate Force", is she extending the domain of the Supramental Light and pressing Death closer and closer towards his demise? If this be the case then Mother's departure can be seen, in an analogous way to Sri Aurobindo's, as a sacrifice. When Sri Aurobindo left his body in 1950 the Supramental Light descended into his body and the Mother received what he has referred to as the Mind of Light. The next self-disclosure of the Supramental occurred in 1956 when it manifested in the earth atmosphere. We know from reading the Mother's account of her progress in "Notes on the Way" that she always faced the problem of balancing the descent of the Light and Power of the Supermind and the receptivity of the cells of her physical body. With this in mind, if the time had come for a further revelation of the Supramental Consciousness, the point of concentration would have been in the individual physical form of the Divine Mother. By conquering Death progressively on the inner planes and driving him more and more into the gross levels of the physical she would, of course, have intensified his presence in her own body. Was the apparent "failure" of the Mother to transform her individual physical form actually the instrument for bringing the Supramental Light one step closer to a collective manifestation? Did she use Death as her instrument in the context of bringing the earth to the evolutionary point of complete surrender? Is this the evolutionary reconciliation of Savitri's paradoxical command to Death:

"Live, Death, awhile, be still my instrument...

But now, O timeless Mightiness, stand aside  
And leave the path of my incarnate Force." (P. 666)

We are living in a time of great darkness, but always there is present the flashing intimations of a great Light just behind the blackness. It is *now* that we can most appreciate the intimate connection between Death and evolution in *Savitri*. The gigantic pressure we experience presently on this planet as Death is driven from unconsciousness into consciousness—is it the first fruits of the occult battle of the Divine Mother and Death manifesting on the grossest levels of the material plane?

At the end of Book X, Canto IV Death no longer stands between Savitri and Satyavan and yet,

All waited on the unknown inscrutable Will. (P. 668)

When the Mother was among us in her individualized physical form she was asked what she looked for when people came to her. Her answer was simply, *receptivity*. In a similar vein she was asked on November 19, 1970:

*The solution of the world's problems lies in a change of consciousness. What is your conception of this change and how to bring it about?*

Her answer:

The consciousness that has to be manifested is already in the earth atmosphere. It is now only a question of receptivity.<sup>11</sup>

This remains as our real work of collaboration with Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

CHARLES MALONEY

#### NOTES

1. All quotations from *Savitri* are from this volume.
2. K. D. Sethna, "The Passing of Sri Aurobindo: Its Inner Significance and Consequence" in *The Indian Spirit and the World's Future* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1953), pp. 186-209.
3. Quoted in *Gazette Aurovilhienne*, 1971, p.1.
4. Sri Aurobindo, *Letters on Yoga* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1972), Vol. 22, p. 137.
5. Quoted in *The Bulletin of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, Vol. 27, No.4, 1975, p. 61.
6. "A Talk of the Mother on *Savitri*", *Sri Aurobindo Circle*, No. 32, 1976, p. 5.
7. *Life-Literature-Yoga, Some Letters of Sri Aurobindo* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1967), p. 91.
8. Sri Aurobindo, *Supplement* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1972), Vol. 27, p. 511.
9. The Mother, *Questions and Answers*, 1953 (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1976), Vol. 5, p. 391.
10. *Mother India*, Vol. 4, Feb. 1953, p. 25.
11. *Sri Aurobindo Circle*, No. 32, 1976, p. vi.

## SPIRITUAL AND OCCULT TRUTHS

*(It was necessary to express a few basic facts on this subject. So the writer has not only drawn upon the published works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, but taken relevant glimpses from the Mother's letters and talks to her, which are included in her book, The Story of a Soul, on which she is working at present. From that book come also the account of some experiences of her own, bearing upon the themes treated.)*

Life, death, — death, life; the words have led for ages  
Our thought and consciousness and firmly seemed  
Two opposites; but now long-hidden pages  
Are opened, liberating truths undreamed.  
Life only is, or death is life disguised,—  
Life a short death until by life we are surprised.

SRI AUROBINDO

*Collected Poems, Birth Centenary Edition, Volume 5, p. 54*

I CAME across the condensed version of the book *Life after Life* by Dr. Raymond Moody Jr. in *Reader's Digest*, August 1977. This book has created a sensation. In a world enveloped in scepticism but with a soul still craving for certitudes beyond the material scene, Dr. Moody appears to have brought deep comfort. This result has value but the very fact of it also shows the limitation of the public's sense of reality. The world which sits around the television-set feels that a revelation has been made. But indeed no more than the surface of mystery has been scratched.

What the Doctor gives are merely a few experiences outside the body on a level of existence to which the normal human consciousness has access. There is a profounder and finer possibility of reaching the actuality of strange things after death. Besides, the normal consciousness is not likely to grasp, even on the level accessible to it, the subtler shades of what occurs when one goes out of one's body.

The Mother has written in *Questions and Answers* 1957-1958, p. 302:

...The body seems to you something very simple, doesn't it?  
It is a body, it is "my" body and after all has a single form—but it is not like that! There are hundreds of entities combined there, each unaware of the others, but all harmonised by something deeper which they do not know and having the perception of a unity only because they are not conscious of the multiplicity of the elements and their divergence....

Sri Aurobindo says in *Letters on Yoga*, Volume 24, pp. 1499-1500:

The physical is not the only world; there are others that we become aware of

through dream records, through the subtle senses, through influences and contacts, through imagination, intuition and vision. There are worlds of a larger subtler life than ours, vital worlds; worlds in which Mind builds its own forms and figures, mental worlds; psychic worlds which are the soul's home; others above with which we have little contact. In each of us there is a mental plane of consciousness, a psychic, a vital, a subtle physical as well as the gross physical and material plane. The same planes are repeated in the consciousness of the general Nature. It is when we enter or contact these other planes that we come into connection with the worlds above the physical. In sleep we leave the physical body, only a subconscious residue remaining, and enter all planes and all sorts of worlds....

The Mother wrote to me in one of the letters which have appeared in *White Roses*, p. 62:

...This subtle physical (or true physical) is a world where things are and happen somewhat like in the physical here but with a harmony, a beauty and a truth that do not yet exist upon earth....

Dr. Moody has stated in *Reader's Digest*, p. 168, about the carrier of experience after death: "...I shall call it the 'spiritual body'."

In fact, the body he speaks of is what in Yoga is called the "subtle body".

In the beginning of 1962 the Mother and I had already started expressing through paintings the visions of *Savitri*—the great epic poem written by Sri Aurobindo. The Mother explained to me from the spiritual and occult point of view these lines of *Book One—The Book of Beginnings, Canto Three*, p. 30:

The landmarks of the little person fell,  
The island ego joined its continent:  
Overpassed was this world of rigid limiting forms:  
Life's barriers opened into the Unknown.

She said:

There are actually twelve bodies in the human being. I go out of my physical body—leaving one body after another of the twelve within and enter the subtle worlds and come back gradually to the world of Matter—that is to say, the physical body.

I become aware of all the details of my bodies when finally I come back.

When I see the beauties and wonders of the higher worlds, I think of expressing them in painting by various colours—blues, golds, pinks and whites with certain vibrations of the Light—all in harmony—forming the New World....

I should mention here that all the talks of the Mother which I recorded were always submitted to her afterwards for confirmation. She read my script carefully and, wherever necessary, made corrections.

The above talk reminds me of one of Sri Aurobindo's poems—*The Life Heavens, Collected Poems, Volume 5, p. 574*:

...Sounds, colours, joy-flamings. Life lies here  
 Dreaming, bound to the heavens of its goal,  
 In the clasp of a Power that enthral to sheer  
 Bliss and beauty body and rapt soul....

Apropos of the plane, the best part of which the poem describes, I may cite the question once put to the Mother in connection with the possibility of incarnation on earth by the beings of the lower strata of that plane:

*Have these vital beings a psychic being?*

The Mother replied:

No, I said that the first thing they have to do to incarnate is to drive away the psychic being of the person whom they possess. That may happen from the very birth. There are children who are almost still-born; they are taken to be dead and suddenly they revive—this means that a vital being has incarnated in them. I have known such cases. This may happen also in the course of an illness: someone is very ill and gradually he lets go the contact with the psychic being, then, in a swoon or some other similar state, he cuts the contact entirely and the vital being rushes into the body. I have known cases of this kind also. Or it may be a slow action: the vital being enters into the atmosphere of the person, goes on influencing him and finally brings about illness, attacks, specially mental illness; then a time comes when the connection with the psychic being is entirely cut and the vital being takes possession of the body. There are cases of people falling very ill and coming out of the illness altogether different from what they were. Very often it is this that happens.

*You have said that these beings of the vital are attracted by the spiritual life. Why?*

They are attracted, but this does not mean that they have decided sincerely to follow the spiritual life. The chief characteristic of these beings is falsehood: their nature is made of deceit. They have a power for illusion; they can take the appearance of divine beings or higher beings, they can appear in a dazzling light, but truly sincere people are not deceived, they immediately feel something that warns them. But if one likes the marvellous, the unexpected, if one loves fantastic things, if one likes to live a romance, one is likely to be deceived.

Not long ago there was a historical instance, that of Hitler, who was in contact with a being whom he considered to be the Supreme: this being came and gave him advice, told him all that he had to do. Hitler used to retire into solitude and remain there as long as it was necessary to come into contact with his "guide" and receive from him inspiration which he carried out later very faithfully. This being which Hitler took for the Supreme was quite plainly an Asura, one who is called "the Lord of Falsehood" in occultism, but who proclaimed himself the "Lord of Nations". He had a shining appearance, he could mislead anybody except one who really had occult knowledge and could see what was there behind the appearance. He would have deceived anybody, he was truly splendid. Generally he used to appear to Hitler wearing a silver cuirass and helmet; a kind of flame came out of his head and there was an atmosphere of dazzling light around him, so dazzling that Hitler could hardly look at him. He used to tell Hitler everything that had to be done—he played with him as with a monkey or a mouse. He had decided clearly to make Hitler commit all possible extravagances till the day he would break his neck, which did happen. But cases like this are frequent, though on a smaller scale, of course.

Hitler was a very good medium, he had great mediumistic capacities, but he lacked intelligence and discrimination. This being could tell him anything whatever and he swallowed it all. It was he who pushed Hitler little by little. And he was doing this destruction, he did not take life seriously. For these beings men are very tiny things with whom they play, as a cat plays with a mouse, till finally they eat them up.

*Questions and Answers, 1950-51, pp. 164-166*

Sri Aurobindo has written in *The Life Divine*, Volume 19, pp. 798-801:

..A survival of the material body by the personality implies a supraphysical existence, and this can only be in some plane of being proper to the evolutionary stage of the consciousness or, if there is no evolution, in a temporary second home of the spirit which would be its natural place of sojourn between life and life,—unless indeed it is its original world from which it does not return into material Nature....

Where then would the temporary dwelling in the supraphysical take place? What would be the soul's other habitat? It might seem that it ought to be on a mental plane, in mental worlds, both because on man the mental being the attraction of that plane, already active in life, must prevail when there is not the obstacle of the attachment to the body, and because the mental plane should be, evidently, the native and proper habitat of a mental being. But this does not automatically follow, because of the complexity of man's being; he has a vital as well as a mental existence,—his vital part often more powerful and prominent than the mental,—and behind the mental being is a soul of which it is the representative.

