



# MOTHER INDIA

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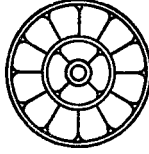
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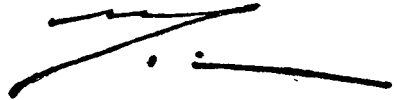


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXXIV

No. 4

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

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## **ONLY ONE THING**

### **WORDS OF THE MOTHER**

WE have only one thing to do: the perfect surrender of which Sri Aurobindo speaks, the total self-giving to the Divine Will, whatever happens, even in the midst of the night.

There is the night and there is the sun, the night and the sun, again the night, many nights, but one must cling to this will to surrender, cling to it as through a tempest, and give up everything into the hands of the Supreme Lord, until the day when the sun comes for ever, the total victory.

## **THE ONLY CREATION HERE**

### **WORDS OF SRI AUROBINDO**

THE only creation for which there is any place here is the supramental, the bringing of the Divine Truth down on the earth, not only into the mind and vital but into the body and into Matter. Our object is not to remove all "limitations" on the expansion of the ego or to give a free field and make unlimited room for the fulfilment of the ideas of the human mind or the desires of the ego-centred life-force. None of us are here to "do as we like", or to create a world in which we shall at last be able to do as we like; we are here to do what the Divine wills and to create a world in which the Divine Will can manifest its truth no longer deformed by human ignorance or perverted and mistranslated by vital desire. The work which the sadhak of the supramental yoga has to do is not his own work for which he can lay down his own conditions, but the work of the Divine which he has to do according to the conditions laid down by the Divine. Our yoga is not for our own sake but for the sake of the Divine. It is not our own personal manifestation that we are to seek, the manifestation of the individual ego freed from all bounds and from all bonds, but the manifestation of the Divine. Of that manifestation our own spiritual liberation, perfection, fullness is to be a result and a part, but not in any egoistic sense or for any ego-centred or self-seeking purpose. This liberation, perfection, fullness too must not be pursued for our own sake, but for the sake of the Divine.

# NIRODBARAN'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

## THE COMPLETE SET

(Continued from the issue of March 1982)

December 23, 1935

*I hear that R was called to see a case outside, which had been given up as hopeless by the French doctors, including Valle.*

By the best doctors in Pondicherry, Valle, Amaladasan and others. They dosed and injected and he was near to his last gasp when Valle ran to R as a last chance.

*Today R comes and tells me that the patient has gone to his office.*

A fact.

*And that you have congratulated him on his success.*

A fact. Why should I not when an almost dead man rises full of life and energy in a few hours?

*A miracle! I am flabbergasted, really!*

Well and then? It should raise you up, not cast you down.

*R showed me some observations made by those doctors on blood-pressure, urine etc. and asked me their significance. I found that the case was probably chronic interstitial nephritis.*

That was reported to me by R from the first.

*From a further talk I discovered that R has very little idea of what it is. And yet he goes and saves a dying man!*

Do you deny the fact?

*Again, it seems to me that he acted as an instrument or medium and nothing else.*

What do you mean by *nothing else*? A human instrument without capacity can do things like that? That would be far more miraculous, impossible, incredible, surely,

than a homeopath whose whole system is founded on symptomatology curing people.

*R says findings of urine are not necessary. Leave the patient to nature. I said: "Albumen is a danger sign, it has to be eliminated; otherwise there is a possibility of relapse."*

A relapse is always possible, if, as R wrote to me, the man is a reckless bon vivant going strong and drinking. But that is his affair. His resuscitation remains a fact.

*This instance has proved to me that homeopaths are concerned with symptoms not with the disease itself, of which they have not much knowledge. If relying on symptoms alone, he has cured this man, I shall be the last person to believe it.*

Because you are tied in your own system and do not understand that Nature is not so rigid as your mental ideas.

*All big homeopaths I've heard of were allopaths before.*

Did they cure by allopathic treatment then?

*How can homeopathy cure diseases through merely the symptoms and without diagnosis?*

Is it not the very principle of homeopathy that it cures the disease by curing the symptoms? I have always heard so. Do you deny that homeopaths acting on their own system, not on yours, have cured illnesses? If they have, is it not more logical to suppose that there is something in their system than to proclaim the sacrosanct infallibility of the sole allopathic system and its principle? For that matter I myself cure more often by attacking the symptoms than by any other way, because medical diagnosis is uncertain and fallible while the symptoms are there for everybody to see. Of course if a correct indisputable diagnosis is there, so much the better—the view can be more complete, the action is easier, the result more sure. But even without infallible diagnosis one can act and get a cure.

*When all doctors have failed, how does R proclaim that he will pull a man out? Self-confidence? Isn't it sometimes too risky to commit oneself like that, however strong one's confidence may be, without knowing anything of the nature of the disease?*

Because he has confidence in himself like all who are able to do in any field big things.

Why can't it? How dreadfully downright and sweeping you are in your demands! What ground had Mustapha Kemal for his strong and enormous confidence when



he defied all Europe and all the probabilities and possibilities and undertook to save three quarters dead Turkey?

What does that matter if it succeeds in some places? Napoleon's self-confidence and intuition tripped him up at Waterloo, but before that it had won him Marengo, Jena, Austerlitz.

He [R] knew there was blood-pressure and he fixed his whole energy in bringing that down and did it.

*Does he have an immediate intuition or does he hear voices?*

Well, he believes in his intuition and his faith justified itself. I never heard that he hears voices.

*Was there some extraordinary power behind R before he came here that was responsible for the marvellous results?*

Certainly. It was because the Mother saw a great force in him that she accepted him in the Ashram.

*I hear he is a very good medium and is a tower of vital strength.*

Which means of course full of massive vital force which can be used by the Yoga-force for its purposes and being massive can produce striking results.

*Is the strength then the real cause of this success?*

Why the flabbergasts not? What's the use of strength if it can't do things?

*But I don't understand how a tower of vital strength can cure a dying man!*

You are very much behind the times. Do you not know that even many doctors now admit and write it publicly that medicines are an element but only one and that the psychological element counts as much and even more? I have heard that from doctors often and read it over reputable medical signatures. And among the psychological elements, they say, one of the most important is the doctor's optimism and self-confidence, (his faith, what? it is only another word for the same thing) and the confidence, hope, helpful mental atmosphere he can inspire in or around his patient. I have seen it stated categorically that a doctor who can do that is far more successful than one who knows Medicine better but cannot.

*Have the medicines, then, no role to play in the matter of cure? You said in S's case that the Force has to count on right medicines for rapid effects.*

I did not mean that it cannot be done without medicines. But if it is to be done with the aid of medicines, then the right medicine is helpful, the wrong one obviously brings in a danger.

*How does R choose the right medicine? Not by intuition; because I saw him consulting his books for the choice of medicines.*

Of course. He learnt homeopathic medicine in America and his ideas of homeopathy are the American ideas. But how does his knowledge prevent intuition? Even an allopathic doctor has often to intuit what medicine he should give or what mixture—and it is those who intuit best that succeed best. All is not done by sole rule of book or sole rule of thumb even in orthodox Science.

*How can a patient, as good as lost, leap up, although he knew nothing of faith in yogic force?*

That often happens. It is even sometimes easier to deal with a man of that kind, provided he does not know what is being done—so that there is no room for doubt or mental resistance.

*He himself admitted that he could not expect such a miraculous result from his treatment. It was the Mother's Force that did it.*

Naturally.

*Is it then the question of mediumship? If so, I dance in rapture thinking that yogi-doctors have a vast possibility!*

Yes, provided they do not entrench themselves in doubt and rigid materialistic orthodoxy.

*I am thrown out of joint at two miracles, Sir: (1) R's treatment or yours; (2) N's English poetry, though Madam Doubt still peeps from behind. Anyhow, no chance for me! कपाल ।<sup>1</sup> Sir! What to do?*

Why out of joint? It ought to strengthen your joints for the journey of Yoga.

Not at all कपाल ।, sir. Mind, sir, mind. Madam Doubt, sir, Madam Doubt! Miss Material Intellectualism, sir! Aunt Despondency, sir! Uncle Self-distrust, sir! Cousin Self-depreciation, sir! The whole confounded family, sir!

*I congratulate you for having such a fine instrument, and him as well for being so for the Divine's action.*

<sup>1</sup> Kapāl=Forehead (with Fate believed to be written on it).

I will try to make it clear, but no time tonight as it is 4.40 a.m. already.

*What poem, indeed! Didn't you say you'd send me a poem showing the force of direct prayers? You forget so easily!*

Excuse me. I said I will send *one day*. One day may mean after some weeks, some months, or some years.

*December 24, 1935*

*In this resuscitation of G who you say was given up by the best doctors in Pondicherry, V, A and others, and who in spite of their dosing and injecting was near to his last gasp when V ran to R as a last chance, what I am puzzled about is the exact contribution of R's medicines.*

Exact? How can one measure exactly where vital, mental and spiritual factors come in? In dealing with a star and atom you may (though it appears you can't with an electron), but not with a man and his living mind, soul and body.

*If R were an allopathic homeopath, with a difference only in treatment and not in pathology, I wouldn't doubt his explanations.*

Why on earth? What is an allopathic homeopath? Homeopathic principles are just the opposite of the allopathic. So why must the dealings be fundamentally the same with only a difference of drugs? In spite of what you say you have the solid belief that allopathy alone is true. I suppose allopathic homeopathy is something like a biped with four feet.

*If you say that homeopathy is quite different from allopathy, as regards the treatment, still the pathology must be the same.*

Not necessarily in all cases or in all respects.

*A symptomatic treatment can't be applied in cases where the same symptom is produced by two or three different diseases!*

Why can't it? There is a possibility that you can strike at the cure, whatever it be, through the symptoms and you can kill the root through the stalk and leaves and not start by searching for the roots and digging them out. That at any rate is what I do.

*Don't speak of your own cures, please; I can't fight you there!*

Why should I not speak of my cures? When they are perfectly apposite and a proof that you can cure by symptomatic treatment? You mean you don't want to give me the lie or say I am under a delusion?

*How can a homeopath ask a high-blood-pressure man who has just risen from the grave to attend to his duties in the old way and give him the usual food?*

Why can't he, if he has some other means of combating the possible bad results? I have not heard that R asked G to resume his duties. He represents it as if he remained neutral and it was G's own choice with which he did not interfere. That may have been imprudent; but R is daring in everything and that means a stiff dose of imprudence. Besides he has his theories also which may or may not be true, but I cannot say they are prima facie impossible if I can judge by the daring one he put forward for making S eat the full Ashram meals. If S's accounts of his condition are true, they seem to have been justified by a considerable amount of success.

*If you say R is led by intuition I'll stop my argument and give you the chance of a hearty laugh. But then how did he ignore so important a factor as albumen in G's case?*

He has intuition but not always the right intuition to fit the case. It is a mental intuition he uses, and mental intuition is a mixed movement.

I have answered all that already. I do not say R was right, but he did not act at random; he gave his reasons for neglecting the albumen which I am not medical enough to understand. I would have preferred if he had dealt with [it] and had kept it under observation before letting him loose, but it is not my funeral. I do not expect G to live long and I don't think R expects it either. But in the case of S he has for the time being at least proved his case. He is by the way dealing with G's kidneys today and admits it is a ticklish job; but the first effects he says were successful and he is waiting for the night to pass to see what will be the sequel. For the drug, he says, is highly potentised (that is American language), but may produce an upheaval. Well, there you are, that is the man. Right or wrong? God he knows. I put a force behind him and also await the results.

He had by the way hesitated to act at once on the kidneys because the body needed to be accustomed to renewed vigour (so far as I understand) before risking the *coup*. Contrary to allopathic pathology? Maybe. But it has some similarity to what I have seen in my experience of action by Yoga.

*His faith, hope, self-confidence, I suppose help to produce a favourable nidus in the patient's mental atmosphere.*

Certainly, if you [are] dejected, diffident, despairing, full of doubt, you can't produce a favourable nidus in the atmosphere.

*Self-confidence, I suppose, presupposes knowledge and experience. Kemal Pasha and Napoleon surely had the stratagems of war and current politics at their fingers' ends. Even so had Napoleon been a little more self-confident, things might have had different results at Waterloo.*

What an absurd statement! Self-confidence is an inborn thing; it does *not* rest on knowledge and experience.

Who says that? I never heard that Napoleon failed at Waterloo for want of self-confidence. I have always read that he failed because he was, owing to his recent malady, no longer so quick and self-confident in decision and so supple in mental resource as before. Please don't rewrite history unless you have data for your novel version.

Please remember that R has studied homeopathy and he has knowledge of homeopathic medicines if not of allopathic pathology. He took a degree in America and the Mother tells me that many of his ideas of which we were so impatient and thought them his own inventions are the ideas of the American school of homeopathy which is more meticulous, intolerant, intransigent, dead against allopathy, particular about the subtle properties of homeopathic drugs and their evanescence by wrong contacts (quite Yogic that) than others.

He was successful outside. While he was outside the Ashram, not yet accepted, he was making remarkable cures and already getting a name. I had to stop him as soon as he became an accepted disciple, even before he came into the Ashram because his practice was illegal. But I had to refuse applications from the town for allowing him to treat patients because he had succeeded so remarkably with them that they wanted to continue. I was not concerning myself in the least with his cures and knew nothing at all about them. And you say all that was luck because his ideas differ from yours? Are you not reasoning like Molière's doctors who declared that a patient's audacity in living contrary to the rules of Science was intolerable or like the British Medical Council which refused any validity to Sir Herbert Barker's cures because he was an osteopath and had no qualified medical knowledge?

*I wonder, then, whether our mode of looking at things is altogether wrong. And if there are really such drugs in homeopathy as can give results in cases in which we have almost none, then it would be worth trying to study it and combine both systems.*

Certainly there are—the universe is not shut up in the four walls of allopathic medicine. There are plenty of cases of illnesses being cured by other systems (not homeopathy alone) when they had defied the allopaths. My experience is not wide but I have come across a great number of such cases. If it is not so, why then did V come to R for help surprisingly when he and A had failed with all their capacity and experience? V has known and practised homeopathy to some extent. May we not infer that he

knew there were cases in which homoeopathy (not allopathic homeopathy but pure) might be successful?

*Or is it only a question of personality apart from yoga-force? If R had taken up allopathy, could he not have done big miracles like these, where Valle and others failed? And if I had been asked to administer the same drug to this dying man, could it have produced such a striking effect?*

It is not a question of drugs alone. The drug is only a support. If you had not intuition and self-confidence and the same thorough-going belief in your own action and the Yoga-force behind you you might have done some good but not had the same rapid effect. R believes in his medicines, but he does not believe that they are infallible in their effects or rely on them alone. He believes in the man behind them and the Force behind the man.

*You can try to logicise me but do try to satisfy me, also !*

How can I "satisfy" you when my point of view and basis of knowledge is quite different from yours or R's either?

I haven't cleared up anything, I suppose, only logicised and not satisfied you. To clear up things it would be necessary to go to first principles as well as my own experience and view of things (to which you object, because you can't fight me there), and that would be going into country foreign to the allopathic and scientific reason.

