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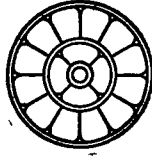
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

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

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“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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SRI AUROBINDO

A BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE ON AUGUST 15 FROM THE SRI AUROBINDO SOCIETY AT SINGAPORE

SRI Aurobindo, a lion among men,
A lion city on this day
Salutes you: Singapore,
Born when Leo ascending signed the sky,
Has heard your name, and seen '
The signature you scribbled in the stars
For future men.

Far galaxies that roll and spin
Along the edge of time have felt
Your lonely power; and the unconscious earth
The imprint of your feet.
On hard unyielding peaks
New roses spring.

Saraswati, O Mother of all song,
Lend us some lovely lyrics from your store,
Help us to paint and praise
Your strongest son!

“HE took them all,” you answer,
“Every golden word he plundered—
Every jewelled phrase—
To make a crown for Mira:
There is nothing more.

“If you will praise him, let
Your silence speak; your mind be bare—
And in that silence Gratitude
Will sing the joy we share.”

SONIA DYNE

ONWARD TO VICTORY

In view of the promise held forth to us by 24 November which is known as the Siddhi Day or the Day of Victory the following poem, written a long time back apparently in the midst of initial difficulties and uncertainties yet piercing through them to a golden prospect, should serve very well with its spirited vision and simple straightforward style to inspire hope and confidence in whoever is daunted by the adventure of the Integral Yoga to which Sri Aurobindo and the Mother call the aspiring soul.

THE pitch-dark view,
A traveller new,
The unknown path, the unscaled height;
But a sure start,
A fire in the heart,
And lightning call of the Sovereign Light!

The hurricane howls,
The Titan growls,
The fettered feet, the slippery way;
But a touch on the head
And a calm is spread;
The gracious smile, the precious ray!

A looking back
And the legs go slack,
A tempting rest, enchanting snare;
But a startling pain
And up again,
A moment's sorrow, and the lead is there.

A doubt once more
And hurdles a score,
And thunders shout suggesting death;
But a soft low voice
And hearts rejoice
Regaining poise and stubborn faith.

Though dark is night
And the journey a fight
And opponents plan the soul's disgrace,
Yet victory's sure
When there endure
His shining eyes, Her smiling face.

ABANI SINHA

A TALK BY THE MOTHER

TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON 13 NOVEMBER 1957

I have a question about the first page where Sri Aurobindo says, "A spiritual evolution, an evolution of consciousness in Matter in a constant developing self-formation till the form can reveal the indwelling Spirit, is then the keynote, the central significant motive of the terrestrial existence."

The Life Divine, p. 824

So, from the point of view of form, in what way is man superior to other animals?

I THINK this is quite easy to find.

Sri Aurobindo speaks of the form that is capable of manifesting the Spirit. The very nature of the manifestation of the Spirit is consciousness, understanding and finally mastery. It is obvious that from the point of view of aesthetics and purely physical appearance, one may find certain animal forms beautiful and perhaps even more beautiful than the human form in its present state of... degeneration, I believe. There were periods when the human race seems to have been more beautiful and harmonious; but as a means of expression of the Spirit, its superiority is beyond the shadow of a doubt. For the mere fact that man stands upright is symbolic of the capacity to look at things from above. He dominates what he sees instead of always having his nose to the ground. Of course, it may be said that birds fly, but with wings it is difficult to have a means of intellectual self-expression!

This upright position is very symbolic. If you try to walk on all fours, you will see that this position with the eyes and nose necessarily turned to the ground does not give you the feeling that you are looking at things from another plane or even from above. The whole structure of the human body is made to express a mental life. The proportions of the brain, for instance, the structure of the human head, the structure of the arms and hands, all that, from the point of view of the expression of the Spirit, is unquestionably altogether superior and it seems to have been conceived and built exclusively *for the purpose* of expressing intelligence.

Certainly from the point of view of strength, of suppleness, of agility, man is not the most gifted of animals, but for expressing the Spirit no other animal can be compared with him. Everything is made with this in view. We may wish to add to this possibility other things which seem to have been sacrificed just for the sake of the mental life—but also precisely because of this capacity of expressing a mental life man is able to develop in himself faculties which are only latent. Man has a power to educate: his body can be developed, educated. He can increase certain faculties. You cannot imagine any animal, even among those we most admire, which is capable, for instance, of physical education, purely

physical—I am not speaking of going to school or learning things, but purely physical education, a systematic development of the muscles. The animal is born and makes good use of what it has and it grows according to its own law, but it does not educate itself or does it in a very rudimentary way, in an extremely limited field; whereas by a normal and systematic development man can remedy his defects and shortcomings. Man is certainly, in an organised way, the first progressive animal who can augment his capacities, his possibilities, increase his faculties and acquire things that he did not have spontaneously. There is not one animal which can do that.

Yes, under man's influence some animals have learnt movements they did not make spontaneously, but that is still under man's influence. Certainly without men dogs or horses would never have learnt to do what they have learnt through contact with man. So, it is obvious that the human physical form is the most appropriate one for expressing the Spirit. It may seem inadequate to us, but precisely we feel we are capable of drawing out from our bodies more than they would have given spontaneously without an educating will. And with this possibility of expressing intelligence, observation, comprehension, deduction—all the mental qualities—man has gradually learnt to understand the laws of Nature and tried not only to understand them but master them.

If we compare what he is with the higher being living in the Truth which we want to become, we may obviously speak about man as he is at present in a very derogatory fashion and complain of his imperfection. But if we put ourselves in the place of the animals which immediately precede him in the evolution, we see that he is endowed with possibilities and powers which the others are quite incapable of expressing. The mere fact of having the ambition, the desire, the will to know the laws of Nature and to master them sufficiently to be able to adapt them to his needs and change them to a certain extent, is something impossible, unthinkable for any animal.

You may tell me that I don't usually speak very kindly about man (*laughter*), but that's because he usually thinks too kindly of himself!

If we compare him with the other products of Nature, unquestionably he is at the top of the ladder.

But, Mother, then the question arises: Does the descent of the consciousness develop the form or is it the development of the form that compels the descent of a higher consciousness?

There would be no universe without the descent of consciousness. Where would your universe begin, and with what?

In the case of man, did the animal man bring down the mind or was it the descent of mind...

Oh! You mean: Is it something in the intermediary being or in the higher ape which by its aspiration called down the mind? But the aspiration itself is the result of a previous descent.

It is quite obvious that nothing can be manifested which is not previously contained in what exists. One can't bring something out of nothing. One can make what is there emerge, manifest, express itself, develop; but if nothing had been there, nothing would ever have come out. All progress, all perfection is the result of an inner effort of "something" that is present and seeks to manifest. That is to say, absolutely, the principle comes first and the expression afterwards. As we go on reading *The Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo will prove this to you in every possible way. If there were not an eternal principle, if there were not—we give it all the names we like, can't we?—a Supreme Reality, there would never have been a universe, because nothing comes out of nothing.

We shall see this as we read on; then you will have to do philosophical gymnastics. But anyway, even without philosophy and mental gymnastics, it is obvious that to make something, you need to have something to make it with.

There is or was a whole period in the development of the human mind in which men tried very seriously to prove that it was the perfecting of Matter which produced the Spirit. But that is nonsense! (*Mother laughs*). The least of your activities, all that you do, is a clear proof that first you conceive and then you do, even on a very small scale. A life which is not the result of a conscious will would be a completely incoherent life. I mean that if Nature were not a conscious force and a conscious will with a conscious aim, nothing could ever have been organised. We have just to observe a little, even in the very small field of observation we have in our individual life, to be completely convinced of it.

But anyway... It is precisely one of the subjects Sri Aurobindo deals with in great detail, so we shall speak about it again.

(*Silence*)

It could be said that the mastery of fire is the symbolic sign of human superiority. Wherever there is man, a fire is lit.

The two things that are clearly superior to animal activities are the faculty of writing and the possibility of articulate speech. And this is something so clearly superior that all sufficiently developed animals are extremely sensitive to articulate speech; it fascinates them. If you speak in a very clear, very modulated, very well articulated way to a wild animal, it is immediately attracted, truly fascinated—I am not speaking of those which have lived close to man, but precisely of animals which have never met man before. They listen immediately, they feel the superior power that is being expressed.

THE MOTHER WHOM WE ADORE

IN THE LIGHT OF HER *PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS*

(Continued from the issue of October 1988)

THE descent of light leads the mind to surrender to it. It will not only bring knowledge but transform all the mind's functions, its thought, reason, imagination, perception and memory, and make it an inspired instrument of a developing concord and harmony.

The Mother in her Prayer on June 16, 1914 has plunged and lost herself in her inner vision of the light. She describes her experience: "Like a sun Thy splendour descends upon the earth and Thy rays will illumine the world. All those elements which are pure enough, plastic enough, sufficiently receptive to manifest the very splendour of the central fire-nucleus are grouping themselves together. This grouping is not arbitrary and does not depend on the will or aspiration of one element or another, it depends on what it is, it is independent of any individual decision. Thy splendour wants to radiate; what is capable of manifesting it manifests it, and these elements gather together to reconstitute as perfectly as possible in this world of division the divine Centre which has to be manifested."

This descent of light brings with it a new possibility for future movement and higher evolutionary development. Thus the comparatively slow process of transformation is replaced. Apropos of it Sri Aurobindo states: "... a play of lightnings of spiritual truth and power breaks from above into the consciousness and adds to the calm and wide enlightenment and the vast descent of peace which characterise or accompany the action of the larger conceptual spiritual principle, a fiery ardour of realisation and a rapturous ecstasy of knowledge. A down-pour of inwardly visible Light very usually envelops this action; for it must be noted that, contrary to our ordinary conceptions, light is not primarily a material creation and the sense or vision of light accompanying the inner illumination is not merely a subjective visual image or a symbolic phenomenon: light is primarily a spiritual manifestation of the Divine Reality illuminative and creative; material light is a subsequent representation or conversion of it into Matter for the purposes of the material Energy. There is also in this descent the arrival of a greater dynamis, a golden drive, a luminous 'Enthousiasmos' of inner force and power..."¹

The Mother writes in her Prayer of April 8, 1914: "Lord, my thought is calm and my heart ingathered; I turn towards Thee with a profound devotion and a boundless trust: I know that Thy love is all powerful and Thy justice will reign over the earth.... O Lord, how ardently do I call and implore Thy love! Grant that my aspiration may be intense enough to awaken the same aspiration

everywhere: Oh, may goodness, justice and peace reign as supreme masters, may ignorant egoism, be overcome, darkness be suddenly illuminated by Thy pure Light..."

On July 22, 1914 the Mother exclaims: "O divine Master, let Thy light fall into... chaos and bring forth from it a new world. Accomplish what is now in preparation and create a new humanity which may be the perfect expression of Thy new and sublime Law."

In her Prayer on September 25, 1914 she chants with full confidence:

"The Lord has willed and Thou dost execute:
A new Light shall break upon the earth.
A new world shall be born,
And the things that were promised shall be fulfilled."

Light descends in the peaceful and calm mind. That is why the Mother in her Prayer of February 10, 1914 exults: "With peace in our hearts, with light in our minds, we feel Thee, O Lord, so living within us that we await events with serenity, knowing that Thy path is everywhere, since we carry it in our being, and that in all circumstances we can become the heralds of Thy word, the servitors of Thy work."