There are, besides, many planes or levels of world-existence and the soul has to pass through them to reach its natural home. In the physical plane itself or close to it there are believed to be layers of greater and greater subtlety which may be regarded as sub-planes of the physical with a vital and a mental character; these are at once surrounding and penetrating strata through which the interchanges between the higher worlds and the physical world take place. It might then be possible for the mental being, so long as its mentality is not sufficiently developed, so long as it is restricted mainly to the more physical forms of mind and life activity, to be caught and delayed in these media. It might even be obliged to rest there entirely between birth and birth; but this is not probable and could only happen if and in so far as its attachment to the earth-forms of its activity was so great as to preclude or hamper the completion of the natural upward movement. For the post-mortal state of the soul must correspond in some way to the development of the being on earth, since this after-life is not a free upward return from a temporary downward deviation into mortality, but a normal recurrent circumstance which intervenes to help out the process of a difficult spiritual evolution in the physical existence. There is a relation which the human being in his evolution on earth develops with higher planes of existence, and that must have a predominant effect on his internatal dwelling in these planes; it must determine his direction after death and determine too the place, period and character of his self-experience there.. .

...[The soul] may enter at once into the worlds of other-life, or it may remain first, as a transitional stage, in some region of subtle-physical experience whose surroundings may seem to it a prolongation of the circumstances of physical life, but in freer conditions proper to a subtler medium and in some kind of happy perfection of mind or life or a finer bodily existence. Beyond these subtle-physical planes of experience and the life-worlds there are also mental or spiritual-mental planes to which the soul seems to have an internatal access and into which it may pursue its internatal journey; but it is not likely to live consciously there if there has not been a sufficient mental and soul development in this life. For these levels must normally be the highest the evolving being can internatally inhabit, since one who has not gone beyond the mental rung in the ladder of being would not be able to ascend to any supramental or overmental state; or if he had so developed as to overleap the mental level and could attain so far, it might not be possible for him to return so long as the physical evolution has not developed here an organisation of an overmental or supramental life in Matter.

But, even so, the mental worlds are not likely to be the last normal stage of the after-death passage; for man is not entirely mental; it is the soul, the psychic being, and not the mind, that is the traveller between death and birth, and the mental being is only a predominant element in the figure of its self-expression. There must then be a final resort to a plane of pure psychic existence in which the

soul would await rebirth; there it could assimilate the energies of its past experience and life and prepare its future. Ordinarily, the normally developed human being, who has risen to a sufficient power of mentality, might be expected to pass successively through all these planes, subtle physical, vital and mental, on his way to his psychic habitation. At each stage he would exhaust and get rid of the fractions of formed personality-structure, temporary and superficial, that belonged to the past life; he would cast off his mind-sheath and life-sheath as he had already cast off his body-sheath: but the essence of the personality and its mental, vital and physical experiences would remain in latent memory or as a dynamic potency for the future. But if the development of mind were insufficient, it is possible that it would not be able to go consciously beyond the vital level and the being would either fall back from there, returning from its vital heavens or purgatories to earth, or, more consistently, would pass at once into a kind of psychic assimilative sleep co-extensive with the internatal period; to be awake in the highest planes a certain development would be indispensable....

...The psychic entity within,...the spiritual individual in us, is the Person that we are; but the 'I' of this moment, the 'I' of this life is only a formation, a temporary personality of this inner Person: it is one step of the many steps of our evolutionary change, and it serves its true purpose only when we pass beyond it to a farther step leading nearer to a higher degree of consciousness and being. It is the inner Person that survives death, even as it pre-exists before birth; for this constant survival is a rendering of the eternity of our timeless Spirit into the terms of Time.

These lines from *Collected Poems*, Volume 5, p. 147 are apt here:

I saw my soul a traveller through Time;  
 From life to life the cosmic ways it trod,  
 Obscure in the depths and on the heights sublime,  
 Evolving from the worm into the god....

The Mother and I were doing the paintings of *Book Nine—The Book of Eternal Night*. When Death comes to take Satyavan's soul, the Mother told me:

The soul of Satyavan goes out of his body from the top of his head. So you must paint it accordingly.

I did so.

Sri Aurobindo has explained in *Letters on Yoga*, Volume 22, p. 435:

At the time of death the being goes out of the body through the head; it goes out in the subtle body and goes to different planes of existence for a short time



until it has gone through certain experiences which are the result of its earthly existence. Afterwards it reaches the psychic world where it rests in a kind of sleep, until it is time for it to start a new life on earth. That is what happens usually—but there are some beings who are more developed and do not follow the course.

The Mother declares in *Questions and Answers*, Birth Centenary Edition, Volume 3, pp. 36-37.

Death as a fact has been attached to all life upon earth; but man understands it in a different sense from the meaning Nature originally put into it. In man and in the animals that are nearest to his level, the necessity of death has taken a special form and significance to their consciousness; but the subconscious knowledge in this lower Nature which supports it is a feeling of the necessity of renewal and change and transformation.

It was the conditions of matter upon earth that made death indispensable. The whole sense of the evolution of matter has been a growth from a first state of unconsciousness to an increasing consciousness. And in this process of growth dissolution of forms became an inevitable necessity, as things actually took place. For a fixed form was needed in order that the organised individual consciousness might have a stable support. And yet it is the fixity of the form that made death inevitable. Matter has to assume forms; individualisation and the concrete embodiment of life-forces or consciousness-forces were impossible without it and without these there would have been lacking the first conditions of organised existence on the plane of matter. But a definite and concrete formation contracts the tendency to become at once rigid and hard and petrified. The individual form persisted as a too binding mould; it cannot follow the movements of the forces; it cannot change in harmony with the progressive change in the universal dynamism; it cannot meet continually Nature's demand or keep pace with her; it gets out of the current. At a certain point of this growing disparity and disharmony between the form and the force that presses upon it, a complete dissolution of the form is unavoidable. A new form must be created; a new harmony and parity made possible. This is the true significance of death and this is its use in Nature. But if the form can become more quick and pliant and the cells of the body can be awakened to change with the changing consciousness, there would be no need of a drastic dissolution, death would be no longer inevitable.

The last sentence reminds me of one of the Mother's comments in *About Savitri: Book One Canto Four*, which she gave in 1969. This volume is not yet published.

First she recited these lines from *Savitri*:

Ever surround our brief existence here  
 Grey shadows of unanswered questionings;  
 The dark Inconscient's signless mysteries  
 Stand up unsolved behind Fate's starting line;  
 An aspiration in the Night's profound,  
 Seed of a perishing body and half-lit mind,  
 Uplifts its lonely tongue of conscious fire  
 Towards an undying Light for ever lost.  
 Only it hears, sole echo of its call,  
 The dim reply in man's unknowing heart  
 And meets, not understanding why it came  
 Or for what reason is the suffering here,  
 God's sanction to the paradox of life  
 And the riddle of the Immortal's birth in Time.

The explanation of the Mother, which I took down on the tape-recorder ran:

So long the physical, the body itself, did not have the contact with the Divine; consequently it does not have the hope that one day its consciousness also will be transformed and be the right expression of the Divine Life.

On the morning of 23rd April 1971 I went to the Mother. While revising the above exposition, she remarked that what she had said previously was not true now. She asked me to put a note, thus:

This can *no more* be said.

I believe this meant that the cells of her body had become conscious of the divine Light. I was really perplexed at that time when I took down the note the Mother dictated. But after she had left her body, she gave me numerous experiences which made me understand a little of what she had realised. None of us can claim a cellular Consciousness of the Divine, but, of course, one can feel one's very body responding to the inner realities. Though it is pretty difficult to put these realities into words, I shall try to narrate one experience of mine.

It was Tuesday 10th June 1975. Late at night I went consciously out of my body. It was my subtle body which wandered in a marvellous place—nothing was earthly. Everything in that world was exquisite, wonderful beyond words. I was enraptured by its beauties and great serenity.

I wanted some shelter where I could get a bit of repose. Meanwhile, I saw a strange kind of vehicle. Some beings were there—they looked like human beings but they were not so. I asked them to give me a lift. They said there was no place for me in that carriage. So without care I flew high into space—crossing the most magnificent trees adorned by lustrous flowers—some were golden, some were pink

and white and of a silver colour. They had different shapes, but I remember distinctly the shape of magnolia. I also traversed stupendous snow-capped mountains shimmering with rainbow colours. The entire panorama was breath-taking. After that I landed near a silvery river. There I saw a white boat. I asked some beings to let me in. They refused. I thought to myself: "Why do these beings go on denying me? What have I done?" Then it dawned on me that if they had taken me with them, I would not have been able to return to my physical body. So this proved that the Mother was constantly with me.

I floated over the water without any effort, and was moving side by side with the boat. Then once again I soared up into an enormous space, crossing the fleecy clouds, glimmering stars and shining moon. The air was vibrant and perfumed.

Suddenly I thought that I should know whether my physical body was conscious of this sublime experience. I came back into my body. To my astonishment I felt concretely an overwhelming delight and happiness—every pore of my body quivered—responded and thrilled with this unknown and blissful impression. Not only that, but I felt my body ice-cold. I was shivering with chill in spite of the hottest night of June in Pondicherry. (I do not have an air-conditioner. For it does not suit me.)

Now I knew that my body was aware. Once again I left my body and took off to a still higher realm. This time I heard an ethereal music from a far beatitude. I too sang in perfect harmony as I flew higher and higher. But the link between my physical body and subtle body was intact because in my sleep I felt my physical lips moving as if I was attuning myself to the notes of that music. My subtle body swam in ecstasy amidst these melodious and luminous vibrations charged with the divine Light. My flying did not stop. I entered into the domain of my soul. No words are adequate to describe the splendour of my true home....

Once again I entered my physical body. It was shaking with celestial joy and rapture. This gorgeous experience remained in my body for at least one week.

I have already mentioned one of my experiences in the booklet *Matrimandir—The Mother's Truth and Love*. I had it when the Mother was in her body. I related it to her. She wrote:

Happily, the true worlds and the true consciousness are not a dream, but the only real Reality for those who are sincere and conscious....

The Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother means that the most gross Matter of the physical body should become conscious of the divine Vibrations and the divine Light. This I understood a little by this unforgettable experience.

I can say with confidence that the work the Mother has been doing will never cease. Her living Force is at work more intensely than ever in this world for the purpose of making us—human beings—conscious of our true selves and aware of her incessant work...

In spirituality and in occultism it is not necessary to die in order to obtain any kind of experiences. One can go consciously to other worlds, with the body still alive.

In 1962, when the Mother was teaching me to express through paintings the visions of *Savitri*, it was essential for me to have a little knowledge of the occult worlds, so that I might see, feel and grasp the hidden truths of the poem and express them properly according to the Mother's wish.

During that period I had been going through a tremendous struggle both outwardly and inwardly. She made me an instrument for her various purposes. From the human point of view everything seemed quite out of place, meaningless, useless, hopeless. The Mother and I knew what I had gone through. I lived only because she tied me with her irresistible Love.

I expressed my feeling to the Mother on 13th November 1962. She answered:

Do not fear, there is nothing to misunderstand—the more one begins to have a contact with the Divine Light and Life the more one feels that this earthly life of falsehood is painful.

But this feeling must be used as a stimulant towards the transformation that makes us emerge out of falsehood into the splendour of the Truth.

The sleep of which I had spoken to you is an occult sleep in which one can obtain the capacity of going out of and into one's body at will. It requires much training generally and takes time. But for all that, the first thing to get is peace, peace, peace—inside of course. It is most important.

With all my love.

