

# MOTHER INDIA

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JANUARY 1985

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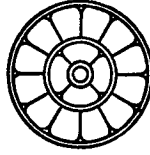
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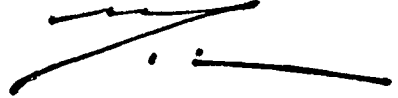


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXXVII

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

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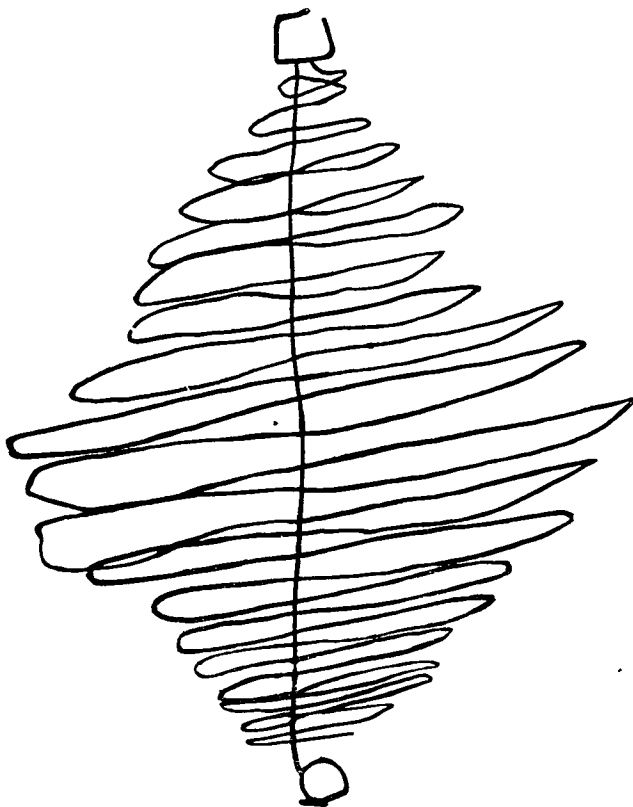
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## WHAT IS YOGA?



*Douce Mère a fait cette esquisse en 1968 pour expliquer à un enfant ce qu'est le yoga. En bas, l'homme. En haut, le Divin. Retrouver son origine, s'unir au Divin est le but de toute la création. Le chemin sinueux est celui de la vie ordinaire, la ligne droite est le chemin du yoga.*

THE Mother made this sketch in 1968 to explain to a child what yoga is. At the bottom, man. At the top, the Divine. To recover its origin, to unite itself with the Divine, is the goal of all creation. The winding path is that of the ordinary life, the straight line is the path of yoga.

# A TALK BY THE MOTHER

TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON JANUARY 27, 1954

This talk is based upon Mother's essay  
"Physical Education."

*Mother, does a person's body-formation express his character?*

No. Even the character itself is not a simple affair, that is, the character of a person is not the expression of his true being but the result of many things. For example, atavism may be expressed, that is, what comes from the father, the mother, from both together which may have a different result; from what has gone before them—the past history, grandfathers, great-grandfathers, etc.; and then from the environment in which people have lived when they were very young and had no independence at all. That has a considerable effect on the character. And this character affects the physical formation. So, just by seeing somebody one cannot quite say what his true nature is. One may describe his tendencies, know his difficulties, his possibilities, but it is only with the growth of the consciousness and as the development becomes voluntary and organised that the body can begin to express the true character of the person.

*And when the body has been deformed by illness?*

That may be an accident, you know. Accidents are due to many things; in fact they are the result of a conflict of the forces in Nature, a conflict between the forces of growth and progress and the forces of destruction. When there is an accident, an accident that has lasting results, it is always the result of a more or less partial victory of the adverse forces, that is, of the forces of disintegration, disorganisation. That is to be seen.

There are teachings, like that of theosophy for instance, which take Karma in an altogether superficial and human sense and tell you: "Oh! You have met with this accident because in a former life you did something bad, so that comes back upon you in the form of an accident." This is not true, not at all true. This is but human justice, it is neither the justice of Nature nor the justice of the Divine.

Naturally the formation of the body is very important in this sense that if, for instance, one is constantly under the influence of a depression, of pessimism, discouragement, a lack of faith and of trust in life, all this enters, so to say, into one's substance, and then some people, when there is the possibility of an accident, never miss it. Every time there is a chance of something happening to them, they catch it, be it an illness or an accident." You have a whole field of observation here—it is always the same people who meet with accidents. Others do the same things, have

as many chances of having an accident, but they are not touched. If you observe their character you will see that the former have a tendency to pessimism and more or less expect something unpleasant to happen to them—and it happens. Or else they are afraid. We know that fear always brings what one fears. If you fear an accident, this acts like a magnet drawing the accident towards you. In this sense, it may be said that it is the result of character. And the same thing holds for illness. There are people who can move about among the sick and in places where there are epidemics and never catch a disease. There are others—it is enough for them to spend an hour with a sick person, they catch the illness. That too depends on what they are within themselves.

*And for children, is it also the same thing?*

One cannot say. It is a moral question. The problem should not be judged from a moral point of view. One should not say that those who always enjoy good health and to whom nothing happens are “good children” and those who meet with accidents and suffer catastrophes are “bad”. That is not correct. For, as I was saying, the logic of Nature is not human logic and its sense of justice (if it has any) is not a human sense. For it there is very little of what we call good and bad. It could rather be said that there is what is constructive and what is destructive, what is progressive and what is retrogressive. That indeed is very important. And then there are those who are luminous, sunny, happy, smiling and those who are gloomy, dull, misanthropic, dissatisfied, who live in grey shadows. It is the latter who catch all the unpleasant things. Those who are radiant (they may be radiant without it being a spiritual radiance, it may be just a radiation of good sense, balance, an inner confidence, the joy of living), those who carry in themselves the joy of living, these are in harmony with Nature and, being in harmony with Nature, generally avoid accidents, they are immune from diseases and their life develops pleasantly as far as it is possible in the world as it is. And now?

*“There is a prevalent belief that brilliant minds are found in weak bodies.”  
I haven’t understood this.*

These were old ideas of the last century. They are no longer in fashion now, but at the end of the last century it was always thought that the more weak and sickly people were, the more brilliant was their mind, the more intelligent they were! Some even explained that the development of their intelligence was due to the fact that they could not draw any joy from their body—for they were quite incapable of living fully, so all their attention was turned to their mind and it was thus that their intelligence had developed. There was even a time when it was the fashion to look a little sickly. Poets, for instance, put on these airs.... An artist, he had to be a little sickly to give the impression that his mind was all afire! But that is now over.

It was finished even before you were born, I believe. It was the romantic age, the end of the last century. Men like Musset, for instance—I don't know if you have ever seen a portrait of Musset, but indeed he had a sentimental and sickly look, and he added to it as much as he could by his dress. It was thought that it gave him an artistic and poetic appearance. But now this is altogether out of fashion. People favour a good physical balance, good health, a strong body and all that is given by the physical training of children.

I read a story by a very well-known French novelist (it was a novel), which was set in prehistoric times, in the Stone Age, when man lived in caves, dressed in animal-skins and hunted in order to eat and in self-defence. Now, it happened that by some sort of accident a child was born lame or at least deformed or humpbacked or something like that. And generally, in those days (so it is narrated, I don't know), malformed children were destroyed for they were an encumbrance. But for some reason or other its mother had hidden it and it had lived. And then this boy who had no means of hunting, for instance, or of doing all the work his companions were doing, had begun to develop his mind and had become the first poet, because he expressed in his words what the others did by their movements. Well, it is just ideas like these which are at the root of this feeling that in order to have a mind one must not have a body, and that the more ill one is, the more intelligent he is! Isn't that quite silly?

It is true that there is a certain independence. I think I spoke to you last time about a French poet called Sully Prudhomme who was dying of a very serious disease—a very painful and grave disease, and it was at this time that he wrote his most beautiful poems and said the most beautiful things to his friends. His mind was quite independent of his body. But still, this is not an absolute rule.

*In children the psychic is always in the front, isn't it?*

Not always. The psychic is more "in front" than later when they grow up and the mind develops, but it can't be said that in all children the psychic may be felt. And one cannot judge from what we have here, for the condition of admission I make when children are brought to me is this: if I see the psychic on the surface I take them, but if they are already veiled by all sorts of deformed activities, I don't take them. So, those whom we have here are an exception. It is the cream. It is a choice.

*But why are there greedy children?*

Oh, good heavens! greedy, that's not a crime! There are greedy children. Perhaps they have a bad digestion and so always want to eat. They don't gain by what they eat. The whole outer being is full of difficulties of all kinds, in everybody—in children also. You could ask me with much more justification: "Why are there such cruel children?" That indeed is one of the most dreadful things.... But it is due to



unconsciousness. It is because they are not even aware that they are making others suffer. And usually, if care is taken to make them understand—for instance, through experience—then they understand. Children who ill-treat animals (there are many of these)—well, that is because they don't even know that animals feel as they do. When they are made to understand that when they pinch animals or pull their hair or beat them it gives them pain, and if necessary when they are shown on their own bodies how it hurts, they don't do it any more!

There are some who are particularly wicked. These are under a perfidious influence. And at times this shows itself from their very infancy and they are like that all through their life, unless they are converted, which is not easy.

There is a sort of association between the physical and the psychic and between the mental and the vital being. A mental being is very often a very vital being. A psychic being is very often a physical being. Children—just because this psychic consciousness is in front in them—live also altogether in their body. But as soon as one begins to develop the mind, the taste for association also develops, with all the deformations that go with it. People who make very strict distinctions between man and woman (I don't know why, for one is as good as the other) say that man is mental and vital and woman physical and psychic. There is some truth in it. But naturally it involves all possible exceptions and complications. These are arbitrary simplifications. In fact the physical being has a simplicity and even a goodwill (which is not always very enlightened, far from it), but still a simplicity and goodwill which put it in a closer relation with the psychic than the passions of the vital or the pretensions of the mind. And it is probably because of that also that in children the psychic can feel more at ease, being less constantly jostled by mental and vital contradictions.

*How can one know whether the psychic being is in front or not?*

Who? Oneself?... It is not felt, no? You don't feel it? I am not speaking of a small child, for it has no means of control and observation, it lacks the capacity of observation. But then, when one is no longer a baby, doesn't one feel it? It doesn't make a difference?... (*The child nods in assent.*) Ah! ... There is not one of you who will dare to tell me that it makes no difference when the psychic is there, when one feels better within oneself, when one is full of light, hope, goodwill, generosity, compassion for the world, and sees life as a field of action, progress, realisation. Doesn't it make a difference from the days when one is bored, grumbling, when everything seems ugly, unpleasant, wicked, when one loves nobody, wants to break everything, gets angry, feels ill at ease, without strength, without energy, without any joy? That makes a difference, doesn't it?

*It may make a difference, but one doesn't understand that the psychic is something else.*

Naturally, if nobody has ever taught you what the psychic or the vital is, you cannot have any notion of the thing. You may say, "Today I feel good, yesterday I did not." Till I was twenty-four I knew nothing about all these things, and yet I could distinguish very well these movements. I did not use these words because no one had taught them to me and I had never read anything, but I felt very clearly the difference at different moments and in what state of consciousness I was.

But you who are here, after all that you have heard and all that you have read and all that I have taught you, you should be conversant with all the movements within you and be able to fix a little label: this is this, that is this other.

Do you know the days you are in good health and the days when you are ill? Physically. Do you know it?

*Physically, yes.*

Physically, quite sure? When you get up in the morning, can you say whether today the balance is good or not?

*It changes from day to day.*

That's true, it changes all the time. Even during the same day. But when you have just got up, when just waking up and beginning your day, do you begin your day always in the same way?

*No.*

Ah! There are days when everything seems to you harmonious, and days when you are as with grinding wheels. Things grate within you, they don't turn round. Well, it is something like that. If you observe it physically, for your body, afterwards you can observe it for your sensations, your feelings (a kind of inner impression), and then you observe your brain, if the head is clear or smoky. Yes?

*Yes.*

So it is the same thing.

*In what part of the being does the power of observation develop?*

I think the power of observation develops in all the parts of the being. You may have a mental power of observation, a vital power of observation, a physical power of observation. When you observe ideas, for instance, the train of ideas, the logic of the ideas, it is not altogether the same power of observation as when you look at a friend doing athletics and see whether he is making his movements correctly or not. That

is, the capacity of attention is there in both cases, but it works in a different field. It can't be said that it is one part of the being observing the others; it is the faculty of observation developing in each part of the being—that is, the faculty of concentration and attention. For the capacity of observation must not be confused with the capacity of discernment. Discernment is an intellectual capacity. Something like a judgment already enters into it, what we call “discrimination”: you can distinguish between the origin of one thing and of another, and the reciprocal value of these things. But that ought to be founded on a correct observation. The power of observation comes first, discernment follows.