We may remember here the end of a sonnet by Sri Aurobindo on Light:

"I move in an ocean of stupendous Light
Joining my depths to His eternal height."²

We can notice here a striking similarity with the Mother's Prayer on December 13, 1913:

"A great light floods my whole being and I am no longer conscious of anything but Thee."

As a final revelation we may aptly note a whole sonnet by Sri Aurobindo:

Thy golden Light came down into my brain
And the grey rooms of mind sun-touched became
A bright reply to Wisdom's occult plane,
A calm illumination and a flame.

Thy Golden Light came down into my throat,
And all my speech is now a tune divine,
A paean-song of Thee my single note;
My words are drunk with the Immortal's wine.

Thy golden Light came down into my heart
 Smiting my life with Thy eternity;
 Now has it grown a temple where Thou art
 And all its passions point towards only thee.

Thy golden Light came down into my feet:
 My earth is now Thy playfield and Thy seat.³

(To be continued)

NILIMA DAS

REFERENCES

1. *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol 19, p. 944
2. *Ibid*, Collected Poems, p. 150.
3. *Ibid*, p 134

A PRAYER

I KNOW not what love's delight
 Has built in me Thy temple bright
 With effluence from a mystic cavern deep.
 My sudden awakening from aeons of sleep
 Hears now a dulcet voice within:
 "Thou art beyond all virtue and sin—
 All manifestation is but My guise,
 Which thou shalt discover through love-lit eyes."

Now hold me in fetters or set me free—
 It's but my glory, thy love's decree.
 Make all of me a slave of Thine—
 This heart a mirror for Thy secret shine.
 Remove Thy veil from these two eyes
 That are sore with yearning for Thy love's prize!

VIKAS BAMBA

VIGNETTES OF THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of October 1988)

Udavi and Auroshikha

PEOPLE have sometimes asked, "Why does the Ashram do nothing for the suffering millions of India?" Though Sri Aurobindo declared, "My Yoga is for the Divine", humanity was not excluded from it. Very few know of the Mother's concern for the poor villagers around Pondicherry. In a quiet way, she adopted an entire village and later told a disciple, "I want to change this whole region."

The Mother asked Nata, an Italian disciple, to do something for the village of Edyanchavadi, near Auroville. She gave this project the name 'Udavi' which in Tamil means 'Help'. It was like her to choose the poorest, most desperate village, one mentioned by the famous Ananda Rangapillaï in his diaries as a criminal village; in the time of the French occupation, if one wanted to get somebody killed or robbed, one went to Edyanchavadi; and this persisted even after Independence... it was, one might say, the only industry in the village. There were no wells there and at certain seasons the villagers had to walk miles to get water. In 1967, when the Mother laid her hands of benediction on it, people were deserting the village.

To start with, Nata began a small dispensary. A well was provided with the help of Tamil Fund and Nata raised funds to start a store which would provide the villagers with essential commodities at rock-bottom prices, so that they would not have to walk miles to buy supplies. After the water-supply, dispensary and store, it was time to think of the next step: the pathetic woebegone children.

If children between the ages of two and five are deprived of protein they can be affected in their minds and bodies for the rest of their lives. Up to the age of two they can draw sufficient protein from their mother's milk, and after the age of five the worst danger is past. So Nata, always with the Mother's counsel, began a feeding-scheme for the children of that age. The little ones were so unkempt and dirty that a 'crèche' was started where every day these children were given a bath. Volunteers were requested to help pour out the milk, but no woman would come forward without payment. The villagers were so destitute that they could not conceive of service, which is a luxury. So some of the mothers were given clean white saris and paid to pour out milk to their own children. Long before the first children were five years old it became clear to Nata that they could not just be thrown back into the village. The Mother said, "Il faut les suivre"... "We must follow them up."

Up to this point friends had donated money to keep the scheme going, but now it became clear that there must be some regular source of income to continue

the work. Nata asked the Mother if he should start some activity to bring money to help the village. The Mother agreed that he should and added, "As long as it is done with selflessness and for the purpose it is meant for, I shall put my Force behind it." Nata asked the Mother for suggestions, but she left the choice of activity to him.

Nata meditated on the problem and had a revelatory idea: he should start an incense factory. Rolling the incense would provide the villagers with work; machines and electricity would not be needed; and with the help of friends in various countries he would export the incense and with the profits earned be able to bear the expenses of the Udavi project. Nata put the scheme before the Mother who gave her whole-hearted approval.

The Divine's seal was given, and Nata put his scheme together. With the help of first one and then another young French disciple—one of whom is still running the factory—the project was begun in Udavi itself. As 1973 advanced, the Mother started withdrawing within. Whenever Nata went to her she would be in trance and uttered only a word or two. He was convinced that she was in a world where incense-factories had no place. But one day she surprised by him saying, "You have not yet brought me the incense sticks you promised me." This spurred Nata to make even greater efforts, though he was doing his best, and happily he was able to send some incense to the Mother before she left her body; his only regret was that he could not present them to her himself, since by then she had stopped seeing people.

Later Nata and his helpers made Auroshikha Agarbathis one of the biggest exporters of incense in India.

Meanwhile the kindergarten was established. At first there were two enthusiastic young teachers who every single day cycled the distance of 14 km uphill from Pondicherry; even during the monsoon they never missed a day. The children flourished, and each year a new class was added.

At Udavi the children are given three meals a day, including nourishing things such as sprouted legumes; each day they take their bath at the school and are provided with a freshly-washed and ironed uniform... and in fact with everything from toothbrushes to notebooks. By the loving dedicated service of our Maggi and Anuben, today the school has reached the ninth standard. It seeks as far as possible to teach through the methods the Mother always advocated; the young children learn through games that are made by the teachers to match their learning-needs. These games have begun to draw attention, and UNICEF proposes to show them to the educational authorities of other Indian States and to facilitate visits of educationists to Udavi school for workshops on the use of educational games. An agricultural demonstration centre may also be established there.

Slowly the Mother's dream is taking shape. Each morning the children hear Sunil's music and sing the Mother's prayer:

“Douce mère, permets que nous soyons dès maintenant et pour toujours simplement tes petits enfants.”

“Sweet Mother, grant that we may be, now and forever, simply Thy little children.”

The Mother used to say that when something is accomplished anywhere, it serves for the whole world. To see Udavi is to understand that the Mother's work in this sector is well under way.

Compiled by S

NIHIL

IN entire absorption
 A secret space
 of inviolate stillness
 For light-burdened eyes.
 Time ebbs and flees conjured:
 Unwound, unspaced, invisible, momentarily white.
 No body moves,
 And matter seems a mere substance wrought,
 One in all moving forms inert.
 Sudden flickers of life in myriad eyes
 Millionly flee, and blobs remain!
 A fluid mass bodying nothingness.
 A nascent oneness like a vast circle of peace
 Rings in its pure embrace
 The thousand material shapes of earth.
 An unperturbed gaze too tenuous for spirit or sound
 Hesitatingly forms a visioned tranquillity.
 A silence immaculate and an infinite calm,
 It seeps from an unknown depth
 Made of substance too sheer for earth.
 A soft sincerity, a roseate breeze,
 Of spirit re-found the splendid ease.

ARVIND HABBU

HOW THEY CAME TO THE ASHRAM

(Continued from the issue of October 1988)

13 (Continued)

Now X's employer and his friend went on an all-India tour. In the course of their wanderings they came to Pondicherry and had the Mother's darshan. Their lives were changed and they started coming to Pondicherry frequently. From them X got a copy of *The Life Divine*, published then for the first time. X was so fascinated by the book that he ran through it and finished it in 18 days. His whole outlook on life changed. He said to his employer whom he loved, "I'll not teach your children any more but will remain with you."

This employer, now a friend, was actively participating in the freedom movement of India. Gandhi had started his Individual Satyagraha. X's employer was sick. X said to him, "Since I am now a member of your family, I'll offer Satyagraha for you." Thus he was jailed for one and a half years. After completing his jail term he again started some tuitions. He tried to work with his former employer but found it difficult. So he started a school. Sometimes doubts assailed him. "Am I doing Yoga? Is it Sadhana?" His inner voice replied, "Go on. Do not question. Do not run away." X continued with his school but for 14 years he read and reread the Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's books.

In 1953 his former employer who had now become a staunch devotee of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had a dream. In the dream the Mother asked him to bring X along, and pay for his visit. X agreed to go and thus came for the first time on 26th November, 1953.

He had the balcony darshan and saw the Mother going out. Thus passed 15 days. Then Acharya Abhay Dev asked him, "Why have you not gone for the Mother's individual darshan?" X replied, "No one asked me and I did not have the courage to go alone." Acharya Abhay Dev took him to the Mother. He introduced him saying "Mother, he is X. He is from Delhi. He reads your books." What happened then is better told in X's own words:

"10.12.87. Thirty-four years back (1953) on this day at about 3.30 p.m. I was taken by Acharya Abhay Dev to be introduced to the Mother. I was to meet her near the stairs, down which she used to come to get into the car waiting to take her to the Tennis-ground near the seashore. While on the way he took me to the garden opposite the Ashram gate to collect a flower garland to be offered to the Mother. The man-in-charge of the garden, however, told us that no garland was available and the one that he had was meant for someone else who had ordered it earlier. We therefore went near the stairs empty-handed but hearts full of love and adoration. There were still a few minutes for the Mother to come down. In the meanwhile the gardener came hurriedly saying that the per-

son who had ordered that garland had not come and therefore I could carry the garland for the Mother. I was delighted and took the garland. The Mother was now coming down the stairs and was three steps from the bottom. When Acharya Abhay Dev presented me to her, told her my name and mentioned that I was from Delhi and that I used to read Sri Aurobindo's books at the Sunday meetings, the Mother cast a look from her sparkling eyes at me. I saw that behind the old body of the Mother a young beautiful girl was standing with her face full of smiles. The Mother's old body and the young girl were shedding glorious light and the breath of a cool breeze passed through my entire body from head to foot. The Mother came down, sat in her car and was driven to the Tennis-ground. My heart was leaping with joy and I was wondering whether I had seen the Mother or it was all a dream. Just then some acquaintance, a lady, came near me and asked me, "Did you see the glorious Light on the face of the Mother?" I was satisfied that I had seen something real and not only a vision.

"Little did I know what I meant when I said to you, 'Mother, I love you,' and you kept mum and then smiled and then laughed at my audacity and also my ignorance. You knew perfectly well that I was sincere and though I did not know the meaning of love I did want to know it. That happened almost forty years ago and you did take my hand in yours and started showing me the whole panorama of your dreadful beautiful world. Through so many tangles and wrangles sometimes pushing me and at other times pulling me. And today after such a long time the thirst to know 'love' remains still unquenched. This fire burns every cell of my body, every particle of dust which has been used to build it. I do not know whether my heart and body are made of matter or of spirit. They are both burning with the heat and like the fountains of molten gold I see them flowing day and night.