Let me say however about R. He is a man who seems genuinely to believe in the Force; even when he was not an accepted disciple and was treating cases in town, he was attributing his cures to the Force (ours), although we did not consciously preside at all over his cases or send him any particular help. So he has the first requisite for being a 'medium' of Force. Next, he is a man of great vital push, self-confidence, abounding enthusiasm and energy; such men are the best instruments, not for knowledge, but for successful action. Second requisite there. Next, he is a man with a great power of suggestion and also of inducing auto-suggestions in his patients, and these become remarkably effective provided they do not resist too much. He is the kind of man who can give pure water, saying, "This is a potent medicine", and the patient would immediately feel better after taking it. (By the way, many allopath doctors do that, when they think it necessary, according to their own confession.) Third help (though the trick would be unyogic); the power of conveying one's thought-formations, vital energy, will, decisions etc. to others being an element in Yogic action. He has that. Fourth, a knowledge of homeopathic medicines and what seems to me a very supple and daring use of them. Dangerous? Perhaps or rather, no doubt; he himself admits that with his more potent medicines a great disturbance occurs before the cure or can do so and a great disturbance means a great risk, but a daring man is a man who takes risks in the hope of great results. He might have killed

S? Certainly, but so might an allopathic doctor. My grandfather and cousin were patently killed by the medicine administered by one of the most famous and successful allopathic doctors of Calcutta. An allopathic doctor also takes risks and those who are the most successful are also the most adventurous and decisive in their methods. All that does not militate against his capacity as a healer. They are points in his favour.

On the other hand there are big defects. He is a bluffer; he makes big mistakes and does not admit them even when he knows he has made them—he covers it up by an absurd statement which he thinks the others will swallow. But he does not persist in his mistakes—he sets them right without admitting them. He is not truthful and truthfulness is a great help for the Force, while the opposite induces a wrong vibration. He is vain, arrogant etc.—and men with such defects can easily fall into great blunders. He pretends to have knowledge where [he] has none. He is ignorant of many things a healer ought to know.

Well, in spite of all he has done remarkably well with S. Whether he will carry through G remains to be seen; but that for the time being he raised him up from the half-dead is beyond question. The man has parts—whether his parts will become a whole is a matter of the future. A man being a man can be neither perfect nor worthless. One has to see what can be made of him or what he allows himself to be made or to become. Let us Asquithenly, for him as for others, wait and see. Why either condemn wholly as a fraud or boost up as a miracle?

There would be much else necessary to say, about allopathy, homeopathy and the elasticity of Nature, about the place of medicine, Force and the mediums, about spiritual force, intermediate occult forces and material forces, about the complexity and relativity of the “truths” that are only convenient formulas and the inadvisability of turning them into absolute and all-covering truths etc., etc.—but all that would be long, would carry us into too deep depths and can be postponed till the blue moon rises in your heavens.

## AT THE SAMADHI

DISPERSE all thought from my mind but of You.  
 My cheek pressed with love against the fragrance of flowers—  
 Your closeness and only Yours I crave.  
 My dreams float high—as high as temple-towers.  
 My aching head against the coolth of the marble  
 Where I sit at the Sacred Throne of You—  
 Let Your face glow in my heart through the dark night  
 And Your Peace be present in that Shadow All-Blue!

MINNIE N. CANTEENWALLA

## SOME LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

### A PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE OF 1938

*(This set of letters written from Pondicherry to Bombay are published without any omission for the special value they have of showing a very human side to a divine personality. While several important topics are dealt with in brief, some of the matters mentioned are bound to strike one as trivia, but they become significant because of the writer being what he was—a friend and father who was at the same time a Himalayan Master. The father-touch comes through most in the opening of the last letter, for the inquiry found there was made entirely on the writer's own initiative. The absence of expected communication from the addressee prompted the sweet concern expressed. The letter's end also has a deeply solicitous accent in a different yet related context.)*

Pondicherry  
12.3.38

Amal

We were very glad to receive your letter of the 6th and to know that you are going on as well there as can be expected in another atmosphere and among very different-minded people. We have received the packet and the designs—I suppose Lalita has written to you.

Homi's information is interesting; if he wishes to write to the Mother direct he can do so though the answer will usually go through you.

As for the house contemplated by Aimai and Sharanagata, there is one (a house of Henri Gaebelé) next to the Bartwa house which you know very well, so I need not describe it. It is to be sold in June or July, but as it will be by auction it is not possible to say how much it will cost—it might turn out something a little above Rs. 10,000 rather than under.

I have been kept too occupied with other things to make much headway with the poem—except that I have spoiled your beautiful neat copy of the Worlds under the oestrus of the restless urge for more and more perfection; but we are here for World-improvement, so I hope that is excusable.

*The Mother's Note:* my love and blessings are with you.

\*

Pondicherry  
29.6.38

Amal

You seem to have been having an excessive number of tosses,—knee, influenza, overdose of medicine! I hope you have come through them all unshaken, alert and smiling. Three however are enough and to spare.



Your three friends can all have permission for the Darshan—but accommodation in the Ashram is, alas, hoping for the physically impossible. They will have like so many others to camp somewhere.

So Nuffield has come to “nuffings”.<sup>1</sup> That was always possible, but the intervention of the secretaries has sealed the possibility and made it a certitude. The only chance would have been if somebody had got hold of him by the button hole and fixing him still farther with a magic eye like the Ancient Mariner talked him into being interested even in spite of himself and his ear turned to the marriage bells, i.e. to unlimited reading matter, University donations and the manufacture of innumerable aeroplanes for the future worldwide massacre.

But what is the matter with you? You want to insure the Mother’s life and for Rs. 10,000! If it were one crore of rupees and the insuring company undertook to pay all the premiums themselves, then the matter might just be negotiable.<sup>2</sup>

That’s all I think for the present. I have been too much under high pressure to write, so you must not expect an overlong letter. We hope to see you before long hale, hearty and full of pep for the future.

The Mother sends her love and blessings along with mine.

\*

Pondicherry

1.8.38

### Amal

You must on no account return here before your heart has recovered. No doubt, death must not be feared, but neither should death or permanent ill-health be invited. Here, especially now when all the competent doctors have gone away or been sent to a distance from Pondicherry, there would be no proper facilities for the treatment you still need, while you have them all there. You should remember the Mother’s warning to you when she said that you would have your realisation in this life provided you did not do something silly so as to shorten your life. That “something silly” you tried your best to do when you swallowed with a cheerful liberality a poison-medicine without taking the least care to ascertain what was the maximum dose.<sup>3</sup> You

<sup>1</sup> Editor’s Note: The Mother, on being shown Lord Nuffield’s photograph, had found him an open unconventionally generous mind. So Amal’s brother, who was in England at the time and enthusiastic to work for the Ashram, was sent with Sri Aurobindo’s approval a write-up by Amal about the cultural and educational aspect of the Ashram and about the need for financial support. Unfortunately, to everybody’s amazement, Nuffield got kidnapped and, when released, became difficult to approach directly.

<sup>2</sup> Editor’s Note: Since the Integral Yoga was expected to prolong the Mother’s life indefinitely, a life-insurance realisable after a long term seems to have been suggested on the basis of some proposal made by an insurance company.

<sup>3</sup> Editor’s Note: The normal tonic dose was one-twelfth of a grain, but the man who gave a “physician’s phial”, which had no directions, mistakenly advised a dose of four grains, which meant forty-eight times the normal dose. It was later ascertained that beyond one-sixth of a grain the potent drug would be dangerous to life. Twenty-four times this quantity would surely be lethal.

have escaped by a sort of miracle, but with a shaken heart. To risk making that shaky condition of the heart a permanent disability of the body rendering it incapable of resisting any severe physical attack or shock in the future, would be another "something silly" of the same quality. So it's on no account to be done.

You need not be afraid of losing anything great by postponing your return to Pondicherry. A general descent of the kind you speak of is not in view at the moment and even if it comes, it can very easily catch you up into itself whenever you come if you are in the right openness; and if you are not, then even its descending would not be of so urgent an importance, since it would take you some time to become aware of it or receive it. So there is no reason why you should not in this matter cleave to common sense and the sage advice of the doctors.<sup>1</sup>

\*

9.10.38

### Amal

For a long time the conditions were such that writing letters was impossible, hence my silence. I have been hearing of your health from others, but very vaguely, "Amal is still not well," "Amal looks much better but the heart is still weak," "Amal is better". You might let me know the exact condition. We have heard from Minnie that your mother's hernia has been pronounced curable.

One matter. Mehroo Tarachand wrote asking for permission for November darshan with Dhun and requesting an answer through you, but as I could not write, there was no answer. Now she has written again; but we have also a letter from Dhun saying that her (Mehroo's) mother is ill and she won't be able to come. Anyhow she can be informed that she has the permission and can come, if she is able to manage; she will be put up with Dhun in one of the new houses.

I have also not been able to deal with your four poems up till now. I do not find them quite satisfactory. The substance of good poetry, but lacking in perfection, that powerful or exquisite perfection you were so often getting recently. The three blank poems have fallen back into a monotone rhythm owing to lack of swing and driving force; the lyric is pretty, but has not the usual combination of felicity and directness except in the last two lines. But I presume all that is due to lack of inspirational exercise and keeping the hand in.

I have not been able to make any headway with Savitri owing to lack of time and also to an appalled perception of the disgraceful imperfection of all the sections after the first two. But I have tackled them again as I think I wrote to you and have pulled

<sup>1</sup> The Supramental Manifestation which took place on 29 February 1956 was expected in the year 1938. Before Amal left for Bombay the Mother had told him that "a general descent" might occur in the course of the year and she wanted him to be in Pondicherry around that time and would inform him of its imminence or its occurrence. As no word about it came up to nearly the end of July he was anxious to know what he should do.

up the third section to a higher consistency of level; the “worlds” have fallen into a state of manuscript chaos, corrections upon corrections, additions upon additions, rearrangements on rearrangements, out of which perhaps some cosmic beauty will emerge.

The Mother sends her blessings and I mine.

\*

Pondicherry

13.12.38

Amal

I write to get news about your progress—recovery—I hear that you are better; I hope you can confirm it.

I have not yet been able to answer Homi’s letter. You can tell him from me that the Mother and I were both extremely well-impressed by Bosanquet’s photograph which shows a remarkable personality and great spiritual possibilities. I may be able to write about (Bosanquet’s) letter in a few days. If he comes here, we shall be glad to give him help in his spiritual aspiration.

There is nothing much to say on other matters. The Asram increases always, but its finances are as they were, which is a mathematical equation of doubtful validity and is not so much an equation as an equivoke.

I have done an enormous amount of work with Savitri. The third section has been recast—not rewritten—so as to give it a more consistent epic swing and elevation of level. The fourth section, the Worlds, is undergoing transformation. The “Life” part is in a way finished, though I shall have to go over the ground perhaps some five or six times more to ensure perfection of detail. I am now starting a recasting of the “Mind” part of which I had only made a sort of basic rough draft. I hope that this time the work will stand as more final and definitive.

In sending news of yourself, you will no doubt send news of your mother, also. I saw a notice of a remedy (in the *Matin*) for hernia which they say has succeeded in America and is introduced in France, very much resembling the defunct doctor’s discovery (the one who treated Lalita’s father), but perhaps more assuredly scientific; it is reported to get rid for good of belts and operations and to have made millions of cures. It will be a great thing for many if it turns out to be reliable.

# A DREAM-EXPERIENCE OF CHAMPAKLAL

## RELATED BY HIMSELF

‘To go to a particular “Place”, with Sri Aurobindo, where we had been before’: this thought arose in my mind. Just then a grand, luminous and typically new kind of vehicle appeared. I sat in it. There were others too but none of them were known to me. Sri Aurobindo Himself was driving it. It was a majestic sight! After that what happened and how I was left alone, I do not know. But I was clear about where I had to go. So I walked on and on.

After covering a long distance, I came upon a locality where I felt that the “Place” I was looking for was hereabout. The buildings were exquisite and fascinating and of an altogether novel structure. But they all were closed. No person was seen there. Later, from the upper part of a very pretty house, an elevating fragrance was emanating. This brought the certitude of that “Place” being definitely there. I was naturally and spontaneously drawn to it as to a magnet, and stood at the gate. The door opened automatically. I experienced the joy of finding the destined place. Momentarily a thought had crossed my mind earlier: ‘As all the persons have gone away in the vehicle, how shall I be able to reach that “Place”?’ But I arrived at the ordained site.

There was a fragrant and exalting atmosphere indicating that a Yajna (fire-sacrifice) had been just performed inside. And I recollected—yes, yes, this was certainly the spot where Sri Aurobindo had taken me and where He had performed a mighty Yajna. As I reflected thus, Sri Aurobindo’s powerful as well as extremely sweet voice resounded. It brought to me immense Ananda. Sri Aurobindo was chanting Vedic Hymns. Hence I became absolutely sure that He wanted to take me there indeed and had asked me to come.

Then I started going from one hall to another. The halls were of a novel type and inside they were painted with unique and radiant colours. There were no doors, but each time I proceeded as guided from within, instantaneously the way out would open very naturally and from there I would go on to another hall. Thus when I reached a particular hall, I felt it was a place of worship. The spot was enchanting! Its atmosphere is just indescribable. But the inner voice impelled, ‘No, no, I have to go further than this.’

The melodious, powerful and captivating chant of Sri Aurobindo was heard all along and it seemed I would reach Him very soon but it was not happening like that. The chant came closer and closer and yet the halls, each excelling the earlier one in beauty and intensity of atmosphere, kept on coming continuously. They all had an effect on me but I could not comprehend what was going on in me, what was happening. In all these halls, some presence was felt but it was invisible. For a moment a thought came, ‘How fine it would be if one could stay here!’ But it was evident that some unseen Force was guiding me on. I had been under the impression that I was going forward on my own, towards the “Place” indicated by Sri Aurobindo. But a contrary thought arose and I perceived that it was not so. The Unseen Force

was directing me and by this Force alone I was being pulled on and on.

Later I entered into another hall. I was very much charmed by it. Yet I wished to advance further. Here, despite my endeavour, the way out did not open! As I could not come out and as the way did not reveal itself, I felt very uneasy. Then it occurred to me: 'This is only a dream. When I wake up I shall come out of it.' So I tried to rouse myself but could not awake, I smiled and asked myself, 'Where is the cause of this uneasiness?'

The effort to wake myself continued. I experienced uneasiness as well as amusement. There was an awareness of the contradictory states of wakefulness and dream existing simultaneously. I laughed at myself again for this unreal uneasiness. I struggled to arouse myself but was unable to do so. Consequently I felt a great suffocation. Then a godlike strength entered into me. And gathering all my force I exerted myself to wake up. Finally I really woke up.

I then saw myself in yet another hall. It is not possible to give a description of this hall. At that moment it appeared to me that Sri Aurobindo was just behind the hall. I felt relieved! At last, after making me undergo many new experiences, he had brought me to my destination. Now I yearned to be with Him. But the atmosphere of that hall did not allow me to go further. A sort of attraction held me back. Just then a tremendous pull came from somewhere and an invisible Force thrust me forward.

Now there were no more halls. I entered into an open, vast and magnificent expanse. I could see many sites far, far away. Then all of them turned aglow with a resplendent golden light. Just then Sri Aurobindo's chant seemed to me to originate from above but immediately I heard His clear voice in front of me. That was certain. Suddenly a person held my hand and took me forward. The person remained invisible but led me on and on. He had gripped me tight in his clasp, yet the touch of his hand was extremely soft and tender. By this touch, some transparent fluid started circulating in me from top to bottom and from bottom to top and spread everywhere, in each atom of my body. In the beginning, this fluid was of one colour. Then its colour started changing into different colours. But the speed at which the colours interchanged was so tremendous that it surpasses all description. What then can I write on this subject? Finally the golden, transparent, glowing fluid coursed in my entire being and permeated me. When my whole body was completely suffused, it radiated light. Even the limbs started disappearing one after another and no trace remained of the body! Light alone was there. Later, even this perception ceased and there was nothing but boundless Ananda.