*Is there a power of observation in the psychic?*

More than that! There is the capacity for a direct vision of things. It is like a mirror in which all things are reflected, whatever they may be. But that is just what most children, when not deformed, have very clearly, a great sensibility—for example, to the atmosphere of those who approach them. There are children who, without any apparent reason, rush towards one person and run away in horror from another. For you both of them are equally good or not good, you make no difference. But in one instance the child is immediately attracted by the person, and in the other, try as hard as you may, it will weep, it will cry or it will run away, but it will have nothing to do with that person; and all this is a translation, in a consciousness of ignorance, of a psychic phenomenon: the vision of the psychic quality of that person.

*Some people can concentrate very quickly while others can't.*

Perhaps they are born like that, for some reason or other, or perhaps they have practised it even without knowing that they were doing so. Yes, there are children who, even when very young, are very attentive, and others who are always distracted. But that is how the inner constitution of different beings is. There are not two who are the same. Some are born with a great power of attention and there are others who don't have it.

*Can it be increased?*

One can develop it, one can, and there are no limits to the development. And it is even altogether indispensable to develop it.

*(Questions and Answers, Vol. 6, pp. 1-9)*

## TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of December 1984)

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

September 15, 1940

SRI AUROBINDO (*addressing P*): Have you told yesterday's points to Anilbaran? What does he say?

P: I have told him a few as there was not enough time. He is coming round and was especially impressed by the example of the machine.

S: All these questions don't arise if one accepts Nirvana as the goal.

SRI AUROBINDO (*smiling*): Yes.

S: After all the explanations the mystery remains the same.

SRI AUROBINDO: Because Truth is supra-rational, hence it must be mysterious.... Buddha in that way was most logical. He was concerned with how things started and got stuck together and how to unstick them and make oneself free. It is the Upanishad's standpoint—psychological. Shankara bringing in Maya created difficulty.

S: Isn't there some difference between Buddha's and Shankara's ultimate goals?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes. Shankara speaks of the One and the One-in-many. For Buddha there is no ultimate Self of all; each by his own effort attains separate liberation. Radhakrishnan is now trying to prove that Buddhism believes in the Self. But then illogicality will come in.

S: Tibetan Buddhists say that Nirvana is a half-way house.

SRI AUROBINDO: What is beyond?

S: That I didn't find in the book.

SRI AUROBINDO: I met a Muslim sadhak in Calcutta. He said that Islam also has ascending planes of experience of the Divine.

S & P: Maybe a Sufi.

SRI AUROBINDO: Bhaskarananda of Poona spoke to me of the same ascending planes.

(*After some time*) Germany is speaking of invasion of England but again says that invasion is not necessary. Their air-attacks and submarine-blockade will bend the English down. (*Laughing, he added*) They are preparing their people in case the idea of invasion is given up.

P: Yes, it must be that.

SRI AUROBINDO: In the meantime the R.A.F. is battering the French coasts and Germany too.

P: I don't know how far an invasion will be successful.

SRI AUROBINDO: Now it will be difficult. Hitler had his chance after the fall of France. If he had at once attacked then, it would have been difficult for England to resist. Hitler really missed the bus. Now England is equally strong in air and navy. Only on land if they come to grips, it has to be seen what will be the outcome.

P: Hitler will have to pay a heavy toll in an invasion.

SRI AUROBINDO: That he doesn't care about. What he is afraid of is failure.

S: It seems there are 800,000 Italians in Egypt.

SRI AUROBINDO: 800,000?

S: So *The Indian Express* says.

P: It must be 80,000 or so.

SRI AUROBINDO: 8000!

P: The other French colonies are now moving towards De Gaulle.

SRI AUROBINDO: How? (*Laughter*)

P: That is what somebody writes in *The Indian Express* —

S: Can we believe it?

C: That is why he didn't name *The Indian Express* before!

P: No, but they say there is a great tension in Syria.

### *Evening*

S: *The Indian Express* holds the opinion that the Congress should have accepted the Viceroy's extension of Council and then fought for more.

SRI AUROBINDO: That would have been obviously a practical step. A practical politician like Tilak would have done that, accepted half a loaf and fought for the rest. If you don't accept any compromise, then the other alternative would be to prepare for a revolution.

S: Nehru is speaking bitterly against the Government policy and saying that the Congress can't remain in such inactivity for long.

SRI AUROBINDO: He is the Kerensky-type. Any resumption of Satyagraha when England is being threatened with invasion would be serious. Besides, talk of independence is absurd. England won't concede that, especially if after that you declare yourself neutral. When the British Government offered Dominion Status of the Westminster variety —

N: That was as good as independence and, as in the case of Ireland, the British Government could not force them to join the war.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, and Egypt too. Suppose today Hertzog gets a majority and tries to make peace with Hitler, England can't do anything. It can only create a split separating Natal and Cape Town.

N: Nolini Sen is asking whether, after the ego-sense has disappeared, any selective action can remain.

SRI AUROBINDO: After the disappearance of the ego-sense ego-movements remain and they go on, the habitual movements of the old Prakriti, but one is not bound by it as in Ignorance.

S: Two liberated souls won't act in the same way. They will have some selective action.

SRI AUROBINDO: In the old Yogas one used to leave the nature-part to act in its own way, thinking that it would fall off with the falling of the body. They would either allow the Cosmic Force to act on their nature so that the *bhāvas* of *bāla*, *unmatta*, etc., would result, or they would open to the cosmic Force with a controlling influence. Or it would be the nature of their own being that would go on with its movements to exhaust the Karma.

S: Unless after liberation one becomes entirely passive as did Ramakrishna—

SRI AUROBINDO: Even Ramakrishna used to pray: "Give me whatever you like but not lust." So he kept a preference there. Among the saints, there is the egoism of the Bhakta. Besides, one may say that the ego-sense has gone, while in fact it may be there. We have seen a number of cases like that where people have claimed that their egos had disappeared.

N: In the other state, where there is no ego-sense or ego-movement, can't there be selective action still?

S: That is the supramental state; before Supermind it is not possible.

SRI AUROBINDO: One can have a reflection of it. But that is a very difficult state. There the individual becomes as it were a divine personality. He acts and lives in the Divine Presence. There is no longer any selective action.

September 16, 1940

SRI AUROBINDO (*smiling*): England has destroyed 175 German planes.

N: A very big number, as on August 15th.

P: Yes.

C: It was also the 15th yesterday.

P: Anilbaran was asking, "How does the psychic carry its experiences into the next life?"

SRI AUROBINDO: By the various subtle sheaths. After the dissolution of the body these sheaths preserve their experiences and they go to rest in their own planes after which they get dissolved. From these experiences the psychic takes up the essential elements that are necessary for the soul's evolution in the next life. It is the psychic that chooses according to its need from its own inner world. It is not that the psychic takes up an entirely new body, mind, etc., or that it is again the old personality that renews itself. You can see in the case of the Lamas that it is not the same person.

(P gave an instance of how a Dalai Lama—a boy—gave the correct details of a hidden new tea-bowl about which all others had forgotten.)

SRI AUROBINDO: I hear these Lamas die young.

P: About 30-40.

SRI AUROBINDO: When one dies young, one comes back to life quickly and the memory remains fresh; as in that Mathura case. Very often one's desires remain unsatisfied and attachments persist, while in old people desires have to a great extent been worked out.

P: In Tibet they have developed this occult science wonderfully well. (P gave some instances from Madame Neel's book.) They call in some other Lama during somebody's death to help the passage of the soul through the vital world.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is the most dangerous passage. It is this world of which people usually speak when they refer to heaven and hell.

P: By some process the Tibetans are able to awaken some flame in the heart and after that even if one is kept merged in ice it does not affect one at all.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is the *yogāgni*, I suppose. Here only Kanai may be able to do that (*laughter*), but unfortunately we haven't sufficient ice to test it.

P: Instead of himself being merged in ice, we can put ice on him.

### *Evening*

SRI AUROBINDO: The number of aeroplanes is now 185!

P: Yes. It seems two French fleets have passed from the West to the East through Gibraltar. Perhaps they have been allowed by the British to proceed to Indochina!

Tabouis has said that if the Italian navy could be destroyed, it would give a tremendous blow to the Axis.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is my view also. If they could do that, they could separate Africa and occupy the whole of it.

P: She has also said that if the French had attacked the Siegfried Line, they could have broken through it.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is what I thought. Of course they would have had to sacrifice a lot of men, but it wouldn't have been invulnerable as they thought.

N: Nolani Sen is still not clear about the selection of the individual in the supramental state. He says there will be individual centres and asks whether the individual, though he will work according to the truth of his being, won't exercise some selection in the process. As each individual will work according to his own truth, there will be some selective process.

SRI AUROBINDO: In the supramental state there will be individual centres of Cosmic Consciousness. The Supermind will work through the Cosmic in these centres according to the truth of their being.

N: Is the condition of complete egolessness a supramental state?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, when there is the fullness of the supramental state. In the intermediate stages there may be various ways of working.

N: Nolini Sen also speaks of individual truth of being. He says that since there will be various individuals, the truth of each will be different from that of another. So in their manifestation a certain selection will come in.

SRI AUROBINDO: Selection is a wrong word. It does not apply. The Supermind will work in various ways harmoniously for one purpose, without any limitation. In the lower planes there are various possibilities and the ego bound by its limitations selects out of them. If one looks at the supramental state mentally, giving it a mental and vital character, one is likely to make mistakes.

P: One can say it is a specialisation.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not even that. It is a fulfilment.

*(To be continued)*

NIRODBARAN

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## AT HER FEET

HERE ceases the cyclic game,  
 Now gathered in are my senses,  
 I am a golden cocoon.  
 The past weighs no more on my soul,  
 Through the silences I glimpse the goal.  
 The deep-etched grooves of Karma  
 Are cancelled by Thy Grace.  
 Through the luminous cloud-clefts  
 Thy rainbow-arms' embrace  
 Wipes off each lingering shade  
 Of my aeonic pain.  
 Thy beauty infinite in the finite's face  
 Makes my own being a secret whole.  
 Whispers tell me, "Don't hesitate,  
 Advance and dare the ultimate.  
 Wager everything on your faith."  
 And the spheres answer in silver tones.  
 Annulled are the ego's separative zones:  
 To the Immeasurable moves my path.

SHYAMKUMARI



## NOVEMBER 17, 1973

*(Several messages from members of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram were tape-recorded to be replayed at a meeting organised by Mr. Nandalal C. Patel on November 17 last year at Singapore. The message spoken by the Editor of Mother India is given below, with slight revision, at the request of friends who have felt that it had something specially worth remembering.)*

ELEVEN years have elapsed since the Mother passed away. When Sri Aurobindo passed away we had the Mother to throw light on the occasion. With the Mother's departure, there were only the disciples to comment upon it. But they had a valid clue in the Mother's comments on the departure of the Master. For the Mother and Sri Aurobindo stood as equals and both had come with the same divine mission: the manifestation of what they called the Supermind upon our earth, with its culmination in a totally transformed human body.

To go to the heart of the matter I shall draw on the Mother's words to me personally when I read out to her my note on Sri Aurobindo's passing for the readers of our periodical *Mother India*. I am not referring here to my long article which came out in January 1951 and to which she had given her full approval. I am referring to a short piece which was to be published along with a picture of Sri Aurobindo immediately after the event of December 5, 1950. This piece contained the words: "the mortal remains of Sri Aurobindo." At once the Mother stopped me and said: "You can't use the word 'mortal'. There was nothing mortal about Sri Aurobindo." I was taken aback at so sweeping a statement. She followed up with the declaration: "Sri Aurobindo did not go because of physical causes. He had complete control over his body." I asked her: "What happened then?" She replied: "It is quite clear to me but I am not going to tell you anything. You have to find out for yourself." I said: "Yes, Mother, but give me the power to find out." She put her hand on my head to bless me. Then I took my leave.

What has stuck in my mind are her banning of the epithet "mortal" and her denial of physical causes for Sri Aurobindo's leaving us. These gestures make us understand the status of the Supermind and the implication of being Supramental Avatars. The Supermind is a transcendental poise of the Divine: it is above the Cosmic Law and utterly free. It can submit itself to the Cosmic Law but with no such limits as even the Divine puts on himself through that Law by incarnating from a high cosmic plane and not a transcendental one. Whatever the Supramental Divine does is basically his choice—for reasons we may guess in part and are bound to miss in a great measure. How he chooses and how he may vary his choice from time to time depends essentially on the transcendental Truth acting in him—the Truth which he works out with the frontal Avataric personality in the cosmos and the Truth which from beyond the cosmos is his own ultimate guiding Self. This guide may launch its own frontal personality along one line or another, change methods

and even change courses according to the supreme vision of the final good of the Divine's fumbling, stumbling and often grumbling children who yet somehow go rumbling along the evolutionary path.