On 11th September 1963 at about 2.30 a.m. I got up with a shock of terror. I perspired profusely. Suddenly I froze with fear. Afterwards I pulled myself together and started writing a letter to the Mother:

"My dearest Mother,

"I had a frightful dream. There was an isolated white house situated in a vast barren area with small patches of turf here and there. I was roaming about. Then I entered the house. There I saw my own people who did not recognise me. So there was no point in my lingering there. I made my exit. I saw quite a number of familiar faces.

"Then to my horror I felt all my teeth fall out, grow again and fall. It was a very strange but palpable experience.

"I still rambled on. My curiosity got the better of me—and I went to the basement of the house. There I perceived a tiny hole. To my sheer amazement I saw the most ugly, hideous, filthy, stinky, sticky and dangerous beings come out of it one by one, ready to pounce on me. They were in large numbers. All of them—men, women, children—surrounded me. My stomach somersaulted. I closed my eyes for a moment or two with total disgust. They were stark naked and from their private parts blood and pus were oozing. I was feeling terribly faint and sick. I won-

dered how they could remain all together in such a cramped recess!

“A man who had a grotesque face came very close to me. My blood chilled with panic. He told me: ‘Look here, pretty one, I am the leader and the most attractive and charming among this whole lot. Marry me.’ But he was obnoxious and the ugliest of the lot. Fear was creeping up, paralysing me. But I composed myself and answered him coolly: ‘I have no inclination to get married to a handsome man like you or to any man in fact. All I want is to get away from this place if you can help me.’

“Suddenly all of them shouted: ‘Sure, sure, come with us.’ And they led me to an obscure, ill-smelling and dingy room. Its atmosphere and lethal vibrations were eerie and to me this environment seemed alive with peril. It was a perfect hell. There I saw distorted heads stuck against the grey walls. Red tongues were hanging from their mouths, huge blood-shot eyes kept staring and some of them had their giant teeth sticking out of their mouths. I shuddered and stood dumb and stricken. My fear increased a hundredfold. But I did not show the slightest glimpse of it to these hostile, nasty, beastly creatures lest they should harass me and scare me to death. The leader asked me to put my head in a hole which was somewhat like a port-hole. He said that I could thus go out. I did as he had asked. And in the flash of a second with a weird weapon he chopped off my head. I could see clearly with my inner eyes the head and body separated. At once a piercing cry from my heart reached the Supreme. I uttered the two Names—*Mother, Sri Aurobindo*. In a trice my head and body joined together. I opened my eyes gradually and saw the pernicious beings at a distance. Now they could not dare to approach me. They were nervous and alarmed. I got up slowly, looked at them intently and walked out of the chamber of horrors into an open space.

“I presumed that in that dreadful room there were heads of human beings turned into monstrous faces. It also seemed that they could not return from this gloomy domain. Those ghastly creatures wanted to fix my head also among the rest.

“O Mother, I wanted to see the grandeur of the higher worlds and I actually thought before I left my body that I was going there. But I landed in a hellish world, which was not at all my idea...”

The Mother answered the next day:

It is into the subconscious that you went last night; into the subconscious where are accumulated all the past impressions, thoughts, feelings, emotions, fears, disgust, etc., etc.—still hoping to come back to the surface on the first occasion—it is the world of concentrated falsehood where all is distorted, falsified, degraded. It is one of the places where the Divine is not only denied and unknown but violently disobeyed and rejected.

Before going to sleep, *pray not to go there* again, and to remain under the Divine Protection.

On my side I shall do what can be done to help.

This subconscious world is one of the places where wander those who have put an end violently to their physical life. It is wiser to avoid going there at all.

I wondered why my teeth had fallen out in that subconscious world. I came across Sri Aurobindo's explanation (to Amal) in Volume 23, *Letters on Yoga*, p. 986:

Symbolically, if the dream is symbolic, the falling of teeth means the disappearance of old fixed mental habits belonging to the physical mind.

I remembered to have taken ill for a few days after this wretched experience. I was utterly shaken. But, thank God, I did not go there again. The Mother must have done the needful.

Nevertheless, I do not regret the terrifying experiences in my sleep because they were useful both outwardly and inwardly.

I call to mind the date—6th April 1965—when I went to the Mother in the morning. She saw the paintings of *Savitri*, *Book Seven—The Book of Yoga*, and said with a happy smile:

They are really successful.

Then she pointed out one of the pictures in which I had painted beasts, snakes and grotesque and malicious beings. She asked:

Child, do you see all these beings? Because they are *exactly* as in reality in that world.

I answered: "Yes, Mother, sometimes I have glimpses of these creatures but mostly I have painted them according to the feeling of the inspiration."

A sweet smile spread across her charming face. Well, it was only because of her inner and outer guidance that I could bring authenticity into the paintings. Above all, the Mother protected me constantly.

It is a great pity when some human beings get lost in the hideous and hazardous worlds.

My memory flies back to 20th January 1964. After the *Savitri* work, the Mother revealed to me what truth, lie and falsehood are, which she had never done before:

Child, there is a vast difference between Falsehood and lie. When people tell a lie, it is words that come from their mouth and they are contrary to the actual fact or deny it. For instance, if you have gone somewhere and deny to have gone or if you have done something and refuse to admit the fact—it is a lie. But lies have no strength. Lies are always the sign of a great weakness and, if they are habitual, of a great crookedness.

Falsehood is something very serious. The world, as it is, is in a state of Falsehood—it denies the Eternal Truth. There are three chief categories of Falsehood:

(1) People who aspire for the Truth but are not sincere enough in their aspiration to discriminate between the Truth and the Falsehood. They fall always into trouble and misery and get out from the path leading to the Truth.

(2) The second category is dangerous. People who can very well discriminate between Truth and Falsehood, who know that Truth is better but have no strength to resist the temptation and fall constantly into Falsehood.

(3) The last one is the most dangerous of all. People who are aware of the Truth but refuse to recognise the Truth and choose deliberately the Falsehood. They have a kind of hate for the Truth and reject it violently. These, on the list of the Eternal, can be marked: 'Missing Souls'—as it is written in *Savitri* [Book Two, p. 239]:

So might one fall on the Eternal's road  
Forfeiting the spirit's lonely chance in Time  
And no news of him reach the waiting gods,  
Marked "missing" in the register of souls...

Happily there are very few like that—who deny the Truth and choose the Falsehood.

There are, of course, a number of people who have good will, good purpose, good aspiration and the rest; but in spite of all that they still live in Falsehood because they have no strength to fight for the Truth. And if they let themselves go without reacting with a constant vigilance they are bound to live in Falsehood because this world is a world of Falsehood.

When souls come upon earth by accepting the sorrows, miseries and troubles of the world—it is because they want to conquer Falsehood, and help in the Victory of the Truth. I call them heroic souls.

For those who leave aside their mental, vital and physical and live only in the Bliss, there is no struggle and pain, because their beings are untouched, undisturbed and they remain as they are. But the souls, who come upon earth to fight face to face with Falsehood, are truly heroic souls, and the Supreme Love is there with them. They set a concrete example for the world.

Another important thing to be remembered is, that one must have an unshaken faith in the Lord. The Flame of Faith must be kept burning and it must grow and spread its light widely to replace the Falsehood, because it is the Light of the Truth.

Child, why should you get disturbed? You must leave everything to the Lord. It is He who knows—not only knows but sees and looks after everything, arranges everything. It is His responsibility and not the responsibility of human

beings. The more they get disturbed and upset by Falsehood, the more it will come under various forms and take a quick chance to enter their consciousness, hearts and brains and make them miserable. Here the body and the true consciousness are not separated, so naturally the body too suffers from the Falsehood. Child, I tell you, you must try constantly to ignore the Falsehood by remembering only the Lord's Love. Whatever thing may happen to you, do not get upset—just pray to the Lord.

I cannot resist quoting a few lines from *Savitri, Book Two Canto Seven*:

Only were safe who kept God in their hearts:  
 Courage their armour, faith their sword, they must walk,  
 The hand ready to smite, the eye to scout,  
 Casting a javelin regard in front,  
 Heroes and soldiers of the army of Light

Shortly afterwards I wrote another letter to the Mother, because the horrid experience of the subconscious which I had gone through was still haunting me.

“Mother, dear, if the world of the subconscious is not conquered, the substances from there are likely to come over and over again. I feel that there is no use in overlooking or suppressing them. These nether worlds must be overcome. Please, Mother, make me surmount these terrible worlds of falsehoods.”

The Mother answered:

This is quite true.

In the same letter I continued: “Mother, the other day I had a dream-vision of a red-gold snake—very humble and lucent. It moved smoothly in a golden Light. It was simply fabulous. Its tail was up and the head down trying to touch the dark worlds. I really wish the head could touch all these coarse subconscious depths; then the falsehood will disappear from the earth-consciousness. How wonderful that would be!”

She wrote back:

It is indeed the Supramentalised Energy.

The Mother's remark somewhat reminds me of what she has been reported as saying in *The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo*, Part Seven, p. 131:

...the serpent, now luminous,—pure and free energy—can enter the body again, this time with its head down and tail up. It enters blazing, illumining with its superconscious light the centres one by one, giving man a richer and richer



consciousness, energy and life, transforming the being more and more. The Light comes down easily enough to the heart region; then the difficulty begins, the regions below gradually become darker and denser and it is a hard task for the Light to penetrate as it goes further down. If it succeeds in reaching the bottom of the spine, it has achieved something miraculous. But there is a further progress necessary, if man—and the world with him—is to realise a wholly transformed supraconscious life. In other words, the Light must touch and enter not only the physical stratum of our being but the others too that lie below, the subconscious and inconscient. That has been till now a sealed dungeon, something impossible to approach and tackle.

And yet it is not an impossibility. Not only it is not impossible, we have to make it possible. Not only so, man's destiny demands that it should be inevitable....

I continued writing to the Mother:

"I feel sure that you will make my soul attain the Supreme Truth and the Supreme Love..."

The Mother wrote:

*Yes.*

I expressed my ardent wish: "Mother, I shall have to reach my goal—otherwise my soul will never keep quiet..."

She replied:

Yes, your soul wants the whole being to be free.

Lastly I prayed to her: "O Mother, let it be realised. I am yours in all love."

She promised me:

This is exactly what I am doing. With a ceaseless love.

From the beginning of 1956 the Mother started introducing my soul to me. She saw numberless visions of my true self which she related to me and asked me to paint. I did so according to her instructions.

Then little by little I became aware of my psychic being.

On 9th January 1965 the Mother gave me a glimpse of my soul. I cannot possibly describe its luminosity and beauty. I informed her of what I had experienced. She wrote to me the next day:

Dear little child of mine,

Yes, you went on a successful journey to your soul, that is why you are feeling

better this morning.  
In eternal love.

I found how exact was the Mother's description of the psychic in *Questions and Answers*, 1950-51, p. 86:

...But even if you enter consciously into the psychic, it is dazzling; and it is within your reach because it is your own psychic being, and yet it is so different from your external consciousness that the first time you enter it consciously, it seems to you truly dazzling, something infinitely more brilliant than the most brilliant sunlight.

The psychic is what may be called 'the Divine within the reach of man'.

According to Sri Aurobindo, it is to the psychic that the Upanishads refer when we read:

अङ्गुष्ठमात्रं पुरुषो ज्योतिरिवाधूमक ।  
ईशानो भूतमध्यस्य स एवाद्य स उ स्व ।  
एतद्वै तत् ॥१३॥

The Purusha that is within us is no larger than the finger of a man: He is like a blazing fire that is without smoke, He is lord of His past and His future. He alone is today and He alone shall be tomorrow.

*This is That thou seekest.*

Volume 12, *The Upanishads*, p. 256

The Mother did not let me lose the contact with my psychic despite my outer and inner struggles and sufferings.