My eyes opened.

On 23rd December 1981 morning, as I lay with eyes closed, in beatific contemplation, this beautiful dream-experience was lived.

*(Translated by Sushulaben from the original Gujarati with the help of Kamalaben and Champaklal)*

# AT THE FEET OF THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO

RECOLLECTIONS BY SAHANA

*(Continued from the issue of March 1982)*

14

MYSELF: Mother, my morning-letter was full of self-defence, wasn't it? I am making the same mistake again and again; I am really very sorry for it.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is very good that you see clearly in yourself, it is the first necessary step for the entire change.

MYSELF: What is the use of only seeing in oneself if there is no sincere effort to rise above what one sees? The will, determination and mental strength by virtue of which all kinds of obstacles can be surmounted or what was to be done is done—are not these things needed? My efforts go no further than just giving you my word and resting contented there. What then is the remedy?

SRI AUROBINDO: There is nothing to be discouraged about. The fact is that after having lived so long on the mental and vital plane you have become aware of the physical consciousness, and the physical consciousness in everybody is like that. It is inert, conservative, does not want to move, to change—it clings to its habits (what people call their character) or its habits (habitual movements) cling to it and repeat themselves like a clock working in a persistent mechanical way. When you have cleared your vital somewhat, things go down and stick there. You see, if you have become self-conscious, you put pressure, perhaps, but the physical responds very slowly, hardly at first seems to move at all. The remedy? Aspiration steady and unchanging, patient work, coalescing the psychic in the physical, calling down the light and force into these obscure parts. The light brings the consciousness of what is there; the force has to follow and work on them till they change or disappear. 7.11.32

MYSELF: There is still a strain of discontent. Of course I have to work, the force for it is there, a new ardour, but an inner discontent is flowing on like an undercurrent. Meditation also was not a success the last two or three days. I sit for it all right but float on the surface. Whenever I concentrate to go deep inside, I come out bounding like a spring. This is what is now going on. When I shut my eyes to meditate, the physical mind becomes active and pushes me always to the surface and I feel a kind of heaviness near the forehead, as if some movement were going on there.

Before, I used to have good meditation; what has happened now? I feel very cheerful and enthusiastic when at work, the mind too is quiet. But all the trouble starts with meditation and brings a sort of discomfort. Is it true, Mother, that if one

tries to meditate, the consciousness goes downward? Whatever the truth may be, you know where lies my defect.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is on the surface that the transformation is done. One comes up to the surface with what has been gained in the depth, to change it. It may be you need to go in again and find it difficult to make the movement back quickly. When the whole being becomes plastic you will be able to make whatever movement is needed more quickly. 8.11.32

MYSELF: Mother mine, I have stated one side of the feeling I have with the nervousness or hesitation to confess about my errors etc.; there is another side which is always telling me—why should I be nervous if my errors, my defects or faults are found or pulled out, or why must I feel ashamed if my ordinary nature shows itself to you, when I know you are making me see my ordinary nature in this way for me to become conscious of these things? So then why do I feel sorry? [Here in the margin Sri Aurobindo wrote—“Exactly so,—why?”] On the contrary I should be glad and relieved to see that one by one the defects of my lower external nature are exposing themselves to you to be transformed.

Mother, I am not sure whether this sort of thing may be also a self-consolation for the mistake that is made. I don't know which is the true movement, because there are so many tendencies to deceive myself that I feel like knowing from you which is what.

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course, one must not make a mistake for the purpose of bringing it out or accept the mistake once made; but if it comes, one has to take advantage of it to change. 18.11.32

MYSELF: Mother Divine, I want to understand a point clearly. Kindly make me understand it. Sri Aurobindo has written to me—“a too great stiffness in the effort of the will”—“a too great stiffness” means what exactly?

SRI AUROBINDO: I mean a strong mental coercion on a recalcitrant part of the being—an outer tussle and wrestle to make it obey—that makes it resist more and brings reaction. 22.11.32

MYSELF: Mother mine, how can something be carried out without making an effort with a strong will behind it, and with only the quiet persistent aspiration, as Sri Aurobindo has written? That is to say I have only to go on aspiring—is this what Sri Aurobindo meant for me when a part resists?

SRI AUROBINDO: You have to look at it, reject, and bring a quiet pressure for it to change its will. That is the most important—to bring light and change into the resisting part. 22.11.32

MYSELF: Mother, after informing you, I became conscious about one thing—I could see very well what was working behind the condition. I saw that that force came

to test if I really wanted to be freed from the bondage. A friction with one's relatives is often succeeded by a soft and tender feeling which along with a sense of sympathy or emotional stress covers the consciousness completely; and taking advantage of the occasion and the weakness, the force tries to turn the mind and increase the tenderness towards the old tie. This, I saw, is also one of the tricks of the forces. Please show me if I am anywhere wrong in my perception.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, what you saw about the forces was perfectly correct. You are not exaggerating or deceiving yourself. 8.1.33

MYSELF: Mother mine, I remember that, when we used to go for a drive with you, you told us once that after a meditation we should go behind this ordinary consciousness. I feel I go deep down, but I don't go behind this consciousness. You said it was very important, but then how to do it? I want my meditation to be improved. I feel a beautiful sense of going deep, a quiet, a vastness, a peace etc. I like to remain in that state also, but I don't feel clearly the change of consciousness—going from one place to another—kindly let me know how to go beyond this physical consciousness.

SRI AUROBINDO: Beyond, behind, deep (within) are all the same thing.

MYSELF: I began to try also to go out of this body, and after practising sometimes I began to feel a giddiness. Sri Aurobindo had asked me to stop this practice. May I try it again now?

SRI AUROBINDO: No, very dangerous.

MYSELF: I want to make progress in my meditation, Mother Beloved. I am not satisfied with my meditation, I am eager to get an initiation from you if only I am now capable of it.

SRI AUROBINDO: There is no initiation to give. As you go on, all will open up of itself. It is not necessary to go into trance in order to have all the needed experiences.

21.1.33

MYSELF: I feel such a relief now that I have found in myself the mistake of following the outer methods and cannot but be grateful to you for having made me conscious in time and saved me.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, that is right. Relying on outer methods mainly never succeeds very well. It is only when there is the inner poise that the outer movement is really effective and then comes of itself. 27.1.33

MYSELF: Again the old things are pushing themselves up driving me to anger! And the anger brought the usual result!

SRI AUROBINDO: It is really simply the recurrence of an old habit of the nature. Look at it and see how trifling is the occasion of rising of this anger and its outburst—it becomes more and more causeless and the absurdity of such movements reveals



itself. It will not really be difficult to get rid of it if when it comes you look at it calmly—for it is perfectly possible to stand back, one part of the being observing in a detached equanimity even while the anger rises on the surface, as if it were someone else in your being who had the anger. The difficulty is that you get alarmed, grieved and upset and that makes it easier for the thing to get hold of your mind which it should not do.

Help we are giving you—stand back so as to be able to feel it and not the obsession of these surface movements. 30.1.33

MYSELF: I am doing your work all right but where is the joy of the service? Cheerfulness is gone, there is faith neither in my success nor in divine grace. All empty and void. I am lying listless in an empty house. The flame is out!

SRI AUROBINDO: You must throw all that away. Such depressions can make you shut to what Mother is giving you. There is absolutely no good reason for such an attitude. The existence of difficulties is a known thing in the yoga. That is no reason for questioning the final victory or the effectuality of the Divine Grace. 4.2.33

*(To be continued)*

*(Translated by Nirodbaran from the original Bengali)*

## AN EXPERIENCE ON 29 FEBRUARY 1972

### A LETTER TO THE MOTHER

At meditation this morning I tried to go within, and felt as if I were in the dome of a temple. There was a pale golden light pouring from above, which changed into deeper shades of gold, then rose-pink and orange, as it descended below.

My body was felt as something below. The higher I tried to climb the more intense grew the light. And I felt that something in the head had opened, and there was wideness, peace, and coolness above. I wanted the meditation to go on much longer, and just a few seconds before the gong was sounded I saw a pale gold light turn into a fire with many tongues and rise upward from the heart. Then the gong was sounded, but it took me some time to get into the body and to make it move.

The physical mind was not quite silent, still this experience went on side by side.

Now what is left of the experience is a peace and a cool feeling from the top of my head down to my nose...

May they remain with me!

LALITA

# THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

*(Continued from the issue of March, 1982)*

## The Mother's Message

This is the  
interesting story of  
how a being became  
the Divine Life



9

ON the morning of the 1st April 1956—a Sunday—the Mother kindled a spark of hope within me by writing:

“Bonjour

To my dear little child Huta

With this month’s beginning let us have a new hope for a complete liberation.

“My help, force, love and blessings are always with you.”

My eyes filled with tears of relief.

The Soviet Gymnasts visited the Ashram on the 2nd and 3rd April. They were on tour under the aegis of Rajkumari Sports Coaching Scheme. They stayed in the Ashram at Golconde and gave a very praiseworthy demonstration at the Sports Ground. I saw it.

These Gymnasts were top-ranking—many of them were gold medallists and world-champions.

After the show the Mother’s Message was read out:

“We salute you, brothers, already so far on the way to the physical perfection for which we all aspire here. Be welcome in the Ashram amongst us. We feel sure that today one step more is taken towards the unity of the great human family.”

The Gymnasts responded to the Mother’s Message and their leader gave the answer:

“Dear Friends, on behalf of the delegation allow me to give you hearty greetings. We thank you for the kind welcome which you have given to us here. It was with a feeling of great joy that we accepted the invitation to the Ashram. We have heard about it and we have read about it. We have learned that great attention is paid here to physical education and sports. And yesterday we witnessed your display and we have seen that in this place there are very many gifted people who are so healthy. We hope our visit will contribute to the development of gymnastics and we wish you success in it. Long live the friendship between our peoples!”

After this the team presented to the Mother a beautiful porcelain figure of a typical Russian woman.

This very image the Mother gave me for painting in 1957 when I was learning painting under her direct guidance.

I may quote one interesting event, as far as my memory recalls it. When the Gymnasts were in the Ashram, Khrushchev in Russia had already delivered on the 14th February his startling speech which had exposed Stalin’s tyranny. But it had been done at a secret meeting. The Gymnasts, without knowing it, had come to the Ashram during a new phase in Russia’s history, which culminated in 1961 with Stalin’s body being removed from its mausoleum in Red Square as well as with Stalingrad

becoming Volgograd in the same year. Soon after the Gymnasts had left the Ashram, the report of the new phase reached their ears.

The Mother has on more than one occasion hinted quite pointedly in her talks that Stalin was an Asura incarnated. Hitler, however, was a human being getting possessed by an Asura over and over again and receiving and accepting all kinds of destructive suggestions from him.

The Mother once assumed the form of this Asura during the Second World War and led Hitler to attack Russia and thereby meet his doom. On her way back from this mission, she encountered the real Asura going to Hitler. After what the Mother had done he could not undo anything. He got furious, but he was helpless in front of the Divine.

The Supreme's reach is farther than any devil's.

Political leaders think that they manage the critical turns of History. But, as a matter of fact, it is a much greater hidden Power which intervenes at crucial moments and changes the course of events.

The Divine Force uses whatever instruments it finds. But the results achieved are far beyond the vision and ability of the instruments. The latter tend to take all the credit to themselves. But a detached objective view of History convinces one that a more-than-human agency is at work and consequences are according to its will and not determined by mere human wish and ambition.

How few people realise what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have done in recent History by their powerful action from behind the scenes!

Asuras and hostile beings remind me of Rasputin of Russia, who called himself an occultist and priest but ran 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.

Here I recall one of the comments from *About Savitri*, which the Mother gave on the tape. I recorded it in 1969:

“All the earth life is under the governing shadow of the vital beings. Even the Highest Divinity, when coming upon earth, cannot escape the consequence of this shadow governing all the events of the earth.

“For the life upon earth to become entirely divine, harmonious, happy, painless, these forces and beings of the vital world must be conquered or destroyed, transformed or they must disappear—that is, return to the Nirvana of their Origin.”

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On the 3rd April I received a card from the Mother along with these words:

“This afternoon at 3.45 I shall go to the Stores and meet you there.

“Be there and I shall give you the work that you can do.”

The date 3.4.56 was indeed significant from the occult point of view.

I was happy with the Mother's words. I felt as if sweet tranquillity settled upon the dark uneasiness of my heart.

I opened the Stores and waited for the Mother. As soon as I saw her coming, my spirit leapt to meet hers. With a swift smile she entered the Stores. Dyuman too was there. We inspected together all the rooms, which had been repaired and white-washed. I opened all the cupboards and the Mother looked into them keenly. Her eyes sparkled with pleasure when she saw many idols in one of the cupboards. She said:

“We shall have the ‘Dolls Exhibition’ in November. I want these idols to be exhibited in a temple which will have a separate room—so it will be quite by itself. You will take charge of the temple. Decorate the idols and arrange them in it.”

And she gave a small enchanting laugh. I thought to myself that I would certainly enjoy this work. The Mother looked at me for a second or two and with a happy smile left the Stores leaving a trail of one of her exquisite French perfumes.

The next day—the 4th April—was Sri Aurobindo's arrival day in Pondicherry in 1910. It was my misfortune that I could not have the *Darshan* of the Lord.

Now to decorate the idols I needed a lot of things. I informed the Mother. She answered:

“My dear little child Huta,  
Bonjour

“I have read your letter about the things you need to arrange the idols.

“It seems to me that it will be better if you take them one by one to Golconde, arrange them there and bring them back once ready.

“For the things you require—

“(1) You can ask from Mona to let you choose among things she has (I shall speak to her about it).

“You can take back all the things you had brought along with the idols. These are with Dyuman in the stores (I shall speak to him about it).

“If there are in the stores some little bits of things (gold laces, etc.) that can be useful for the decoration you can also have them. (Dyuman will be informed.)

“I am sending some Brasso for cleaning.

“I am happy you are taking up the work.

“You know that you can come to me in the playground whenever you feel the need of it.

“With my love and blessings.”

I found many things like beads, gold lace and tiny gold jingle bells in the Stores.

I got, from Mona Pinto, gold and silver paper and other things which she was using at Christmas time. I also got from Vasudha many pieces of brocade, silk, satin, velvet, chiffon and other fine fabrics, which had been left over after making dresses for the Mother. Wooden thrones of many shapes, some stands and other things like swans, Vinas and so on in papier-maché, I got made at the Cottage Industries. Now I had an opportunity to spend my pocket money for this purpose also. I was pleased about it. I remember how, a long time ago, when I worshipped Radha and Krishna, I would spend most of the pocket money my mother had given me on gold, ruby and pearl ornaments for my beloved idols. I had always taken great joy in seeing them adorned. Now my work was both exciting and uplifting for me.

One fine morning I brought an idol to Golconde, but failed to recognise it. So I sent it to the Mother to find out from her what the image represented. She replied:

“The idol you sent is Mahalakshmi—you can give her a pale green sari with roses painted on it.”

There! Painting!

A whole new story began with the work of using colours and brushes. Now art and spirituality were to go hand in hand. Actually I knew nothing at all about oil painting; I did not even know how to hold a brush—nor did I have any colour sense.