"My body is bursting at the seams and is trying to engulf the whole universe within it or is dissolving itself into the atmosphere and becoming one with it. Often I have asked myself what I want out of this love. Power, friendship and romantic love for women have often dangled their charms before my eyes but none of them has been able to keep its spell on me for long. They only served as fuel to make the flame of love burn more and more brightly. The flame has now become a huge smouldering fire burning sometimes visibly and sometimes invisibly the dead and wet wood of what I used to call my personality. Sometimes when a part of fuel is dried up by the fire, it begins to burn brightly and begins to spread its heat and light but then the other part which was wet gets dried and there is another period of heat and light-sparks. This seems to be an endless work and I never feel exhausted. The greater the pain, the longer its duration and the wider its expanse. The more details of the beauty of the work come into sight and I say to myself, 'Where is the time and where is the space?' It is all a continuous conflagration in this work. What once appeared to be things and events are consumed by this conflagration.

“When I saw myself and the world as two separate objects I said, ‘I love you.’ But this fire has consumed me as well as the world and the two have become one. What was love in the beginning has become an utter delight now. My whole nature plays with the whole world as a child plays with a toy. Now where are thy griefs, thy sorrows, thy petty wrangles and thy pitiful complaints, O World; they are the objects of this delight’s different forms and garbs. I do not know whether you possess me or I possess you, O spirit of Delight! This is an idle question and can never be answered because it issues out of an ignorant mind. The heart never asks questions. It is in quest, ever in quest, of what we call an utter delight—which once found becomes the fountain of Real Life.”

X visited the Ashram again in 1955. He said to T, “I am going back. Why do you not take me to the Mother?” T replied, “You should write a letter praying for an interview.” X replied that he had already written a letter and given it to Nolini-da. T went to inquire; Nolini-da answered, “Yes, but X is leaving on the 11th. The Mother has no time till then.” X had written in his letter, “Mother, I want to have the experience of being in your presence for two minutes.”

A prayer to the Divine Mother is never in vain. T’s brother had bought a scooter. He wanted the Mother to see and bless it. X went to T’s house. T’s mother told him, “My son is taking his scooter to the Mother. Why don’t you go along?” X went gladly. The Mother stepped down from her car and stood very near X for full two minutes or more. X had the experience he had prayed for and his faith in the Divine Mother was reinforced. He understood that she knew everything in our hearts and fulfilled all true aspirations.

On one of his visits the Mother consented to give X fifteen minutes’ meditation. She asked if X would mind if T came along for the meditation. T himself asked him, “Have you any objection if I come with you?” X said, “No.” So both went together. The Mother asked X, “Have you any question?” X had none. Then the Mother smiled and told him to be seated. X closed his eyes. When he opened them fifteen minutes had passed. He did pranam at the Mother’s feet and came out. Later T told him that the Mother had wanted him to convey to X that the latter had good receptivity.

There is something very sweet connected with this incident. While on his way to meditation with the Mother X saw Nolini-da and introducing himself requested, “May I be with you for some time?” Nolini-da replied “But you are going to meditate with the Mother today. If after that you feel the need to see me you can come.”

Truly X was so overwhelmed after seeing the Mother that he totally forgot to go to Nolini-da.

X once wrote to the Mother, “I do not understand but when I see Sri Aurobindo’s photograph I see you standing behind him, when I see your photograph I see Nolini-da standing behind you.”

Now X closed his institution and lived with Z and did the Mother’s work

in that branch of the Ashram. One day Y, a European, saw the board of the Ashram and went in and was greatly impressed with X. He took him to Europe and later provided for his needs, till the government started paying him a freedom-fighter's pension; once he took X to Kashmir. There during his sleep X had the Mother's darshan and asked, "Mother, you have done everything for me; can I do something for you? The Mother asked him, "Are you prepared to bear physical pain for the sake of my work?" "Why not, Mother? If you send it I will accept it gladly," replied X. Next morning he found he had gangrene. This gangrene was caused by an injury. X returned to Delhi. He was admitted to a hospital. The doctors assured him it would be a short stay—for three or four days. These three or four days stretched into three months. Now the doctors thought they would have to amputate X's leg below the knee. On being admitted to the hospital, X wrote a letter to the Mother even though it was 1975—two years after she had left her body—"Mother, I am in the hospital. The doctors may have to amputate my leg. This is not to pray for a cure or to spare me pain. It is just to inform you since you are my Mother. I am writing to the past address."

One of the doctors attending X tried to convince the other doctors to amputate only two toes. He was hopeful that this might control the spread of gangrene. But the other doctors differed and a day was set for the operation. X was prepared for the amputation and was brought to the operation theatre. He was perfectly calm and resigned. He took it as the Divine's will. Just before the operation, the lights failed and the operation was postponed for a day. That night the doctor who had earlier suggested that they should amputate only two toes convinced the other doctors to amputate only two toes and, if that didn't succeed, to amputate X's leg later on.

Next day two of X's toes were amputated. The wound started healing. X had no money left. His European friend gave the money, though he had to leave for Europe to resume his duty.

X passed these three months in the hospital in deep concentration on the Mother. Most of the time he was indrawn. Actually he felt happy that he had this opportunity for inner concentration. But the bleeding did not stop. It was proposed that he should be shifted to Ram Manohar Lohia hospital where the doctors were hopeful about curing him. But X had no money.

On 19th February at 10 o'clock permission for admission to the above hospital was received. One hour before, a friend, the divorced wife of his European friend, having heard of his illness, came to see him. She brought Rs. 3000.00 with her and remained to nurse him for one and a half months. Now she had to return to America. X came back to the Ashram branch where he stayed. But the bleeding continued. A homeopath stopped the bleeding but X's arm was terribly swollen. The doctor who had operated on X's toes was called. He said that X should at once be taken to the hospital for an operation. Now the ques-

tion arose, "Who would look after him?" Suddenly a young lady offered her service. She nursed X for five or six hours. Time passed but the trouble continued. X's European friend sent two tickets, for X and a companion, to come to Europe. X toured Europe and on his return after three and a half months X was completely cured. It is strange that X's illnesses started in 1972, Sri Aurobindo's centenary year and ended in 1978, the Mother's centenary year. The whole of his life he had felt and experienced that the Divine Mother protected and helped him at each step. She took care of his needs. Also X has realised over the years that his "madness" was in fact a descent of a special consciousness.

Today doctors wonder how eighty-two-year old X can see or hear anything. Physically, his eyesight and hearing are totally gone. Yet X can read and write what he wants to read and write and can hear everything that he wants to hear.

X visits Pondicherry from time to time and brings a number of bright young people to the Mother's feet, for he had always had a very innocent aspiration, "Mother, let me bring busloads of people to you." And as with all sincere aspirations his aspiration is also fulfilled.

X who vowed never to keep money—is well looked after by the Divine Mother, he who never married—has many young devoted people who serve him sincerely and lovingly, a truly divine family.

(Concluded)

Compiled by K

LIFE-YOGA-POETRY

FROM TWO RECENT LETTERS

I HAVE been waiting for Peter Brook's translation of Jean-Claude Carrière's magnificent dramatised version of the Mahabharata to arrive before replying to your fine letter of June 18. But it has not reached me yet. So I have decided not to delay further. After you wrote to me that you had just reached your eightieth year a friend told me that your birthday had fallen on June 14. As I shall be eighty-four next November 25, I am 3 years, 6 months and 19 days older than you—if my mathematics is not far out. I was never good at numbers, except, I hope, those which Milton had in mind when he wrote of dwelling

on thoughts that voluntary move
Harmonious numbers.

In regard to arithmetic what seemed the truth of the matter dawned on me when on failing miserably in the exam to qualify for the 4th standard at St. Xavier's High School at Bombay I was favoured with a special test by the Principal Father Hetting in consideration of the important historical fact that my father had been a Xavierite. To buck me up papa accompanied me to the test. I was given four sums to do. Twenty minutes later I submitted my results. They proved to be all wrong. Father Hetting looked grave and passed the papers to papa. Papa glanced at them and said with a smile: "See, his method is perfect everywhere. He knows exactly how to approach a problem. Doesn't that show an acute intelligence? The only thing he doesn't know in arithmetic is addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Surely they can be learned in time. Just for failure in them, will you hold back a boy so bright in finding his way in the subject?" The Principal was so stunned by the originality and acuity of this argument which any Schoolman of the Middle Ages might have envied, that he broke a minute's silence with the sporting words: "Oh well, let him go up with his master mind and tackle the trivialities later."

Your reference, apropos of your surprise that I was a "horseman", to the horse as an important part of Indian life gives me a cue to some observations on Indian spirituality. As you know, this spirituality has its fountainhead in the Rigveda, the earliest religious document of the Indo-European linguistic family to which both of us—you as an Englishwoman and I as an Indianised Parsi—belong. In the Rigveda the horse, along with the cow, is a central animal symbol. The word for the latter, *go* or *gau* (obvious origin of the English term for the female bovine) meant "ray" in spiritual symbolism. The cow stood esoterically for the spiritual light which is to guide our mental faculty. The horse stood for the spiritual energy which is to lead the life-force in us. The aim of the Rig-

vedic discipline was to align divine realities with earth-existence. There was no talk of flying away from earth. One rose into subtle planes, reaching up to "the world of the Sun", the Truth-plane where all the cosmic multiplicity is harmonised and has its perfect source, but one still kept one's hold on the terrestrial scene. Mother Earth and Father Heaven were never disjoined. The Rishis who were the mystics of that remote age were also the guardians and teachers of the community. They did not think of the terrestrial scene as something to be escaped from: it was something to be brought to its own true significance amidst its daily affairs.

The very word "maya" in the Rigveda had no inevitable association of an undivine unreality. It connoted, as Sri Aurobindo has explained, the power of the Supreme Reality to outline, measure out, mould forms in the formless, psychologise and make knowable the Unknowable, geometrise and seem to make measurable the limitless. By this power static truth of essential being becomes ordered truth of active being. In a less exalted sense maya meant knowledge, skill, intelligence. Only later it acquired the pejorative sense of cunning, fraud or illusion in ordinary parlance and philosophically an inexplicable phenomenon in which an unreal cosmos appears with its unredeemable multiplicity from a Oneness which is timeless, spaceless, featureless and which counterpoises a Nirvanic beyond of beatitude to the many-motioned teeming Here and Now of mixed shine and shadow. The Upanishads are still free from any emphasis on world-negation, they are shot with signs of an active spiritual living, though there are some strains in them towards an ascetic development. Even the later life-abjuring trends, whether Buddhist or Shankarite, were never the sole spirituality in the Indian field. Various affirmative outlooks and disciplines flourished, especially the Bhakti movements and the Tantrik experiments, and, above all, the synthetising message of the Gita which swept together the Yogas of Knowledge, Devotion and Work. To them "the earth and all that it inherit" are an epiphany in the same way as to you—"the continual self-revelation of the living spirit."

However, I must say that though the epiphanic nature of the world is undeniable the soul's passion for "one entire and perfect chrysolite" is yet not wholly satisfied. There is something missing in world-affirmation just as in world-negation. Neither in concept nor in experience has an answer been found for that demand of the soul until the advent of Sri Aurobindo. He alone has gone from his initial Nirvanic experience to a vision of the Divine at a revelatory play in the world and then to the Supermind which bears in itself not only the original creative power but also the final transformative power, for it is at the same time the home of the perfect originals of mind, vitality and matter and the evolver of these very originals within their imperfect forms in earth-history because they are already "involved" in the evolving phenomenon. The Supermind is hidden below in the primeval darkness no less than it is secret above in

the ultimate light. By its pressure and pull from on high and by its pressure and push from the nether pole all evolution takes place—the free forces descending and the bound ones ascending. First, the multi-linked material universe emerges from what the Rġveda calls the chaotic ocean, then variously branching life appears, then mind with its diverse devices shows itself—with the secret psyche growing through them in birth after birth—and the next step will be the manifestation of Supermind, bringing about a super-epiphany. Mind will fulfil its urge for all-knowledge, life-force its *nisus* towards all-capacity, matter its straining for durability, immunity, flawlessness of form—and the psyche will come forth with a plenary glow of bliss and love suffusing them all.