Light on what took place on November 17, 1973 has to be sought by us in the mysterious exchanges between the Mother's Avatarhood operating amidst her children and the transcendental Self of this Avatarhood beyond our ken. Both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had been set on an integral divinisation of their earthly beings as the starting-point of such an accomplishment in those who had become their disciples and who had aspired to be the pioneers of an ideal world-society. But Sri Aurobindo had always scoffed at conventional ideas about the Avatar's action and its immediate results. Once he wrote to a disciple: "Why should the Divine be tied down to succeed in all his operations? What if failure suits him better and serves better the ultimate purpose? What rigid primitive notions are these about the Divine!"<sup>1</sup> In this connection a line in *Savitri* assures us:

His failure is not failure whom God leads.

What may look like the Avatar's falling short is always, as Sri Aurobindo affirms, what the ultimate purpose finds most helpful in the midst of the world's vicissitudes, in the midst of the myriad entangled forces at play according to the rules laid down for the game.

Yes, both the Mother and Sri Aurobindo have changed the course they had marked out in the beginning: both have left their bodies without the last physical transfiguration crowning the victory that had been won down to their subtle-physical forms. A greater spiritual Light than any before has been established on earth. Why was the finishing touch beyond all dreams left out? Certain statements of the Mother in the years preceding the end of 1973 illuminate the events terminating in her departure.

All the time she was undergoing terrific physical difficulties attending the first experiment of total supramentalisation in human history. Again and again she has asserted that what seemed illnesses were not really such but the sacrificial consequences of the superhuman labour she had accepted. She has also said about her so-called bodily disability: "It is a state... the body does not feel the decline. It is convinced that if tomorrow the Lord wanted it to take up again its activities, it would be able to do so."<sup>2</sup> As with Sri Aurobindo, so too there could be nothing "mortal" about his co-worker and Shakti. The secret of all that happened lay in some words she uttered about the goal to be reached and her body's future: "Will it continue or will it be 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'...."<sup>3</sup> From such an utterance we may conclude that if

<sup>1</sup> *On Yoga II*, Tome One, p. 415.

<sup>2</sup> *Bulletin*, November 1972, "Notes on the Way", p. 87.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, April 1969, p. 87.

her body came to know that the goal was not meant to be reached in our day she would soon get out of it and not suffer unnecessarily or impose hardships on her attendants.

Now observe the trend of events. On November 14, 1973, at night the attendants, while making her walk in her room, saw her swoon as if she might pass away. They laid her down. She took 20 minutes to recover. Naturally they were afraid to repeat the same movement. The Mother, dauntless as ever, wanted to walk once more. The attendants could not respond even though she kept insisting. On the morning of the 15th she was completely quiet, entirely non-insistent. Pranab, when he was recounting the story of the closing days, made the curious remark about this change: "She became absolutely obedient."<sup>1</sup> According to me, this was the clearest sign that at last her body had come to know the decision of her own Supreme Self. There was no point in carrying on further.

She must have made whatever inner preparations were needed. Then on the evening of the 17th she let the troubles which had been harassing her take their crucial turn. Serious respiratory difficulties developed and within a short time she left her body.

But this critical act of hers at the command of her Supreme Self could never mean a giving up of the Supramental Mission. Neither the Mother nor Sri Aurobindo were workers whose will could ever be weakened. The grand aim they had set up could not be put aside. Their hidden influence and help go on and nothing they have done can mean anything except God's mysterious march towards the fulfilment of the glorious vision brought by God's two greatest Avatars for the humanity they loved so much.

6.11.1984

K. D. SETHNA

<sup>1</sup> Supplement to *Mother India*, 5 December 1973, p. 3.

# THE HOUR OF GOD

## APROPOS OF THE ASSASSINATION OF OUR PRIME MINISTER

ON October 31, 1984, the light was snuffed out. But the lamp has to be relit so that the light continues to shine, not only for the sake of the Indian nation but for the spiritual growth of humanity. I quote from Sri Aurobindo: 'There are times in a nation's history when Providence places before it one work, one aim, to which everything else, however high and noble in itself, has to be sacrificed. Such a time has now arrived for our Motherland when nothing is dearer than her service, when everything else is to be directed to that end.' Again: 'The sun of India's destiny would rise and fill all India with its light and overflow India and overflow Asia and overflow the world... They must have the firm faith that India must rise and be great and that... every difficulty, every reverse must help and further their end.' And the Mother says: 'The time has come to govern through union, mutual understanding and collaboration. To choose a collaborator, the value of the man is more important than the party to which he belongs. The greatness of a country does not depend on the victory of a party but on the union of all parties.'

Finally, the note of warning from Sri Aurobindo's famous message "The Hour of God" deserves mention. 'Unhappy is the man or the nation which, when the divine moment arrives, is found sleeping or unprepared to use it, because the lamp has not been kept trimmed for the welcome and the ears are sealed to the call. But thrice woe to them who are strong and ready, yet waste the force or misuse the moment; for them is irreparable loss or great destruction.'

For India the divine moment has been here for sometime. Let us not waste the force or misuse the moment.

H. C. GANGULI

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## PRADYOT KUMAR BHATTACHARYA

On November 22, 1984, at 11:30 p.m., Pradyot Kumar Bhattacharya, one of the Trustees appointed by the Mother in 1972 for the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, passed away at the age of 79 after a heart-attack. He was a highly qualified Engineer with a degree from Glasgow. Before settling in Pondicherry for the Integral Yoga, he had an eminent public career in India. The Mother had extraordinary confidence in him and charged him with various missions to help the Ashram. In a forthcoming issue of our periodical, Nirodbaran who knew him intimately from the time they had both been boys will write on his life and work at some length.

# MY FIRST AND LAST MEETING WITH MRS. INDIRA GANDHI

BY  
HUTA

“Fate is a balance drawn in Destiny’s book.  
Man can accept his fate, he can refuse.  
Even if the One maintains the unseen decree  
He writes thy refusal in thy credit page:  
For doom is not a close, a mystic seal.  
Arisen from the tragic crash of life,  
Arisen from the body’s torture and death,  
The spirit rises mightier by defeat;  
Its godlike wings grow wider with each fall.  
Its splendid failures sum to victory.”

*Savitri*, Bk. 6, C. 2, p. 458

It was impossible for me to believe the news of the sudden departure of the Prime Minister—Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

I was in contact with her for over one and a half years through Nolinida. We used to write to each other.

I recalled the words of Nolinida when he read one of the P.M.’s letters to me:

“Huta, you were lucky with the Mother and you are lucky with the Prime Minister.”

I was fortunate enough to get an invitation from her.

I flew to Delhi on 11th February. On 15th February she went to Moscow to attend the funeral of the President—Mr. Andropov. I wondered whether she would come back and see me on 17th February as scheduled. Quietly I left everything to the Supreme Lord.

On 16th evening her secretary—Mr. Dave—sent the message by telephone that Mrs. Indira Gandhi would see me the next day at 6.30 p.m. at her residence.

This was the first time in my life I had gone to Delhi and it was the first time I was to meet the P.M. I had never seen her physically. She had come to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram several times, though.

I stayed with Tara Jauhar at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Delhi Branch.

It was 17th morning, a Friday.

I told Tara that I would like to take for the P.M. four loaves of bread and brocolies. Tara was very pleased and at once arranged for them. Mrs. Chitra

Rajayshree helped me to pluck beautiful flowers from the Ashram gardens. We both made a lovely bouquet.

In the afternoon my good friend, Mohinidevi, wife of the M.P., C. P. N. Singh, came to the Ashram to assist me in packing the books and other things for me to carry to the P.M.'s house.

Mohinidevi chose a pale-gold silk sari for me. She told me not to wear any perfume. For the P.M. did not fancy it.

I went into the Meditation Hall and prayed to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo to be with me.

Then we set off at 6 for the P.M.'s house. In the car Mohinidevi told me some very interesting things about the P.M.

We reached our destination at 6.15 or so. At the gate we were asked to get down. But Mohinidevi introduced herself to the guards. So we went straight to the porch where I alighted. My friend went back in the car and waited for me outside.

I was taken into a room where there were many chairs. I sat in one of them. I was absolutely blank but poised. Within a few moments two bearers came and greeted me in Hindi and asked me whether I would take tea, coffee or a cold drink. I said: "Nothing, thank you." After a few seconds another bearer came and asked me whether I wanted a heater, because in February Delhi is pretty cold. I said that I didn't need it and thanked him.

Then another bearer came and led me to an adjoining room which was small but very attractive. He told me in Hindi that Madam had already left the office and was on her way home. Then exactly at 6.35 Mrs. Gandhi entered the room. I rose from the sofa. She put her papers and files on a table and came to me. We greeted each other with smiles. I gave the loaves and brocollios. She laughed softly and said: "Oh! but we have plenty of brocollios in our garden."

After that she handed them to a bearer. The door was closed. We were alone.

I offered her a packet of books by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and other souvenirs, and said: "This is for your grandchildren." She gave a broad smile. I handed another packet and told her that it was for her. She received it with thanks.

She asked me to take my seat. I did so. She removed her Kashmiri shawl and folded it neatly with care and put it on a table near her sofa where she sat. I smiled to myself, because her scrupulousness reminded me of our Divine Mother.

Mrs. Gandhi was on my right side, but we were sitting very close. First she looked at the entwined fingers of her hands and then at me. She asked me softly:

"Do you wish to tell me anything?"

I smiled and answered: "No, I have come with good will and I wish to convey the Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's Message of Truth, Love and Peace along with their blessings."

Then I opened a lovely velvet coffee-coloured bag used by the Mother and took out an elegant box in which there were enamel-photographs of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo mounted in silver frames. Also there was a silver locket with the Mother's

and Sri Aurobindo's symbols. I showed them to her, then put them back in the bag and offered them to her. She was very happy and touched it to her forehead with reverence. Once again she thanked me and leaned back in a relaxed manner. I asked her: "Are you tired?" She answered:

"No, I am not tired but worried about the Punjab situation. They are making a lot of trouble and killing many people."

And she became grave.

I asked her: "What about the Assam situation? Is it bad also?" She replied:

"No, it is not so bad. The situation is improving."

Then the talk turned on other subjects. In the course of it she referred to Sukarno and his regime. She also talked about some political matters.

I said that to look after the affairs of the whole of India was a very difficult task. I added that even running a small factory and controlling labourers was not easy.

She smiled and nodded. Then suddenly I told her that Mr. Milton Obote—the President of Uganda—had been our clerk once upon a time in Africa (Kenya) where my father and four brothers had owned a factory. She asked me:

"What factory?"

I said "Sugar factory." She was very much amused.

I said: "If Nolinida had been in his body, he would have been very happy that I have at last met you. But he passed away on 7th February. He was noble and kind. His death is a great loss to the Ashram."

She nodded and said: "Yes".

After that I talked to her about the Falsehood in the world and about the New World of which the Mother had spoken to me. I also told her what the Mother had revealed of the higher worlds in connection with the paintings of *Savitri*. She listened to me attentively and I found her more and more relaxed.

I stole a glance at her printed silk sari and her necklace of beads and I marked also her movements. She did not look her age. She was extremely charming. The most important thing I observed and felt from the occult and spiritual point of view was the soothing and refined vibrations emanating from her and creating an unusual aura around her. The Mother's Presence was constantly there with an overwhelming peace.

I said: "The Mother has given a lot of treasures—her precious documents which need to be well preserved. For, they belong to the whole world." She fully agreed, and affirmed the need, as if she were referring to her own valued possessions.

I did not realise the time. Mrs. Gandhi was very much at ease.

Then I said to her that I must take my leave and thanked her for sparing so much time. I added that I had been praying for her and would do so always. She thanked me again and again.

I got up. She too followed suit and bade me goodbye at the door.

Then the guards led me to the gate where my friend was waiting in her car. She exclaimed:

“Why, Huta, I thought you would come soon. I saw the P.M.’s car entering the house at 6:30. It is half an hour. What did you talk about with her—what did she say?”

I replied: “Oh! Mohini, I am so dazed. I do not know what to say. I am very happy, and I thank you for everything.”

I had not been nervous with the P.M., because she had made me feel at home.

I am not a politician—I could not approach the P.M. from that level, but from my inner being I found her a noble and an aristocratic person. I also felt that in her heart of hearts she loved true spirituality.

After I came back, I wrote her a thankful letter and also sent Messages to her which had been distributed in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram on the occasion of the Mother’s birthday and the eighth leap-year Anniversary of the Supramental Manifestation. The P.M. appreciated the gesture.