In my childhood, drawing was one of the subjects taught at school. Happily we were allowed to draw whatever we liked. So I always used to draw, with a pencil, what my elder sister taught me—such as chillies, lady’s fingers, brinjals, mangoes and also a few flowers. Well, I did not go much further than that!

I wondered now whether it was possible for me to do oil painting. I did not have the colours and brushes, so I asked the Mother to give me some and she got me a whole box of them.

In the evening I went to the Mother and asked her many things about the work. She not only told me how to decorate the idols but also explained at length what their symbols and powers were. Here are just a few glimpses of her enlightening statements:

<i>Radha:</i>	Perfect Love of the Divine.
<i>Mahalakshmi:</i>	Kindness and Beauty.
<i>Mahasaraswati:</i>	Integral Perfection.
<i>Maheshwari:</i>	All-Knowledge and Wisdom.
<i>Mahakali:</i>	Power and Generous Love.
<i>Mother Nature:</i>	Mother of the Multitudes.
<i>Mother India:</i>	Spiritual Guru of the World.
<i>Shiva:</i>	The Lord of Transformation.
<i>Vishnu:</i>	Protector of the World.

The Mother asked me to put an aureole of a different shape behind the head of each idol, depending on what it represented. So I cut gold and silver paper into different shapes. The saris of the goddesses had to be of certain colours:

<i>Mahalakshmi:</i>	pink, green and mauve
<i>Mahasaraswati:</i>	white and red
<i>Maheshwari:</i>	royal blue and gold
<i>Mahakali:</i>	red and gold
<i>Radha:</i>	pale blue
<i>The Supreme Mother:</i>	white and gold

I wished to know more about the saree of Mahalakshmi, because now my whole attention was on that idol. I wrote a letter to the Mother. She answered in my letter itself:

“The colours of Mahalakshmi are *pale—pale green*, pink and mauve of a soft colour—the others can be bright.”

First of all I cleaned the idol with tamarind and then with soap and water. Lastly I polished it with the Brasso the Mother had sent to me.

I thought to myself and felt amused: “If the orthodox priests of various temples would see me cleaning the idol in such an odd manner, they would consider me a great sinner!”

It was Sunday, the 8th April. In the morning the Mother sent an attractive card painted with tiny red roses, buds and leaves, with these lines:

“I have this nice painting with me, I am sending it to you so that you can copy the roses only, and you can make them *paler pink* also—like ‘tender love’. You can repeat the motif several times if you like and there is place on the cloth, or put one bud here, and one bud there as you think best.

“Still I have no news of Laljibhai, that is to say I have received no telegram from him. But everything is kept ready to receive them when they come.”

Yes, the family was coming and, along with this news, everything of the ordinary world and of my past came rushing back to me: I saw each and every scene of my old life very vividly as one sees a movie and I shuddered.

The Mother wrote to me:

“With my love and blessings that are always with you to help and protect you.”

Her compassionate words brought me a little solace.

As I have said before, I never felt really at ease in the ordinary world—I always

knew in my innermost heart that I was different. I was lost, bewildered in a world of shadows and sinister actions in which I had played no part, but kept constantly the burning and living aspiration knowing that it alone would lead me to my goal—the Divine.

I was quite the stay-at-home type. My personal contacts especially were disappointing. Many a time I wanted to be absolutely alone and quiet to give my spirit time to grow.

Past griefs and present problems were blurred together in a dark menacing cloud which hung over me, giving me no peace or rest. I was unusually sensitive.

The night grew darker and darker—but still I sat at the window, thinking of the troubles of my inner and outer life and never felt like going to bed. It was long before I was able to regain some measure of composure, and longer still before I could try to unravel the tangle of my thoughts. They raced on in a jumble of fears and doubts that led me nowhere except that one possible solution came to my mind: to quit the Ashram for a while. I wrote to the Mother. Her answer was:

“Indeed your soul is with me, with me for ever, and I wish that your body also should remain with me because the body can be happy only when it is united to the soul.

“It seems to me better not to decide anything in advance,—then there will be no need of your going, even for a short time.

“Meanwhile, learn to remain always sheltered in my loving arms and nothing will be able to affect you.

“With my love and blessings.”

I was relieved a little but it was hard to forget the past.

Now I put all this out of my mind and tried to trace roses and I did some experimental painting on a piece of cloth. I got everything ready to adorn Mahalakshmi. I thought that when the sari was finally painted I would make the rest of her clothes and then the ornaments and the garlands.

Some members of my family had already arrived and my heart leapt with happiness and sank again. I was torn between my goal and my emotional attachments and I was filled with despair. At night, I tossed and turned in my bed, buried my face in my pillow and sobbed bitterly. My people were kind but I wanted to get away from the attachments—I wanted the Divine alone. At last I confessed my feelings to the Mother and she answered:

“Indeed you are very sweet and I fully appreciate your feelings. You can be sure that whatever is done will be done with Grace and divine Compassion and expressing the highest Truth. So, at the end, everything will be all right.

“Be peaceful and confident—my love and blessings are always with you to help and protect you.”



A few days elapsed and now the weather was getting warmer and warmer. Once again I became absorbed in my work. After a great struggle, I eventually finished the painting of the saree and that evening I showed it to the Mother in the Playground. She admired it; then while looking at me intently, she went into a trance for a few seconds. After receiving flowers from her and a kiss on my forehead I went to Golconde.

That night I wrote a letter to the Mother that my mother was terribly upset and worried about what would happen to me in the future as I was so young. As usual, the Mother sent me a card. She had written on it:

“My dear little child, my sweet Huta,

“Yes, your mother is very unhappy and her heart is in sorrow because things are not as she wishes them to be—and she does not know and does not understand that there is only one way to find peace and happiness, it is complete surrender to the Divine, with faith and confidence.

“When she arrived here at distribution one day, she spoke to me for a long time and told me all her sorrows, and she was weeping—I could not tell her anything because I do not speak Gujarati. But if you think it will help her to hear me, you can come with her one day and you will serve as an interpreter. Let me know and I shall fix a day.

“With my love and blessings.”

I conveyed the Mother’s message to my mother who visited me at Golconde. Then I made her sit near me and I returned to my painting—I tried to paint a blue bird—the bird of happiness—on a piece of red silk. After that I went to the Playground to show it to the Mother. Her pleasure was instantly reflected in her smile. She shook my hand and, after a pause, said:

“Child, you have capacity to paint and it is a splendid gift. I also did many paintings and exhibited them in Paris. I love to paint but where is the time?”

And she went into a trance for a few moments. Then after a delightful smile she asked me:

“Will you paint blue birds on my white dress?”

I uttered to myself: “Mon Dieu, mon Dieu! To paint blue birds on her dress!” The Mother must have sensed my perplexity. She said sweetly:

“Don’t worry, I can easily get the design of blue birds traced for you and then you can paint.”

I answered: "Why, Mother, I shall trace them myself. How would you like me to arrange the birds on the dress?"

She explained everything to me and asked me to show her the drawing when it was ready and she would alter it if necessary. She gave me some flowers and embraced me tenderly. Then I departed.

My spirits soared heavenward, only to drop down again. I was nervous lest I should fail to paint the Mother's dress satisfactorily.

I also received on the same day—13.4.1956—the Mother's second letter saying:

"I am seeing your brother on Sunday and I shall do the needful.

"Keep sheltered in my arms—they will protect you against everything. Open to my help, it will never fail you."

At night I tried to concentrate on my painting, but could not do so, because the peace of my mind was shattered. I slept only in snatches and was fully awake before dawn.

The Mother sent me a letter on the 14th with these words:

"This morning at 9 o'clock I shall see you with your mother."

When we arrived in the Meditation Hall upstairs, my mother expressed her love and devotion in many words, which the Mother followed and I was hardly needed as interpreter. But the Mother asked me to tell my mother that she should not worry about me. My mother's eyes were filled with tears of gratitude. Now she was at ease. Then she looked first at me and then at the Mother and made a gesture that she was offering me to her. Lastly, while praying once again to the Mother, tears rolled down her cheeks. The Mother gave her flowers and a blessing packet and soothed her by caressing her hands and her hair. I felt that the Mother worked on her silently to make her more and more quiet and calm.

I remembered the Mother to have sent a pendant of her symbol to my mother in 1955, because my mother had been miserable and had fallen ill.

My mother told me that she hated the sight of sweet corn-maize, because she was worried whether I, who loved it so much, could get it. She also gave away things which I had liked most. She even removed the ornaments she was wearing.

While hearing this from my mother, large drops of tears streamed down my face.

She requested the Mother to let her have a photograph in which the Mother and I would be together so that she could always keep the photograph. Her wish was fulfilled.

In the evening I saw the Mother in the playground. She received me with a broad smile and told me that my mother's forehead was full of ethereal light which Laljibhai and myself had inherited. She also said that my mother's soul went to her every night, and she was full of love and devotion towards the Divine. Then suddenly the Mother went into a trance for a while and said tenderly:

“Child, when your mother said that she was offering you to me, it was a mistake because it is you who have offered yourself willingly and freely to the Divine.

“You see, each and every soul makes decisions for itself and there is no human interference whatever in this matter. Every soul is independent and expresses itself....”

For a second I looked inward and became aware of the truth about human relationships. The people whom I called mine might not have been mine in previous births—neither might they be mine in future births.

I raised my eyes to meet the Mother's which were full of compassion. She gave me a sweet smile and patted my hands. She embraced me lovingly. I experienced the strength of those strong and soothing arms about me, and, in their close embrace, I felt all threats and worries were trivial things; nothing could upset me or harm me while she held me thus.

The same evening Laljibhai also met the Mother as previously arranged by her.

Later in the evening I sat on the seashore with Laljibhai, his wife, their children and my mother.

Laljibhai and I exchanged the talks which we had had with the Mother and all that she had said to us: how the vital beings take possession of some people and make them their prey or by incarnating in them play havoc not only in these people but in other people as well.

When I was in the ordinary world I must have met these types of pernicious beings. But there I was not quite aware of them except that I felt terribly uneasy, sick and miserable in their company.

Usually such beings are exceedingly skilful and sweet. People are dazed by their crafty actions and succumb to their whims, and then get trapped. These beings suck blood till the last and finally throw people away like rags.

From the occult point of view there are varieties of vampires such as Fox-vampires, Rigvedic Panis (robbers of the spiritual wealth), Sex-vampires and so on.

Sri Aurobindo has written in the Cent. Ed. Vol. 23, p. 840:

“The tired feeling which people felt after seeing X is a sign of vampirism, but very often there is no such feeling but there is an after-effect on the whole. The nerves get gradually wrong—what is called the nervous envelope becomes weak or in one way or another the vitality becomes weak or one gets into an abnormal condition—excitable and irritable. There are many such ways in which the effect shows itself. Sex-vampire is a different matter—in sex interchange the normal thing is to give and take, but the sex-vampire eats up the other's vital and gives nothing or very little.”

Sri Aurobindo has also explained on the same page:

“When people mix together there is generally some interchange of vital force which is quite involuntary—Vampirism is a special phenomenon—a person who lives upon the vital of others and flourishes vitally at their expense.”

Sri Aurobindo has affirmed in Cent. Ed. Vol. 23, p. 985:

“Yes. The robbers are as in the Veda vital beings who come to steal away the good condition or else to steal the gains of the sadhana.”

Here in the Ashram the Mother’s Force is so intense and active that even if we are only a little conscious we know all the movements of these types of beings.

*(To be continued)*

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## O AGNI

O AGNI, my guide and friend,  
I offer today unto thy flames  
All that is best to mind’s interest  
That was enslaved by demands of flesh.

I befriended those who hate  
Love and power of thy fiery heart,  
But that is past, with birth of dawn  
The lines are now clearly drawn.

Stand by me, even a little in front  
As I face the forces that obstruct  
My argent aspirations, vanquish the well-wishers  
That confine my prayers with doubt and distrust.

Bring me peace and will constant  
That would remember each instant  
To offer cream of every action.  
O Fire, let thy white flame  
Fetch love and light and power  
That would ever remind us and reveal  
The One who it is that does,  
The One who it is that does.

# APROPOS OF UDAR'S COMMENT

IN THE ISSUE OF DECEMBER 1981

I

## A Letter to a Friendly Critic

I AM sorry Udar's article in *Mother India* has proved so offensive to you. I know it hits hard at places but it does not seem to me more offensive than the extract Udar has quoted from the Introduction to Vol. I of the *Agenda*. Perhaps your reaction is really to what he has said in reply to that extract? As you have singled out this reply, let me first say something about it.

Obviously it is subjective in most part but the provocation is to be understood before one judges it. It is very likely that the "flag" Satprem has mentioned in a derogatory way is metaphorical, but surely he must know that his metaphor happens to answer to a very concrete and significant reality in the Ashram. Possibly you are unaware of the circumstances associated with the Mother's flag. On the Independence Day in 1947, the Mother had her flag hoisted over the building where Sri Aurobindo and she were staying. She said it would fly for 3 days, including August 15. There was an anti-Ashram riot and in it a sadhak was murdered, the sadhak who used to massage Sri Aurobindo's right leg every day. There was even a threat given that the hostile elements would climb up the building and pull the flag down. The Mother refused to take it off until her 3 days would be over. Udar was prominently involved, by the Mother's own orders, in organising the Ashram defence. I was on a visit to the Ashram from Bombay on this occasion. The Mother's flag was the centre of the whole conflict. At that time Golconde too was in great danger of attack: the Mother's flag was flying there also. It still flies and is meant never to be taken down. You should be able to imagine Udar's feelings about it. Besides, doesn't the Mother attach to it in the *Agenda* itself a great symbolic importance?

You consider as "nonsense" Udar's suggestion that there may be a fifth column in the Ashram planning to break up the Samadhi. I do not know anything about breaking up the Samadhi. A friend abroad has been asking that the Samadhi be opened so that one may know whether the Mother's body is really lifeless or is a radiant living presence in spite of the decomposition which was going on while it was lying in state. What put the idea of a plan to break up the Samadhi into Udar's mind was Satprem's reference to "fraternal iconoclasts" who would have "the courage to shatter all effigies". We may think Udar jumped to a wrong conclusion by taking Satprem's menacing words literally. But I am surprised at your implied disbelief in "a fifth column" in the Ashram. The description could well cover certain members. They want the present Trustees—who were appointed by the Mother—to be thrown out and themselves or their supporters installed in their place. They would be very happy if they could persuade—after Nolini has departed—the Government to take over the

Ashram in their interests. They do not disapprove of Satprem's hostility to the Ashram.

Before I published Udar's article I sent for all the relevant documents—the Trustees' letter to Satprem and the letter to him by the Mother's son André telling him that the Mother had explicitly asked André to edit the *Agenda*. Evidently she had confidence in André and not in Satprem. This point brings me to your theme—broached in good faith, I am sure—of people looking at the negative instead of the positive side of Satprem's work. The basic negative side is that he has not attended to the Mother's wish that André should read and judge things. To avoid this wish from being carried out he managed to take charge of the typed copy of the *Agenda* which used to be kept in the Mother's room and towards which she had pointed when giving André her instructions. When the basis is an absolute falsehood, what you call the positive side is bound to be a specious splendour.