The path to this fulfilment cannot be totally smooth. How can anything be quite easy when the Supreme has undertaken the tremendous adventure of beginning its own self-expression in the universe from what it has posited as its own opposite, a dense Inconscient, the Rġveda's chaotic ocean in which, as that scripture says, "darkness was enwrapped within darkness"? Yes, there are hurdles to be crossed; yet, as Sri Aurobindo says, "the advent of the Supermind is inevitable by the very logic of things". But man as a being conscious of himself has to give his willing co-operation if this advent is to be soon. Hence our need for the Aurobindonian Integral Yoga to embody the Supramental Divine both individually and collectively. A mantra of this Yoga's aim is the great invocation which I once quoted to you and which ends with the profoundly moving mysticism of the words:

Rose of God, like a blush of rapture on Eternity's face,
 Rose of Love, ruby depth of all being, fire-passion of Grace!
 Arise from the heart of the yearning that sobs in Nature's abyss:
 Make earth the home of the Wonderful and life Beatitude's kiss.

Perhaps I have been flying too high and tiring you. Let me come down to a theme nearer our past discourse—the Mahabharata. At almost the conclusion of your excellent comment on Brook's splendid 8-hour show you allude to the savagery of Bhima and say that you find it hard to take. Then you add: "And even Krishna, when he tells Arjuna to slay Karna while he is trying to free his chariot wheel, and indeed again when he tells the terrible Bhima to strike Duryodhana on the thigh, is hard to reconcile with the words of the Bhagavad Geeta." Nor are these the only incidents in which Krishna seems to act out of accord with that scripture's commands. Duryodhana, after he has been beaten by means not agreeing with the Kshatriya code, lists some more deeds of Krishna that stand out as "unfair". But we must remember those declarations of Krishna to Arjuna in the Gita: "... whensoever there is the fading of the Dharma and the uprising of unrighteousness, then I loose myself forth into birth. For the deliverance of the good, for the destruction of the evil-doers, for the enthroning of

the Right I am born from age to age" (IV.7.-8). The victory of the Kauravas would have spelled the death of Dharma. Unrighteousness would have ruled. But they were so strong that they could not have been destroyed by the ordinary modes of warfare. To follow strict Kshatriya standards would have frustrated the very purpose of Krishna the Avatar's birth in that age. He tried his best to avoid the war. Several times when he is accused of employing stratagems for the Pandavas to come out victorious, he asks: "Have I not strained my utmost to prevent hostilities? Did not the sons of Dhritarashtra turn a deaf ear to my pleas? Was Duryodhana willing in the least to put aside his unjust ambition, his gigantic lust for power?" He declares that his sole purpose was to save good men from harm, from death at the hands of incarnate demons. Even so, we may mark that he let the Pañdavas fight fairly and do their best to overcome their enemies. Only when he realised that they would ultimately go under did he resort to unconventional methods. If Dharma could be established by generally approved means, they were certainly welcome. The fullest chance should be given to them. But if they seem bound to fail, one who was born for the destruction of evil-doers could hardly stand by. What was clearly visioned by the Avatar to be wicked the Avatar had the right to dethrone by whatever means his wisdom and superhuman insight deemed valid. His exceptional right to overpass common standards was implicitly recognised, for none of those who obeyed his command to act unKshatriya-like would have acted that way on his own. His friends who became his instruments knew that he was more than human and that he could act from a motive inherently right and that in his case the end would justify any means. Unless we enter into the sense of his Avatarhood and of his extreme initial desire to avoid conflict—unless we understand intuitively his mission—we shall fail to perceive the utter intrinsic inevitability of his deeds.

(10.7.1988)

I have been a little slack in replying to you, but the procrastination has brought me to a very important day on which to launch my letter. August 15 has for India a far-reaching significance to commemorate. There is the birth of Sri Aurobindo whose fight for India's freedom was seminal in many respects, not least the first clear-cut demand for total independence, and to whom political freedom meant a chance for India to develop without any impediment or distraction a spiritual light for the world. According to him, this light was to gather together all the various past shades and generate the vision of an ultra-violet reaching out to the all-transformative "Supermind" and of an infra-red plunging down to the same archetypal Power waiting secret in Matter to break forth a divine life in earth. Sri Aurobindo's birth on August 15 in 1872 is celebrated today on its 116th anniversary. This is the prime significance of the date in view of India's basic genius of many-splendoured spirituality.

Harmoniously along with it comes the 41st anniversary of her rising free

of British rule and announcing her freedom, through Nehru's mouth, to the world in the very language of her erstwhile rulers, the language which in fact had served her best in her struggle for liberty and which had communicated to her many a modern ideal, one of the chief having been the ideal of national independence and unshackled individuality so dear to the English-speaking heart:

We must be free or die who speak the tongue
That Shakespeare spake...

And it is most meaningful that the choice of August 15, 1947, a birthday of Sri Aurobindo, was made for India's Independence not by any Indian but by an Englishman, the last British Viceroy of India, Lord Mountbatten.

What gives further suggestiveness to the choice is that Mountbatten picked out August 15 because two years earlier that date had seen the end of World War II with the surrender of Japan to him, the war which Sri Aurobindo had singled out as a crucial confrontation between forces controlled from behind, the scenes by preternatural anti-divine beings and those which, for all their defects, were on the side of the Gods helping the evolving soul of the world towards a future of non-regimented, diversified, depth-expressive unity.

Openly Sri Aurobindo had supported the Allied Cause despite the British component in it which had been responsible for the foreign imperialist yoke in India. There was a lot of criticism in our country: "Why is a spiritual figure participating in what is apparently a clash of titan Egos bent on their own interests and aggrandisements? Should he not keep apart as an impartially disapproving Witness instead of favouring by both downright word and financial contribution a contesting party which includes India's own alien masters?" For Sri Aurobindo to keep apart would have meant in a super-Keatsian sense

Standing aloof in giant ignorance.

It was precisely because he possessed a mighty spiritual knowledge of unseen things instead of being totally in the dark about what was below the surface that Sri Aurobindo, along with the Mother, declared that fundamentally this war was theirs and not merely a conflict of the Western democracies with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy and, towards the concluding period, militarist Japan. For the work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother was for a new spiritualised earth building dynamically a greater beauty of the visible and the concrete, a tangible progressive embodiment of the Divine and not just a flight of the Inner to the Higher, leaving the Outer to the poor devices of a groping and stumbling mind. A victory of the totalitarian powers would have spelled a tremendous setback to the *Vita Nuova* that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were striving to realise for the earth.

Thus from various points of view, today to which my delay has led my reply to you is the recurrence of an occasion of multiple momentousness. You should be proud and happy that I have kept you waiting.

Touching again on the Mahabharata, you have asked: "If the Dharmaraja is allowed to tell a lie (about the death of Drona's son Aswatthama), at what point does he forfeit the right to be called King Dharma?" It is true that Yudhishthira let Drona believe his son was dead, but the Mahabharata depicts this circumstance with greater subtlety than your words suggest. Take the whole complex of events in proper significant sequence. First is the fact of Drona harassing the Pandavas with a divine "astra", a weapon not permissible in a conflict among Kshatriyas. Krishna emphasises the unfairness of the fighting and declares that an unfair counter can be made to it. He tells his comrades that if somehow Drona can be led to believe that his son has died he will drop his illegitimate weapon and get killed or else the Pandavas, the upholders of Dharma at whose head is the greatest of Dharmic men, Yudhishthira, will be wiped out. Now there happens to be an elephant which bears the same name as Drona's son. Bhima slays the elephant so that one may truthfully announce that Aswatthama is dead. The announcement, as composed of sounds, will be true but its sense will be false. Knowing its double nature Bhima, "with shame suffusing his face", exclaims to Drona, "Aswatthama is dead." Drona is upset and feels faint, yet he fights on. He will cease only if he hears the news from the lips of Yudhishthira who has never told a lie. Drona turns to Dharmaraja. Krishna has already anticipated this emergency and has put before Yudhishthira the fact that if the false suggestion does not come from his ever-truthful lips the Pandava army will be decimated. He has also assured him that the suggestion will not cling to him like a sin. So Yudhishthira has been made ready. Now mark what exactly is exchanged between Drona and him. Drona asks, "My child, I want you to tell me if it is true that my son has died." Yudhishthira answers: "Aswatthama is dead", and softly adds: "The elephant called Aswatthama." Yudhishthira has not only uttered a verbal truth: he has expressed the true sense as well, though in a whisper which Drona is too distraught to hear. The Mahabharata has brought out a subtle shade in the falsehood which converts what would otherwise be a direct lie into that delicate hoverer between straight truth and straight falsehood: equivocation—and a special one too with a slight tilt towards the former. Poet Vyasa has too clear a mind to deny that something wrong is done by his paragon. So he says: "The chariot of Yudhishthira which was always four inches above the ground because of his dharma, touches the earth as soon as those words are spoken. He is now like any other mortal." But with a fine perception of psychological and ethical shades Vyasa depicts the paradox of dharma's essence surviving dharma's loss of existence. We have to remember also Krishna's persuasion of Yudhishthira: "You have to deceive Drona for the sake of saving your army, a vast multitude of men."

I am amazed at Prof. P. Lal thinking "Arjuna was quite right not to want to slay the heroes of both sides, to see all his family wiped out in a war." First of all, Arjuna was asked to fight the Kauravas, the heroes ranged against the side of the Pandavas. Only a part of his family was to be wiped out by him. And Krishna explains to him at great length and from various angles the necessity of the drastic action. And, over and above the socio-political need, the Divine Charioteer seeks to instil the high spiritual mood in which the mighty work has to be done. The Gita is not just a call to war, however righteous: it is a call to a many-aspected Yoga which is not after a static realisation alone but combines an unalterable inner poise of peace and a dynamic identity with the Divine Will at work in the world, work which at times may involve actual conflicts demanding difficult decisions. How could Lal have translated the Gita accurately without entering into its spirit? He is a fine translator as a rule but to do justice to spiritual writings one has to catch their inner afflatus and empathise with their supra-intellectual vision. You have referred to Mahatma Gandhi in the Lal-context. His doctrine of Non-violence is a commendable one and goes back to Hindu no less than Buddhist scriptures. But in certain circumstances it has no validity. Even Buddha never meant to abolish the fighting class—the Kshatriyas—whose duty it is to defend with arms their country against aggressors. His rule of *ahimsa* was an absolute only for those who took to monkhood. The others had to learn not to be aggressive: that is all. I doubt if he would have approved of the Gandhian gesture during the Battle for Britain when the Luftwaffe was pounding the country mercilessly and preparing the way for an all-out invasion by Hitler's armies. The advice was then given to England to practise non-violence, submit to Hitler, welcome him and thereby melt his heart. Here there was a lack of insight into the Rakshasic Force that was making Hitler its instrument. As all occultists know, the Asura, the Rakshasa, the Pisacha—the Titan, the Giant, the Demon—by their "typal", non-evolutionary nature, cannot be mended: they have to be ended. The British in India, for all their superior airs and occasional brutality, were manifesting human traits gone awry: they could be touched by non-violence, though even they at times required to be tackled in a different manner. Also, basically it was a change in world-conditions and Britain's own fortunes that created the ground for India's independence. And, unlike the Nazis, quite a number of Englishmen had a mind of their own: they were themselves in favour of India's freedom. There is a time for non-violence and there is a time for active resistance. All efforts should be made, as by Krishna, for a peaceful solution, but when they fail, a call to arms is inevitable if mankind is to progress. Extreme adherence to the Gandhian line would be a backward step. The ideal course would be a fight with others after one has fought with one's own common nature and got in touch with one's deepest self which is in contact with the Infinite, the Eternal who is the world's Lord and Lover. In short, to follow the light which is shed by Avatars like

Krishna and radiates from scriptures like the Gita.