The last letter Mrs. Indira Gandhi wrote to me is reproduced in facsimile on the opposite page. In answer to her I wrote back:

29-9-84

“God gives Himself to His whole creation; no  
one religion holds the monopoly of His Grace.”

SRI AUROBINDO

My dear Indiraji,

Greetings.

Thank you so much for your letter dated 21-9-84.

I am pleased to learn that you have received all my letters.

You have endless work to do and countless things to attend to. How can you realise you haven’t written to me since June?

I do understand your situation and do not expect you to answer each and every letter of mine. Nevertheless, an occasional letter from you will make me very happy.

You wrote: “...But what has taken its place is narrowing of concepts, revivalism and fundamentalism. Things should change, but how?”

The Mother has written in one of her books:

“It is only when people truly want their consciousness to be changed that their actions also can be changed.

“The conditions under which men live upon earth are the result of their state of consciousness. To seek to change the conditions without changing the consciousness is a vain chimera.”

I have understood directly from the Mother and the books of Sri Aurobindo that now we have entered a New Age—the Age of a New Consciousness. The New Consciousness manifested upon earth on 1 January 1969. The Mother called It “The





PRIME MINISTER  
INDIA

New Delhi  
September 21, 1984

Dear Hule

I did not realise that I had not written to you since June. Yes, I have been receiving your letters.

You write that the period of religion is over. But what has taken its place is narrowing of concepts, revivalism and fundamentalism.

Things should change, but how?

Yours sincerely,

(Indira Gandhi)

Superman Consciousness.” We must try to live That.

The whole world cannot be changed in a trice. But if each one of us tries to change our consciousness, then eventually the great Vision of the Supreme Lord will be fulfilled one day.

“A spirit was there that sought for its own deep self,  
Yet was content with fragments pushed in front  
And parts of living that belied the whole  
But, pieced together, might one day be true.”

From the occult point of view now the whole world is under the shadow of the governing force of a non-human being from the Vital World—the World of the Life-Force behind the world of Matter. The Mother calls this horrible being “The Lord of Falsehood—the Lord of Nations”, because he tries his best to lead Nations as if he were their Master. He plays havoc in the world—especially in the Assemblies where the serious and important decisions are taken for the worlds’ welfare. He overthrows creative and beautiful plans. He is pernicious. His emanations take possession of human minds—like Hitler, Stalin and others who have disruptive motives and want to regiment mankind.

I am enclosing a copy of one of my paintings from the book *About Savitri* with a comment of the Mother on a passage in *Savitri*. I have painted this picture according to her explanation.

The present world is not at all a pleasant one. It is terribly obstinate and obscure. Money, Power and Sex are prominent—and these are the cause of all troubles and catastrophes and what not....

Sri Aurobindo has written in *Savitri*:

“Only were safe who kept God in their hearts.”

When the Mother and I took up the new work of *About Savitri* after the work of *Meditations on Savitri*, she made comments which I tape-recorded. One of the explanations, which was her last comment, ran:

“This is the world as it seems to the eyes of an ignorant vanity that lives without knowing, sees without understanding and is cut off from its ORIGIN.

The ‘WHY’ of all this is hidden and unless it is discovered and lived consciously, life will always be an incoherent horror.

But we are here to discover, to know and to live, and we can bear the horror with the certitude that the Light, the Knowledge and the Purpose will be one day manifested.

With patience and firmness and quiet assurance we must go on, we must

endure and we must realise.”

With kindest thoughts and affection always  
in the Mother's Truth

Yours sincerely,  
Huta

The death of Mrs. Gandhi shocked me terribly. I felt my heart heavy. I could not weep. My whole being became numb.

I saw her last journey on the T.V. Tears were frozen in my eyes.

I will never forget her. My concern is and will always be what the Mother did in her and through her.

I remember the Mother saying to me in 1967 that she was hoping to get Indira to lay the foundation-stone of the Matrimandir. The Mother had a beaming look and a broad smile when she said this. She loved Mrs. Gandhi.

The Mother's wish about the Matrimandir remained unfulfilled.

As a matter of fact, nobody can ever fathom the Divine's plan—His ways and His actions.

What has happened to Mrs. Gandhi is a part of what happens always to great souls who come upon earth to lead mankind. They are treated with sheer unkindness and incomprehension.

Sri Aurobindo has written in *Savitri*:

“Death's grip can break our bodies not our souls.”

We see how things change in the world. But one thing never changes or diminishes: The Supreme Truth and Love.

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# THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

*(Continued from the issue of December 1984)*

## The Mother's Message

This is the  
interesting story of  
how a being succeeded  
to Divine Life



(41)

OCTOBER 12th 1957. The Mother sent me a card showing a statue of Buddha—seated, with a big gloriole which is between two flying siddhas—preaching his first sermon. Below the throne, a number of persons are reverencing the Wheel of the Law. The statue is of the fifth century (Gupta period); white sandstone; height

5<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> feet; excavated at Sarnath; now in the Museum at Sarnath.

The Mother had written beneath the card:

“To my dear little child Huta,  
This message of hope and love for all.  
With my love and strength and sweet compassion.”

The Mother meant, by “This message of hope and love for all”, the Buddha’s First Sermon. I found the reference in these passages in *Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology*, Paul Hamlyn, Introduction by Robert Graves, pp. 367, 368:

So the first preaching took place at Benares, in the Gazelles’ Park. According to the texts, the Buddha in his first sermon ‘set in motion the Wheel of the Law (Dharma Sakrapravartana).’ The Master’s first message indicated at the outset the tone of primitive Buddhist doctrine: lucidity, moderation, charity.

‘There are two extremes, O monks, which must be avoided. One is a life of pleasure, which is base and ignoble, contrary to the spirit, unworthy, vain. The other is a life of self-maceration, which is dreary, unworthy, vain. The Perfect, O monks, kept aloof from these two extremes and discovered the middle path which leads to rest, to knowledge, to enlightenment and nirvana... Here, O monks, is the truth about pain. Birth, old age, sickness, death, separation from what we love, are pain. The origin of pain is the thirst for pleasure, the thirst for existence, the thirst for change. And here is the truth about the suppression of pain—the extinction of that thirst through the annihilation of desire.’

And again: ‘I am come to fill the ignorant with knowledge. Alms-giving, knowledge, and virtue are goods which cannot be wasted. To do a little good is better than to accomplish difficult works... The perfect man is nothing if he does not diffuse benefits on creatures, if he does not console the lonely... My doctrine is a doctrine of mercy... The way of salvation is open to all... Destroy your passions as an elephant throws down a hut built of reeds, but know that a man deceives himself if he thinks he can escape his passions by taking refuge in hermitages. The only remedy for evil is healthy reality.’

Thus began a wandering mission which lasted forty-four years. Buddha went up and down the land, followed by his disciples; converting all who heard him. Many episodes of this long ministration have been popularised in art or in legends.

Buddha always put stress on Nirvana. Sri Aurobindo has written about it in the Cent. Ed., Vol. 22, p. 67:

“Nirvana cannot be at once the ending of the Path with nothing beyond to explore and yet only a rest house or rather the beginning of the Higher Path with everything still to explore.... The reconciliation would be that it is the end of the

lower Path through the lower Nature and the beginning of the Higher Evolution. In that case it would accord exactly with the teaching of our yoga.”

\*

I was very busy in the Mother's private Stores, because she wished to exhibit her rare collections of Indian handicrafts and other beautiful objects at the Exhibition Hall on 24th November 1957. I had been cleaning them minutely and carefully.

Seven days passed. More and more I was engrossed in my work.

A card depicting the most entrancing panorama, an exquisite landscape, came from the Mother on the 20th. She had written on it:

“To my dear little child Huta.

As clouds cover the sun, so the illusion hides the Divinity. When the clouds recede, the sun becomes visible; even so when the illusion is dissipated, the Eternal can be seen. (Ramakrishna)

“With all my love, strength and sweet compassion—always.”

In the evening the Mother saw me before her Translation Class. She tilted up my chin gently and looked fully into my eyes. I beheld her extraordinary blue-grey eyes with a strange brilliance like moonlight. She smiled at me with loving eyes and spoke:

“One must put a strong will that one ought to do this or that. One must have a strong will to cure and get rid of all falsehood. As a matter of fact, each one is the creator of his own misery and happiness.”

She plunged into a trance for a few seconds. Upon opening her eyes she smiled and said:

“One must have a strong will in order to achieve something. For example, whenever I wished to do something, I usually consulted my grandmother, who lived near Paris—in the countryside. Sometime in 1907 I expressed my wish to her to go to Algeria to learn occultism. First of all she refused strongly, because she thought that young women must not go to foreign countries without an escort, and as for occultism she was baffled. But I was determined to go. Then suddenly I took her hands into mine and started reading her palms. I told her all about her past, present and future. She was amazed. I also convinced her of certain things regarding occultism which impressed her immensely. Then not only did she permit me to go but gave me a bag-full of money.”

She laughed tenderly and added:

“So, my child, in each and every thing a strong will is needed.”

During that time the Mother painted a portrait of her grandmother.

The Mother met Théon through a person named Themanlys who was a friend of the Mother’s brother Mattéo Alfassa.

She practised occultism with Théon and his wife Alma in Algeria for two years in a row: 1907 and 1908. During 1908 she painted a portrait of Théon. She also painted his house in the same year.

The Mother had countless experiences in occultism both blissful and harrowing. That very night I pondered over those words in her talk to me:

“...each one is the creator of his own misery and happiness.”

But that did not stop the awful aching feeling inside me or relieve the tension that was tying me up in knots. The psychological struggle and the constant strife between two Forces never let me decide firmly which way I should march towards my true destination. Hence there was uncertainty in my life. Things were changing too fast for me to keep up with. Nevertheless, it was true that one formed one’s own troubles.

This now leads me to quote from *The Light of Asia* by Edwin Arnold:

“Pray not! the Darkness will not brighten! Ask  
Nought from the Silence, for it cannot speak!  
Vex not your mournful minds with pious pains!  
Ah! Brothers, Sisters! seek

Nought from the helpless gods by gifts and hymns,  
Nor bribe with blood, nor feed with fruits and cakes;  
Within yourselves deliverance must be sought;  
Each man his prison makes.”

Narada speaks rightly in Sri Aurobindo’s *Savitri—The Book of Fate*:

“O mortal who complainst of death and fate,  
Accuse none of the harms thyself hast called;  
This troubled world thou hast chosen for thy home,  
Thou art thyself the author of thy pain.”

\*

On Friday morning a card illustrating a bouquet of flowers came from the Mother accompanied by these words:

“A bad thought is the most dangerous of thieves.” (Buddhist Scripture)

“To my dear little child Huta

With all my love, strength and sweet compassion always.”

In the evening the Mother and I had a quiet meditation.

Despite her unfailing Grace and Love, I felt sick at heart and disgusted with my state of consciousness. When I was terribly angry, I did outrageous things.

My emotional being became restless and sleep eluded my eyes for long. I thought that I was good for nothing—I was wasting my time—my soul’s aspiration for Realisation came to nought. Then what was I living for? Then I dozed off a little.

When I got up it was already late. I missed the Balcony Darshan. But I did not regret it, because I felt my heart dry and unfeeling.

The Mother unceasingly sent me a card with her perpetual personal words to me. Now a card showing Kali came. Her quotation on it was:

“Let not worldly thoughts and anxieties trouble your mind.” (Ramakrishna)

At 10 a. m. on the Kali puja day, she came down from her apartment to the Meditation Hall downstairs to distribute a Message. The Message was in the form of a folder. On the left side there was a packet containing the petals of Pomegranate—The Divine’s Love—and on the right these lines from Sri Aurobindo:

“Vain, they have said, is the anguish of man and his labour diurnal,  
Vainly his caravans cross through the desert of Time to the Eternal.  
Thick and persistent the Night confronts all his luminous longings,  
Dark is Death’s sickle that mows like harvest his hosts and his throngings.  
Even if all life has failed, must it therefore be failure for ever?  
Are not the ages before us still for a greater endeavour?  
Have we not Beauty around in a dangerous world enthralling,  
Courage inciting our steps and Thoughts to infinity calling?”

In the evening the Mother received me cordially. I sat near her feet. She looked at me for the space of a second or two, and while holding my hands she merged into a deep contemplation. She opened her eyes, and said:

“When you are outwardly weak, that is to say when your vital is weak, you always like thunder, fights and furious things. On the contrary, if you have a strong vital, you like sweetness and tenderness. To keep the balance, these opposite natures are quite necessary.

It certainly takes time to be absolutely perfect.



Sometimes the same nature has opposite movements.