In the beginning of 1970 she and I used mostly to meditate. Her voice was not up to the mark to recite *Savitri* and give her comment on it. Instead of the work she asked me to meditate with her. So for almost two years and five months we meditated together. During the meditation the Mother gave me countless experiences of my psychic being. As a matter of fact, she made my body conscious of the psychic, so during our meditation I was quite aware of its movements and its spontaneous response to the Mother's Light and to the sweetness of her Love. I was really having the most blissful and soothing experiences throughout. No words can do justice to the splendour and sublimity of the perfect interchange between the Supreme and the psychic.

I may attempt to express one of my experiences during our meditation.

It was 18th August 1972. I was called at 10.50 a.m. I offered her a garland of Jasmines and five flowers of 'Transformation'. She kept one of these five and gave me back the other four, along with a lovely bouquet of white flowers of various kinds—and the inevitable white roses!

While giving me the bouquet, our fingers touched. Immediately I felt intense

vibrations spreading all over my body. My psychic was wide awake and its comforting light stirred my heart.

I sat near the Mother's feet. No sooner did I settle than my subtle eyes opened and saw the flame of my psychic being. It was rising from the heart towards the head. I felt concretely the sensation of the vibrating light in both these places. My eyes were half closed. I was drowsy and intoxicated by the ethereal atmosphere. I saw the Mother in meditation with her open eyes watching all the movements of my psychic being. First she looked at my heart because the flame was there; after that, over my head and then gradually on my right side because the psychic stood there. Wherever on my body her gaze fell, I felt it was charged with her radiating vibrations and force. I was completely oblivious of my existence—I became absolutely still and cool. Everything around me was blank and silent—everything was marvellously peaceful....

Now the Mother was utterly indrawn.

Suddenly it chimed 11 o'clock. She awoke from her profound trance and held my hands in hers. I kissed her hands. She caressed my head. She was very happy and passed some delightful remarks which I failed to grasp because I was still dazed by the heavenly atmosphere. I truly wished this experience to be prolonged. I did not want to get out from this wonderful state nor did I like to leave the Mother's room. I realised how one felt when one's mind becomes silent.

As soon as I went out, my eyes brimmed with tears because I had still to face the roughness of the physical world....

I recall one of the Mother's letters which she wrote to me on a pretty card showing snow-clad mountains and underneath them a small church. The date was 27th November 1956:

Bonjour

To my dear little child,

To my sweet Huta,

Here is the pure silence of the heights—when the soul comes to the front and the mind becomes quiet and still.

My love and blessings along with the Divine Grace are constantly with you.

The Mother never said anything which she did not mean. And she did not go back on her words. She has given so much. I am afraid I have still much to assimilate—still to aspire to make me worthy of her Grace and Love. The inner knowledge is not enough for my soul. Nevertheless, the Mother gave me the golden opportunity to sit near her and meditate, for which I am eternally grateful.

My memory travels back to one of the Mother's letters which she wrote to me on 12th October 1964:

Dear little child of mine,

With all my heart I want you conscious, peaceful and happy,

*one with your soul.*

And my force and help are with you to make this possible.

In the Lord's love.

The Mother always used to give the flowers of 'Transformation'—*Millingtonia Hortensis*, Indian Cork Tree. She gave the meaning of the flower: "The goal of creation." She also stated in *Questions and Answers*, 1950-51, pp. 346-47:

You do not know that there are 3 principles: the transcendent, the universal and the individual or personal? No? —the transcendent which is above creation, at the origin of creation; the universal which is the creation, and the individual which is self-explanatory. There is a transcendent Divine, a universal Divine and an individual Divine. That is, one may put oneself in contact with the divine Consciousness within oneself, in the universe and, beyond all forms, in the transcendent. So these three aspects are also the three aspects of the divine Mother: transcendent, universal and individual.... Do you know the flower I have called 'Transformation'? Yes. You know it has four petals; well these four petals are arranged like a cross: one at the top which represents the transcendent, two on each side: the universal, and one at the bottom: the individual.

*The petal at the top is divided into two.*

Exactly, the transcendent is one and two (or dual) at the same time. This flower is almost perfect in its form. This was the original meaning of the cross also, but that was not perfect as the flower, for it was one, two, and three. It was not so good—the flower is perfect....

I had been aspiring for the divine Peace since 1956.

I wrote a letter to the Mother on 18th June 1963:

"...Only last night I became aware in my sleep about the hints you had given me regarding 'liberation'. Mother, you had also asked me to go within my true being—forgetting everything of this wretched world and to remain absolutely quiet and peaceful..."

The Mother wrote back:

It is true that since two nights I have made a special concentration to show you how to withdraw inside and get out of the turmoil.

With all my love.

Sri Aurobindo has written in Volume 24, *Letters on Yoga*, p. 1096:

The psychic being is always there, but is not felt because it is covered up by the (

mind and vital; when it is no longer covered up, it is then said to be awake. When it is awake, it begins to take hold of the rest of the being, to influence it and change it so that all may become the true expression of the inner soul. It is this change that is called the inner conversion. There can be no conversion without the awakening of the psychic being

The Mother had been telling me about the Supramental and the Transformation since 1956. On 22nd April 1956, she said:

These days (February to April) are good for everybody to make progress. So you must understand everything clearly, disregard all lower elements and make a firm resolution to progress. Then only can you be free from all oppositions and know happiness. What I am telling you is right.

She relapsed into silence for a moment or two, then said with an amused gleam in her blue-grey eyes:

Child, if you do not listen to the devil, you will surely become happy and healthy. You see, I do not want the devil to become fat!

And she laughed. A quick smile flickered on my lips at the word "fat", in spite of my sombre face.

The Mother went on:

Truly, if you do not respond to him, you will certainly progress little by little—one step at a time towards the realisation—to your goal.

Afterwards she leaned forward from her couch and put her hands on my temples and pressed them firmly but tenderly. I hardly took the trouble to find out the true meaning of her powerful words. At that period I was totally involved in a psychological struggle, and life seemed completely disorganised.

The next morning the Mother sent an attractive card with a quotation from one of her Messages:

It is the Divine Presence that gives value to life. This presence is the source of all peace, all joy, all security. Find this Presence in yourself and all your difficulties will disappear.

She continued on the same card, referring to 24th April:

Let this day of supramental New Birth put an end to all past obstacles and inaugurate for you a new life and a new consciousness exclusively consecrated to the Divine.

The next day, that is on 24th April, in the morning the Mother distributed this Message to people:

The Manifestation of the Supramental upon earth is no more a promise but a living fact, a reality.

It is at work here, and one day will come when the most blind, the most unconscious, even the most unwilling shall be obliged to recognise it.

The Mother has expressed a central truth in the *Bullétin*, November, 1972, p. 42:

Sri Aurobindo came upon earth to announce the manifestation of the supramental world and not merely did he announce this manifestation but embodied also in part the supramental force and showed by example what one must do to prepare oneself for manifesting it. The best thing we can do is to study all he has told us and endeavour to follow his example and prepare ourselves for the new manifestation.

Sri Aurobindo has also announced:

The Supramental is a truth and its advent is in the very nature of things inevitable.

On 6th October 1956 I received an elegant card indicating red flowers—Scarlet Sage—from the Mother. She wrote:

Here is “matter consenting to be spiritualised”. Is it not good? We are going fast towards it.

My love and blessings along with the Divine Grace never leave you even for a moment.

That very evening I saw the Mother in her room at the Playground. She held my hands and said with a delightful smile:

Child, let us meditate on the physical body which will be transformed—penetrated by the Supramental Light, Force, Consciousness, Harmony, Truth and Love....

Then we meditated for quite a long time. I was bewildered and was completely ignorant about the transformation of the physical body. What I really felt happy about was only her closeness, which was soothing, sweet and loving.

Sri Aurobindo has written in *The Mother*, Volume 25, p. 49:

Yes. Her embodiment is a chance for the earth-consciousness to receive the

Supramental into it and to undergo first the transformation necessary for that to be possible. Afterwards there will be a further transformation by the Supramental, but the whole earth-consciousness will not be supramentalised—there will be first a new race representing the Supermind, as man represents the mind.

The Mother has written in *Questions and Answers*, Volume 3, pp. 175-176:

...One of the greatest victories of this ineffable humility of God will be the transformation of Matter which is apparently the most undivine. Supramental plasticity is an attribute of finally transformed Matter. The supramental body which has to be brought into being here has four main attributes: lightness, adaptability, plasticity and luminosity. When the physical body is thoroughly divinised, it will feel as if it were always walking on air, there will be no heaviness or *tamas* or unconsciousness in it. There will also be no end to its power of adaptability: in whatever conditions it is placed it will immediately be equal to the demands made upon it because its full consciousness will drive out all that inertia and incapacity which usually makes Matter a drag on the Spirit. Supramental plasticity will enable it to stand the attack of every hostile force which strives to pierce it: it will present no dull resistance to the attack but will be, on the contrary, so pliant as to nullify the force by giving way to it to pass off. Thus it will suffer no harmful consequences and the most deadly attacks will leave it unscathed. Lastly it will be turned into the stuff of light, each cell will radiate the supramental glory. Not only those who are developed enough to have their subtle sight open but the ordinary man too will be able to perceive this luminosity. It will be an evident fact to each and all, a permanent proof of the transformation which will convince even the most sceptical....

The Mother sent me a beautiful card showing the red flowers—Mexican Fire Plant—and underneath them she had written:

The Divine's love manifested in the vital.

She wrote further on the same card:

Bonjour

To my dear little child,

To my sweet Huta,

Yes, my child, I will teach you not only *what is* Divine Life but also *how* to live it so that you will realise in yourself that true divine life.

My love and blessings and presence of the Grace are constantly with you.

This letter, which came on 29th December 1956 was the most encouraging and

promising one I had received from the Mother. But at the same time I must not forget Sri Aurobindo's luminous words, which the Mother sent me on a lovely card in 1968:

Fix not the time and the way in which thy ideal shall be fulfilled. Work and leave time and way to God all-knowing.

To describe and to interpret the Supramental World according to our petty conceptions is sheer stupidity. Some geniuses are very fond of giving lectures. I remember a joke. Two learned gentlemen parroted speeches on a high and brilliant level to a congregation. The people were moved and entirely mesmerised. Later in the evening these wise orators were found by a man in a certain place enjoying themselves thoroughly. The man asked them what they were doing in such a place and what was the meaning of all their lofty spiritual preaching. The highbrows answered: "Oh! well, our duty is only to preach and not to practise. It is people who must listen and live according to our teaching. So there!"

While doing the paintings of *Savitri*, *Book One Canto Four—The Secret Knowledge*, the Mother read out this passage twice and laughed heartily at the absurdity of human beings:

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.

Here I recollect the letters written by a European to me, who considered himself a supreme being—working from the supramental plane! He used to write thirty, forty or sometimes fifty pages—all sheer nonsense. As a matter of fact, I had never seen him, never heard of him. I had no notion where I figured in this matter since I knew nothing. I got really fed up. Finally I took one of his letters to the Mother and told her in a nutshell its contents—the man's claim that he was working from the supramental world and that from there he would destroy me if I did not agree to be his spiritual companion. He had also written that he was very much in love with me, and concerned about my welfare and wanted to help me....

First of all the Mother had a good laugh and then told me seriously:

Child, do not be afraid. He cannot do anything to you. Those who want to destroy you will be destroyed themselves. Give this letter to me. He will himself be destroyed. This fellow is not to be allowed here—in the Ashram.