Reference to Krishna and the Gita is an appropriate approach to the theme of the Kaliyuga on which you have interesting comments. According to tradition, the Kaliyuga came the moment Krishna's "lotus-feet" left the earth. The message of the Gita is, therefore, the last spiritual summons to us from the pre-Kali epoch. I am not speaking of the historical date of this scripture. Whatever that may be, spiritual tradition has to look on it in this manner. And I should think that no other scripture has hailed from the past with so comprehensive and synthesising a revelation of the secrets of Reality. The vision, to which you allude, of the successive loss of a quarter of Reality with the series of the four yugas is an old Indian insight. One version speaks of a cow originally standing on four legs but with the passing of each yuga losing one of them until in the Kali it is precariously poised on a single leg. We may consider the Gita's threefold message—Karma, Jnana, Bhakti—as supplying the spiritual support in an epoch in which the Time-cow has lost three of its four upholding limbs. How shall we understand the occult import of the last of these members?

A fancy of mine has it that the Gita itself provides the answer. What is its culminating word? Earlier the triple path of Work, Knowledge and Devotion has been elucidated and a varied disclosure of Divinity has been given to Arjuna by Krishna, including the apocàlypse of the World-Form and the Time-Spirit where we have those phrases which occurred to the physicist Oppenheimer during the experimental explosion of the atomic bomb at Alamogordo, "Such is the light of this body of God as if a thousand suns had risen at once in heaven." Now, in the very last chapter of the eighteen, the Divine Charioteer prepares the final revelation by telling the disciple: "Further hear the most secret, the supreme word that I shall speak to thee..." Then the great secret is voiced: "Abandon all dharmas and take refuge in Me alone, I will deliver thee from all sin and evil, do not grieve" (XVIII, 66). This seems at first sight a somersault of a statement. Hasn't Krishna declared the Avatar's role to be the restoration of dharma in a time of its decline? What does he intend now?

I believe we have to attend to the plural number used: "all dharmas." There is, as every student of Hinduism knows, a dharma that is *sanatana*, "eternal". Surely there should be no abandonment of that. What is to be abandoned is the multitude of norms that spring up from time to time according to occasions. These norms are called "dharmas of the heart", the promptings of the surface-being, the common natural reactions or responses to particular situations, and they depend also on the psychological state of an individual, like the state of Arjuna when he saw the unpleasant work he was asked to do as a protagonist of the Pandavas against the Kauravas who had among them his loved relatives and revered elders and honoured teachers—the state in which his heart prompted him to refuse to fight. An additional nuance of temporary or occasional dharmas relates to certain conventions of an age: these conventions may

be passing social conveniences or legal technicalities. A further shade would refer to the outer trappings of religion—its observances, rituals, customary practices. To be told to transcend such dharmas would not contradict the clinging to what the Avatar periodically comes to maintain in order to ensure terrestrial harmony. But I would go a step beyond. I would say that along with asking Arjuna to relinquish such non-eternal dharmas, Krishna has a still deeper command. It is as though he were laying bare to Arjuna an inner spiritual movement which, if resorted to with absolute intensity, would bring in a single blaze the luminous results of the triple path already set forth. Work, Knowledge, Devotion would yield their superhuman sense spontaneously, without involving their special disciplines, by means of an all-compassing self-surrender to the Divine—the will fused with Him, the thoughts plunged in Him, the emotions rapt by Him through one sustained sweeping soul-gesture. This is how in the Kaliyuga the God-seeker can make the Cow of existence afford to lose all its legs except one, the last remaining limb concentrating in itself the strength of the other three and a new energy of simplified significance going straight to the spiritual mark.

My somewhat complex attempt to read in the apparent negatives of the Kaliyuga a hidden positiveness seems to find support in an insight of Sri Aurobindo's apropos of the idea that from aeon to aeon God "manifests himself in an ever-evolving humanity which grows in experience by a series of expansions and contractions towards its destined self-realisation in God". Sri Aurobindo comments: "That evolution is not denied by the Hindu theory of *Yugas*. Each age in the Hindu system has its own line of moral and spiritual evolution, and the decline of the *dharma* or established law of conduct from the *Satya* to the *Kaliyuga* is not in reality a deterioration but a detrition of the outward forms and props of spirituality in order to prepare a deeper spiritual intensity within the heart. In each *Kaliyuga* mankind gains something in essential spirituality. Whether we take the modern scientific or the ancient Hindu standpoint the progress of humanity is a fact. The wheel of Brahma rotates for ever but it does not turn in the same place; its rotations carry it forward."

(15.8.1988)

AMAL KIRAN (K. D. SETHNA)

GLIMPSES OF PAVITRA

(Continued from the issue of October 1988)

FROM REMINISCENCES OF PAVITRA AND MRITYUNJOY

Part 6

Early Days in the Ashram: 1925-1927

Pavitra's autobiographical talk ends with his arrival in the Ashram and acceptance by Sri Aurobindo., But Mrityunjy's account continues with a description of Pavitra's first years in the Ashram.

MRITYUNJOY: Pavitra came to Pondicherry in the middle of November 1925. He concealed from his friends in Japan his real intention in coming and told them simply that he was visiting India. This he did to avoid discouraging discussions.

Pavitra set off from Japan and halted on the way in Indo-China, then the biggest French colony in the Far East. His younger brother Albert Saint-Hilaire, a radio engineer, was in service there under the French Government. Albert insisted that Pavitra spend at least a month with him, and would have liked him to remain longer, for he was not yet married and all alone.

From Saigon Pavitra went to Colombo by steamship. There he had to wait for three weeks, as the passage to India was suspended; the railway tracks in South India had been washed away due to heavy rains. When the train service was restored, he left Colombo for Dhanushkoti, the southern tip of Indian soil, by ferry steamer. The sea was terribly rough, and Pavitra had his worst experience at sea, on this the last sea-voyage in his life. The small steamer was tossed like a cork on the waves and the passengers were thrown around in their cabins the whole time. It was a last attempt by Nature, perhaps, to resist Pavitra's spiritual quest! But he was indomitable by nature. Once over, the sea-trip was a story of the past, a thing of no importance!

Pavitra reached Pondicherry by train, arriving on December 17. He had already written two letters from Japan to Sri Aurobindo, but he didn't get any reply. Still, he was never one to be discouraged by outer appearances; so he came; put up in the Hotel d'Europe, and immediately set out for the Ashram. At that time the Ashram had not yet started in an official way. Sri Aurobindo was living in the upstairs front room of Library House. He was informed that Pavitra was there, and he granted him an interview. On this first day, Pavitra was

the speaker and Sri Aurobindo the listener. He narrated to Sri Aurobindo his life's yearning and the reason for his visit, why he had left Europe and come to India: he wanted liberation from ego, from ignorance and falsehood; he wanted to realise God. Sri Aurobindo listened to him patiently and told him to come back the next day.

That afternoon, the Mother met him. This was quite a departure from the rule in those days, because She was not meeting people then, especially visitors. She mainly remained inside and looked after Sri Aurobindo; it was he who was out and seeing people. Now it is not difficult for us to understand the mystery behind the Mother's seeing Pavitra then; but at that time it was an exception. Pavitra told the Mother in brief what he had said to Sri Aurobindo about the purpose of his visit. The Mother spoke to him very gently and affectionately. Her eyes, Pavitra said, were wonderful, glittering all the time, and he got something tangible from her. He felt clearly that his decision was taken and went back to the hotel inwardly convinced that his place was here and nowhere else. Until then he had not been sure that he would remain in Pondicherry and join the Ashram. In Colombo he had considered going either to Adyar in Madras (to the Theosophical Society) or to Benares to become a sadhu—he had even bought a book for learning Hindi; the book was in his almirah for a long time.

The next morning Pavitra went again to see Sri Aurobindo. This time Sri Aurobindo spoke. He said that there were some traditional yogis in India who could help Pavitra to gain what he wanted, but they would be hard to find and difficult to approach, especially for a European. The liberation (*mukti*) that Pavitra wanted, said Sri Aurobindo, is a necessary first step for his Yoga. But there is a second step, and that is the descent of the Divine Power for the transformation of one's nature. Finally Sri Aurobindo told him, "So I place this ideal before you. If you choose it, remain here among us." These words of Sri Aurobindo were not simply words, said Pavitra. The day before, by the Mother's touch, he had been inwardly convinced that his life would find its fulfilment here. Now outwardly he realised that Sri Aurobindo had accepted him. He was certain that at last he had found what he had long been searching for: his guru was here before him. He bowed down at Sri Aurobindo's feet, and Sri Aurobindo blessed him.

From that day on, for one full year, Pavitra had the privilege of going to Sri Aurobindo every day, talking to him and listening to his answers. Naturally he kept a record of his talks with Sri Aurobindo; selections from it have been published in the *Bulletin*.¹ Those who were with Sri Aurobindo in those days, such as Barindra and Kshitish, have said that from the time Philippe came (for in the beginning he was called by his French name) the talks took a more scientific turn.

¹ See the quarterly issues of the *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education* from August 1969 to November 1971.

Although Pavitra had been accepted by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, he had to stay a few more days in the hotel. Then he was officially informed by a letter from Amrita, who signed as the Manager, Arya Office, Pondicherry, that Sri Aurobindo had given him permission to live in a room in Rosary House. (That room later became Navinbhai's box-making department.) Pavitra kept this letter ever after as a memento of his entrance into the Ashram. Rosary House was then only a rented annexe of the Ashram compound; to reach it from the main building one had to pass through some small openings specially made for the purpose. Opposite to Pavitra another sadhak was staying in the room that has now been turned into Dyuman's stores for the Mother. The rent for Pavitra's room was Rs. 15 per month. For the first year Pavitra had to manage his own affairs—rent and food and everything else.

As we have already said, there was no Ashram as such in 1925, only the "Arya Office". The Ashram actually started after the Darshan of 24 November 1926, when Sri Aurobindo withdrew to his room and the Mother took outward charge of the disciples' lives. When Pavitra came, there were not more than fifteen disciples; some were living with Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in the Library House; others stayed in Rosary House or in Guest House. Each house did its own cooking.