No doubt, the Mother's talks are very illuminating—the *Agenda* in itself (minus the parts the Mother would never have published) is a divine gift to the world, but we cannot forget the ambitious and unfaithful hands that are offering it to us—not only with those parts included but also with malicious and misleading footnotes. While benefiting as much as we can from the Mother's wealth of wisdom we must not let ourselves be over-impressed and carried away by the labour which Satprem has spent on it and which you in your innocence want us to profoundly appreciate. Have we not always to look first at the sort of force at work behind a project? Constructive energy on a large scale lay behind both Hitlerism and Stalinism, but even though we may learn something from it we cannot get lost in admiration of it. Of course, Satprem is neither a Hitler nor a Stalin, yet a clear tinge of the totalitarian in him is evident from the intolerant, exclusivist, single-type mentality he has fixed in the group which follows him.

I have observed that people who are not steeped in Sri Aurobindo and the Mother turn against the Ashram on reading the *Agenda*. Even an old-time Swiss sadhika stopped coming to the Ashram for years because of the propagandist spirit which has moulded the *Agenda*. A friend of mine in Holland was also affected with anti-Ashramism by it. I who knew his warm and sincere heart wrote him a clarifying letter and he began to see differently. Apart from this there is the question: "What picture does it present of the Mother?" The Mother, complimentary or critical, spoke from a divine consciousness—and her personal comments were never meant to be carved in "monumental alabaster" for all time. They were made for a purpose and she could say the very opposite the next minute. Even people in the Ashram don't always realise this but people outside who have no feel of the divine consciousness in the Mother are liable to be completely misguided both as to her aim and as to the level of being from which she spoke. While getting a bad opinion of those whom at a particular moment she has criticised they are likely also to see her as a repeatedly grumbling back-biter as well as a sower of discord between people and countries.

Then there is the question of fairness in the editor. On the strength of some

tapes and letters, I have been assured of subtle manipulation and even of certain talks cut out because they were complimentary to a person who has fallen from grace in Satprem's eyes. The spirit behind the *Agenda* is very far from being admirable. That is why Nolini refuses to encourage it and not just because Satprem has not let the Trustees have a hand in it.

It is not my intention to show Satprem as all black. I knew him very well for years, I have known his difficulties and his good points and I am sure the Mother has given him some genuine spiritual experiences. But I am afraid they have gone to his head and have failed to touch with refining fire the outer being, the lower part of him to which the Mother's reference can be traced in the *Agenda* itself. And the *Agenda* has been turned by him into a powerful means of self-aggrandisement and self-advertisement: he uses it to make himself out to be the one and only apostle of the Mother.

Have you seen the folder he or someone inspired by him has prepared to go with the two English volumes of the *Agenda*? It smacks of sensational journalism and tries to focus the limelight on him and to present the Mother not as she was—a real Divine Mother working for the good of her children with deepest love and understanding—but as a kind of super-occultist bent only on one object with the help of her single confidant. Do you know that in a recent interview Satprem has allowed the impression to be made that the sole Yoga of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo and himself is to change the “programming” of the cells and reveal the Supermind in them by a certain inner process? Except for an endeavour to silence the intellect, the vital being and the physical mind, no sadhana is required. It is as if the numberless spiritual experiences which lay behind the final stage of the Mother's sadhana for the world were of no importance and could be bypassed. What Sri Aurobindo called “the one thing needful”—as you may gather from some passages I have published in the December *Mother India*—is completely ignored in the new Gospel *à la* Satprem. To bring out the inmost Psychic Being, the true Soul, to experience the In-dwelling Deity and the immutable Self of selves and the Cosmic Consciousness, to realise the Transcendent Divine, to be filled with the Supreme Peace and Wideness and Illumination and Compassion and Dynamism—all these *sine qua non*s of the Supramental Yoga are never mentioned.

Do you believe it is possible to transform the cells of the body without a long process of psychic and spiritual Yoga? *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis*, *Savitri* and *Letters* seem to have become superfluous just because the Mother towards the last part of her life was concentrating on supramentalising the cellular consciousness. Could she have hoped to succeed if she had not had behind her a plenary life of Yoga answering to all that is said in those books? What Satprem is preaching to his admirers is a mutilation of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother—a path that cannot lead the aspiring soul of the West anywhere near the “Divine Materialism” (to adopt a fine phrase of his own) at which the Mother was at work for the last 15 years of her stay on earth—without, of course, stopping to help us all the time towards the reali-

sations which she herself had compassed and which alone can prepare us for the culminating Cellular Sadhana.

17 December 1981

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### Postscript

I have spoken of Satprem's aim of self-aggrandisement and self-advertisement by means of the Mother's *Agenda*. A note has come to me from an independent party—a keen-eyed disciple—drawing attention to a few points which acutely illustrate this very aim:

Perhaps the most ludicrous of the wild claims made throughout the *Agenda*, and in televised and published interviews given by Satprem, is in Vol. 13, p. 319—it would be in keeping with the psychological theorem that “If a lie is big enough, repeated often enough, it will come to convince the most unbelieving”.

Satprem twists the Mother's remark that her body must have the conviction that “it is useful for something” into meaning that the single conceivable usefulness of the Mother's body was not her unparalleled endeavour to supramentalise the corporeal consciousness but rather its usefulness consisted of the support and succour she afforded to her one and only true disciple, and to deprive her of physical meetings with him meant death.

Footnote assertion, p. 319:

“When Mother's door was closed to us [the editorial ‘we’ he uses throughout] she was being condemned to death. This is the simple truth. But nobody, not a single person, understood or wanted to understand. No-one. Of what were their [her jailors'] hearts made?”

The facts are that André, the Mother's son, who visited her every evening all through her self-imposed seclusion—except for the first few weeks—would have been entirely co-operative in summoning Satprem or anyone else she might ask to see, and so would her doctor and attendants, but she summoned no-one. The picture which Satprem paints of a woman encircled by malevolent and omnipotent conspirators, while Sri Aurobindo stood idly by and heeded not her abject helplessness in their hands, has been actually accepted by a considerable number of otherwise sane individuals in Auroville and abroad.

Perhaps the saddest part of the frequent misleading twists and the contrary-to-fact assertions rampant in the *Agenda* is their effect of denigrating the Mother's stature in the juggler's attempt to glorify his own. One thinks in particular of the heart-rending episode of the Mother's suffering in 1970 (Vol. 10, September) when a small intimate detail is bared which was spoken in deepest confidence at the moment of a desperate plight, the Mother never dreaming that Satprem would put it on a loud-speaker to the world to enhance his own glory while exploiting a



moment's weakness of the Mother at a time of unspeakable stress.

All the falsifications committed in the *Agenda*, both deliberately and/or unwittingly, diminishing and exploiting the Mother will one day fall away and the incalculable value of her experiments and experiences will be available, stripped of the dross of an errant disciple.

The greatest of falsifications is at the end of the 13th volume where the all-but-shouted drift is that the Mother was driven to her death by the Ashramites she had appointed to look after her. It is true that before her retirement she spoke more than once of some expedient she might employ of forcing the issue of physical transformation which did not seem to get solved in a normal progressive manner. She spoke of the possibility of entering into a cataleptic trance and warned against mistaking it for death. But side by side with this possibility she hinted that, if the body failed to endure and hold out, a new attempt in the future would have to be made. What she might actually do in the present life was never precisely announced. A general clue as to whether she would be in a cataleptic trance or had left the body would be the fact of decomposition. She let it be understood that, unless decomposition started, the body was not to be put in the Samadhi-vault. Of course, departure from the body would be contingent on her receiving from her own Supreme Self the word that the venture to transform the body would not succeed in this birth. She had said about her body's future:<sup>1</sup> “(...as if the world put the question) Will it continue or will it get dissolved?... But the body knows that it has been decided, and that it is not to be told to the body. It accepts, it is not impatient, it accepts, it says, ‘It is all right, it is as Thou wilt’...”

What exactly happened on the evening of November 17, 1973? There were unmistakable symptoms of physical distress. The respiration was acutely in trouble. There was no entering into any kind of trance. A life-crisis was evident. And the upshot was as if the Mother had come to know that the work would not be completed and that no point remained in continuing in a body which was suffering intensely under the pressure of the first experiment in supramentalising flesh and blood and bone.

There was not the slightest doubt that the Mother had left her body. The proof of it came soon enough. Small spots of decomposition appeared after a day or so—and then the process increased its speed until the doctors came to the conclusion that the time had arrived for placing the holy and heroic body in the Samadhi.

It is high time a halt was called to the anti-Ashram propaganda whose agitated centre is Satprem—propaganda which can also be termed anti-Mother in the sense that it goes not only against her principal field of work but also against the spirit of Truth, the Truth-Consciousness, which she represented on earth.

3 February 1982

AMAL KIRAN

<sup>1</sup> *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, April 1969, p. 87.

## **“I AM ALWAYS FREE”**

To think of the Mother, to say something to Her, to ask something of Her, or just to meet Her and be with Her was our pastime. It was most enjoyable and a fine occupation for the idle hour. But this pastime became superb sometimes—when the longing arose and the feeling grew ardent and a union and identity came into being. We were then granted a communion, a real spiritual contact and interchange with the Mother. That became truly a memorable occasion. But even a mere turning towards Her was a release, a freedom, a wideness and a height. We were then no more under the embarrassing involvements and confusions of ordinary life.

Those of us, who had long dealings with the Mother or who were under Her dealings as Sadhaks, would spontaneously turn, off and on, to what She said to them, what She gave them, what She silently bestowed on them, the occasions when She smiled, chided, rebuked them and ever and again consoled and encouraged them. Subtle and sublime is the art of spiritual guidance and help. We felt the Mother knew each one of us inside out. And we knew that She watched each one of us continually. We felt we were in Her hands and entirely guided and controlled by Her. This feeling was very enjoyable, even when at times we wanted to withdraw and be ourselves independent and separate. The Mother’s smiles were of many kinds. At times, the smile showed that She knew what was in our minds, but would not say it because we were not prepared for it. This smile had in it a quality of mystery.

Once the Mother chided me in an exceptional measure. She asked why I did this and why that and then why the other thing and so on. At the end, with a smile, which had a quality all its own, She said, “All right, now go and take your lunch, if you can.” This chiding of the Mother I remember specially and I find pleasure in remembering the situation as a whole and rehearsing it within myself again and again. Presumptuousness and self-justification are common ‘virtues’ of the ego-nature. And I had more than my share of them. Oh, how many times I had to be made conscious of them, told about them, repulsed on account of them, left in confusion and ambiguity because of them. These high ‘virtues’ denied me simplicity, straightforwardness, honesty and an easy life as a Sadhak. I can recall endless such occasions, even turn to the Mother’s written remarks bearing on them. At the time of the original situations I was no doubt unhappy, pained, frustrated and all that. But in recollection now they stand out as wonderful. What simplification, ease, relaxation, confidence and joy have they, bit by bit, built up! A Guru is indeed a great thing. He seeks and promotes our good even when we resent it. It is only later that the true and lasting appreciation arises and we feel infinitely, truly infinitely, grateful.

Here one recollection comes to me with a special force and it is the one I failed entirely to understand and appreciate on the original occasion. But it is also the one that lingered on with me long years and which with passing years and growing inner experience I have learned to appreciate, enjoy, adore and admire more and more. In a special situation of perplexity I had gone to the Mother and with my usual pre-

sumptuousness said, "Mother, with complete freedom, please tell me what I should do." She sharply and emphatically, although smiling, said, "I am always free." I felt stunned, almost dazed, perhaps felt sorry that I had asked the Mother to feel free.

Later years of Sadhana and continuous observation of the inner situation have ever and again shown me vividly, acutely, agonisingly that I am not free. Always something swayed and I was carried away by it. Once the Mother gave me a blessings-packet, saying, "That you may not get carried away." With all that help and with a keen inner aspiration, freedom has been very slow to come. And when I get carried away and fail in freedom I recall the Mother's sharp words "I am always free." I wonder what a status of consciousness it must be! How difficult to achieve! But what a joy to feel always free! And as a little freedom became perceptible the appreciation and the adoration of the status increased a hundredfold. The psychic situation ensured the freedom; determination by anything of the physical, the vital and the mental amounted to being carried away. A happy persistence in watching the inner situation led to the identification of the myriad motivations, the practice of 'stand-back' from each of them and the discovery and enjoyment of the psychic freedom. Freedom truly has to be won. The Guru's help makes it possible, yet worthiness has to be earned. But with freedom comes a lot more—the other riches of the spirit.

However, the stunning observation of the Mother, "I am always free," over the decades slowly paved the way for it and continues to show the fuller horizons of the Freedom of the Spirit.

INDRA SEN

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## V. CHIDANANDAM

SHREE Veluri Chidanandam (born 6th August 1901) passed away at his residence at Hyderabad on 12th December 1981. He is survived by his only daughter.

He had a large circle of friends at Pondicherry as well as Hyderabad where he was a popular teacher of English and Mathematics for more than thirty years.

He graduated from the Presidency College, Madras, and stayed for about six months with his brother Chandrasekharam, who was already at Pondicherry in close touch with Sri Aurobindo. During that period Sri Aurobindo used to converse with the disciples in the evenings on various subjects. Veluri Chidanandam who had a very good memory used to go back to his room and record the conversations. He presented the original typescript of these conversations to the Ashram. The record was published in *Mother India* under the title "Sri Aurobindo at Evening Talk".

# ENGLISH: ITS USAGE AND "ABUSAGE" —AND A SIDE-TRACK ON SPIRITUALITY

## A CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from the issue of March 1982)

From Morwenna Donnelly

April 1, 1952

Dear Mr. Sethna,

I feel I must write to you and say how much I like the new format of *Mother India*, and wish it success. There is something ephemeral about the best of newspapers, and I am sure your change to periodical form is an improvement. Good luck to it!

I am ashamed not to have answered your long and interesting letter before this: it lies in a file at my elbow—still waiting patiently for a rather harried pen to attend to it! The truth is, it raised so many arguable and interesting points that I hadn't time to combat when it arrived, that I put it aside to answer at leisure. The result being that I never had the leisure and still haven't! Like Alice in Wonderland I run very hard and things go whizzing by, but I'm always running on the same spot. Of course I didn't mind any of your nice velvet punches, but my hair did rise straight on end and my nose turn a furious purple and every claw stretch itself in battle at being described as an "Englishwoman"!! I am Irish to the marrow, and of Gaelic stock, a Celt in fact, with scarcely any English blood at all. My forebears fought like tigers for Irish independence, and I am a Republican in sympathy in spite of being married to an Englishman. Unless I get to Ireland once a year I begin to droop like a flower out of water!

The whole question of adapted English is a very complex one, and I agree with many of the things you say. I think the adaptations must be unique and creative though, and not sound in any way like 'unpolished' English. The outstanding example of English beautifully moulded by a racial consciousness to which it was a strange tongue, is, of course, Irish speech. The forms in which English is spoken by the simple people in Ireland bears all the marks of having originally been evolved by people thinking in Gaelic and speaking in English. Hence the use of the negative interrogative (used frequently in Gaelic): the avoidance of 'yes' or 'no'—for which there are no equivalents in Gaelic. The verb is always repeated. For instance "An szian i sin? 'Sead'." (Is that a knife? It is.) Phrases like 'Has he drink taken?' 'I wonder what happened him': 'There's come a great grabbing in you lately': 'He went to the window to see would he catch a glimpse of her': 'How much money has she past her in the bank?' 'The trouble's in myself': etc. are all coloured by Gaelic forms and idioms. Modern Irish poets work very much with internal assonance—a poetic technique inherited unconsciously from centuries of Bardic poetry: the oldest vernacular literature in

Western Europe. I don't really know what deductions one can make from what has happened in Irish speech: one can only observe that it is one of the most poetic and original in these islands. If 'Indian English' could evolve in this way, with a really strong individual flavour of the parent tree, then I think something might transpire of individual beauty. It is curious that the 'shape' of your own languages has made so little impress on your speaking of English: perhaps because it has not spread to the uneducated? possibly because you are not so passionately atavistic as the Irish. However, I know that one can't expect one instance to prove any rule—doubtless, in time, English will bear as little resemblance to the languages that have sprung from it, as Spanish, French and Italian do now to another 'root' language, i.e. Latin!