In France, there was a king who was very cruel and unkind to others, while he loved his white kitten very dearly—more than himself. He never hesitated to kill people and shed their blood. But, if something happened to his kitten, he started shedding tears.”

I read in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Edition 1963, about this king Louis XI (1423-1483):

King of France, the son of Charles VII.

Louis XI prepared a plot to kill the king (Charles VII) and his minister Pierre de Brézé. The plot was revealed to Charles, who banished his son to Dauphiné (1447). Louis never saw his father again.

Louis dismissed the governor of Dauphiné and settled the boundaries between it and the territories of the Duke of Savoy and of the Papacy; and he enforced his authority in Western Europe, both lay and ecclesiastical...

On August 15, 1461 Louis was anointed and crowned at Reims. His first act was to strike at faithful ministers of Charles VII. Pierre de Brézé and Antoine de Chavannes were captured and imprisoned...

Louis's complex character, in which piety was combined with a ruthlessness and dissimulation that earned him the name of *Universelle Araignée* (“Universal Spider”), was unlikely to seem attractive....

The contemporaries of Louis XI, who did not love him, looked only at his demands. During the last two or three years of his life Louis lived in great isolation, “seeing no one, speaking with no one, except such as he commanded,” in the Chateau de Pesses les Tours, 2 mi. S. W. of Tours, that “Spider's nest” bristling with watchtowers, and guarded only by the most trusty servitors. A swarm of astrologers and physicians preyed upon his fears and purse. But however foolish in his credulity, he still made his strong hand felt both in France and in Italy, remaining to the last the “terrible king”....

He died on August 30, 1483, and was buried in the church at Cléry, not at St. Denis....

I came across several people whom I found full of duplicity. They loved nobody but themselves.

\*

I was conscious of my inner need. I felt that without the union with the Divine the whole being was torn into pieces. Naturally there was no perfect organisation in my whole being. That was the reason why I experienced a most uncomfortable and precarious state—without success I groped to find peace and relief in outward things. For, the inward things were beyond my reach. It was totally impossible

for me to be fully aware of my true being and grow into the Divine Light and Consciousness. My situation was exactly like—"Neither fish nor fowl nor good red herring."

Now the Mother kept writing quotations on the pretty cards she sent me in order to enlighten my consciousness.

On 23rd morning came a bouquet of white roses and a card with these instructive lines:

"When a thought rises in us, let us see whether it is not in touch with the inferior worlds."

As it was Sunday we had a long meditation in her room at the Playground.

To my shame, I still responded to the adverse forces which followed me like a shadow.

The Mother encouraged me supported me continuously by quoting from great Scriptures. But I was nervous—terrified to move any further in the spiritual sphere. My heart fluttered in fear and doubt.

At night I sat in my arm-chair interminably. I closed my eyes and told myself: "No more ordeals, no more...."

The poignancy of suspense and scepticism almost choked me to death. I received from the Mother a fine card with these words:

"Be master of thy thoughts, O thou who wrestlest for perfection."

(The Book of Golden Precepts)

The boundless compassion and patience of the Mother never ceased.

I felt sad. The whole world seemed grim, gloomy and miserable. I thought desperately: "How long, but how long still have I to remain in this awful world?"

The Mother saw me in the evening. We had a brief meditation. Then she gave me flowers and kissed my forehead. I excused myself and went to Golconde. I could not attend the Translation Class.

The next day was like other previous days full of dread and ambiguity.

It was Tuesday. The Mother gave me ample time in the evening.

First she held my hands and looked intensely into my eyes. Then she leaned back on her couch and plunged inward for quite some time. I was unable to do what she did. My eyes were closed but my mind rambled on. Obviously I was unable to feel her powerful action. I was far, far away from the Divine.

She awoke and spoke solemnly:

"The world has forgotten the Divine. No wonder it remains in sorrow and misery. The world must turn to the Truth and never forget the Truth.

The Grace is there to help.

The world must aspire and pray to the Divine.

It is not the question of a single thing or an individual thing. It is a question of the whole world. The world must not remain in Falsehood. It must awake and realise the Truth."

As regards the world today the Mother has stated in her *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, pp. 73-4:

Every day things seem to become worse. In truth we feel more and more disgusted with the old rotting world, and we are more and more convinced of the necessity of founding, somewhere out of the well-trodden tracks, a new centre of life in which a new and truer light can be manifested, a new world no more based on selfish competitions and egoistic strife but on general and eager endeavours to promote the welfare, knowledge and progress of all—a society based on spiritual aspiration instead of lust for money and material power.

\*

Despite my state of mind, I never stopped my work, because I knew this occupation would prevent me from going nuts.

For two days I was extremely busy in the Mother's Stores taking out numerous things from the cupboards in order to show them to the Mother.

On 28th October Dyuman and I with the help of Jayantilal and Krishnalal carried quite a number of things to the Meditation Hall upstairs.

The Mother entered the Hall with one of her enchanting smiles and surveyed all the things in a single glance. Then she sat on her high-backed chair. She asked me to sit near her at her feet.

Champaklal too collected many things from the cupboards upstairs to show them to the Mother. Four sadhaks brought one thing after another. She made the selection from these objects such as ivory, brass, carved wood, clothes and so many other unusual handicrafts which were to be exhibited on 24th November.

The precious and rare articles had been offered to the Mother by countless people from all over India and the world.

It took three days to choose among varieties of things. I was bespelled by a pair of ivory sandals—their shape was of the kind Sannyasis wear. The Mother tried them on. Usually she never wore *tabi* in her apartments—only light-weight chappals with two strips. So it was easy for her to take them off. The ivory sandals became her. They were not exhibited, though.

I picked up an ivory box—my curiosity got the better of me—I opened it in front of the Mother and lo! the red powder with which women decorate their foreheads spilt itself on my white sari and more on the floor. They all looked at me—I felt terribly embarrassed. The Mother laughed. There was a sense of hearty enjoyment in her laughter. The others followed suit.

I sat down and started collecting the powder and putting it back in the box. My palms became absolutely red by the "Kumkum". The Mother came near me, held my palms before her and exclaimed:

"Ah! they look very nice."

I gave a nervous smile to her and murmured: "I am very sorry, Mother." She patted my cheeks. I thought that first of all I had become the main object of the exhibition! Heaven knew what the four spectators thought or how much they relished the scene secretly.

The Mother sat down gracefully and handed silver souvenirs to each of us. She held up a tiny bunch of four keys in front of me and said with a soft laugh:

"Tiens! mon petit, here are the keys of Heaven, take them."

I took them with gratitude and rested my head on the Mother's knees. I cannot resist quoting a few verses from *Savitri*:

"A glorious shining Angel of the way  
Presented to the seeking of the soul  
The sweetness and the might of an idea,  
Each deemed Truth's intimate fount and summit force,  
The heart of the meaning of the universe,  
Perfection's key, passport to Paradise."

We took all the things back to the Stores and separated them from all that were to be displayed in the Exhibition Hall.

Then I went to Golconde. I scrubbed my hands vigorously with soap and water. But still the faint redness was there. I related my adventure to Maniben when we took our luncheon. The Mother unfailingly sent the Prasad which I used to share with Maniben.

I was exhausted. After my lunch I took my siesta. I got ready to go to the Mother in the evening. First she regarded my palms and said:

"Oh! it has gone—but it looked nice."

Then with a smile she went into a trance. I smelt the fragrant flowers and the perfume she had worn. I closed my eyes in sheer refreshment. To be with her was heaven.

Afterwards she embraced me. Her touch was tender and sweet, her vibrations divine.

She gave me flowers and kissed my forehead.  
Thus came the end of October 1957.

*(To be continued)*

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## A NATION WITHOUT A NAME

*(Here are extracts from an article which, during the First World War, appeared in the Daily News of London, written by one Mr. James Douglas. They were copied out by the father of Mother India's editor in his "scrap-book" which is a precious heirloom, containing a vast number of selections from an enormous range of reading in several languages. Now and again we shall cull from it whatever seems of special human and literary value.)*

IN the immeasurable anguish of the war, there is a nation without a name, without a language, without a ruler, without frontiers. Its territory is not marked upon any map. It is a secret nation which is bound together by invisible ties.

This nation dwells in all the lands that are being ploughed by the sword. It is the nation of mothers. The quality of motherhood is the same in every race. The full tragedy of the war can only be grasped by those who see the nation of mothers hidden within the warring peoples and who feel the beat of all those aching hearts.

There are at this moment millions of mothers suffering the same silent agony. No census can compute the precise number of mothers who are carrying a ceaseless pang in their breasts. But if we try to imagine the sum total of pain involved in the vigil of ten million mothers, then we are by way of comprehending the dreadful magnitude of the calamity which has visited the human race....

The grief of motherhood is a thing apart. It is outside the causes of war, the quarrels of races, the pride of empires. It is an older and more durable passion than any of the motives which send brave men into battle. States rise and fall. Empires come and go. But through all the vicissitudes of governing machinery the nation of mothers remains undestroyed and indestructible. And when all the human links between nations are broken, this link holds fast—between the mothers of the young soldiers who are slaying each other there is the link of a common love....

Through the smoke of burning cities, we can descry the sweet, sad face of the eternal mother—yearning over a thousand battlefields, searching the trenches with patient tenderness for the beloved face, laying a reverent hand on the graves of the unknown and unnumbered dead, shedding over all the wild chaos of carnage a halloved radiance of undying devotion.

Men cannot divine the deeps of agony endured by the mothers of Europe. They cannot overpass the great barrier which separates the heart of the father from the heart of the mother. The love of a father for his son is different in kind as well as degree from the love of a mother for her son. The poverty of language forces us to use the same word for the two affections, but there ought to be a word to express the wonderful passion of motherhood. It is in its supreme form utterly selfless. It is proof against ingratitude, against cruelty, against all the evils which are fatal to all other kinds of love....

For the valiant dead there is peace—but for the mother there is a grief that

can never be assuaged. Others may forget, but she never. She bears her pang to the grave. Hers the long slow remembrance kept fresh by cherished relics—a fair ringlet of childhood's curls, a series of photographs, school caps and colours perhaps, garments that bear witness to each stage of youth, toys, and all the flotsam and jetsam that survive in an empty house.

In the presence of such a sacrifice, a man can only get down on his knees in humble reverence and wordless gratitude. Nothing but a pure and stainless cause could sanctify a gift so great.

The mothers of mankind will not have suffered in vain if their suffering be the redemption of humanity. Out of their anguish let the will of the world be born—the will to establish and keep peace on the earth against all its adversaries for ever.

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### I HEAR THE PRIMAL PHONON'S HUM\*

No mountain gladdens the surging of cypresses and deodars,  
 But a black tail wags when the enormous sky is set in blaze.  
 Sometimes in that onrush of night is glimpsed the zodiac eye,  
 Sometimes our will leaps out even as would sleep be a storm,  
 Sometimes enlarges into the early morn the twinkling of the stars.  
 There is no wind-flutter although the marigolds are a-bloom,  
 There are no gods beyond a certain hierarchy of the High.  
 Then would the.e worlds glow as if purple lava came gushing from a cave  
 And in the dazzlement of that sacrificial flight the song is born:  
 "I am the unspanned mystery of the far-off Invisible's spaces  
 And, awake in a dream of solitude, my timeless flames are gathered.  
 O the daring into a million mouths of the monster of Death!  
 I am the spark-burst of Truth whirling in a dance of ecstasy,  
 I am the incomprehensible cypher, I am the unexplored pupil,  
 I am the dimensionless marvel of the undefined Now and Here;  
 Compacted into a stupendous hush of the Infinite  
 Burn the suns of my joy and the shining path of life is laid;  
 I am the substance electric a-quiver in a bowl of anti-mass,  
 And the wave-particle's phenomenality filling the ether,  
 And the secret idea-seed cast into the bosom of a verdant bliss.  
 I hear the primal phonon's hum deep in the superconscient womb:  
 Outcurving into the region of Sound I chant the glory of the Name,  
 Incurving I am the Silence poised on wings of eternal seeing;  
 I have become a Bird of Fire zooming on the breath of my own Shadow."

R. Y. DESHPANDE

<sup>1</sup> The "Phonon" is the elementary particle of sound-energy.

## THE JOURNEY

In my meditations  
I think not  
but know all.  
The distant shore shrouded in mist,  
there on the horizon,  
is but the landing  
on a different land  
of sunshine  
and blue sky.

The darkness of the night  
brings no fears,  
only solitude.  
The shroud of quiet  
under which a path opens  
where I wander through  
the flowering of my soul.

Do I but open that other eye  
and look around at a beauty unknown  
to mortal man  
or created gods  
and see the only God I know:  
Truth.