In the early days, even around Sri Aurobindo there was practically no organised communal life. In large measure people were free to do what they liked—Sri Aurobindo never forced them to do anything. It was not in his nature to be a task-master in the ordinary affairs of daily life. We have the story that if, while sitting in front of him, you put your finger into a fire, he will not say anything; only if you ask his advice will he tell you to remove it so that it won't get burned. Naturally, the story is an exaggeration, but the truth behind it is not altogether an imagination. The point is that Sri Aurobindo will always help you if you ask him, but otherwise he will let you do as you like. Thus in the physical sphere, there was, if not exactly a chaos, at least a kind of tamasic looseness, so very common to the ordinary Indian temperament. Nobody took much interest in the household affairs, as that would be considered worldly-mindedness and thus below the dignity of a disciple. There were people, of course, in charge of marketing, cooking and other such matters. They discharged their duty loyally, but still it was no more than a duty. Tamasic carelessness was mistaken for yogic detachment.

Again, most of the disciples did not really understand what the Mother was doing. They kept a respectful aloofness from her, finding that Sri Aurobindo had given her a very high place in matters of sadhana. She, on her part, did not make herself often visible or easily approachable. The disciples knew that she was a dignified personality but little more than that. Since April 1920, she had been living in the same house as Sri Aurobindo and a few others, but she had remained somewhat apart from the daily routine of the sadhaks. They did

not really have a chance to understand who she was or what she was preparing for the future. Later, of course, in his letters and books, Sri Aurobindo clearly indicated that the right line of approach to his Yoga was to open to the Mother in order to receive her force and light and thus to grow in consciousness.

A story, and a true one, will perhaps prove revealing here. In 1922, Amrita, one of Sri Aurobindo's most intimate disciples, complained to him about his difficulties in sadhana. Sri Aurobindo pointed to the Mother's room and told him, "Go and tell her about these things. It is only she who can give you the necessary practical guidance. You will not get it by remaining with me for twenty years. I can only give you some force; the rest you will have to do by yourself. But for tackling the problems of physical life, she is the occult master." So Amrita approached the Mother. About a month later, he told Sri Aurobindo that he had spoken to the Mother, but after several requests he had been granted only fifteen minutes of meditation with her on two occasions—nothing more. "What chance was there," he asked, "of discussing individual problems?" Sri Aurobindo replied, "Yes, that is how it is at present. It is because she does not want to put herself forward. But if there is a collective service to the Divine, she will not be able to remain behind. She will come forward to help in the service, and it will be a unique opportunity for the spiritual progress of the world." Such was Sri Aurobindo's hint and prophecy in 1922. But even at the end of 1925, when Pavitra came, only Amrita and Nolini recognised who the Mother was; the others at most had some formal devotion.

Pavitra's arrival at this time was surely not just by chance; from the occult point of view, it must have been prearranged. Otherwise, why would a man who had nothing spiritual in his background go off to the East in search of a guru? Why would he suffer such tremendous physical hardship when he had every door open to him for material prosperity and a high station in life? Many Indians who take to the spiritual life have no other line open to them; and the religious tradition in their homes makes them easily tend to shun the material life. Perhaps that is why the majority of those who came to the Ashram before 1926 had difficulty in adjusting themselves to the new conditions. For when the Mother took charge, the material side of life was no longer overlooked; the disciples had to participate as an organised unit, not only outwardly in order to live, but inwardly, to make life itself a part of their spiritual experience. Many Indians were handicapped in this new outlook on life, whereas Pavitra had an immense advantage: he had already been seasoned to a disciplined physical life by his upbringing, education, war-time experience and stay in Japan. And, as he said, his search was for the truth of life *on earth*.

Due to this inner and outer preparation, Pavitra's contact with the Mother was unquestionably very intimate from the beginning. The Mother always gives this intimacy to those who approach her for the development of their consciousness, but for many it is not easy to keep. Either they dawdle on the way, or

they forget its aim and purpose. The intimacy then becomes the ordinary one between mother and child, with all sorts of demands for earthly comforts and conveniences. As a result, the inner contact gets diminished, even though the outer remains. The Mother does not withdraw, but gives her children a chance to remember and renew the inner contact. Some do; they get back the right consciousness and try to live from inside outwards. But many do not; they continue to go their ordinary way. Then a day comes when circumstances present themselves in such a way that the outer intimacy gets interrupted, even though the Mother's inner help is always there.

In Pavitra's case destiny had equipped him with the firm determination always to walk straight towards the highest realisation in life. From December 1925 to November 1926, when Sri Aurobindo withdrew and the Mother came forward, Pavitra had almost a year to prepare himself for surrendering to the Divine through the Mother. It was easy for him, but not for many of the old associates of Sri Aurobindo. Their habitual clinging was more to Sri Aurobindo than to the Mother, and to a "human" Sri Aurobindo who indulged them by never forcing them to take up a life of discipline and self-surrender. Always he advised this in his writings, but most of them did not apply it to themselves. They were in intimate and affectionate contact with Sri Aurobindo—a unique advantage, but also a disadvantage because in close human relationships the junior always demands concessions from the superior. Sri Aurobindo's fellow-travellers of those days in the Arya Office, Pondicherry, knew him alone as their all-in-all in life. Since he came to Pondicherry, they followed him; but he had followed the dictates of his inner voice, they had only followed him. True, they were ready to give their lives for him. Some had been with him since 1910, others had come later, but all had lived sparsely with him year after year. For them Sri Aurobindo was everything. Certainly it is no common virtue, no small merit. But as Sri Aurobindo had never insisted that they change in their nature, they had never cared enough to change it. With the Mother it was different. She was there, as she always has been, precisely to help man to change his nature. But for that he must look into himself, ask for her help and follow the line of action prescribed by her. Then she pours into him her force and light and consciousness.

Sri Aurobindo's withdrawal and the Mother's coming forward was just for that purpose: to hasten the transformation of human nature, to make it fit for the manifestation of the highest Truth and Consciousness, which Sri Aurobindo called the Supramental. Sri Aurobindo always stressed in clear and unambiguous terms that his Yoga is different from the old Yogas, and that it is difficult. He did not encourage everybody to do his Yoga. But those whom he accepted were naturally expected to follow the discipline necessary for the purpose. Yet because he never forced them to do it, they never applied the discipline to their outer life. But when the Mother took charge—or rather, when Sri Aurobindo

gave her the charge—life in the old Arya Office was rapidly altered; step by step the Ashram took shape in a harmonised, orderly fashion.

(To be continued)

BLACK HOLE

A HOLE in the belly's pit
 Withdrawing all vital rays
 Becomes dense, and without
 There is increasing vacuum
 And shadowy pain.

A seeing eye on the tip of a beam,
 A periscope projects from inner seas
 And views the black hole, sucking
 All joy and verve and dream.
 Now aware—the central being acts.

The hole within—power concentrate—
 Is held, plucked and offered
 With hands burning, faith ardent,
 To the inmost fire.

The warmed awakened being responds
 Pouring into the fire-singed expectations
 And flesh of hurt ego. All are burnt
 To extinction; freed from its sulk by heat
 The vital emerges anew.

A yawn escapes, the body stretches
 Hands aloft with fervour and joy.
 Fetched by the flames the Grace descends
 And lifts and lights my self with Her smile.

DINKAR PALANDE

THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

(Continued from the issue of October 1988)

The Mother's Message

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



Vol. Three 1959

No. 23

I GOT the accommodation in the YWCA. I had a good number of things to carry from one place to another. For, I changed far too many places. It was trying and tiring. But now colleges were at walking distance, which was very convenient.

I paid the money in advance. A warden showed me my room on the second floor. It was small. I unpacked my cases.

Sudha came. Then we went out to dinner. It was a chilly, misty evening. We parted after wishing each other good night.

I changed and got into my bed. Sleepless eyes stared in the darkness. Suddenly a sense of terrible foreboding seized me. I felt a shiver of dread run through me.

The night drew near to dawn. My eyes heavy with sleep closed a little. Meanwhile the warden banged on my door with a big key. She went round each and every room to wake up the girls in the same manner which I found frightfully odd.

I awoke with a start and stood near my window. The weather looked far from promising. Gloomy and incoherent thoughts rushed through my mind. They matched the day—Sunday—grey, dreary with a slow, steady drizzle.

Unwillingly I got ready and went to the basement for my breakfast. There was a self-service stall. I took my tray and sat at a table. I was all alone. Then out of the blue an Englishwoman appeared and asked me whether she could join me. I agreed. Afterwards she started sobbing out her life-story. I was surprised, because she was a total stranger. I excused myself and left for my room. She followed.

Her chatter was trivial and boring. She seemed to be a bundle of nerves.

I asked her to leave my room and sit downstairs in the public lounge, because I wanted to take my bath. She said that it was comfortable here and that I should take my bath leisurely.

She drew deeply on her cigarette and leaned back her head against the chair.

It was impolite to be rude to an elderly woman. Besides I thought that since she was in this respectable place she must be a lady. I let her sit in my room.

Reluctantly I took my clothes, towel, soap, shampoo, scented bath-oil, powder and started to leave the room. Then instantly I turned back and took the tiny transistor radio which was a souvenir of the Mother. I took also my Rolex wrist-watch and Parker pen—gifts from my parents.

The woman blew clouds of smoke into the room watching my movements through them with her half-closed eyes.

It struck me in a flash of illumination that I must take my gold chain with a large shining gold locket suspended from it. It had been given to me by the Mother.

In the locket nestled a sacred gold-chain the Mother had worn on one of her ankles for several years. She put it round my neck when I met her for the first time in November 1954.

Now it was completely worn out, so she got it secured in a gold locket. On one side of the locket there was her symbol and on the other Sri Aurobindo's symbol.

The locket was on the table near my bed. It was quite heavy, so every night before going to bed I took it off my neck and slipped it under my pillow. But unhappily that day I set it on the table. I advanced my steps to take it, but my innermost self or perhaps the Supreme Power which protects us all unfailingly in the worst moments of danger and catastrophe, whispered to me: "Do not take the locket from the table."

I retraced my steps and went to take my bath. The time was 11.45. a.m. Exactly at 12 o'clock my heart gave a jerk while I was still in my bath. I felt as if my pulse had lost its regularity. A catch of uneasiness, vague and indefinable, seemed to suggest a lurking danger of which I was totally unaware.

After finishing the bath at 12.15 I entered the room. My stomach turned an abrupt somersault. A sick feeling coiled in it. I caught my breath. The woman had disappeared with the locket and some £20/- from my handbag leaving behind her a ghastly, sinister atmosphere. The incident stunned me into silence for a few minutes.

Later I reported to the warden who then rushed to the lady in charge of the YWCA. She called me.

I was shaken to the core. My legs gave out on me. I plumped down into a chair. Despite the state of my mind, I found my voice sounding clear. She heard me out, then asked me severely: "Miss Hindocha, in the first place, why did you allow the woman into your room?"

I felt emotionally too washed out to make any proper reply except that the woman was insistent and I could not help it.

She said: "Such a thing has never happened here all these years. This is the first time it occurred."

Afterwards she phoned to the C.I.D.—Committee of Imperial Defence; Criminal Investigation Department.

I was perilously close to tears, but managed to hold them back. The nauseating sensation of deep unease returned acutely as I went back to my room. Each second that passed was like a shaft piercing my heart. I longed for a sympathetic response which none gave. I felt as though I had lived years in a few hours. This was a crushing blow.