And she pressed my hands so as to give me confidence.

Later, after the Mother had left her body, the man came here. I hardly used



to leave my home. He sought me out. One day by chance, while I was returning from the Samadhi, I happened to meet him near the door of my elder brother Laljibhai's office, The New Horizon Sugar Mills Pvt. Ltd., which is on the ground floor of our house. He introduced himself to me and asked me whether I had received his latest letter. He said: "Now I have obtained such a mighty occult and spiritual power that I can enter even peoples' bones: I can enter your bones, too. I work from the supramental world. And I am superior to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo."

At this I lost my temper and told him severely:

"You have no power. You are nothing but a lunatic. You take filthy drugs and see queer things from the lowest vital plane and you believe that you have achieved the Supramental World. Nonsense. You imagine all sorts of things from the most inferior level. The Mother and Sri Aurobindo are the Supreme and they are with me. You cannot enter my bones, nor can you touch me. Get out of my sight."

Somehow he started to tremble. Then he suddenly turned on his heels and went away. He never approached me again.

But in fact, after the Mother had passed away, I felt on several occasions the hostile forces trying to destroy me. I was saved by her perpetual Grace and Protection.

I remembered to have received a letter from the Mother on 16th June 1965, which has given me strength:

My dearest little child Huta,

Your soul is there conscious and active in your body, and your soul is strong of the Lord's strength.

That will protect you against any bad-will that others can throw upon you.

Now you will feel that the Truth is sure to conquer.

My love and force are around you.

The man's appearance was somewhat like that of the ghastly beings I had seen in my dream. He also reminded me of Rasputin of Russia, who had called himself an occultist and priest and had run riot in his select circle. I believe Rasputin was one of the first incarnations of the lower vital beings just before the First World War broke out.

The Mother explains in *Questions and Answers* 1953, pp. 306-307, 376-377:

... If you are telling me about the goodwill among human beings, this is in the psychic, there's no shadow of a doubt about it. But there is a kind of vital interdependence, quite considerable, more than the physical, I believe. For instance, the First World War was the result of a tremendous descent of the forces of the vital world (hostile forces of the vital world) into the material world. Even those who were conscious of this descent and consequently armed to defend themselves against it, suffered from its consequences. The world, the whole earth suffered from its consequences. There was a general deterioration

from the vital point of view, I could say, which was inevitable even for those who consciously knew whence the force came, whence the deterioration came, and who could therefore fight against it consciously—they could not prevent certain effects being produced in the earth atmosphere. Naturally, men do not know what happened to them; all that they say is that everything had become worse since the war. That was all that they could affirm. For example, the moral level went down very much. It was simply the result of a formidable descent of the vital world: forces of disorder, forces of corruption, forces of deterioration, forces of destruction, forces of violence, forces of cruelty.

... But the one who does the greatest harm is the “Lord of Falsehood”. He it is indeed who is the biggest obstacle in the universe, this constant negation of the truth. And he has a very strong hold on the terrestrial world, on the material world. Besides, here (on the earth), those who see him, see him as an absolutely marvellous, splendid being. He entitles himself the “Lord of Nations”, and he appears formidable, luminous, powerful, very impressive.... Historically, he was the inspirer of certain heads of State, and he proclaims himself the Lord of Nations because it is he who governs the peoples. He is evidently, at the source, the supreme organiser, of these last two wars. It was on that occasion that he manifested himself as the Lord of Nations. And he declared, besides, that he would never be converted. And he knows that his end will come—naturally, he will try to make it as late as possible. And he declared that he would destroy all he could before being destroyed.... We may expect all possible catastrophes.

The Mother has also written in *Questions and Answers*, Volume. 3, p. 7:

... Ambition has been the undoing of many Yogis. That 'canker can hide long. Many people start on the Path without any sense of it. But when they get powers, their ambition rises up, all the more violently because it had not been thrown out in the beginning....

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have mentioned and stressed in several places that at present in the world the main factors are Money, Power and Sex, which are the very root of all evils.

The Mother has also said in *Questions and Answers* 1950-51, pp. 267, 268, 269:

... The vital world is a world of horrors; well, all the horrors of the vital world had descended upon earth, and upon earth they are still more horrible than in the vital world, because in the vital world, if you have an inner power, if you have the knowledge, if you have strength, you act upon them—you act, you can subdue them, you can show yourself stronger. But all your knowledge, all your power, all your strength is nothing in this material world when you

are subjected to the horrors of a war. And this acts in the terrestrial atmosphere in such a way that it is very very difficult to efface it.

Naturally men are always anxious to forget. There are always those who have begun to say, "Are you quite sure it was like that?" But those who have gone through that, do want it to be forgotten; so the places of torture, massacre—hideous places which go beyond all the worst human imagination can conceive, some of these places have been preserved. You can go and visit the torture-chambers the Germans built in Paris, and they will never be destroyed, I hope, so that those who come and say, "Oh! you know, these things have been exaggerated" (for one does not like to know that such frightful things have happened), could be taken by the hand and told, "Come and see if you are not afraid."

This forms character. If it is taken in the right way (and I think there are people who have taken it in the right way), this may lead you straight to yoga, straight. That is, one feels such a deep detachment from all things in the world, such a great need to find something else, an imperious need to find something which is truly beautiful, truly fresh, truly good... then, quite naturally, this brings you to a spiritual aspiration. And these horrors have, as it were, divided men: there was a minority which was ready and rose very high, there was a majority which was not ready and went down very low. These wallow in the mud at present, and hence, for the moment, one does not get out of it; and if this continues, we shall go towards another war and this time it will truly be the end of this civilisation—I don't say the end of the world, because nothing can be the end of the world, but the end of this civilisation, that is to say, another will have to be built. You will perhaps tell me that this would be very well, for this civilisation is in its decline, it is on the way to perish; but after all, there are very beautiful things in it, worthy of being preserved, and it would be a great pity if all this disappeared. But if there is another war, I can tell you that all this will disappear. For men are very intelligent creatures and they have found the means of destroying everything, and they will make use of this, for what's the good of spending billions to find certain bombs, if one might not use them? What is the use of discovering what can destroy a city in a few minutes, if it is not for destroying it! One wants to see the fruit of one's effort! If there is war, this is what will happen.

There we are, I am telling you things which are not very cheerful, but it is sometimes good to put a little ballast in the head to make one think.

It was 4th of October 1963. I went to the Mother in the morning for our work on *Savitri*. I happened to show her the Message given by her, which I had come across:

What have you given to the Lord or done for Him that you ask the Mother to do something for you? She does only the Lord's work.

I asked the Mother: "This Message is interesting. But I wonder what the Lord can want when He has everything. What can be done for Him who is omnipotent?"

She looked into my eyes and answered with a warm smile:

The Lord does not demand anything except *Surrender*. Your wish, your want, your will, your thoughts, feelings, you must offer to Him without reserve. And let His Will, Thoughts, Feelings, Wish and Wants become yours. In fact, let His Vibrations become your vibrations. Then there is no question of such miseries and troubles. You get the Lord and you get *everything*. But it can only be done when you surrender totally to Him and to Him alone. Not otherwise. Well, I do not say that the complete surrender is very easy. To give up everything is indeed difficult.

Nevertheless, give everything—your sorrows, pains, difficulties and sufferings to the Lord and tell Him: "These are Yours, take care of them, they are Your responsibility and not mine." Try this and you will find the difference. Surrender everything to Him and say: "Thou, Thou, only Thou, O Lord."

The soul, who is the delegate of the Divine, represents the Divine. It tries to gather the whole being's substance together and to offer it to the Divine for transformation. The soul is a portion of the Divine. And the sufferings of the soul are always in proportion to its strength. These sufferings and pains are not only for the soul but for the whole world, because nothing is separate—the whole world is one single thing. When beings suffer, the whole world suffers, the soul suffers and the Divine suffers too. But the Lord does not want anybody to suffer. He wants everyone to be happy. It is human beings who make things difficult.

This Mother (*pointing to herself*) has a physical body with only two hands, two eyes and so on... But her Consciousness is vast. She sends answers at once without opening people's letters. But unhappily, most people are not aware and cannot receive her answers, her Force and her Consciousness. Otherwise, the work would be easier for the Mother. However, her work is to lead everyone to his Goal.

This world is a condensation of energy. What we human beings see—animals, trees, plants, etc., etc.—are merely a condensation of energy and nothing else. Recently scientists have tried to find out all about the material world and have come to the conclusion that everything is made of elementary particles—electrons, protons that are nothing but condensed energy—but of course, energy is really a conscious energy and behind everything there is only ONE—the great Conscious Power, the Supreme who holds everything in Him and wills to carry everyone to his Goal and manifest in all. Thus the world ought to become only Him who is *Everything*.

In *Essays on the Gita*, Vol. 13, p. 351, when Sri Aurobindo conveys Sri Krishna's message, we have the same truth driven home:

Take it thus, that I am here in this world and everywhere, I am in all and I constitute all: there is nothing else than I, nothing without Me. I support this entire universe with a single degree of My illimitable power and an infinitesimal portion of My fathomless spirit; all these worlds are only sparks, hints, glintings of the I Am eternal and immeasurable.

The dreadful dreams still persisted. At the same time the Mother used to tell me numerous things—by word of mouth, signs and writings. But unfortunately, I could not possibly capture them all. I felt ashamed and sorry.

She wrote on 3rd January 1964:

...I can say that most of the dreams come from the subconscious. It is old movements trying again to manifest. To answer to these undesired movements by the Name of the Lord is certainly the best thing to do and the most effective way to get rid of them.

As for the other night activities and the things I tell you during your sleep, they will become more clear to you, and one day you will remember them quite clearly and exactly....

She wrote another letter on 23rd June 1964 in connection with what she told me during my sleep:

It is a fact that night before yesterday I have told you in detail my answer to your questions.

Now I must write it down—and when it is ready I shall send it to you.

Indeed to receive things directly and remember makes life easier. This comes by a persistent attempt.

With the Love of the Lord.

For the Mother's answer please see the book *White Roses*, pp. 91-94.

It was, I think, in 1964 or so, that there was a scarcity of milk in the Ashram. I did not know about this till I had a dream-vision of a huge, buxom, dark and ugly woman pulling human beings towards her and forcing them to suck her breasts which were dripping with milk. In that plane I saw many familiar faces. I observed that all of them enjoyed the milk!

The horrid woman looked at me sharply and tried to drag me and compel me to do as the others did. I freed myself violently and fled from that awful place.

When I got up in the morning, I actually found my arms aching.

I could not restrain myself from telling this peculiar experience to the Mother. She was extremely concerned about the entire episode. She drew me very close to her and asked me to repeat the dream. I did so. Then she said solemnly:

Child, it is good on your part to have told me. Now I know the whole thing, now I can visualise the situation of human beings. Did you drink the milk?

I answered: "No, Mother, first of all I cannot stand milk. Secondly, the formidable woman was such a disgusting sight that I had a strong feeling of nausea. Thirdly, I thought that it would be odd for a grown-up woman like me to be suckled...."

A faint smile touched the Mother's lips. But I felt from her expression that she did not take this dream lightly, because she was absolutely aware of the entanglement of human beings with the vital forces. Otherwise she would not have asked me to relate the incident a second time.

After that the Mother went into a deep trance. When she awoke, she told me:

Child, now I shall work out everything from the occult point of view. It is good that I am informed. Also it is fine that you did not drink the milk. I advise you that you must never, never take anything—either food or drink—from the vital beings when you go into the vital world. Otherwise you will fall terribly ill. //

Once again the Mother entered into a trance for a while. I could not really make out anything except that I should bear in my mind never to accept a single thing from the spiteful beings of the vital world in case I went there.