What I meant about swallowing a Master's teaching wholesale is something I could really explain better by talking than in a letter. I do feel there is a danger in being intellectually fascinated by the cosmology of a great thinker: one is apt to bite off great slabs of his reasoning and to regurgitate it without having received it at some deeper level into one's own experience: to use his authority illicitly. A wise man of my acquaintance, talking to a group of Anglican clergymen, said to them "Never talk about anything you have not experienced yourself." That doesn't mean 'that one can't say "Plato says" or "Aurobindo says"! All great Masters have used a Power that was not universally available—for example Christ probably healed through using forces that we are now beginning to study as radionics and ultrasonics. But I feel we should really only prognosticate about them with the utmost caution, and that too much talky-talky about Supermind may become as much a snare as the Second Coming of Christ. The important thing to concentrate on (to me) is the sadhana, which is difficult enough to demand all our energies and thoughts, and to leave the rest to the Divine and the Guru: to try and make oneself a perfect instrument and not trouble about the purpose for which the instrument is going to be used. I have not the shadow of an idea (except intellectually, which is as good as nothing) what Sri Aurobindo means by Supermind, and I find all his references to it as guarded as the Holy Grail. What, to me, is totally important and something within my intellectual and spiritual measure, is the entirely original conception of the life of the spirit he developed, along with the means to achieve it. On that ground I can build my own experience and achieve my own insights into Truth and in their own humble way these will prove infinitely more valuable than trying to crack my muscles striving to justify what Sri Aurobindo meant about the Supramental. It may so easily become dope—Lotus land—detract from the real job. In short, it is better to be able to say "I know—because it is something I have experienced", however trivial the insight may be, than to say "Sri Aurobindo says, or Christ says"—I mean by better, psychologically more valuable, because in the end it is the thing that happens in each one of us that is really vital. Everything else is just an exchange of opinions isn't it—thinking and not knowing?

I've explained all this very badly, but I think you rather missed my point in interpreting my reservations in accepting points of spiritual doctrine quite hopelessly be-

yond the average person's grasp, as a kind of arrogance of sceptical open-mindedness. In fact it seems to me the only possible humility. We accept certain things on trust because the people who have said them are, we believe, animated by the Truth. But at the same time we say 'For me it is still a mystery: What I see by that Light may not be quite the same when my own begins to burn.'

I really must end, otherwise this letter will assume unwarrantable proportions. I am sure that basically we both believe the same thing so it's probably that much spilt ink! Why don't you come to England for another visit—surely it is time if you haven't been here since you were six? You will find us not too materialistic or barbaric as some of our more vociferous voices seem to proclaim!

**From Sri Krishna Prem (Ronald Nixon)**

March 16, 1951

Dear Sethna,

I have just got back from a four months absence and found your letter awaiting me. However, from the date, I don't think you can have been waiting long. As for your problems—seven years trying to speak 'clearly' to students followed by twenty three years in a purely Indian environment have rather damaged my ear for correct English. This winter I met my sister after twenty six years and was told that I spoke with an 'Indian lilt'. However—"forthcoming" as a noun, I have no objection—if 'coming' can be a noun, as in 'second Coming', I see nothing wrong in certain contexts though admittedly unusual for English. On the other hand I do *not* like it in your sentence. Why not 'imminence'? Or even 'likelihood'? I don't think it should be used as you have done. "Understanding a little the supramental light." Personally I feel like putting a comma after 'little' but otherwise can see no objection. The question of 'understanding' is a different one and hardly linguistic. I take it that what you mean is "by contemplating (or considering) these events (or matters) against the background of the supramental light"—or something of that sort. It would not have occurred to me to cavil at 'understanding' unless I were debating or arguing closely when of course it certainly would. "The great illuminating letters etc." sounds to me perfectly alright. I definitely prefer it to the version with 'or' and I shouldn't want the extra 'had's. But I never was a grammarian and, as I say, have perhaps damaged my 'ear' so I can only give my opinion for what it is worth.

The article itself I found very interesting but perhaps too 'explanatory' for my taste, too conscious perhaps of a shock to sympathisers, admirers and even followers, its end too concerned with prospects and possibilities, wills and mayes. I would rather have had my gaze directed through the event to the Eternal. That direction I find pointed out in Mr. Dowsett's poem (printed on the same page). I know that the time-process is supported by the Eternal and is, in fact, its glyph but yet I feel that, at moments of crisis especially, it is from the Eternal and not from future hopes, however well-founded, that must come our strength.

This is not meant as a criticism but as what you asked for, a sincere personal

reaction.

“Past and future veil him from our sight;  
Burn both with fire.” —Jalaluddin Rumi

I would only add that the fire in question is not one which destroys but which transmutes them both in its flames.

**From K. D. Sethna**

March 25, 1951

I thank you very much for your letter. It has blown off the burden under which my mind had lain for several days. I had begun to doubt seriously the instinct of English, which I had thought I had somehow developed. Your opinion here is of great value—though I don't quite understand why you are averse to my using “forthcoming” as a noun in the context where it occurs in my article. I have put into it the very same sense as the usual adjective has: it means in my sentence “likelihood of coming forth” or “approach”. If I must change it I should think first of the word “approach”. Would you advise me to use that word? Mere “likelihood”, as suggested by you, is too abstract. “Imminence” is much better, but isn't there in it a threatening to occur *immediately* or *soon*? I shall appreciate a ruling from you. A postcard will do.

Your interpretation of my “understanding a little the supramental light” is perfect. I couldn't have explained myself better. Perhaps the phrase is too telescoped. Will it be an improvement in any sense to write “understanding a little of what the supramental light means”? I don't mind scrapping my phrase. What was worrying me was only its alleged un-English character.

I feel bucked up no end by your support of my doing away with those two “had”s. It was a stylistic instinct that had guided me—and I hold that even if what I have done is for the first time in English it is something entirely legitimate.

Your “personal reaction” to my article I certainly respect and what you say is very well said and has an important truth in it. Unless we build on the Eternal we build in vain. And perhaps my article may strike many people as not sufficiently stressing the vision of the Eternal through the event. But I believe such an impression would not be quite correct or quite just to my purpose in writing the article. In the very second para I speak of the Eternal that is the essence of every true Yogi's life and that makes the term “death” an absolute misnomer. But the fact is that Sri Aurobindo gave to the time-process a meaning drawn from a reading of the Eternal which, without diminishing the basic value of the Eternal, is revolutionarily new. And unless I see his death in the light of that meaning and bring it into relation with his exceedingly novel work in and on the time-process and therefore naturally concern myself with, among other things, prospects and possibilities, “will”s and “may”s and proceed on a keen sense of the need of explaining what seems to contra-

dict his own ideal and goal—unless I do all this, I may as well not have written my article. I cannot write on the passing of Sri Aurobindo as I might have written on the passing of Ramana Maharshi or Ramakrishna Paramahansa. In writing of them I might principally have directed the reader's gaze through the event to the Eternal; but Sri Aurobindo aimed not only at seizing the Eternal through the time-process but also at grasping the Eternal in the time-process and this not merely by a realisation of *Vāsudeva sarvam* but also by a direct evolution of mind, life and body into a divine state of themselves by a descent of their perfect and immortal truths residing in the consciousness, the force, the substance of the creative Supermind. As an Aurobindonian I couldn't have, on the whole, written another sort of article on the inner significance and consequence of Sri Aurobindo's passing—though I dare say I may have done my job not well enough.

### From Sri Krishna Prem (Ronald Nixon)

I

April 11, 1951

I am afraid I have kept you waiting: I was away at Almora town for some days. Certainly 'imminence' will imply 'soon' though how soon that soon may be will naturally depend on the general scale. Much the same would be true of 'approach'. Incidentally I should not object to 'coming'. Illogical? Perhaps but I have tried it on two other English ears who agreed with me. 'Understanding a little of what the supramental Light means' is doubtless free from all objections but personally I would let the original stand. If one worries too much about such points there is risk of the style becoming uninteresting and of losing all individuality.

As regards your reply to my 'reaction'—I entirely understand, but you did ask for my *personal* one. Nor is it that I believe the manifestation of such a *nirmānakāya* in any sense impossible. But I distinguish (for myself) between faith and belief. I have faith only in the Eternal and that faith supports me. I have only beliefs in the temporal and these beliefs are *supported* by me. Hence my preference for faith at times of crisis.

2

October 11, 1949

Dear Sethna,

Thanks so much for sending me a copy of your *Mother India* with a review of my book. Congratulations on your paper—I particularly liked the article on Kashmir and the one on Gandhiji. Both seemed to me just right. Good luck to you in your venture.

I was so glad to have met you if only for so short a time last year at Pondicherry. Greetings and all good wishes to you and Mrs. Sethna.



August 26, 1950

My dear Sethna,

It has long been on my conscience that I have allowed an, I fear, characteristic mixture of lazyness and busyness to prevent my writing to thank you for the copies of *Mother India* which arrive regularly as well as for the gift of your volume of poems which I greatly appreciated even though I don't feel myself competent to offer intelligent comment on them. But your latest editorial on "Does Russia Mean Peace" is so good that it has pierced right through the central 'sandhi' of the lazy-busy compound and I must write and congratulate you. We always enjoy your editorials but this one in particular is just first class. I wish it would be broadcast to the widest possible public and, more important still, perhaps, injected into the heads of those who rule our destinies. I haven't seen so devastatingly clear an exposé of the situation anywhere else.

Again, the article on nineteenth century physics is also excellent—I think that also is from your pen. Why not follow it up with one on modern physics, that is, if you have the stuff available? There has, it seems to me, been of recent years an attempt to show that the non-materialistic suggestions aren't really valid and this not only by scientists but also philosophers. I read a review in 'Philosophy' in which someone, I think Stebbing or Broad, shot up both Jeans and Eddington pretty badly. And in fact the former in particular may be said to have gone down in flames!

By the way, in a recent number—the previous one in fact—there was a reference in an article not by you which spoke of a secret agreement between Russia and China in which the latter was instructed to reduce its population drastically. I can quite believe it but may I ask the source of the information? Is it quite reliable?—one doesn't want to get caught on propaganda of whatever school of politics.

Another item I liked particularly was your Birthday Letters (in the current number)—especially the second one.

Well, I must send this to the post. I don't know what sort of circulation you have built up but, whatever it is, may it increase.

Congratulations and the best of luck to you.

I hope both you and Mrs. Sethna are keeping fit Warmest regards and greetings to you both.

P.S. By the way, I liked 'The Green Tiger' though I am not sure I know what it means and, as I say, do not consider myself a competent judge of modern poetry.

November 11, 1950

Dear Sethna,

I was so glad to get your article on Relativity Physics which I thought quite first-rate—brilliant in fact. I have been trying to find a copy of a few paragraphs I wrote

on time which might interest you from another angle—but have so far failed to find it.

Yes, it was Stebbing's book (on Jeans and Eddington) that was reviewed in 'Philosophy'—I can't trace the sequence—by Broad. Not that I have any great use for Stebbing!

Excuse the scribble—I am just leaving for Brindaban and wanted to write a few lines first.

Best wishes to you both and may *Mother India* flourish.

( *Concluded* )

## MEMORIES

### From Thomas Hardy

Woman much missed, how you call to me, call to me,  
Saying that now you are not as you were  
When you had changed from the one who was all to me,  
But as at first, when our day was fair.

Can it be that I hear?...  
Never to bid goodbye  
Or to lip me the softest call  
Or utter a wish for a word while I  
Saw morning harden upon the wall,  
Unmoved, unknowing  
That your great going  
Had place that moment, and altered all.  
O you could not know  
That such swift fleeing—  
No soul foreseeing—  
Not even I—would undo me so!

### From Henry King

Sleep on, my Love, in thy cold bed  
Never to be disquieted!...  
And think not much of my delay;  
I am already on the way,  
And follow thee with all the speed  
Desire can make or sorrow breed...  
'Tis true, with shame and grief I yield,  
Thou like the Van first took'st the field,  
And gotten hast the victory  
In this adventuring to die  
Before me, whose more years might crave  
A just precedence in the grave.  
But hark! My pulse like a soft drum  
Beats my approach, tells thee I come;  
And slow howe'er my marches be,  
I shall at last sit down by thee.

## IN-TONES

*(Continued from the issue of March 1982)*

THROUGH my window I see every passing cloud, and I know my moments pass like them, soft and lonely, nursing their sadness in silence.

For the limitless sea they are bound. So too my moments, following one after another, sweep towards the sea of Thy Presence.

There You will break all this variety of form and colour, break them with Your touch and make them Your own.

Then my cloud will be your sky, O Limitless One, eternally beautiful, all-embracing.

\*

'What is my soul?' I asked of You. You led me by the hand, Kind One, over the hills, and there on a hillock you placed me and pointed to the heavens.

The lonely bird circled the clouds and from far away its faint cry trickled to the earth. "That's your soul," You said, "that's your solitary deep soul that none can keep company with except its maker."

Who can that be, O Kind One, but You the creator of the Universe and its deep immeasurable silences. I know it is You who are my fit companion.

\*

Day after day I take up my pen to write my thoughts, to write my songs. Day after day I know You smile at these small endeavours.

Fool that I am to listen to the halting melody of my soul, when before me there is the unwritten music of Your halls. The wind plays it, the flowers dance and the water shivers in delight. Wind, flower and water know Your music in which are hidden a thousand secrets.

Fool that I am to take my pen to listen to my soul wherein I could hear only the shuffling feet of men going to the market.

\*

In the silence of the night I look up at Your stars, and then I am seized with joy, for I know that You are the Master Craftsman, You who are my friend. So deft are Your fingers.

To Your shapes you give light; that is your privilege, O my Master.

My soul knows humility and shame when I place these little pictures of mine before the vast epic of Your stars.

*(To be continued)*

EUGENE D'VAZ

## INDIA FOR THE WORLD, SANSKRIT FOR INDIA

THE world is passing through a time of intense crisis and seems to be groping in the dark for answers. To the clear sighted, however, it is obvious that all the elements of this crisis centre upon a crisis of the inner being. Humanity's groping is a prelude to the emergence of a new life, the advent of a new consciousness. Nothing short of them will redeem us of our problems.

### India's Role

In this situation India has a very special role to play. First, she is to handle the enormous variety of problems which exists within herself. Then she will be able to offer guidance to the world. In the words of The Mother, "*India's true destiny is to be the guru of the world.*" But in order to play that destined role India must first recover herself, recover her true genius. The world has already started looking to India for that SOMETHING which she alone is supposed to have and by which alone a proper orientation for the whole of humanity can be provided, a true perspective developed, and humanity prepare herself for a truly happier future. Spirituality, Yoga, Occult Knowledge are some of these things which people of the world expect from India.