I had an unhappy, unendurable restless night. My violent urge to leave the hostel became imperative.

The dawn broke—pale light shone through the side of the curtain covering the window. I threw aside the quilt and rose from my bed, exhausted.

My spirits sank still lower—but with a great effort I set my feeling aside, approached the table and started writing to the Mother.

The memory of the Mother enshrined in my heart was intenser than ever. I knew that when everything in my life failed me I should bear in my mind that the Mother loved me and that love would save me from all evils.

At about 11.30 a.m. a man from the C.I.D. came over and asked me several

questions. I endeavoured to maintain my calm as I answered him, but my nerves were frazzled. Besides, I showed him my photograph with Aunt Margaret in which I had worn the locket.

He left saying he would make investigations and would let me know. I thanked him.

It was a fragile hope, but all I could cling to.

I went out to post my letter to the Mother. Now to crown it all, I received a letter from the Manager of Barclays Bank Ltd., that my account was over-drawn. I was shocked.

Immediately I telephoned Aunt Margaret to come with £50/- She was a haven—always dependable. I could count on her to stand by me.

She arrived with the money and told me: "Huta, I have been in terrible anxiety about you these past few hours. You really had me in all of a twitter with worry. Now tell me what happened and why you wish to quit this place."

I said: "Aunt, I take a very grim view of this episode, because the chain along with the locket were not ordinary. They held the Mother's marvellous Force." And my eyes filled with irresistible tears. I continued: "I have the strong impression that the woman was not only a thief but a desperate character. If I had taken the locket from the table, she would not have hesitated to use violence on me in order to get possession of it. She might have murdered me. From this I can conceive that the hostile forces are everywhere out in the lists. They are actively present—bent upon mischief and how they always wait to pounce on unwary beings! Yet what possible harm can they do to me when the divine forces also are present? You see, the instinct I had of not picking up the locket proved to me that the Divine too was everywhere vigilant and victorious. Nevertheless, there have been too many shocks in my young life. Aunt, I really want to leave this place. I feel disgusted. Thank you for the money which I will credit in my account. When I get the money from my father I will repay the sum to you."

Suddenly I closed my eyes against the weariness—against the problems and conflicts all around me.

Aunt Margaret said with solicitude: "How earnestly you wanted to get into the YWCA hostel and what a bad experience you had when we finally found you a place here! I know, you are not the sort of person to say things for no reason. I sympathise with you. We shall certainly find another place. Don't worry."

Later we went to the lady in charge. I told her that I wished to leave the hostel and that I would be much obliged if she would give me the refund. She consented. Then she disclosed:

"The wretched woman has vanished without paying her heavy bills. She is a great thief. Moreover, I telephoned the office in West End where she was supposed to start her new work. They said that the woman had not turned up.

She took a handsome amount from the office in advance. I also found that she had borrowed money from some girls here and never returned it.”

Now the pieces began to fall into place when we heard the lady. We thanked her and came out of her office. In the meantime, the Bank Manager telephoned me that it was a mistake on the part of his staff—somebody had drawn the money and they thought it had been I!

I told him that his letter to me was like a bolt from the blue. I requested him to be very careful. He apologised and assured me that he would not commit the mistake again. I gave the money back to Aunt Margaret with gratitude and appreciation.

I drifted aimlessly through the days. The atmosphere of the hostel was unbearable. Aunt Magaret found another accommodation in Holland Park, which was not very far from Doris's flat. But unfortunately I still had a few more days to spend in the YWCA.

When I had no classes in the afternoon, I visited the British Museum, which was very near to the hostel. Bloomsbury, which had originated with the purchase of Sir Hans Sloane's library and collection in 1753, and of the manuscripts collected by the famous antiquarian, Sir Robert Cotton. The funds were raised by public lottery. The Museum was first opened in 1759 in Montague House but a large building becoming necessary to house the new and growing acquisitions, the present one was erected on the Montague House site. It was finished in 1847, at a cost of £ 1,000,000. The King Edward VII Extension was built between 1908 and 1914. The reading room, its great dome, the second largest in the world, was built in 1857, and the Museum Library contains over six million volumes.

Apart from the huge library, there is an enormous museum section. It displayed the original antiquities—illustrating the histories, arts, crafts of numerous civilisations.

I was fascinated to see ancient paintings, Greek sculptures, Assyrian winged bulls about forty feet high. There are priceless objects which were excavated and now exhibited with informative notes. There were also Egyptian mummies and Sarcophaguses.

I saw the mummies—some still packed, some half-opened—lying in rows with different poses. One among them was of Katebet which was striking. The whole scene gave the impression as if living spirits were still hovering over the mummies. The air was eerie and made me shudder. The Mother has revealed several things about Egyptian mummies.

There were many valuable manuscripts which owing to centuries became brittle.

I admired the countless objects of the past. The bronze statue of TARA—Nepalese 14 century A.D. or earlier—was charming.

I came to know much later that Sri Aurobindo had once lived in Great Russell

Street. He must have visited the library at the British Museum—the greatest, oldest and finest library in the British Commonwealth.

*

The lady in charge informed me that the man from the C.I.D. could not locate either the locket or the woman.

She gave me the refund and wished me good luck.

The Mother sent me a card dated 30.3.60 in answer to my letter.

On the top of the card were her soothing words:

“Be grateful for all ordeals, they are the shortest way to the Divine.”

She had written under this:

“My dear little child Huta,

Do not be worried. Since a few days I knew that you were in difficulties and my love and force were with you more intimately than ever.

Money and jewel can be replaced, the Divine’s love is unreplaceable.

With love and blessings.”

Relief flooded through me temporarily. I knew everything passed with time. But some things leave scars.

I had loved the feeling of the sacred chain around my neck. It had given me a sense of security. But now? Tears ran down my face, the slow, painful tears of utter despair.

(To be continued)

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SRI AUROBINDO'S EYES

If the face is in general the index of the mind, what then in particular are the eyes? The deepest chambers of one's heart may be revealed through them. Through the eyes the pages of the dim past and the distant future may be unfolded. The Mother used to judge the psychic condition and spiritual gift of many a Sadhak through the mirror of their eyes, even as seen in photos. The future of many an aspirant was decided only through the image of their eyes.

Does 'Love at first sight' not mean the meeting of two pairs of eyes and its long-lasting consequences? How many tender hearts have been united for life only through a simple look at first! If such are the properties of commoners' eyes, what about those of a poet or a yogi? And what about the eyes of Sri Aurobindo?

Before he left Baroda, Sri Aurobindo had made a deep impression on students and colleagues alike. Dr. C.R. Reddy recalled:

"I had the honour of knowing him. We had a number of friends in common. Mr. A.B. Clark, the Principal of the Baroda College, remarked to me: 'So you met Aurobindo Ghose? Did you notice his eyes? There is a mystic fire and light in them. They penetrate into the beyond. If Joan of Arc heard heavenly voices, Aurobindo probably sees heavenly visions.'"

Dr. Reddy wondered how a materialist like Mr. Clark could be so discerning. The second famous Englishman to recognise those eyes was Sir Edward Baker, the Governor General of Bengal. Let us hear about him from Sri Aurobindo himself:

"He visited us in Alipore Jail and told Charu Chandra Dutt, 'Have you seen Aurobindo Ghose's eyes? He has the eyes of a mad man!' Charu Dutt took great pains to convince him that I was not at all mad but a Karma Yogi."

British author and M.P., Henri Nevinson, while giving an account of the Surat Congress (1907) wrote:

"Grave and silent, I think without saying a single word, Mr. Aurobindo Ghose took the Chair and sat unmoved, with far-off eyes, as one who gazes at futurity."

Another inspired expression was the result of the interview with Sri Aurobindo by the adventurous French lady Madame Alexandra David-Neël:

"I am truly grateful to the friends who advised me to visit this man. He thinks with such clarity, there is such lucidness in his reasoning, such lustre in his eyes that he leaves one with the impression of having contemplated the genius of India such as one dreams it to be after reading the noblest pages of Hindu philosophy."

Now we may go in for two small anecdotes:

One is from Upendranath Bandopadhyay, as related by Nirodbaran. I cull the information from Nirodbaran's Bengali version of his *Twelve Years with Sri Aurobindo*. It was during Sri Aurobindo's *Bandemataram* period. He

had coined the word "Churchianity" in an editorial. The proof-reader took it to be the result of carelessness. He changed it to "Christianity". Next day Sri Aurobindo looking at the paper got stunned. The "learned one" was called. He replied: "Sir, I am an M.A. from Calcutta University and I have read quite a few books in English. I have also consulted a few dictionaries. But I did not find the word 'Churchianity' anywhere. So I thought 'Christianity' was the word you had in mind." He was going to elaborate the point further, but looking at the eyes of Sri Aurobindo he suddenly left.

The second anecdote was learnt from Shri Arun Chandra Dutt in an interview that the present author had with him at Chandernagore. Shri Arun Chandra Dutt was a disciple of Motilal Roy who was in charge of Prabartak Sangha. He addressed Sri Aurobindo as Maha Guru. He recalled that once during the early years of Sri Aurobindo's stay in Pondicherry, Dutt was sent there by Motilal. One day a small quantity of liquor was served to each of the persons present there. It was not a daily affair, of course, but there was no ban either, if it could be arranged. Sri Aurobindo was seated in a chair. Dutt was a puritan and had never before tasted the thing. He announced that he would not touch it. Needless to add that his ego got some satisfaction in such an announcement. The result was that he received a calm and beneficent look from Sri Aurobindo. He recalled that his entire being, physically from head to toe, got drenched in a cool and resuscitating feeling, his whole being was brimmed with a divine love. Throughout his life he never forgot the touch of those noble eyes.

Motilal Roy and a few others had also such rare opportunities of meeting with the look of the Master.

Now we may try to be satisfied with the look that is available in his photos. Special mention may be made of his photo taken with the Mother, on the April Darshan Day of 1950 by the French photographer, Henri Cartier Brésson. In it one of the eyes is looking at you but the other's gaze is extended towards infinity.

Shall we compare his look with that of the Mother? It is beyond us. But we may share with many one occult truth, that whenever one concentrates deeply on the Mother's eyes, he feels a pull or push on his psychic centre. But while so doing with Sri Aurobindo's eyes he feels a pressure on his head or beyond the head, at the Sahasrara chakra. The experience is enough for one to begin with. One may obtain many experiences through Sri Aurobindo's eyes.