The caravan  
winding through the desert sand  
over the drifting dunes  
carries not the treasure  
of gold and silk  
that burdens the man  
and withers the soul.  
Balanced on the camel  
and wrapped in the morning breeze  
is all I value in life,  
myself in all,  
and the mirage on the horizon  
is not some hazy illusion  
but the oasis where I drink of  
Reality.

The eagle soaring  
through the cloud-flocked sky,  
drifting and searching,  
sees not what I see beyond



where no thing exists,  
and no boundaries bind,  
where faith flies  
and at last lifts me to  
Love.

The burden I carry  
to that unknown shore  
tires not the shoulder or thigh.  
The load I carry there  
is light and easy,  
but stones and despair  
if ever I should lose my  
Faith.

My faith will take me there  
to that land of sunshine  
and gentle blue sky.  
No man shall rob me of it.  
It has no value to him  
who desires and craves  
that which is not  
or ever was,  
nor will a thief find it ever  
though he searches me.  
For it is hidden away  
and wrapped in the invisible folds  
Of my belief.

When the day is dawning  
and the night has faded behind,  
there around me is  
the warmth and the peace  
of that which ever was  
and of value only.  
There in the shining presence  
I rest,  
and drink of the fresh cool nectar  
flowing from His hands  
and hear within, without,  
the song that is the only Goal I seek:  
"The Journey is Over."

## DOCTOR BABU—MY GRANDFATHER

(THE dates and data given here are accurate to the best of my knowledge, but since everything is written from memory I am fully open to any corrections and suggestions from my readers.

This article is on my grandfather Dr. Upendra Nath Banerjee. But I make haste to point out at the very outset that there were two Upendra Nath Banerjees—a fact that is a common source of confusion to many. The first Upendra Nath Banerjee—the senior of the two—was associated with Sri Aurobindo in Bengal during the revolutionary days in the first decade of the century, and was exiled to the Andamans with Barindra Kumar Ghosh, Sudhir Sarkar and others. He also stayed with Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry during 1920-21. The junior Upendra Nath Banerjee, my grandfather, born on March 14, 1880, was associated with Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry in the 1920s and after, and was known as Doctor Babu; it is upon him that this article is written.)

### I

There are special moments in one's life—moments that may be as simple and insignificant as the falling of a leaf on an autumn evening or as grandiose and overwhelming as the first contact with the splendour of one's soul. These moments are so deeply stamped on one's being that they remain for a long time—sometimes for the whole of one's life.

That morning—it was about a quarter of a century ago—my grandfather sent me with a letter to meet one of the elderly sadhaks of the Ashram. Little did I know then that this was to be one of those unforgettable moments in my life, not an overwhelming one, but unforgettable all the same.

I suppose it was nine or ten in the morning. The day was bright and sunny. The door was open, though a curtain covered the opening. For courtesy's sake, I knocked lightly on the door, and said as softly as I could: "May I come in?"

"Come in! Come in! Don't wait there! Come in!" replied a voice from inside.

Pushing the curtain aside, I stepped in. The sadhak by now had turned around in his chair and was looking towards the door. As soon as his eyes met mine, his enquiring look gave way to a benign smile, as he burst out in a warm-hearted tone, "Ah! The grandson of Doctor Babu! Come in! Come in, young hero! Come in!" His face was very bright and had the radiance of a smile that expressed nothing but love and gentleness, a love and gentleness such as only the wise have. To be frank, I was quite embarrassed, but at the same time rather proud that I should be so loved and honoured by this august old sadhak; for I was a mere kid of twelve or thirteen. But the thought that I should be honoured not for any achievements of my own, but for the reputation of my grandfather, was so thoroughly embarrassing that I didn't know quite what to do with my hands and legs. The sadhak bade me

sit on a chair that was too high for me; my little legs could hardly reach the floor. Taking this as an excuse, I began to swing my legs to and fro and I thought I was feeling better. But this feeling of well-being was short-lived.

“Don’t move your legs! Don’t be so fidgety!” the sadhak gently commanded. “You know,” he added, “your grandfather never got excited, he never fidgeted. He was among the quietest of men and had great self-control.” My swinging, of course, stopped at once; my legs virtually froze.

The sadhak was no longer smiling, but his face and voice expressed a deep reverence for my grandfather. He spoke again:

“Always be quiet. You know, your grandfather had such a deep personality that he could cure patients just by sitting at their bedside, without the use of any medicine. At times he looked as unshakable as the rock of Gibraltar.”

I was deeply moved, to say the least. His words were a revelation to me. I knew that my grandfather was respected by all, but this was the first time I had met someone who adored him. I knew also that my grandfather was a doctor—but now I began to understand what a remarkable doctor he was.

I looked around the room. The furniture was starkly simple; everything was spotlessly clean. There was a table with a neat white cloth spread over it and two stools. There was a book-shelf with neatly arranged books of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. There was, on the floor, near the centre of one of the walls, a shining china flower-vase of a pale blue hue; in it was a single tiny sunflower in front of two long fern leaves. This Spartan simplicity spoke of the refined and unassuming nature of the sadhak. From the big mango tree behind the house, a coppersmith bird was sending out its monotonous cry: cop...cop...cop...cop...cop... as regularly as the beeps of some electronic device. For the rest, there was utter silence. A cool breeze from the window touched my forehead and I thought I was fortunate to be sitting in this profound atmosphere.

When I looked back at the sadhak, his head was turned away from me. His eyes were fixed on the window, but he was not looking at it. A metre or two beyond the window, where the garden began, a Victory creeper full of big bright yellow flowers seemed so bursting with health that it was a pleasure to fix my eyes on it; but the sadhak was not looking at it either. Still beyond, over the thicket-fence I could see the infinity of the sky—a single sheet of dazzling sapphire blue; but he wasn’t looking at that either. In fact, he was in an indrawn state—he wasn’t looking at anything in particular. Then slowly he spoke once more, this time in a voice so distant that it seemed as if he were a being from another world.

“You know, once the Mother was severely ill. So ill that it was a touch-and-go affair. There wasn’t a doctor in Pondicherry who could do anything for Her. Specialists were brought from Madras; they couldn’t cure Her. Then Sri Aurobindo called for your grandfather. Doctor Babu came, saw the Mother, diagnosed Her ailment and She was cured within twenty-four hours.” The old man paused for a while, and then said softly, almost in a whisper, half to himself, half to me: “Truly

great men are here in Pondicherry among us, and not just out there in the world!"

There was such gravity in his words that for a fraction of a second my eye of vision seemed to have opened up. I could clearly see my grandfather's stern face with a stethoscope stuck in his ears, grimly leaning over a bed as the Mother lay limp and frail. I could see Sri Aurobindo standing behind my grandfather, extending His invisible arms of Grace and Power, and gods standing motionless and goddesses shedding tears. Far off in a dark corner stood the Devil, gnashing his teeth and foaming at the mouth because the biggest prey of his life, The Divine Mother, was slowly but steadily slipping out of his grip.

I left the room with a heavy heart. All this in a single morning was too much for me. Besides, I was remorseful; *my* grandfather was known to everybody but *me*. Oof! I felt so foolish. Nearer the temple, further from God. Foolish indeed! I prickled all over.

When I arrived home, I was determination itself. From head to foot I was charged with the resolve to hear the full story. I stormed into my grandfather's room and exploded: "Dadu, is it true that you cured the Mother in just twenty-four hours when all the doctors had failed?" I wailed so loudly that my mother rushed into the room quite alarmed. And my grandfather? Well, he removed his eyes from *The Life Divine*, looked at me, smiled, and went back into his book. When I was younger, I used to pour cold water on cats just to see how cowed down they would be. That smile of my grandfather gave me a wet-cattish feeling!

To decide to get something and actually to get it are two separate things. My grandfather had a Teutonic reticence. He was given to contemplation and study, not to speech. So my readers should understand that what I am going to write now was not got in one sitting, not at all. Not even in several sittings. Plainly speaking, it was not obtained in any "sitting", but collected drop by drop, not in a big bowl but in the smallest of crucibles, through-sixteen years of my stay with him. Sometimes he would only answer "Yes" to a question of mine. Sometimes only "No". Sometimes I would collect a sentence or two while strolling with him in the Botanical Garden that he liked so much; often he would go there in the evening for a walk, a man of eighty, and I, a lad of twenty, walked by his side. Perhaps at the sight of the setting sun, which made the tall trees look like sentinels from the past, he would be moved, and I would be the beneficiary. But most of my precious drops were collected on our terrace, where he sat every evening towards the end of his life, to watch the sun set. It is my opinion that he had some special affinity with the setting of the sun and the creeping in of the evening. Often he would go to the terrace quite early, while the sun was still high, and stare at that sun almost unblinkingly, till water rolled down his cheeks. He had such a stout heart and so grave a face that everyone assumed it as the heat of the sun that made the water run. But, well, I have known him for too long and I have another notion. For it was on such evenings—though it happened very rarely—that he would give me a hint of how ominous it was that day when he looked on the Mother's failing body and had a hand in changing destiny.

I shall try to put my grandfather's story as much as possible in the first person.

"I came to know about Sri Aurobindo from the monthly magazine Sri Aurobindo used to write—*Arya*—and so I wrote a letter or two to Him. Then, in the early 1920's, when Barin, Sudhir and others were released from the Andamans, I wrote once again to Barin, this time expressing my wish to come here and meet Sri Aurobindo. But I never expected to get a call from Him so dramatically. It was in January 1925; the early hours of the night had passed—it was about 10:30 p.m. My daily reports were completed. My faithful compounder and driver, Dhamri, was tidying up the clinic. I was a bit tired. Then suddenly a postal-carrier in khaki dress brought me a telegram. It read:

MIRRA ALFASSA SERIOUSLY ILL COME AT ONCE.

BARINDRAKUMAR GHOSH

"These words set my head on fire. With lightning speed, things started happening in my chest, the meaning of which I neither understood nor had the disposition to understand. I turned the telegram over. Yes, it was from Pondicherry.

"I decided to leave at once. I signed a few blank cheques and handed them over to Dhamri, so that he could take care of your grandmother. Then I arranged my attaché case with the necessary medical things for the journey. But it was not easy to decide what to take, for I did not know the nature of the malady. I decided to take one bottle of alcohol, one bottle of ether, one bottle of a purgative<sup>1</sup> some cotton-wool, and all the things necessary for bleeding, a common practice of those days. And of course I took my stethoscope."

I remember my grandfather once told me: "As far as instruments go, the stethoscope has proved to be the greatest weapon in our armoury in our grim battle against the Devil."

At that time my grandfather was practising in a small town named Mirzapur, situated in the centre of North India. From Mirzapur there was no direct train to Madras. On enquiry he found that a train bound for Calcutta was due shortly at the Mirzapur railway station. It was an express and would not halt at the small station for long. He asked Dhamri to get his Ekka—a one-horse double-seater carriage—ready at once. Such was the fire burning in his bosom that he didn't even care to say good-bye to my grandmother; nor did he think of what food he would have the next day.

The Ekka leaped forward with the cracking of the whip. I can clearly see my granddad in my mind's eye—and what a granddad he was! Sitting up straight,

<sup>1</sup> This purgative was an extremely pungent-tasting liquid, unwelcome to grown-ups and a sheer terror to children. My grandfather had mentioned its name to me many times, but I have forgotten it. I had the misfortune of tasting it once and I can assure the readers that its effect was devastating.

immovable as a solid rock, immovable as his own unshakable will, being driven to the station by a totally confused Dhamri, who begged him to stop this journey, begged him at least to say farewell to my grandmother, begged him to go back and touch the forehead of my little sleeping father, who was only ten at the time. But oh! above all, I can see my grandfather's unblinking eyes.

*(To be continued)*

TARUN BANERJEE

# DHYANA WITH THE MOTHER'S PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS

## Part I

A BIG bird with wings wide apart was gliding through the vast, deep, infinite sky. It was a bird neither white nor grey nor black, perhaps of a colour nearer to white or ash or something like that. It was flying unmindful of everything else, alone, all alone. Immediately the rational mind jumped upon the scene, for suitable comprehension. And, as it happens always, the whole thing vanished. I was sitting in the meditation hall, but deprived of the vision.

Sri Aurobindo has said that the bird is a symbol of the individual soul. What a beautiful thing to soar high and glide through the sky above, liberated from all anxieties and trials. The Mother many times had the bird-feeling. "All barriers have fallen, within and around me, and I feel like a bird opening its wings for an unrestrained flight" (28-11-1916). And when under the pressure of materialistic thoughts all the efforts and capacities of the Mother seem to be numbed, she cries—"The mind, worn out, suffers like a caged bird which cannot spread its wings and yet longs to be able to soar freely" (4-1-1914). It is the journey of the soul as seen through the inner aspiring eyes of the man sitting, even if not known to him outwardly on the surface of his being. For the exploration of this Truth, we do Yoga and meditation as a means of the inner quest. "The doors of the consciousness have to be kept open; to do that to get hold of the subtle levels of consciousness is the purpose of meditation, of Yoga," said M. P. Pandit in one of his talks at the International School of Theosophical Studies, Adyar, Madras on 13th July 1977. But why does not the vision stay for long? Sri Aurobindo replies, "It is not usually the object that vanishes, it is the consciousness that changes. Owing to lack of sustained capacity or lack of training one is not able to keep the subtle physical vision which is what was really seeing the object."