Curiously enough, India at present seems to be overtly trying to imitate the West while some of the most forward-looking people in the West are turning to India for spiritual guidance. This paradoxical situation is undoubtedly a transition-stage which can be seen as a step in the process of India's self-resumption. For she need not reject what the West has to offer while recovering her proper genius to fulfil her role as a spiritual Guide to the earth. We must remember Sri Aurobindo's exhortation, "*India can best develop herself and serve humanity by being herself.*" India's primary need is to regain a clear vision of the law of her being, her *svabhāva*—her spiritual heritage, her unique genius, her true culture—and then from that vision to re-create herself. It is by her all-embracing spirituality that India can best reconstruct herself and help the world.

In the words of The Mother:

"India is a country in which the psychic law can and must reign and the time has come for that here. Besides, this is the only salvation possible for the country... in possession of a unique spiritual heritage "

And Sri Aurobindo affirms:

"India's nature, her mission, the work that she has to do, her part in the earth's destiny, the peculiar power for which she stands is written there in her past history and is perhaps the secret purpose behind her present sufferings and ordeals. A re-shaping of the forms of our spirit will have to take place; but it is

the spirit itself behind past forms that we have to disengage and preserve and to give to it new and powerful thought-significances, culture-values, a new instrumentation, greater figures.” (*The Foundations of Indian Culture*, pp. 34-35)

The terms ‘spirit’ and ‘spirituality’ are often mistaken for an exclusive world-negating principle and a world-shunning pursuit of liberation. But in the words of The Mother, “True spirituality is not to renounce life, but to make life perfect with a Divine Perfection.” And for this re-shaping of the Indian spirit, her true renaissance, we have the clearest possible guidance from Sri Aurobindo:

“The recovery of the old spiritual knowledge and experience in all its splendour, depth and fulness is its first, most essential work; the flowing of this spirituality into new forms of philosophy, literature, arts, science and critical knowledge is the second; an original dealing with modern problems in the light of the Indian spirit and the endeavour to formulate a greater synthesis of a spiritualised society is the third and most difficult. Its success on these three lines will be the measure of its help to the future of humanity.” (*The Foundations of Indian Culture*, p. 409)

### **The Importance of the National Language, Sanskrit**

Such is the need and task of India. We must now turn to the effective measures for the recovery of our spiritual culture. It is here that we shall realise the importance of our native language which alone can best hold and sustain the regenerative power of our spiritual and cultural ideas. For, a language not only communicates; it also preserves and re-creates all the thought-significances, all the psychological richness, all the emotional refinement, all the intellectual attainment, all the aspirational depths, all the moral and aesthetic values and all the spiritual experience of the nation. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

“...each language is the sign and power of the soul of the people which naturally speaks it... Therefore it is of the utmost value to a nation, a human group soul, to preserve its language and to make of it a strong and living cultural instrument. *A nation, race or people which loses its language, cannot live its whole life or its real life.*” (SABCL, Vol. 15, pp. 492-493, italics ours.)

But what precisely is our native tongue? The geography of India and its historical extensions are so vast that a simple answer might not appear easily acceptable. And yet the fact is that in spite of its physical immensity and all the long ages of its history, the unbroken oneness of Indian culture has maintained itself. We must therefore probe into that language which in spite of all the vicissitudes of our *outward* life has throughout been vitally effective in the maintenance of the continuity of our cultural and spiritual life. This language is of course SANSKRIT.

But, it may be objected: "Sanskrit is no more a 'living language'. It is nowhere spoken in India, not even amongst the learned; so how is it valid to deem it practically valuable now, or any longer preservable, whatever its value for the past? We at present have no one language for the country as a whole; there are various regional languages, English somehow works as the link language of the educated; advocacy for Hindi as the prospective national language is unacceptable. However much we may cherish a common and historically justifiable language fit for our national purposes, there is factually no such language and no 'dead language' can now be revived for seven hundred million people."

Should we then conclude that we as Indians neither do have nor can have a common language which would carry to us all an equal power of our Soul's expression? Shall we be left to cherish the truth of our cultural unity without a means of sharing and expressing it? If the foregoing argument is correct, perhaps yes. But is it? We propose here that the above observations are superficial and misleading. A close study of Indian life will show that we continue to have one and the same cultural and spiritual language throughout the country. The diversities characterising our different regional languages are in fact of no essential consequence. The word-stock in the literary, cultural, religious and spiritual language in all the regions of the country is common; the variations are mostly pronounciational. Most of the regional languages are simply outflows of the original Sanskrit. These outflows naturally formed into dialects which eventually were standardised for convenience as languages. And yet in the whole of this process of linguistic democratisation the root-sounds and words, as well as the word-values, are retained and the essential substance of Sanskrit remains intact.

The other remarkable feature—obversely consistent with the process of evolution of regional languages from Sanskrit—is that each step of chastening our current languages naturally leads us towards the original Sanskrit, and the more chaste a regional language, the closer it stands to every other language in the country. Also, the greater the need of finding adequately rich and appropriate expressions in the regional languages, the greater the imperative of falling back upon and drawing from the perennial source of Sanskrit. In addition, the vitality and dynamic creativity within Sanskrit continues working for every language in the country when new words are coined.

One might feel like making an exception to this in respect of the Dravidian tongues like Tamil. But as far as our spiritual culture goes,—and that certainly is our chief concern,—most of the above truths evidently hold. In fact, Sanskrit words and expressions abound equally in all the South Indian languages, sometimes even more chaste than elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

The truth of the matter, therefore, seems to be that Sanskrit not only was but also continues to be *the one common language of India* running through all the regional

<sup>1</sup> It must be noted that the recent attempt to de-Sanskritise Tamil was politically motivated and so quite unnatural and naturally unsuccessful.

languages and, though not spoken by the people, yet most alive to their cultural being. Its vitality is undying. To speak of it as dead is sheer ignorance. It is like refusing to accept the presence of vitality in a plant because it makes no sound. If we wish to see and understand, the truth simply reveals itself to us that Sanskrit *already is our national language*, not of course on the surface but deep in the current of our national life.

### **The Recovery of Sanskrit**

India's self-recovery would then naturally imply the process of recovery of Sanskrit from the undercurrents of our national life. It must obviously operate in our practical lives, providing the true linguistic substance throughout the country. The Mother in Her simple words said:

“It would be ideal if, in a few years, Sanskrit becomes the representative language of India, a Sanskrit made young, that is, a spoken Sanskrit... We find Sanskrit behind all the Indian languages... And it should be that.”

Referring to the essentials of Sanskrit, the advantages of its root-sounds, the Mother added:

“And it is that which ought to be the language of this country which every child born in India must know, just as every child in France must know French.”

Usually, when we speak of Sanskrit, we think of it as a classical language. Thus we create in our minds an awe about the language which makes it to us inaccessible. Believing that only great scholars can learn it, we assume that ordinary students cannot manage with it. The traditional method of teaching Sanskrit has changed little to discourage this unfortunate and unnecessary feeling. The Mother's advice is for the original and basic Sanskrit, the language at the base of all our languages. In a conversation She said, “Not scholarly Sanskrit, but the Sanskrit, a Sanskrit... that may open the door to all the languages of India. I think it is indispensable.”

The importance of Sanskrit for India thus being what it is, we propose a nation-wide programme for learning it. The Government of India already seems to be somewhat aware of the need and has introduced news-bulletins in Sanskrit on All India Radio. The experience of the listeners is quite happy and encouraging. The fact is coming home that Sanskrit is already familiar to us because of its intimate oneness with our own languages. And in schools and colleges there seems to be growing a more favourable disposition towards it. This is particularly true since in this period of internationalism and cultural confluence a basic acquaintance with Indian ideals and spiritual literature is a growing need.

Yet this much is hardly enough. Provisions for learning Sanskrit are extremely poor. The methods of teaching and learning it are still old and dull, especially in the



class-room—full of rote learning and pedagogically most uneconomical. The joy of acquiring this beautiful language is constantly marred by the thoughtless labour which is unnecessarily attached to the teaching-learning process. The load of grammatical rules with which its teaching usually starts only creates disgust in most young minds, and the contents of the beginners' books seldom sustain their interest.

Realising the need of learning Sanskrit, we must generate a new and creative approach to it. Its acquisition should be free from the cumbersome methods of the orthodox pedagogy. We must bring out the ever fresh and living vigour of its word-power from our mother-tongues and move to the original roots in the most natural manner possible. We shall find as we proceed that we are already quite at home with the language, though we did not know this to be the case. As we cease looking upon Sanskrit as an unfamiliar language, we shall move towards it in a spontaneous and enjoyable manner. In a sort of attempt at self-chastening of our own tongues, we shall enter into the process of learning Sanskrit in a way which will become re-creative and rewardingly profitable.

### **Experiments at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education**

A very interesting teaching and learning process has already begun at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry, with the inspiration of the Mother. To the teachers She said, "I should like that here we teach a Sanskrit that is simple, as simple as possible, but not simplified: simple by going back to its origin." The distinction between 'simple' and 'simplified' may seem subtle, but it is clear and important. Because of its rich, thorough and perfect grammar, Sanskrit seems rather complex to many who begin to learn it. Some have suggested simplifying the grammar as a solution to this 'problem'. But this simplification would spoil the whole beauty and grandeur of this wonderful language and would impoverish it by taking away its great power to create new and appropriate expressions from the root words and sounds. The Sanskrit which is simple is Sanskrit in its direct contact with these roots in a natural way. This direct approach to the roots develops an intimacy with the language, an intimacy free from all artificial strains, reservations and complications.

Here at the Centre of Education the process of teaching and learning Sanskrit is even more direct than the so-called 'direct method'. The teachers are as much students as the students themselves: Sanskrit becomes the only medium of communication between them whether in the class-room or the playground or the dining table or the theatre. It is the 'home-method', if method we must call it, in which every child learns his or her mother tongue. Sanskrit is spoken and understood by the students *before* reading and writing starts, as with the mother-tongue. Formal grammar comes last, and that too only if specifically asked for by the students. Mistakes in expressions, inaccuracies and deficiencies in vocabulary or syntax drop off naturally. There is no room for hesitation, and complexes have no ground. Enthusiasm, frank and

unreserved freedom of speech take their place. The creative use of word-games, puzzles and charts, story-telling and the enactment of plays, recitation and songs has made the learning of Sanskrit alive and simple. Children start getting into it as early as at three years old, immediately upon their entry to the Centre of Education. Soon they begin to converse (and shout and play and cry) in Sanskrit; they learn more and more and they learn without the conscious idea of the attempt to learn. All this has been remarkable and the progress continues.

In this process the teachers of Sanskrit here have had to be very creative and exceptionally busy, for, they had no ready-made material to be supplied to the children either for reading or anything else. Children naturally require a constant and proper supply of fresh material in order to stay interested and motivated. In many other languages there is a good deal of children's literature and other aids to be used in educational activities. The materials are prepared by experts who know how to make them attractive and thus children are automatically drawn to the materials offered. But in Sanskrit there is no such material available. So, with enthusiasm and for the joy of it the teachers here have themselves devised all the needed material aids for their students. Illustrated stories, word games, charts, letters and pictures and other aids have been prepared for use by the teachers and students. The development of such aids continues, but children being the angels of activity that they are, the demand for such materials exceeds the supply. It takes, for example, a number of weeks to prepare a small illustrated story book, the writing, sketching, cyclostyling and binding all done by the teachers in all cases. But in the small eager hands they suffice for only a few hours, so the supply runs short. Although dozens of such books have been prepared, they are yet far from being adequate.

There is consistently the need for the development of medium and advanced level material for the older students, material which could as well be used by beginner adults.

Since India must re-create herself with the living inspiration from Sanskrit, the creative work being done at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education deserves to be encouraged, enhanced and shared with others. Once the reading and study material is prepared here, it can go into the hands of children and beginners or more advanced adults throughout the country. We may hope this will be the starting-point of a wider movement.

MAHESHWAR

## APRIL IS HERE

APRIL is the harbinger of Springtime, the season of flowers, sunshine and singing birds. The word April comes from the French *Aperire*, 'to open', and the Latins took it as a contraction of *aperilis*, 'opening'. It opens out long vistas of bygone times and also of future possibilities. April is associated with many events, glorious and inglorious, sad and joyous, mundane and spiritual, historical and legendary.

### A Significant Month

The 1st of April is All Fools' Day, which is the relic of an old festival. The practice of playing harmless tricks on one's friends and neighbours is universal in Christendom. This month is significant in many other ways too. Some of the unforgettable events in the world's history have happened during it. In India, some important major festivals like the Tamil New Year Day and Sri Rama Navami are celebrated in April. Sri Rama Navami is a national festival which commemorates the birth of Sri Ramachandra. The *Rāmāyana* presents to us the most lifelike picture of the civilisation and culture, the political and social life, the religion and thought of ancient India. Its main theme is not that of Ulysean adventures, but of domestic human passions, the stuff of tragedy we find in *King Lear*, *Macbeth* and *Othello*. No wonder a translator of the *Rāmāyana* wrote long ago before India's independence: "I am convinced that India must win her freedom, not by fighting, because Hindus will not resort to violence, and not by politics, for the British are superb at politics, but by Englishmen falling in love with Sita... no one in his senses could believe that a people that could produce such epics [as the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata*] ought to be ruled by others."

### A New-Creator

It was during the memorable month of April in 1875 that Swami Dayananda Saraswati founded the Arya Samaj with the primary object of improving the physical, social and spiritual conditions of India and mankind. He made the Veda lucid. It was he who brought out the idea of the divine Truth and Right in the Veda and convinced the people that the Veda 'is as much a book of divine law as the Hebrew Bible or the Zoroastrian Avesta'. "Among the great company of remarkable figures that will appear to the eye of posterity at the head of the Indian Renaissance, one stands out by himself with peculiar and solitary distinctness, one unique in his type as he is unique in his work.... Dayananda will be honoured as the first discoverer of the right clues to the Vedas. Amidst the chaos and obscurity of old ignorance and age-long misunderstanding his was the eye of direct vision that pierced to the truth and fastened on that which was essential." Such is the tribute Sri Aurobindo pays to Swami Dayananda, 'a very soldier of Light, a warrior in God's world, a formidable

artisan in God's workshop, a puissant renovator and new-creator'.

### **The Amritsar Massacre**

It was again a tragic coincidence that the land of the Punjab, which followed Dayananda's teachings faithfully, had to witness one of the darkest episodes in her long history in the month of April. On the 13th of April, 1919, General Dyer made his troops shoot down thousands of innocent men, women and children at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar, where a peaceful meeting was held to protest against the indignity and horror of martial law in the Punjab. The Amritsar massacre caused a widespread sensation in England and India. Rabindranath Tagore surrendered his knighthood and in his letter to the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, remarked that the time had come "when badges of honour made our shame glaring in their incongruous context of humiliation". Gandhiji also returned the medals he had received for his war work in South Africa and said that he could retain neither respect nor affection for a government that moved from wrong to wrong to defend its own immorality.