The Mother explains in *White Roses*, pp. 77-78:

...The vital world is inhabited by vital beings who are not human, some are very beautiful and resemble gods, some are hideously ugly, but all or almost all are antidivine and try always to turn human beings from their Divine Goal....

On 15th June after the work on *Savitri*, the Mother held my hands tenderly and looked deeply into my eyes for a moment or two, and said with a pleasant smile:

Ah! here is a little message for you. You shall have true vision, true understanding. There is an opening....

Then she leaned forward and kissed my forehead. I felt an indescribable thrill run through my whole being. Our eyes met and we smiled happily....

Nonetheless, I was quite aware that the true spiritual life is not child's play. One has to cross innumerable layers of consciousness before one finally attains the zenith of the brilliant Truth and Love.

This line from *Savitri*, *Book Two Canto Eight*, p. 227 is appropriate:

None can reach heaven who has not passed through hell. //

The dire dreams still harassed me. When I met the Mother on 13th December 1965, I told her about them. She said with all her compassion:

My child, you go into the subconscious. First of all it is necessary to have the subconscious cleaned. That is why you go there. It is no use going straight away into the higher worlds, leaving the subconscious unpurified. The progress has to be made step by step, with the lower parts—elements—cleaned first....

Then after a pause, she said with a smile:

But I know that you are very strong inwardly.

My eyebrows were raised. I smiled to myself about my countless weaknesses. The Mother shook my hands, gave her sparkling smile and said firmly:

Yes, indeed, you are strong.

And she laughed softly. A quick colour rose to my cheeks. I had accepted what she had said.

The Mother also wrote in a letter to me on 19th July 1963:

Most of the dreams are in the subconscious or in the vital—they can be useful for the inner progress if properly understood....

I wrote to the Mother on 16th December 1965 about the existing state of the inner consciousness. She answered:

At present the *sadhana* is bringing down the higher forces (forces of Truth and Love) into the material planes to prepare the Transformation. That is why so much work is done in the Subconscious; and after the Subconscious will come, *last*, the Inconscious which will be prepared to become *conscious*, and with the end of the Inconscious will dawn the time of the Transformation which will bring with it not only the knowledge but also the *experience* of all the worlds, even the highest.

So, you can be sure that your aspiration will be fulfilled.

The Mother has expressed the fundamental step towards this ideal in the *Bulletin*, August 1950, p.9:

We want an integral transformation of the body and all its activities. But there is a first step, absolutely indispensable, which has to be completed before anything else can be undertaken; it is the transformation of the consciousness. The starting-point, it goes without saying, is the aspiration towards this transformation and the will to realise it; without that nothing can be done. But if to the aspiration is added an inner opening, a kind of receptivity, then one can enter at a bound into this transformed consciousness and remain there....

On the night of 26th June 1967 I got up with a start from my sleep. I felt vividly that a powerful hand was pressing my left shoulder. My heart was beating fast. I took a deep breath to steady myself. Then once again I dropped off into an uneasy sleep.

I wrote to the Mother about this unpleasant dream. She answered:

Your so-called dream of last night, was not at all a dream—you became conscious of the resistance and refusal in your own subconscious—but if you had strongly called me at that time with reliance and faith, it would have gone—that is to say that you would have conquered this resistance and made a great progress. It will have to be done another time. For, if you want to study occultism as you say, this mastery of your own subconscious must be done first; to be able to move freely and without danger in the invisible worlds.

The first essential condition is *fearlessness*.

With all my love.

To acquire self-mastery was the toughest and severest of all examinations in this world. What else could it be when something occult is involved? I was very much caught in this new adventure. There was no way for me to escape. I had to prepare myself to gamble on the subject.

Now it became a habit for me to go out of my body. I could not possibly help it. The Mother wrote to me:

Wherever you go in sleep, subconscious or vital, you are protected.

With all my love.

Ah! I was relieved. I took more and more interest in occultism, because it was something new revealed to me. It was fascinating and fantastic. It was *not* in the least that I wished to get some power so that I might use it on people. No. I only wanted to explore the marvels of the other worlds and get out for a while from the suffocation of the earthly atmosphere. I truly like to step into other worlds to flee the struggle and misery of the physical world. Actually, I often found I could bring back from such a journey the courage to face my problems. But still according to human nature I harboured a subtle fear lest I should fail to reach my goal—the Divine.

On 18th July 1967 the Mother wrote in answer to my letter to her:

My very dear little child Huta,

Chase from your mind this fear that you won't reach your goal. Did I not tell you that you will.

In the night, during sleep, it is with the subconscious that you get in touch and you get upset by all the fears accumulated there. This has to be cleared off



before you can safely do any occultism. So the first thing to achieve is to overcome the fears. Am I not there to help you?

With all my love.

The Mother has written in *Questions and Answers* 1956, p.191:

Well, the occult world is not one single region where everything is mixed up, which becomes occult simply because we can't see it. The occult world is a gradation of regions, one could perhaps say, of more and more ethereal or subtle regions; in any case, of regions further and further off in their nature, from the physical materiality we ordinarily see. And each of these domains is a world in itself, having its forms and inhabited by beings with a density, one could say analogous to that of the domains wherein they live. Just as we in the physical world are of the same materiality as the physical world, so in the vital world, in the mental world, in the overmind world and in the supramental world—and in many others, infinite others—there are beings which have a form of a substance similar to that of that world. That means that if you are able to enter consciously into that world with the part of your being corresponding to that domain, you can move there quite objectively, as in the material world....

I happened to send a book on occultism to the Mother on 25th July 1967. She wrote on an elaborate card depicting red roses:

My very dear little child Huta,

I looked at the book. Yes, it is occultism. But each teacher of occultism has his own theory and declares that it is the most ancient teaching and tradition.

In each teaching there is something true based on personal experience and also something very relative which is the product of the mental theories and additions.

So all these books can be read with interest, but not taken as a gospel of Truth.

When you are ready for occultism you will know it yourself and your experiences will take a special significance and a special value.

With all my love.

The Mother has also disclosed her view in *Questions and Answers* 1957-1958, p. 161:

...Occultism is a special use of the consciousness, that is all. That is, at the moment, as it is practised among human beings, it is a direct and conscious perception of the forces behind appearances and the play of these forces, and as one has the direct perception of these, one has the power to act upon them, and one

makes a more or less higher will intervene in the play of these forces in order to obtain a required result.

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On 28th July 1967, after the work on *Savitri*, once again I told the Mother about my having frightful dreams. She meditated for a few seconds and then said gravely:

Dreams come just to indicate your defects which are in the subconscious, and from these dreams you must know and see clearly what is to be accepted and what is to be rejected.

I advise you never to go out of your body by your own will. It is not safe.

I felt from her expression that she was only testing me, otherwise why should she write letters regarding the subject and talk to me about it? I smiled and said: "Mother, before I go to sleep, I concentrate on your photograph, I pray and slip the special blessing packets you have given me under my pillow."

She was pleased, gave a broad smile and said:

O good, then you will come to me in your sleep. You see, I am available at night at 10, 12 and 2 o'clock.

Before going to sleep just call me: "Mother, I am coming to you—be with me. I am going out of my body—be with me." And I shall be with you.

Then I saw a glint of amusement in her eyes. She asked me with a humourous smile:

By the way, child, are you alone in your room?

I widened my eyes and answered: "Why? But of course, Mother. Don't you know?" She laughed. It was a lovely sound—clear and sweet like the chiming of little silver bells. She really never lost a chance to tease me whenever the opportunity arose. She caressed my cheeks and said:

I know. But the reason why I asked you is that if anybody touches your body, then everything will go away—all that you had seen and felt in the other worlds. It should not happen. You must lock your door.

A smile hovered on my lips when I replied: "Mother, I am all alone in my room. In fact, I feel terribly uncomfortable and uneasy if anybody sleeps in my apartment. For I like to be free and alone. So the question doesn't arise. Does it?"

Her gay laughter filled the room. She held my hands and said:

Eh! then it is all right. Also, my child, you must remember that you should never get up suddenly from your sleep in the morning. Nor must you use any artificial means like an alarm-clock.

Another thing, you must never go out of your body from the navel but from the heart. (*The Mother did not mean the physical heart but the subtle heart which is felt in the middle of the chest*). Keep your body straight. Relax—lie on your back with your hands by your side and palms facing upwards.

Then after a pause she added:

‘The fellow who wrote that book you sent to me the other day is an Englishman and calls himself a “Lama”. It is a big blunder.

I said: “Mother, I promise you that I will not adopt what he or anybody in this world writes on occultism. I will always follow the inspiration of my soul under the influence of the Supreme Truth. Moreover, whatever you have willed for my life, let it be so...”

The Mother was very happy. Further, I said with an anguished sigh: “Mother, this world is really painful”

She answered:

Yes, it is.

I said: “That is why I want to go out of my body to the invisible worlds—just for recreation. It is so thrilling and sensational to fly into a vast space. I feel so light in the subtle body that I do not like at all to return to my physical body.”

The Mother listened to me attentively and then said suddenly:

No, my child, do not try to go out of your body by your own will. It will come automatically to you when the time comes.

I asked: “When, Mother?”

She withdrew into a trance for a moment or two. Then she held my face between her hands and looked fully into my eyes and said assuringly:

You will see...

That very night I attempted to do exactly as the Mother had asked me. But it was very difficult to lie for long on my back. It started aching. I got tired and told myself, “What type of occultism is this?” Despite all the discomfort and confusion, that night I felt nice and refreshed. I awoke at 3.45 a.m. During my sleep I had seen huge mountains and deep valleys where some people were fighting peacefully without

making any clamour and I was watching them peacefully also. What a peculiar sight!

The next morning the Mother wrote:

Things are going on all right. The night was good. Persevere and you are sure to succeed.

Noted for tonight.

With all my love.

Once again I thought that if I had to lie on my back then I would rather drop the idea of this occultism. The position required was surely not comfortable.

The night of 29th July 1967 was disturbed. I could not come to any conclusion or know what was happening. I got up at 4.30 a.m. I wrote a letter to the Mother and put some questions to her about spiritual and occult truths. She wrote back:

Your letter of yesterday and all its questions have been answered already, fully and completely, all explanations given, and all concerning Yoga. But these answers and explanations have been sent in silence, not written, just because they are concerning Yoga, and you must receive them by the inner reception! Otherwise their effect is incomplete and may even be falsified by the misunderstanding of the mind.

So do not try to grasp with your mind, let them do their work inwardly, which they are doing, even if you do not know it.

I can add that the needed effect is being achieved and that you are advancing towards your goal in a steady way, even more rapidly than expected.

So all is well and do not worry. Trust the Divine Wisdom which arranges things for the best and answers all the aspirations even if they are not formulated.

Be confident, my dear child, all is well.

With all my love and blessings.

On 7th August 1967 I went to the Music Room where the Mother used to play the organ. She had given me a cupboard in that room, in which I kept all the required things for our work. So I arranged everything—the recorder, the microphone, the script, and so on.

The Mother entered the room gracefully with a huge white water-lily in her hand, which she gave to me with a radiant smile. She has called the flower: “Wealth. True wealth is that which one offers to the Divine.”

After the work, I showed her the thick note-book in which I had put down all that she had said and written regarding occultism. I said with a sigh:

“O Mother, look, I have stopped writing after certain pages....”

She pressed my hands with a smile and said:

This note-book will be filled....