What is *dhyāna*? We shall start with a few words of Sri Aurobindo,

"There are two words used in English to express the Indian idea of *dhyāna*, 'meditation' and 'contemplation'. Meditation means properly the concentration of the mind on a single train of ideas which work out a single subject, contemplation means regarding mentally a single object, image, idea so that the knowledge about the object, image or idea may arise naturally in the mind by force of the concentration. Both these things are forms of *dhyāna*, for the principle of *dhyāna* is mental concentration whether in thought, vision or knowledge."

In a different context the Mother said, "Concentration is a more active state. You may concentrate mentally, you may concentrate vitally, physically and you may concentrate integrally. Concentration or the capacity to gather oneself at one point is more difficult than meditation. You may gather together one portion of your being or consciousness or you may gather together the whole of your consciousness or even

fragments of it, that is, the concentration may be partial, total or integral, and in each case the result will be different.

“If you have the capacity to concentrate, your meditation will be more interesting and easier. But one can meditate without concentration. Many follow a chain of ideas in their meditation; it is meditation not concentration.”

Generally meditation is the common word that is used for all such kinds. We shall henceforth use the word as such for our purpose.

Meditation is an ancient practice for all who have ever striven to realise the inner possibilities. Though it seems to be a mental process, it is in reality much more than that. Unless the whole being with all its ardent aspiration meditates, no result can be achieved. It has been variously described in different ages, as “Love-relation between God and the Soul”, “Elevation of the Soul to God” or “Inexpressible longing of the inner man for the infinite.” The process may be a gradual withdrawal from the periphery to the centre.

The Mother in the very first entry of her notes later known as *Prayers and Meditations* declared the goal for her meditations as follows:

“By turning towards Thee, by immersing myself in Thy Light at the moment when I consider these things, little by little I shall see them more like what they really are—until the day when, having made myself one in identity with Thee, I shall no more have anything to say to Thee, for then I shall be Thou. This is the goal that I would reach; towards this victory all my efforts will tend more and more. I aspire for the day when I can no longer say ‘I’, for I shall be Thou” (2-11-1912).

In another place she states:

“For meditation, contemplation, union is the result obtained—the flower that blooms; the daily activity is the anvil on which all the elements must pass and repass in order to be purified, refined, made supple and ripe for the illumination which contemplation gives to them” (28-11-1912).

Having understood the essence and purpose of meditation we have to think of how, where and when to meditate, how long to meditate. Clara M. Clodd in her *Meditation* opines:

“Meditation should not be too prolonged. Ten minutes to half an hour. Five minutes daily is better than an hour once a week, and it should not be engaged in between the hours of ten and two at night. The psychic nature is peculiarly open to extraneous influences of all sorts just then, and predisposition to mediumship would then show itself. Mediumship and meditation are poles asunder.”

The ancients advised two times as best suited for meditation: between 3 and 5 in the morning and during twilight hours. In both the times there are changes in nature: the night steps into the dawn and the day proceeds towards the night. At these times, particularly at dawn Nature is calm and quiet: the early hours of the morning are called *brāhma muhūrta* when, it is said in the Vedas, the divine gives His riches. One should meditate in a place which is free from disturbances. Noises have been described in the Buddhist system of meditation as a jungle, into which one



enters. So a secluded place where one can sit at least from half an hour to one hour is most suited for meditation.

Sitting cross-legged with body erect, spine straight, head and shoulders in line with the spine, the whole body motionless—that is the ideal posture for meditation. But it should not be a strain. *Sukhāsana* or the posture in which one finds ease has been prescribed. That is, one should be able to forget the body during deep meditation.

All these times, places, ways of sitting, etc., are general rules. As one proceeds on the line, meditation may be so spontaneous that any time will be suitable. One may be able to meditate in the midst of a crowd and while working. Sitting motionless is a passive posture helpful for meditation but as one advances on the way one may be able, as Sri Aurobindo has said, to meditate even while walking, standing, reading. Generally one meditates with eyes closed but it may be done better in some cases with eyes open. Sri Aurobindo himself used to meditate while walking, with eyes open continuously for hours together. But let us not discuss this any further, for it is beyond the scope of a general discussion as it may not be yet known what he used to do and how he used to do everything beyond what is apparently known from some of the eye-witnesses. He lived entirely beyond the ordinary human consciousness, in the occult-spiritual realm.

But meditation is not an isolated affair. To make it successful a proper orientation is required. It depends on the attitude, on both the inner and outer preparation of the man. We repeat the Mother's words as quoted earlier, "The daily activity is the anvil on which all the elements must pass and repass in order to be purified, refined, made supple and ripe for the illumination which contemplation gives to them." Sri Aurobindo has stressed the importance of meditation and warned us not to treat it lightly, for in that case the riches shall be lost or mostly spilled. Champaklal was told that meditation is a "must" for *sādhana*. But the Mother said that it is not indispensable. We must remember that it was said in a certain context to a particular individual, for indeed meditation alone has very little value if it is done quite mechanically. She ridiculed the human ego that feels it has done something great whereas in fact it may have gone into inertia *tamas*, or sleep during the long meditation. Many schools and systems of Yoga have laid down different formulas and procedures for meditating. We shall discuss some important systems before coming to Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's system of meditation under integral yoga.

(To be continued)

AJU MUKHOPADHYAY

# INTEGRAL PSYCHOLOGY INHERENT IN INTEGRAL YOGA

IN THE WORDS OF SRI AUROBINDO

*(Continued from the issue of December 1984)*

## Integral Psychology as a System

WE have now come to the close of the compilation from Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga to represent the Integral Psychology inherent in it. The compilation has been a brief one. The parts of Integral Psychology represented could have been more elaborately done and certain other topics, *e.g.*, Sleep and Dream and Types of Personality could have been added. For representation in a Journal it was necessary to be brief.

Now let us ask ourselves: Does it make out a Psychological System, a coherent individual view of human personality? If so, let us summarise it.

Psychology is the science of *consciousness* as embodied in the human individual, growing up in interaction with the environment, much dependent on the body and the unconscious, but tending to assert itself more and more as a purposive self-existent fact. Consciousness is for it a primary fact as 'matter' is for physics, and it seeks to investigate consciousness in the fullest measure without any self-imposed limitations.

The scope of psychology is as wide as consciousness itself in its various degrees of luminosity (lower and higher) and extensions as related to the phenomenal human manifestation of it. This includes the subconscious and the unconscious, individual, racial and cosmic and the superconscious, individual and cosmic, in various forms and degrees. And also the subliminal, below the threshold of the human conscious, which is generalised, but is not lower or higher than the normal human consciousness. So also other forms of consciousness that may be found in the course of investigations are parts of the scope of psychology.

It is also a part of this scope that we recognise human consciousness as a fact of cosmic evolution consisting of the three steps of Matter, Life and Mind so far covered, stretching out into further possibilities of higher integrations, the ranges yet superconscious. The evolutionary adjustments achieved with the environment, the instincts, the habits, and other automatic actions and reactions constitute the unconscious of the individual, the race and cosmic existence. The new integrations called for show the trends of future growth.

Consciousness being the primary fact and field of investigation for psychology, its method will naturally be the one that can directly observe it *i.e.* introspection. But it is more difficult to make it dispassionate than the external observation employed by Physics. But that has to be done, introspection is irreplaceable for psychology. However, consciousness being deeply embedded in the body, having grown in it evo-

lutionally and being dependent on it for its expression, observation of bodily behaviour can be a study of consciousness. And introspection and observation of bodily reactions are both responsive to experimental handling. And all these—introspection, external observation and experiment—admit of indefinite variations.

The pursuit of Integral Psychology does involve, it may be stated, a motive to grow personally in the integration of life, as without this an appreciation of the higher integrations will be difficult. The knower has to be fairly adequate to the known, otherwise he cannot do justice to the object of knowledge. Thus Integral Psychology, covering as it does in its scope of study the superconscious sets to itself a distinctive aim: that of personal growth enabling the researcher to appreciate more positively the higher integrations.

Thus we have here a system of psychology with a distinctive aim, distinctive subject-matter and scope, a distinctive method and a distinctive emphasis on evolution, cosmic and individual.

The varied activities of normal personality, all more or less derive their orientation from the above approach itself, sense-organs and sensations are evolutionary adaptations or adjustments. They are limitations on the sensing mind, which, at the human level through self-consciousness, can rise above them and command greater capacities.

Instincts and emotions too are evolutionary habits and can be exceeded. Superficially man is a sort of organisation of individual reactions to different environmental situations, but the deeper consciousness is a unitary super-consciousness, which is intrinsically joyous and integral in action. That gives another perspective to all the activities of the normal personality.

Thinking is the highest function of the phenomenal human personality. But to the deeper integral superconsciousness direct intuitive knowing is normal. In view of this, laborious discursive knowing of mind would acquire a new orientation. Its being always in a state of flux would also undergo modification, as silence is seen as natural to consciousness at the higher level. The problem of freedom too assumes a new form. At the level of the mind our freedom consists of an ability to choose between given alternatives and we are not free from inner compulsions. But at the deeper superconscious level, the level of the experience of the Psychic Being, we have along with intuitive seeing spontaneous action with no compulsiveness whatsoever. It is the plane of unity of being, whole seeing and whole action.

Thus we arrive at a different view of personality as a whole, truly a system of psychology of original value, at the minimum a challenge to the contemporary science of psychology.

In the end, we might mention more pointedly a few important contributions it can make to general psychology. One: the mind is not essentially in a state of flux. Under the influence of the Psychic consciousness it can become quiet and even silent and then its capacity to think and to know becomes greater. We then cease to be helpless, more or less, in our thinking activity.

Two: levels of experience, following the steps of evolution, Matter, Life and Mind, should be three, physical, vital and mental. This appreciation enables us to identify activities as being primarily of one level or another and deal with them according to their basic characteristics and thus more effectively.

Three: all emotions are not parasitical in character. There is a joy that depends on the fulfilment of a desire, a pre-existing conation. But there is also a deeper joy, the joy of the Psychic Being which is self-existent and does not presuppose a conation.

Four: mental health is not just a matter of economic balance among the Id, the Ego and the Superego. The peace, the unity, the joy of the deeper Psychic consciousness presents the true norm of mental health and the best integrative force in personality.

Five: 'transformation' *i.e.* a real change in the quality of the animal impulses is possible through the deep and persistent working of the integral superconscious on them. This is different from their modification or sublimation.

Six: 'perception of Wholes' as a direct fact is a most happy contribution of the Gestalt School of Psychology. Now, in the scheme of Integral Psychology it is to the Psychic consciousness that the perception of wholes becomes spontaneous, 'wholes' become the primary interest and parts the secondary.

The problems of the contemporary science of psychology are possibly due to the limitations of its perspective. It wants to be a science like other sciences and limit itself rigidly to the phenomenal mental activities. But the mental processes are not impersonal facts like those of physics. A mental process is somebody's. This is a unique feature of the subject-matter of psychology, and the science of psychology has to proceed on its own distinctive basis. Further, psychology can less easily ignore facts of ultimate reality than physics can. Psychology then becomes a matter of reactions and it lacks unity and then personality becomes un-understandable.

Psychology has evidently to discover its own true standpoint. A handicap here becomes a pervasive handicap.

Integral Psychology is free and wide in its approach, and bases itself on the larger experience of yoga and is able to present a fuller view of personality, which can offer solutions to the problems of scientific psychology. Actually the two seem to be complementary in character and entirely reconcilable. In fact the divergent schools of contemporary psychology can all find due legitimations in the wide scheme of Integral Psychology.

INDRA SEN

## PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

So that we may survive, O Lord,  
Grant unto us:

A Grasshopper's knees  
To jump out of traffic jams;  
The Tortoise's shell  
To overcome housing shortage;  
The Dog's tail  
To make both ends meet;  
The Whale's blubber  
To face the oil crisis;  
The Firefly's abdomen  
To fight the power shortage;  
The Rhino's hide  
To parry all affronts;  
The Skunk's B.O.  
To overpower city smells;  
The Baboon's bottom  
To travel IIIrd class comfortably;  
The Octopus's arms  
To fill in I.T. returns;  
The Giraffe's neck  
To see the sea from a city flat;  
The Parrot's beak  
To crack the jackpot;  
The Elephant's nose  
To make trunk calls when the lines are down;  
The Snake's body  
To wriggle out of suburban trains;  
The Chameleon's skin  
For purely pragmatic reasons: and finally  
The Hippo's Hips  
To HIP-HIP HOORAY.