### **A Galaxy of Great Men**

Among the great personages born in the month of April are: Charlemagne, King of the Franks and founder of the Holy Roman Empire; Raphael, the Italian Renaissance painter, architect and sculptor; William Shakespeare, the poet and dramatist of England; William Harvey, the English physician and discoverer of the circulation of blood; El Greco, the Spanish painter; Oliver Cromwell, the English general and statesman; Henry Fielding, Anthony Trollope and Charlotte Brönte, the English novelists; David Hume, the Scottish philosopher and historian; Immanuel Kant, the German metaphysician; Edward Gibbon, the English historian; Ricardo, the English economist; William Hazlitt, the English critic; Washington Irving, the American essayist; Hans Christian Anderson, the Danish writer of fairy and folk tales; Herbert Spencer, the English philosopher; A.C. Swinburne, the English poet and critic; Emile Zola, the French novelist; Anatole France, the French novelist and satirist; J. Pulitzer, the founder of Pulitzer Prizes; Benjamin Disraeli, the British statesman; Lenin, the Marxist revolutionist; Marconi, the inventor of Wireless Telegraphy; Adolf Hitler, the Nazi dictator; Queen Elizabeth II of England; Yehudi Menuhin, the renowned violinist.

### **The Sad Music**

In the midst of life death persists. The month of April saw the death of Shakespeare and William Wordsworth, the English poets; San Francisco was destroyed by earthquake and fire in the same month; it was in April again, 1912, that the 'unsinkable' British ship S.S. Titanic struck an iceberg and sank in the North Atlantic.

It was her first and last voyage from Liverpool to New York.

### **The Precursors of a New Age**

To a devotee of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the month of April is doubly significant. The steamer that carried the Seer left Calcutta in the early hours of the morning of April 1, 1910, and arrived at Pondicherry, legendarily known as Vedapurri, on the 4th April. And as though by a Divine Command, the Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram came to Pondicherry on April 24th, 1920, never to leave again. From the 4th of April, 1910, onwards began Sri Aurobindo's great Sadhana of the Supermind, and if Pondicherry is today consecrated soil to the true disciples of the Master and the Mother, it is because the Master said: "Henceforth this is my place of retreat, my cave of tapasya—not of the ascetic kind, but a brand of my own invention."

The great eastern Festival of the Buddha, the Vaisak Festival expressing the keynote of wisdom and divine purpose follows one month after Easter at the time of the Taurus full moon and falls on the 25th of April. It is a fitting conclusion to the eventful month of April.

### **Message of Hope**

All the events that have taken place in the month of April seem to have a special meaning for the world. Let us conclude in the words of Shelley, the English poet, whose strength arose from his consciousness of the highest ideals and the most benevolent intention for a renovated world—a world permeated by Love and animated by Freedom:

"If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?"

In this line lies the message of HOPE. April is the trumpet of prophecy. It is the commander of a new era of freedom and love in a despairing world. The dawn of Satya Yuga is at hand. Its fulfilment is no longer an idle vision. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have brought us LIGHT which will burst forth in its noon-tide effulgence in the days drawing near. When the Divine Splendour radiates from the vastness of the World-Mother's breast,

"The Spirit shall take up the human play,  
This earthly life become the life divine."

G. KRISHNAN

## SOME SHAKESPEAREANA

*April 23 is the day of Shakespeare's birth as well as of his death, with 53 years between the two occasions. Here are a few modern touches to the huge amount of Shakespeareana that has been gathering for over 400 years.*

### A Thrilling Story

WHEN he is only sixteen our young student is obliged to memorize great sections of a story which, if slightly compressed and rephrased, might read like this:

Joe's girl, a gun moll, suspects that he's too soft for the killings he's got to undertake. So the next night she pours liquor into the victim's bodyguards, gets them drunk, takes their guns, gives them to Joe, and tells him to go in and do the killing—which he does. But the next night there is good reason to kill the gang leader's lieutenant, and Joe is so scared that he pays a couple of local boys to do the job with clubs. By this time Joe keeps seeing the lieutenant, probably because he isn't there. His nerves are shot. He decides that if he doesn't kill everybody in his way, they'll kill him. But the mob turns on him, kills him, and cuts his head off to make sure.

There is no sex in this story at all. It is the sort of story that you have read in the newspapers in one form or another, and it will be going on in papers as long as there are men living who do not have what they want, or who do not have what their wives want, which is usually more newsworthy.

I have paraphrased the story just recounted because I wished to conceal its authorship. I think it is a story of violence, a yarn not far removed in many of its features from the very sort of story that has been lambasted all over the four networks.

Nobody knows who wrote this story. Some say Holinshed and some say George Buchanan. It doesn't matter in the least. What does matter is that an alert and busy Englishman stumbled upon it, was fascinated by it, re-wrote it, and called it *Macbeth*.

MAX WYLIE, "*The Case for Radio*"

### A Stumper

I observe a number of letters of protest in the Bombay Press on the subject of the General English paper set for the last Secondary School Certificate examination. I must confess that the following passage from *Lear* in the paraphrase section rather stumped me:

Pray do not mock me:

I am a very foolish fond old man,  
Fourscore and upward, not an hour more or less;  
And to speak plainly  
I fear I am not in my perfect mind;

Methinks I should know you, and know this man;  
 Yet I am doubtful: for I am mainly ignorant  
 What place this is; and all the skill I have  
 Remembers not these garments; nor I know not  
 Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me;  
 For, as I am a man, I think this lady  
 To be my child Cordelia.

It's quite easy in American, however:

Listen! you fellas quit pickin' on me:  
 —a poor silly old codger with one foot in the grave;  
 Yeah! To give you the exact low-down—  
 I'm beginnin' to think I'm real cuckoo;  
 You' n' me should be buddies.  
 But I dunno: I'm a dumbell,  
 What's this joint? For the life of me  
 I can't place these togs. I don't even remember  
 Where I doss'd down last night.  
 You needn't shine your ivories at me;  
 For, sure as I'm a real guy, I think this piece of goods  
 Is my own babe Cordelia.

C. R. M. in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, 1955

### The Bard and Motoring

I like the new tire...excellently	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> , III, 4.
O, how the wheel becomes it!	<i>Hamlet</i> , IV, 5.
To climb steep hills requires a slow pace at first.	<i>Henry VIII</i> , I, 1.
Whence is that knocking?	<i>Macbeth</i> , II, 2.
The battery once again!	<i>Henry V</i> , III, 3.
I'll be horn-mad!	<i>Merry Wives</i> , III, 5.
Will this gear ne'er be mended?	<i>Troilus and Cressida</i> , I, 1.

# “OTHELLO IS THE MOST ROMANTIC OF SHAKESPEARE’S HEROES”

## SOME COMMENTS FOR STUDENTS

THE word “romantic” has never been precisely defined. Like the smile of Mona Lisa it conveys a whole world of suggestion depending upon the vigour of one’s imagination. One is reminded of the lines of Stephen Phillips, quoted by Sri Aurobindo, “And thou art full of whispers and of shadows.”

Yes, “whispers and shadows”, a sense of mystery, strangeness and elusive charm, are the very essence of romanticism. There all are agreed.

In this sense, Othello is decidedly the most romantic of Shakespeare’s characters. We know everything about Hamlet and his antecedents, as we know about Lear and Macbeth and Anthony and Julius Caesar. There is no mystery about them, no whispers or shadows.

But about Othello we know nothing. From where he came, Central Africa or Algeria or Arabia—nothing. How did he, a Moor, come to Venice and reach such high eminence as a general? There are vague hints in his speech of having royal blood in his veins, of having been in Aleppo and Arabia (where he saw the medicinal gums oozing like tears from the trees). Even he seems to have visited India, where he saw a “base Indian” throw away a pearl of great prize. Since the age of seven he has been fighting and the “steely bed of war” has been his couch. He loves his occupation immensely, and when his mind is giving way his saddest thought is: “Othello’s occupation’s gone.”

How at the age of seven did he leave his family? He has visited ‘antres vast and deserts idle’, and the anthropophagi ‘whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders’. He has seen numerous battles, sieges and victories. He has had hairbreadth escapes and was caught and sold in slavery.

A man of royal blood and then a slave, what a chequered life!

Shakespeare has woven a web of romance and mystery round him. It is this romantic aura, this most adventurous past which has charmed Desdemona. Even Brabantio loved him and the Duke and Senate held him in very high esteem.

He has the imagination of a poet, the intrepid spirit of a warrior, the skill of an experienced general, the passion of a Moor and a heart tender as well as noble.

The lines of Iqbal apply to him most aptly:

Dar ishque guncha em keh larzad ze bade subuh  
dar kare zindgi sifte sunge khara em.

“In love we are soft as a bud which quivers even in the gentle morning breeze. But in the battle of life we are hard as granite.”

JAGDISH KHANNA



## THE SOUL

THE Soul is not a stupid boy  
who does not know how things to arrange  
or wantonly breaks his old toy  
to get a new one in exchange.

And what is more, he's always sure  
without consulting sense or mind  
if some delight is genuine, pure,  
if not, where remedy to find.

You cannot touch him nor behold,  
although he's present all the time,  
he'll never be worn out and old  
and helps you readily to climb.

Sometimes he has to cause you pain  
in order not to waste and cling  
to your delusions lost and vain.  
You suffer from his mercy-sting.

When you surrender to his will,  
your life becomes a honey-pot  
which sweetens every bitter pill  
and smoothly runs your living's plot.

Now, you will ask: what can I do  
to call forth this benignant chap?  
Open your heart to the Deep, the True,  
then he will jump into your lap.

URSULA

## O SUN-EYES OF EARTH

THIS is not the echo that comes from the calm of distant hills,  
This is not the sword of truth that flashes in the dust of things  
Will then the universe run its track of songs before the game is up,  
Will then the sleep last for starry dreams to reach the blue welkin?  
Will the stallion of Time race for the Timeless and the Unbridled?  
These are not the fires that burned in the annals of Astronomy,  
These are not the birds that zoomed in skies beyond the horizon's rim,  
These are not the jacarandas that flourished in dense spiritual spaces.  
Then is this the trajectory that consumes the arrow's hissing flight?  
Is this the river of heaven frothing rhythmless in the refractory bed?  
Could these be the winds and tides trampling over the grief of life?  
Are these the streams of Saraswati lost in the subterranean pools?  
Are these the gods like a mountain-rill frittering itself in death's chasm?  
But these were the fields of joy ploughed by the disc of the moon,  
These were the smiles of phlox left in the night-watchman's charge,  
These were the little jewels lit like moments in eternity's dome.  
There is the rapture of golden spring for the unquenched thirst,  
There are the voices invading from the Ineffable's far-off realm.  
And not by watching the witch's mess would be the flowers young,  
And not by donning the charmed robe would be the man divine,  
Then wait for the surge of syllables from the sea of silence,  
Then plunge headlong into the mystery of the glorious Unknown.  
O swift-footed heart of poetry, chase the dawn of irised dew,  
O sun-eyes of earth, seize in your gaze the body of the Word!

R. Y. DESHPANDE

# THE BLESSING AND THE CURSE

## A FOLKTALE FROM PONDICHERRY

MOTHER Earth felt very lonely, for she was created without a companion. Life for her became more and more boring and she grew impatient and restless day after day. She finally decided to ask her creator for a companion.

One day the creator rode in his chariot to meet Mother Earth, just to have a little chat with her. Mother Earth made use of the opportunity to put forth her demand. She requested: "Lord! You do not know what it is to be lonely. Your heavenly abode is full of angels, who are always by your side. But look at me! I have none by my side and it is doubtless an unspeakable torture... Will you please arrange for a companion?"

"Are you lonely?" the creator asked smiling. "Are you not aware of the presence of two kids in your womb? It is a matter of time and you will have two sons, who will look after you. They will be of great comfort and support to you. And you will joyfully spend your time with them."

Happy at heart, she thanked the creator.

Time passed and Mother Earth gave birth to two handsome and lively children. She named the first born SUN and the second MOON.

Now that she had two children to look after, she felt life joyful and worth living. They gave her good company and she didn't in the least feel lonely.

Sun and Moon grew up to be fine lads. Now it was their turn to look after their ageing mother. And so they divided the day into two sessions. The first-born agreed to look after Mother Earth from dawn to dusk and the second from dusk to dawn. They shared their love and affection equally with their mother and Mother Earth too was impartial with her sons.

Pleased very much with the filial gratitude of Sun and Moon, the creator one day invited them to Heaven for a dinner.

Sun and Moon accepted the invitation. But it was Moon who asked the creator: "Lord! If my brother and I go to your place, who'll look after our aged Mother? So..."

"It's simple," interrupted the creator. "Bring your mother with you for the dinner."

As instructed by the creator, Sun and Moon together went to their mother and requested her to accompany them to the abode of the creator. But the aged mother refused saying, "My sons! Both of you go and enjoy yourselves in Heaven. The angels will serve you with dishes of varied tastes and the unforgettable nectar... Do not worry about me. It's after all for a day and I'll look after myself. Go and fulfil the wish of the creator."

But Moon didn't leave her at that. He repeatedly pleaded with her to accompany them. But Mother Earth was not willing, for she was unwell.

Half-heartedly Moon took leave of her and accompanied his brother to Heaven.

The creator welcomed them. Finding that Mother Earth was not with them, he asked what had happened to her. Moon replied that her ailment was the sole cause of her absence from the beatific feast.

The feast began. Many kinds of dishes with varied tastes and countless cups of delicious nectar were served. Sun and Moon, who had never savoured such varieties of food before, ate them to their stomachs' fill. And Moon all the time remembered his mother. The very thought that she would be alone and hungry made him sad.

He pondered for a while and stuffed the nail-cavities of his fingers and toes with samples of food after ascertaining that nobody noticed him. And when the feast was over, Sun and Moon took leave of the creator.

Mother Earth was eagerly awaiting the arrival of her sons, for she was hungry. Because of her ailment, she had been unable to go out and bring fruits and edible vegetables.

Sun came and saw his mother. Beaming with a smile he drummed on his protruding stomach with his fingers and belched to express that the dinner had been satisfactory. He then went to his bed.

Moon understood that Mother Earth was hungry. So he washed a plantain leaf clean and spread it on the floor. He then wiggled his fingers and toes on the leaf and the samples of food stored in the nail-cavities fell and grew into a heap of food.

Mother Earth ate it up and drove away her hunger. Hugging her affectionate Moon she blessed him saying, "My boy! It is you who made me happy today. My heart jumps in joy and so I pray to the creator to bless you with a happy, calm and serene life forever. It is Sun who belched before me, caring little for my stomach burning with hunger. Let him lead a burning and unpleasant life forever and be cursed by everyone."

That is why the sun leads a burning life and the moon a pleasant one.

P. RAJA

## THE MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY GIFT

A FEW days before my birthday in September last, I was reminiscing regarding the events on my earlier birthdays. I remembered vividly the day when I was blessed by a glimpse of the Presence. But that was way back in the year 1975.

I prayed to the Mother, "Why don't you bless me on every birthday of mine?" Then I had a vision at 6-15 a.m. three days before my actual birth-date.

There was a big hall on the ground-floor of a house. A balcony went all around it. The balcony and pillars appeared to have been freshly painted in bright colours. The hall and balcony were packed with people gaily dressed and there was hardly any room for anyone to get in or go out.

I happened to be sitting on a slightly elevated place and could see only the heads of the assembled people.

Just then I saw the Mother—tall, slim and dressed in a cream-coloured gown—coming through the crowd and taking her seat in front of me. She smiled at me and held out a black cat which she placed gently in my lap. I was taken aback for a while; then I murmured to Her, "Since you have chosen to bestow upon me your precious gift I will like it." Then I caressed the pet and held its mouth against my cheek tenderly.

I am grateful to the Mother for her birthday gift.

*N.B.* The Mother and Sri Aurobindo have characterised cat as symbolic of auspiciousness, occult work and indrawn-ness.

D. S. PATHRE