Instantly I understood within my heart what was demanded from me. Ever since, I have left each and everything to the Divine Mother to do the best, for she knows the best. Truly speaking, I never practised occultism systematically, never did any effort. I just let myself go....

The Mother knew that I did not wish to be bound by anybody or anything—she knew all too well that it was enough for me to be bound by the Supreme Lord...

For a couple of years she gave me the flowers—*Pancretium Littoralis*. She has given the meaning: "Occultism. Does not truly blossom except when it is surrendered to the Divine."

I did not know the meaning of this particular flower. I wondered why the Mother gave me this flower very often. One day I could not resist asking her its significance. First she looked at me with her shining eyes and then said in French: "Occultisme", and went towards her high-backed chair and sat down elegantly. When I looked at her I saw a glimmer of laughter in her eyes. I raised my eyebrows and kept silent.

My memory flows back to the year 1962. It was 23rd February when I saw the Mother in the Meditation Hall upstairs. We worked there on *Savitri*. During that period we had almost finished *Canto Three* of *Book One*. She said specifically that *Canto Three* was full of occult visions. The Mother closed her eyes for a few seconds and then told me with a gentle smile:

In 1904 I realised or rather reached the highest spiritual and occult worlds. You see, I learnt occultism within a few weeks' time...

Once again she closed her eyes as if she recalled all the invisible worlds.

I said with distress: "Alas! Mother, I know nothing, have realised nothing, achieved nothing. I am a real duffer. And on top of everything I am getting old...."

She laughed sweetly, patted my hands and said:

O, one day you will realise. You see, there are two ways, the occult knowledge is rather easier than the spiritual knowledge. I learnt true spiritual things when I came here. No doubt, everything was within myself, though not outwardly.

Now, the Yoga of Transformation is very difficult—it takes years and years.

To learn occultism one needs a Guru or a Guide, while the spiritual life can be transferred like this (*the Mother pointed to her heart with the index finger of her right hand and then moved the finger in an upward curve towards my heart*).

Step by step, and with great patience the Mother revealed to me spiritual and occult truths as we advanced in our work on *Savitri*.

The Mahabharata, III, says correctly: "He who has heard with devotion the glorious story of Savitri, that man is fortunate, his affairs shall prosper, and never shall sorrow visit him."

The Mother wrote on the top of a diary containing quotations from *Savitri*:

Some extracts from *Savitri*, that marvellous, prophetic poem which will be humanity's guide towards its future realisation.

I was still puzzled and brooding over the words the Mother had spoke about having learnt true spiritual things when she had came here.. . .

Recently I came across her explanation in Volume 10, *On Thoughts and Aphorisms*, pp. 333-334:

...Until the age of about twenty-five, all I knew was the God of religions, God as men have created him, and I did not want him at any price. I denied his existence but with the certitude that if such a God did exist, I detested him.

When I was about twenty-five I discovered the inner God and at the same time I learned that the God described by most Western religions is none other than the Great Adversary.

When I came to India, in 1914, and became acquainted with Sri Aurobindo's teaching, everything became very clear.

Sri Aurobindo has written in Volume 19, *The Life Divine*, p. 877:

...Occult science is, essentially, the science of the subliminal, the subliminal in ourselves and the subliminal in world-nature, and of all that is in connection with the subliminal, including the subconscious and the superconscious, and the use of it as part of self-knowledge and world-knowledge and for the right dynamisation of that knowledge....

The Mother's comment on this occult science is in *Questions and Answers* 1957-58, pp. 340-341:

...in *true* occultism one must have the quality, the ability, the inner gift for using it, and that is the safeguard. True occultism cannot be handled by the first idiot who comes along. And this is not magic either—neither white magic nor black nor golden—it is not magic at all, it is a spiritual power which must be acquired through a long discipline; and finally, it is given to you only by a divine grace.

This means that as soon as one draws near the Truth, one is sheltered from all charlatanism, all pretensions and all falsehood. Of that I have had numerous and extremely conclusive proofs. And so one who has the true occult power possesses at the same time through the strength of this inner truth, the power to undo all magics, white or black or of whatever colour they may be, simply by applying a drop of that truth, to put it thus. There is nothing that can resist that power. And this is very well known to those who practise magic, for they

always take very great care, in all countries but especially in India, never to try out any of their formulas against yogis and saints, because they know that these formulas which they send out with their little mechanical, very superficial power, will go and strike, as a ball does a wall, the true power that's protecting one who leads a spiritual life, and quite naturally their formula will rebound and fall back upon them.

The yogi or saint doesn't need to do anything, he doesn't even have to want to protect himself: it is something automatic. He is in a state of consciousness and inner power which protects him automatically from everything that is inferior. Naturally, he may use his power voluntarily also to protect others. This rebounding of the bad formation from his atmosphere protects him automatically, but if this bad formation is made against someone he is protecting or simply one who asks his help, then he can, by a movement of his own atmosphere, his own aura, surround the person who is exposed to the magical evil spells, and the process of rebounding acts in the same way and works so that the bad formation falls back quite naturally upon the one who made it. But in this case the conscious will of the yogi or saint or sage is needed. He has to be informed about what has happened and must decide to intervene.

That is the difference between true knowledge and magic....

When the Mother and I were doing the painting of *Savitri, Book Nine—The Book of Eternal Night*, I used to see Death near my bed practically every night. I informed the Mother. And Death stopped appearing.

When I went to her, she inquired:

Child, I hope now Death is not bothering you.

I replied: "No, Mother, not lately."

After a few days once again Death was walking to and fro near my bed. He showed himself like a dark huge shadow. I felt he had come to take me.

The Mother wrote me in answer to my letter:

Do not be afraid. The Lord is more powerful than Death and the Lord is with you.

### LOVE

In the course of doing with the Mother the paintings of the same *Book Nine*, I did according to her instruction the picture of Savitri's descent into the domain of an endless Night. Mostly I used to paint late at night when everything was hushed.

After finishing this painting, I went to sleep. I was perfectly all right.

But suddenly I observed that I was submerging deeper and deeper into a bottomless pit of limitless darkness. My throat choked, strangled by the dire and shuddering

gloom. My breathing almost stopped and I actually experienced that I was no more alive. Then I did not know what happened.

Afterwards, I gradually came to and found myself in painful tears. From this experience I knew how one feels when Death draws nearer and nearer....

The Mother gave me unnumbered experiences so that I could accomplish the work on *Savitri* under her direct guidance. Otherwise it was impossible to bring out the realities and the right vibrations.

Later the Mother saw certain paintings I had done of Death and his domain and remarked:

This is the real reality in this domain. What is there is just expressed in the paintings—the figures, darkness, fire, etc., etc.

It is very strange that after the Mother had left her body, her Force intensified a hundredfold. I am sure many must have felt it who are in constant contact with her. From my own experience I can say that at times I am simply driven by her Force to do certain things—I feel strong vibrations in my heart or sometimes in my whole being. At first I thought that it was my imagination and did not pay any attention to what her Force directed. Then I realised that it was not so, because at such a moment whatever I do according to the inner guidance falls always rightly.

Now my dreams are tranquil; they carry a sense as of waves that sink to rest and make a smooth immobile sea. There are no distinct formations. But when something is going to happen, and it has some meaning and importance, I get solid indications beforehand from the Mother and I have observed that events confirm their pointers of truth.

The happiest thing of all is that I feel during my sleep the Mother's living Presence. The warmth of her loving embrace, her vibrations comforting and caressing, her exquisite perfume—all these prove to me that she comes to me almost every night in different forms but producing the same tangible effect.

In one of my letters to the Mother I asked:

“How am I to know that I have overcome the activities of the Subconscious in my sleep?”

She replied:

When your nights will become quiet and peaceful.

I can also feel the vibrations of people whom I know and the people who are strangers to me. There are various kinds of vibrations—good and bad—soothing and harsh. So I try to be always alert to avoid certain vibrations.

It is truly difficult to make people understand how I really feel.

Indeed, in spite of all these experiences, I know very well that I have a long way to go in order to reach my supreme goal.



On the morning of Tuesday the 11th May 1968, I went to the Mother for our new work of *About Savitri*, after finishing the paintings of *Meditations on Savitri*. She recited the passage, which I had written out from the epic on a big sheet in bold letters.

After that she plunged into profound meditation for quite a long time. I wondered. I had nothing to do except to watch her and be ready to switch on the recorder when she spoke. Then she opened her dreamy eyes slowly and gave the striking explanation. Afterwards she heard back her voice which I had recorded, including her recitation.

She said with an exclamation:

Child, I see many things when I go into a trance but it is difficult to grasp everything seen. So I cannot convey to you all of them.

I said instinctively: "Mother, never mind. I shall try to paint according to your inspiration."

Suddenly she leaned forward and, taking my hands into hers, said:

My child, do you see all these things?

Her voice was silky soft, but her blue-grey eyes probed my whole being.

I answered: "No, Mother, I do not see things but I feel them. I love to be near you. I like the atmosphere."

The Mother said with a charming smile:

You see, I started seeing things clearly and precisely when I was 81 years of age.

I laughed and said: "Mother, I do not really believe you. And if it is so, then in that case I shall be able to behold the wondrous things in my next birth or God alone knows when or perhaps never.

She laughed and said:

Ah! you too will see. ..

I marvelled at her supreme humility. As a matter of fact, I knew that the Mother did not forget what she had told me in 1961, before we had started the work on *Savitri*, how she had achieved in her tender age the highest occult truths, how she had realised and seen all the visions set forth in *Savitri*. Actually, she had experienced the poem's fundamental revelations before she arrived at Pondicherry and before Sri Aurobindo read out *Savitri* to her early in the morning day after day at a certain period of the Ashram. She also said to me that she had never told Sri Aurobindo all that she had seen beforehand. A great number of things the Mother has unveiled during my work with her. Unhappily, it is impossible for me to put all in this article.

The Mother brought me back from the glorious reveries of the past. I looked at her. Her glowing eyes held a withdrawn expression. When she talked to me, I felt that she was not living in the same world as ours.

She said with a sweet smile:

Child I can go anywhere while in this body. You have already seen for yourself how I go out of my body. I can go to the highest and deepest—elsewhere too—  
(*gesture pointing with her index finger first up and then down*)

In this body you can also go anywhere you like....

She made me face something so incredible that my mind at that moment felt incapable of understanding it. In truth I was appalled.

In 1962 the Mother arranged my reading *Savitri* with Amal Kiran (K. D. Sethna), to whom Sri Aurobindo had first introduced *Savitri* in private drafts and written all the letters that are now published along with the Epic.

He made me understand *Savitri* intellectually and aesthetically, because it was essential for me. I thoroughly enjoyed reading the poem with him—a work carried out in harmonious collaboration and with wonderful discussions.

Then I read *Savitri* several times by myself. Lastly, the Mother made me understand it inwardly in its true and perfect sense.

Once she told me:

My child, *Savitri* is your life-long work.

I have to admit this.

To state the truth, it was the Mother who took my consciousness to the other spheres and let me regard many things in detail. She also made me feel their vibrations and meet innumerable beings of different types. Without her direct instructions, guidance and constant help nothing would have been achieved. For, when I came to stay in the Ashram on 10th February 1955, I did not know how to draw a straight line. Also, I did not know about the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. I am definitely of the view that nothing is impossible for the Divine's Grace. What *Savitri* says is true:

All can be done if the God-touch is there.

Repeatedly the Mother expressed the wish that the whole of *Savitri* should be painted according to the visions which she had seen in France and in Algeria where she had learnt the highest occultism. She also said that before I was born she had tried here—in the Ashram—to get them depicted through certain people but without success.