HOMI KHARAS

(With acknowledgments to *The Imprint Magazine*)

# STORIES FROM TAMIL LITERATURE

*(Continued from the issue of December 1984)*

## 5. WHO WAS HE?

MANY of the poets in the ancient Tamil land had different vocations. They wrote fine poetry but did not depend on poetry for their living. Some of them were small land-holders, some were merchants and some others pursued technical professions. Still, there were a number of them who tried to live on their poetry. And they were invariably poor. Of course kings and chieftains patronised them and gave them riches and gifts. But the poets did not like to be under one patron for long periods. So they wandered from place to place seeking new patrons. They never liked to pester unwilling chieftains.

Moreover, the poets had very generous hearts; they did not like to keep anything for themselves. The major portion of the wealth they received went to relatives and friends. Sometimes the relatives were so destitute that they came to live permanently with the poets. The poets never thought them burdensome, but took them under their protection even though they themselves were not sure of a regular income.

Vanparanar was such a poet. Giving away everything he received, he was invariably in want. And his poor relatives were always with him. Once he and his dependents set out on a long journey in search of patrons. Their path lay through rugged and barren country and they could not find food on the way. They travelled many days and at last reached a hilly region. The heat was terrible and they were overcome by hunger and fatigue. Unable to go any further they sought shelter under a large tree. They stretched themselves down in the shade and soon fell into a deep, tired sleep.

It was past noon. A stalwart figure of a man emerged from the jungle near where the party slept. The man was dressed like a hunter and carried bow and arrows. On his shoulder lay the carcass of a newly hunted deer. He had fine features and a noble bearing. He was wearing a gold bracelet on his left arm and a string of sapphires round his neck. He noticed the weary figures stretched under the tree. He went near them and peered at their emaciated bodies and shrivelled faces. In a moment he understood the situation. In the meanwhile Vanparanar had woken up and tried to rise at the sight of the noble stranger. The hunter gestured to him not to rise. He laid down his bow and arrows and the dead body of the deer under the tree and disappeared into the jungle. Soon he returned with an armful of dry wood and twigs. He threw them down, took up the deer and started skinning it and dressing it with his dagger. By now the others had all woken up and they squatted round the stranger watching the preparation of the meat with eager eyes. When the dressing was over, the hunter took out his flints and made a fire. He roasted the meat with professional skill and when it was nicely done he cut it into large pieces and distributed them

among the hungry men. The poet and his kinsfolk thanked him heartily and ate with great satisfaction. Next, the hunter guided them to a spring where they quenched their thirst.

Then he addressed the poet: "I am glad you got something to eat. All of you look a little better now. But in this inhospitable jungle I can't entertain you to anything more. However, I shall give you something as a token of my affection." With these words he took off the string of sapphires from his neck and his bracelet of gold and put them in the hands of the poet. "Kindly accept this as my humble gift," he said.

The poet was dumbfounded. He could not even find words to thank his benefactor. The hunter did not wait for words. He wished them well and turned to leave. Then the poet addressed him, "Sir, may I know whom we have had the good fortune of meeting? You have been very kind to us. We must remember you for ever."

The hunter smiled at him. "Is it necessary?" That was all he said and he quickly walked away.

After some time the party resumed their journey. They met a hunting party on the way. The poet described to them the man who had helped them and asked them if they knew who he was and where he lived.

One of them exclaimed, "Don't you know him? He is Nalli our leader and the chieftain of these hills—the Thotti hills."

The poet was again overwhelmed. He had heard of Nalli and his munificence. How he had longed to meet him! Now he had met him and yet did not know him. The chieftain had behaved in such a modest manner. What nobility of character!

The poet has described the whole incident in a fine poem.

## 6. MOSI KEERAN AND THE KING

The poet Keeran from the village of Mosi was known as Mosi Keeran. Once he desired to see the Chera King Irumporai. The capital was a long way off from his village and he started on foot. When he reached the palace gates he was very tired. The guards let him in, but in taking a certain passage he came where all was quiet. There in a side-room stood a beautiful bed with an inviting quilt of feathers on it. The poet sat on the bed to have a few moments' rest, but since he was very tired he could not help lying down after a while. Soon he fell asleep.

The bed was not actually meant for anyone to sleep in. It was the ceremonial seat of the King's Battle Drum. Just like the royal sceptre, crown, the throne and the white parasol above it, the Battle Drum was one of the insignia of the King. It was a symbol of great honour and heroism. When a battle comes and the army marches towards the field the first thing taken in the van of the army is the Battle Drum carried on the back of a caparisoned elephant. When the battle is over, the drum is given a ceremonial bath in the river and placed again on its seat with much garlanding and decoration. Occasionally also on ceremonial days the drum is taken to the river,

bathed, decorated and brought back to the bed for rest.

It was on one such day when the drum had been taken to the river that Mosi Keeran had come and innocently gone to sleep on the vacant bed.

After some time, King Irimporai arrived there and he noticed someone on the bed. Immediately his face was flushed with anger. The person had defiled the sanctity of the bed by sleeping in it. His first reaction was to kill the offender. So he unsheathed his sword and hurried towards the bed. But on the bed he saw, to his surprise, not any country bumpkin as he had expected but Mosi Keeran, the learned poet. His anger died down. Instead, he felt real tenderness towards the sleeping poet. The poet must have travelled a long and weary way. Fatigue must have overcome him and without knowing what the bed was meant for he had slept in it. Full of tenderness, the king sheathed his sword, took a fan of peacock feather from the bedside and started fanning the poet so that he might sleep still more comfortably. Such was the love which the Tamil Kings had for their poets.

How long he stood doing such kind service to the poet we do not know. When the poet awoke and looked up he saw the King fanning him. Shocked, he stood up at once, held fast the King's hands in protest, and embraced him like a child and shed tears. The King, too, held him in a warm embrace. It was some time before the two recovered from their feelings.

Later, when the King told the poet how it all had happened the poet was overwhelmed again and shed tears. He profusely apologized to the King for committing the sacrilege in ignorance, but the King had already forgotten it.

The whole chain of events was movingly described in a beautiful poem in which Mosi Keeran paid a fine tribute to the magnanimity of King Irumporai. The poem said that the esteem the Tamil poets enjoyed was due not to any innate greatness in them but to their Tamil learning. The King's love for Tamil had saved the life of the poet.

*(To be continued)*

M. L. THANGAPPA

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## RIDDLES FROM PONDICHERRY

1. Twin-tongued is he,  
but he is not a serpent.  
Silent does he remain,  
but he is not a hermit.  
Liquid is his food,  
but he will throw up.  
A slave is he all his life  
to none but the learned. (Ink-pen)  
Who is he?
2. That blue ball once torn  
can never be mended.  
That dazzling beauty once gone  
is gone forever.  
That fruit once fallen  
can never be picked up. (Sky, lightning and rain)
3. When young she is green.  
Pleasant is she to look at.  
When old, she turns red,  
more pleasant is she to look at.  
But I advise you:  
Never in the least try to taste her.  
If you do, you'll shed tears. (Chilly)
4. I removed the lid  
and found a tuft of hair.  
I shaved off the tuft  
only to find pearls and pearls.  
I removed them one after another  
only to find holes and holes.  
What is it? (Maize)
5. Look at that green porcupine.  
He has hay for his intestine.  
Entangled in the intestine lie  
many jolly good fellows.  
And every fellow has a pebble.  
What is it? (Jack fruit)
6. He lives in water. He lives on land.  
Don't take him for a frog.  
He can stretch his neck  
and withdraw his head.  
Don't take him for a snail.

He owns a shell that shields him.  
 Don't take him for a coconut.  
 He can't hop or jump to be called a snake.  
 Then who is he? (Tortoise)

7. That is a cave that can  
 open and close at will.  
 Devilish spears made of the hardest stuff  
 stand sentinels over the cave.  
 But see how that fellow  
 rocks, rolls and twists in that cave  
 without the least sign of fear.  
 Who is that fellow? (Tongue)

8. If you stare at him  
 he'll also stare at you.  
 Laugh and he laughs with you.  
 Weep. Oh, how strange!  
 He weeps with you.  
 Bang him with your fist.  
 He rays out in different directions. (Looking Glass)

9. Fresh green is his shirt.  
 But he is no bitter gourd.  
 Varying thorns of green hue adorn his body.  
 But he is no jack fruit.  
 Immaculate white is his stomach.  
 But he is no coconut.  
 Crush him... He gives you all that he holds.  
 Who is he? (Castor seed)

10. Sweet does the mother taste.  
 Her daughter tastes sour.  
 Her daughter's daughter emanates  
 a pleasant flavour. Who are they? (Milk, curd and ghee)

11. A petticoat is its dress,  
 but it is not a girl.  
 It has a paunch of good size,  
 but it is not a Chettiyar.  
 It has a curved tail,  
 yet it is no dog.  
 Then what is it? (Brinjal)

## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**Sri Aurobindo Circle 40th Number, Pondicherry, 1984 Rs. 20.00**

THIS 40th number of a well-established journal is, as usual, immaculately presented. The opening pages give us some beautiful photographs of the Mother, one of the lesser known pictures of the Master in Mahasamadhi, and several facsimiles of their letters to disciples in their handwriting. One of these from the Mother, on the true way of dealing with illness, is especially powerful.

There follow a number of brief 'Words of Sri Aurobindo' on a wide range of topics, then a series of longer writings from his published works: 'The Path', 'The Evolution of Consciousness', 'The True Key to the Faery Palace' (a long and illuminating letter to a disciple), and 'The Tangle of Karma'. A previously unpublished passage from Sri Aurobindo's manuscripts, on 'The Inner Change', is of special interest; and the six 'Letters from Abroad' which follow it, apparently written by Sri Aurobindo around the time of his arrival in Pondicherry in a lively and humorous style but with serious intent, as an exposé of the superficiality of Western materialistic civilisation, is as timely today as when it was penned, since young India seems no less beglamoured by these false values in the 80s than in the early teens of the century.

A critique of the Marxist approach to history and psychology from the Master's pen is followed by a collection of 'Thoughts from Sri Aurobindo', again on a variety of topics, and then by A.B.'s record of conversations with Sri Aurobindo in 1926, which is continuing from previous numbers. A talk of the Mother's from 1955, "When is the New Creation going to Happen?" rounds off this first part of the periodical.

The second half consists of exegeses of different aspects of Sri Aurobindo's work, by various writers... well-known names all of them. Kishor Gandhi (the editor) contributes a brief outline of some of the basic ideas of Sri Aurobindo's social and political philosophy; K.R.S. Iyengar is represented by a study of Milton and Sri Aurobindo; from Sisirkumar Ghose comes a scintillating piece about the inadequacy of Marxist socialism, 'Not yet Revolution'; from A.S. Dalal there is 'Psychological Disturbances in the Light of Integral Yoga', which brings together much of what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have said on the topic; P. Raja contributes a lively little piece on 'Sri Aurobindo and the Creation of the *Arya*'. For me this informative and otherwise unexceptionable article was unfortunately marred in a couple of places by a levity of tone which I found inappropriate to its theme and its context.

Several fine poems from R.Y. Deshpande, K.D. Sethna, Nirodbaran, Arjava and "Gleaner" are scattered through these later pages. The highlights of this second half of the journal, for this reviewer, were the delightful marriage of personal tone and profound speculation in K.D. Sethna's 'Letters to a Friend', where he touches on some subtle details of Sri Aurobindo's world-view; and Prema Nanda-

kumar's piece on the Ramayana: 'Sri Aurobindo's Interpretation of Indian Culture: the Epics'. To a scholarly knowledge of Valmiki's Ramayana as well as of Sri Aurobindo's writings, she brings a warm and sympathetic understanding from deeper planes to illuminate and increase our appreciation of both.

The earlier pages are full of inspiration for all who revere the Mother and the Master; the later ones hold much to interest thoughtful minds. In all, this 40th issue maintains the high standards of the preceding 39 numbers and makes a worthy addition to a distinguished collection of Ashram periodicals.

SHRADDHAVAN

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## AT THE END

THE Master and the Mother are our sun and our moon,  
 The one to shower the gold of the noon,  
 The other to rain the silver delight.  
 We require their radiance for day and night.  
 Both are no more but their presence we feel,  
 Their grace is there to hold when we reel.  
 We call for their help, they answer our call,  
 They guide us aright to save us from fall.  
 On bended knees we pray for their grace  
 To give us their darshan at the end of our race.

BHANUSHANKAR BHATT