I was extremely happy and grateful that she had chosen me as an instrument.

Some people think that the paintings of *Savitri* are mere pictures—some even mocked and criticised. Some passed random and gauche remarks out of sheer jealousy, and they believe the paintings to be my personal possessions and affairs because I have done them. and because the Mother graciously granted me special copyrights.

But, really speaking, the paintings of the whole of *Savitri* are substantially the Mother's own creation based on her series of visions—in fact, her own Yoga. She told me, before we launched into the ocean of *Savitri*, that physically she had no time at all to express these beautiful visions, so she would use only my hands while the rest would be done by her Force, Light and Consciousness. I have not forgotten how many times she concentrated on my hands to execute the big work.

The Mother said that there would be a link between her Consciousness and mine which would be like a channel. She also told me numberless things from the occult point of view which are not easy to explain through words.

I worked with the Mother for years all alone. So there is no witness except the Supreme and my soul.

My memory rolls back to the year 1967. I saw the Mother one afternoon to tell her that I had finished the paintings of Sri Aurobindo's mystical poems other than *Savitri*. She was glad and said with a contented smile:

A card came to me the other day from somebody for my blessings, along with a lot of praise for it. It was the card which you had done for the New Year—"Bliss". You see, I like it very much when people appreciate your paintings.

In everything there is the Divine but some people find the paintings bad.

And she put her hand on her forehead. I said: "But, Mother, it is their way of seeing, feeling and appreciating things. What can we do? Let me tell you a joke." I recounted the following story:

An artist painting in the country had a farmer spectator. "Ah!" said the artist, "Perhaps you too are a lover of the beauties of Nature. Have you seen the golden finger of dawn spreading across the eastern sky, the red-stained sulphurous islets floating in the lake of fire in the West, the ragged clouds at midnight blotting out the shuddering moon?"

"No," said the farmer, "not lately. I have not taken hard drink for a year."

The Mother's laughter tinkled merrily. She leaned forward and kissed my cheek lovingly.

While we were doing *Book Ten—The Book of the Double Twilight*, I asked her: "Mother, *Savitri* followed Death. Now in the Epilogue, *Book Twelve—The Return to Earth*—I read that *Savitri* was lying near Satyavan's dead body. How is it possible for her to pursue Death in her physical body, which seems to be the case since she is described as passing through woods and other places?"

The Mother leaned a little forward from her high-backed chair and exclaimed:

Oh, no, it is her Spirit which followed Death. She shed the physical sheath. She also left her senses, faculties, one by one before her Spirit flew to Satyavan who was now in a subtle luminous body....

This reminded me of the twelve bodies which according to the Mother human beings have.

While at the same *Book Ten*, the Mother, knowing that I was confused, threw some light on the verses which described the transformation of Savitri when she confronted Death

My child, here it is not the physical transformation of Savitri, but the spiritual transformation....

Sri Aurobindo has explained in Volume 19, *The Life Divine*, p. 910:

... A highest spiritual transformation must intervene on the psychic or psycho-spiritual change; the psychic movement inward to the inner being, the Self or Divinity within us, must be completed by an opening upward to a supreme spiritual status or a higher existence. This can be done by our opening into what is above us, by an ascent of consciousness into the ranges of overmind and supramental nature in which the sense of Self and Spirit is ever unveiled and permanent and in which the self-luminous instrumentation of the Self and Spirit is not restricted or divided as in our mind-nature, life-nature, body-nature. This also the psychic change makes possible; for as it opens us to the cosmic consciousness now hidden from us by many walls of limiting individuality, so also it opens us to what is now superconscient to our normality because it is hidden from us by the strong, hard and bright lid of mind,—mind constricting, dividing and separative. The lid thins, is slit, breaks asunder or opens and disappears under the pressure of the psycho-spiritual change and the natural urge of the new spiritualised consciousness towards that of which it is an expression here....

I have read in *Dictionary of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga*, p. 20:

If the transformation is complete, that means no subjection to death; it does not mean that one will be bound to keep the same body for all time. One creates a new body for oneself when one wants to change, but how it will be done cannot be said now. The present method is by physical birth—some occultists suppose that a time will come when that will not be necessary—but the question must be left for the Supramental evolution to decide.

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother will never give up the tremendous task of transformation to prove to humanity that death can be conquered. Once the Mother told me:

Child, we remain in eternity—time does not exist for us....

So we must leave everything to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and not behave as if failing to realise what Harry Emerson Fosdick has expressed: "God is not a cosmic bell-boy for whom we can press a button to get things."

On 16th November 1974 I saw the Mother in a dream-vision between 2 and 3.30. a. m. She spoke many things about the body's transformation. I could not possibly grasp all of them. But she definitely said to me:

The transformation of the body is not an impossibility, and it has to be done. I am working for it in order to make it a reality upon earth....

Sri Aurobindo has written in Volume 16, *The Supramental Manifestation*, p.5:

The perfection of the body, as great a perfection as we can bring about by the means at our disposal, must be the ultimate aim of physical culture. Perfection is the true aim of all culture, the spiritual and psychic, the mental, the vital and it must be the aim of our physical culture also. If our seeking is for a total perfection of the being, the physical part of it cannot be left aside; for the body is the material basis, the body is the instrument which we have to use....

The Mother wrote to me:

The transformation of the whole being is not only a possibility, it is a certitude. But it takes time and patience, endurance and confidence in spite of all difficulties, setbacks and delays.

My Force and courage are always with you to face everything.

A similar conception the Mother has expressed in the *Bulletin*, November 1957:

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

I invite you to the greater adventure, and in this adventure you are not to repeat spiritually what others have done before us, because our adventure begins from beyond that stage. We are for a new creation, entirely new, carrying in it all the unforeseen, all risks, all hazards,—a true adventure of which the goal is sure victory, but of which the way is unknown and has to be traced out step by step in the unexplored.

I have already written an article about the Mother's position towards the body's transformation in answer to certain opinions held by some people. My article has appeared in *Mother India*, February 21, 1974: The Mother's Birthday Special Number: The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of *Mother India*, pp. 86-92.

Sri Aurobindo has given a just appraisal of modern Science in Volume 16, *The Supramental Manifestation*, p. 96:

... Science is in her own way a great seer and magician; she has both the microscopic and macroscopic, the closely gazing and the telescopic view, a dissolving power of searching analytic resolution, a creative power of revealing synthetic effectuation. She has hunted to their lair many of the intermediate secret processes of the great creatrix, and even she has been able, by the inventive faculty given to us, to go and do one better. Man, this midget in infinity, locomotive yet nailed to the contiguity of a petty crust of soil by the force of gravitation, has certainly scored by her a goodly number of points against the mother of the universe. But all this has been done in some perfection only in the limits of her lowest obtrusive physical field.

Face to face with psychic and spiritual secrecies, as in the open elementary world even of mind, Science has still the uninformed gaze and groping hands of the infant....

Sri Aurobindo has also written in Volume 17, *The Hour of God*, p. 127:

God within is infinite and self-fulfilling Will. Unaffected by the fear of death canst thou leave to Him, not as an experiment, but with a calm and entire faith thy ailments? Thou shalt find that in the end He exceeds the skill of a million doctors.

The Mother explained in Volume 10, *On Thoughts and Aphorisms*, p. 208:

Ultimately, what is most accessible to materialistic thought, to scientific thought, is the fact that they cannot foresee. They can foresee many things, but the unfolding of terrestrial events is beyond their prevision. I think that this is the only thing they can admit—there is a problematical element, a field of unpredictability which eludes all their calculations.

I have never talked with a typical scientist who had the most up-to-date knowledge, so I am not quite sure, I do not know how far they admit the unpredictable or the incalculable.

What Sri Aurobindo means, I think, is that when one is in communion with the soul and has the knowledge of the soul, that knowledge is so much more wonderful than material knowledge that there is almost a smile of disdain. I

do not think he means that the knowledge of the soul teaches you things about material life that one cannot learn through science.

The only point—I do not know whether science has reached it—is the unpredictability of the future....

If the Mother had been in her body, I would have certainly told her a fine joke—how the men of science depend on machines to the point of absurdity:

A bachelor asked a computer to find him the perfect partner: “I want a companion who is small and attractive, loves water sports, and enjoys group activities.”

Answered the computer: “Marry a penguin.”

Dr. Raymond Moody has mentioned another experience of Light, which is indeed very touching.

The divine Light has many aspects, colours and gradations. Also each represents its own power, function and significance.

Here in the version of *Life after Life* this Light can be what Sri Aurobindo has delineated in Volume 24, *Letters on Yoga*, pp. 1205-1206:

There are special forces of the Light and there is a play of them according to needs but the Light in itself can be lived in as much as one can live in Peace or Ananda.

As Peace and Ananda can pour through the whole system and finally stabilise themselves so that they are in the body, and the body and the whole being are in them—one might almost say, are that, are the Peace and Ananda—so it can be with Light. It can pour into the body, make every cell luminous, fix itself and surround on all sides in one luminous mass of Light.

\*

It [Light] is the power that enlightens whatever it falls upon—the result may be vision, memory, knowledge, right will, right impulse etc.

In 1969 I saw the Mother one Thursday in the afternoon to offer her the sandalwood lotion which I had been preparing for her for a few years.

I showed her a new painting of *About Savitri*:

*The Divine Mother is coming down upon earth.*

The Mother said:

This is all right. But you must paint the Earth as receiving the Divine Light because now the Earth is conscious of the New Light.

You must paint here the silver drops to show that the Earth is receiving the Light....

I held the picture in my hand and thought of the alteration. Then I looked at

her, and saw that enchanting smile still lingered round the corners of her mouth. She was very sure of what she had said about the Earth.

Remembering that smile, I should like to close this article on the marvellous note which rings in a lovely talk of the Mother to me on 22nd December 1960:

Child, you must be obstinate, you see; the Supreme Lord Himself is very obstinate. He persists in His aim of taking away all obscurity, inertia and unhappiness from human beings and making them perfect. This process goes on in an endless cycle. He does not change human beings suddenly. Everything has its own time.

Failure always comes in human life but even he who fails can go one step forward to his goal. Not a single person can escape from miseries, difficulties and failures.

A few people seem highly educated and intellectual, they are praised by many for their remarkable work and success, but after all, these 'wise' people are full of ignorance, and in the end they fail to achieve their goal.

A person gets married, has children and all the rest, yet he is not happy at all. At the end he falls into the chasm of death and again he comes into this world. This goes on, and on, and on ..until he finds the Truth.

This world is the only place where man can progress and lessen the burden of his past life and present life and get ready for the next more fortunate birth to find something higher and more beautiful. It is only here in this world that you are given the opportunity to progress towards the Eternal.

I have seen many other worlds, which are dull, grey and full of darkness, where people are bored and are groping to find happiness.

I know the beginning of the world and its end up to Eternity. Your failure is that of your past birth and not of your present birth. Failure is nothing but a step forward to your success. You will have to dig in each step carefully, and set your feet firmly and proceed in future to the Truth. But you must be obstinate.

The Highest cannot be realised until one becomes perfect. It takes years after years, century after century. However, you must be obstinate like the Supreme Lord. Be more and more obstinate in front of your own defects.

Life is not so simple and straight. It is like the waves of an ocean.

Do not care about what people say; they are ignorant, their judgement leads you nowhere.

Remain in the Vastness of the Supreme Love, Truth, Light and Peace...

This is the Law of the Supreme.

HUTA