AJU MUKHOPADHYAY

SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA

(Continued from the issue of 15 August 1988)

TRUTH is many-eyed. Sri Aurobindo, the soul of India, approached India's civilization through the ages in a new wide perspective. Man, according to Sri Aurobindo, "lives in society and by society and every society has its own general Dharma, and the individual life must be fitted into this wider law of movement. But there too the individual's part in society, and his nature and the needs of his capacity and temperament vary and have many kinds and degrees: the social law must make some room for this variety and would lose by being rigidly one for all. The man of knowledge, the man of power, the productive and acquisitive man, the priest, scholar, poet, artist, ruler, fighter, trader, tiller of the soil, craftsman, labourer, servant cannot usefully have the same training, cannot be shaped in the same pattern, cannot all follow the same way of living. All ought not to be put under the same tables of the law; for that would be a senseless geometric rigidity that would spoil the plastic truth of life. Each has his type of nature and there must be a rule for the perfection of that type; each has his own proper function and there must be a canon and ideal for the function... Differing with the type of the man and the type of the function these special Dharmas would yet rise towards the greater law and truth that contains and overtops the others and is universally effective. This then was the Dharma, special for the special person, stage of development, pursuit of life or individual field of action, but universal too in the broad lines which all ought to pursue."¹

Human life is very far from static. From age to age it resurges, and brings new development, each age needs a creative synthesis. The earlier phase in India was... "the magnificent youth of the nation, in which a fathomless spiritual insight was at work, a subtle intuitive vision and a deep, clear and greatly outlined intellectual and ethical thinking and heroic action and creation which founded and traced the plan and made the permanent structure of her unique culture and civilization."²

Dr. Munshi says: "The cohesive force in this community was furnished by the basic idea of an all-pervading law—*Rita*—which sustained the universe and regulated the conduct of man and the Law was presided over by a mighty God and Asura, the great Varuna."³

Then Dr. Munshi refers to the mingling of varying local elements and the adjustments of customs and beliefs. He concludes: "Despite the fusion, the collective consciousness that Aryans—whether by descent or adoption—were the elect and their ways God-ordained and hence unalterably persisted. Their culture had become a conscious instrument of providing a social pattern based on a kind of traditional common law, elaborate ritual, a background of heroic tradition, preserved in epic recitals, a powerful language and literature

and a philosophy of thought and of life. The fundamental law *Rita*, now called Dharma (*Eṣa dharma sanātanaḥ*) in the Manu Smṛiti is an echo of an ancient unalterable principle, this law was eternal.”⁴

Sri Aurobindo focuses the eternal law with a new vision. He has aptly put his insight in these words: “The universal embracing Dharma in the Indian idea is a law of ideal perfection for the developing mind and soul of man; it compels him to grow in the power and force of certain high or large universal qualities which in their harmony build a highest type of manhood.”⁵

Historians and scholars have tried their best to show the conscious evolving spirit in Indian history. Sri Aurobindo presents the background of this history and points out the finely formulated and orderly scheme which kept the full course of the human spirit in sight. He has stated: “On this firm and noble basis Indian civilisation grew to its maturity and became a thing rich, splendid and unique. While it filled the view with the last mountain prospect of a supreme spiritual elevation, it did not neglect the life of the levels. It lived between the busy life of the city and village, the freedom and seclusion of the forest and the last overarching illimitable ether. Moving firmly between life and death it saw beyond both and cut out a hundred high roads to immortality.”⁶

The social order based on the Upanishads, Veda and Gita became weakened gradually, and narrowness entered in the synthetic caste system which had attended to the various psychological and physical types. Society became limited and coated with self-interests of different groups. In spite of this lowering atmosphere India maintained its effective trend of evolving spirituality.

Sisir Kumar Mitra says: “The state of affairs was very near to a repetition of the conditions that had precipitated the Bharata War and compelled a direct intervention of the Divine. While the heterodox sects, about sixty of which existed in the time of Buddha, were abroad, challenging the ritualistic performances to which religion had reduced itself, the society was dominated by particular classes whose claim to be its custodians alienated the majority of the people. There must now come one who could give a new turn and fresh impetus to Indian life and rescue it from the chaos.”⁷

At this critical moment of Indian history Buddha gave the message of freedom and compassion. He appeared in the historical evolution of India in order to restore Dharma.

Sri Aurobindo has revealed the inner spirit of the evolving crisis in India. He has given a view of the various syntheses of spirituality down the ages and points to a new one possible. “There have been others in the past which have powerfully influenced the national mind and there is no reason why there should not be a yet more perfect synthesis in the future. It is such a synthesis embracing all life and action in its scope that the teaching of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda have been preparing. What is dimly beginning now is a repetition on a wider stage of what happened once before in India, more rapidly but to smal-

ler issues, when the Buddha lived and taught his philosophy and ethics to the Aryan nations. Then as now a mighty spirit, it matters not whether Avatar or Vibhuti, the full expression of God in man or a great outpouring of the divine energy, came down among men and brought into their daily life and practice the force and impulse of utter spirituality. And this time it is the full light and not a noble part, unlike Buddhism, which, expressing Vedantic morality, yet ignored a fundamental reality of Vedanta and was therefore expelled from its prime seat and cradle. The material result was then what it will be now, a great political, moral and social revolution which made India the Guru of the nations and carried the light she had to give all over the civilised world, moulding ideas and creating forms which are still extant and a living force.... The world waits for the rising of India to receive the divine flood in its fullness.”⁸

(To be continued)

NILIMA DAS

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4. *Ibid*, p. VII
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THE AUSPICIOUS FIGURE 8



DID you notice this figure? There is a line in *Savitri* (I can't quote exactly): "Wherever Nature is, He (the Supreme) too is there, for, He and She are one"¹ I was asked to find an illustration for this line,² and I found the 8

The drawing starts here (*Mother draws the first half of the 8*): it's the Supreme leaning forward. Then, Nature in its base, Nature in sleep (the base of the 8). And here (the top of the 8), I put two little drawings (as if to symbolize an eye, a nose and a mouth) to evoke the summit of consciousness. So the Supreme is leaning forward like this and Nature rises like this (*Mother draws the second half of the 8*) All this (the top of the 8) is golden, then it becomes prismatic (the middle of the 8), and deep blue here (the base of the 8), in the most material part of the creation, and the blue becomes lighter and lighter (going upward again), and finally golden Perpetually

—THE MOTHER

¹ As long as Nature lasts, he too is there,
For this is sure that he and she are one

—*Savitri* Bk I, C 4

² The reference is to the series of paintings of the whole of *Savitri* which Huta did under the Mother's direct guidance

WITHOUT HIM I EXIST NOT,
WITHOUT ME HE IS UNMANIFEST.

THE MOTHER

As long as Nature lasts, he too is there,
For this is sure that he and she are one

—SRI AUROBINDO, *Savitri*

While explaining to me this painting of Book One Canto Four picture forty-seven the Mother made a gesture with her right hand—drawing the figure of 8, and said with a smile.

You go on doing like this and it is never ending.
According to the Mother 8 is.

Occult Number
Occult Formation
Double Protection
Double Manifestation

In mathematics the sign for Infinity is the horizontal figure of 8. ∞
Apropos of “He” and “She”

Know Purusha and Prakriti to be both eternal
without beginning

The Gita XIII, 20

These Gods and Goddesses were he and she.
And Krishna and Radha for ever entwined in bliss,
And Adorer and Adored self-lost and one

Savitri Bk 7, C. 5

Sri Aurobindo has written.

The Mother and I are one and equal

15-8-88, the 116th Birth Anniversary of Sri Aurobindo—

$$1 + 1 + 6 = 8$$

1988 happens to be a leap year, which means that its 29th February was the 8th recurrence of the date of the Supramental Manifestation which took place in the leap year 1956

HUTA

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA BIRTH CENTENARY

Compiler's Note

To turn towards the heights to invoke unknown Powers, to cry out to the high Gods seems a waste of time and energy to the pragmatist and the positivist. In this article Nolini-da analyses the problem of human progress from a universal point of view with his usual insight into basic truths that point beyond all matter-engrossed confidence in human mechanisms.

SHYAM KUMARI

THE AGE OF SRI AUROBINDO

Someone has written to this effect: "This is not the age of Sri Aurobindo. His ideal of a divine life upon earth may or may not be true; at any rate it is not of today or even of tomorrow. Humanity will take some time before it reaches that stage or its possibility. What we are concerned with here and now is something perhaps less great, less spiritual, but more urgent and more practical. The problem is not to run away with one's soul, but to maintain its earthly tenement, to keep body and soul together: one has to live first, live materially before one can hope to live spiritually."

Well, the view expressed in these words is not a new revelation. It has been the cry of suffering humanity through the ages. Man has borne his cross since the beginning of his creation through want and privation, through disease and bereavement, through all manner of turmoil and tribulation, and yet—*mirabile dictu*—at the same time, in the very midst of those conditions, he has been aspiring and yearning for something else, ignoring the present, looking into the beyond. It is not the prosperous and the more happily placed in life who find it more easy to turn to the higher life, it is not the wealthiest who has the greatest opportunity to pursue a spiritual ideal. On the contrary, spiritual leaders have thought and experienced otherwise.

Apart from the well-recognised fact that only in distress does the normal man think of God and non-worldly things, the real matter, however, is that the inner life is a thing apart and follows its own line of movement, does not depend upon, is not subservient to, the kind of outer life that one may happen to live under. The Bible says indeed, "Blessed are the poor, blessed are they that mourn". ...But the Upanishad declares, on the other hand, that even as one lies happily on a royal couch, bathes and anoints himself with all the perfumes of the world, has attendants all around and always to serve him, even so, one can be full of the divine consciousness from the crown of the head to the tip of his toe-nail. In fact, a poor or a prosperous life is in no direct or even indirect ratio to a spiritual life. All the miseries and immediate needs of a physical life do not and cannot

detain or delay one from following the path of the ideal; nor can all your riches be a burden to your soul and overwhelm it, if it chooses to walk on—it can not only walk, but soar and fly with all that knapsack on its back.

If one were to be busy about reforming the world and when that was done then alone to turn to other-worldly things, in that case, one would never take the turn, for the world will never be reformed totally or even considerably in that way. It is not that reformers have for the first time appeared on the earth in the present age. Men have attempted social, political, economic and moral reforms from times immemorial. But that has not barred the spiritual attempt or minimised its importance. To say that because an ideal is apparently too high or too great for the present age, it must be kept in cold storage is to set a premium on the present nature of humanity and eternalise it: that would bind the world to its old moorings and never give it the opportunity to be free and go out into the high seas of larger and greater realisations.

The ideal or perhaps one should say the policy of Real-politik is the thing needed in this world. To achieve something actually in the physical and material field, even a lesser something, is worth much more than speculating on high-flaunting chimeras and indulging in day-dreams. Yes, but what is this something that has to be achieved in the material world? It is always an ideal. Even procuring food for each and every person, clothing and housing all is not less an ideal for all its concern about actuality. Only there are ideals and ideals; some are nearer to the earth, some seem to be in the background. But the mystery is that it is not always the ideal nearest to the earth which is the easiest to achieve or the first thing to be done first. Do we not see before our very eyes how some very simple innocent social and economic changes are difficult to carry out—they bring in their train quite disproportionately gestures and movements of violence and revolution? That is because we seek to cure the symptoms and not touch the root of the disease. For even the most innocent-looking social, economic or political abuse has at its base far-reaching attitudes and life-urges—even a spiritual outlook—that have to be sought out and tackled first, if the attempt at reform is to be permanently and wholly successful. Even in mundane matters we do not dig deep enough, or rise high enough.

Indeed, looking from a standpoint that views the working of the forces that act and achieve—and not the external facts and events and arrangements alone—one finds that things that are achieved on the material plane are first developed and matured and made ready behind the veil and at a given moment burst out and manifest themselves often unexpectedly and suddenly like a chick out of the shell or the young butterfly out of the cocoon. The Gita points to that truth of Nature when it says: "These beings have already been killed by Me." It is not that a long or strenuous physical planning and preparation alone or in the largest measure brings about a physical realisation. The deeper we go within, the farther we are away from the surface, the nearer we come to the roots and

sources of things even most superficial. The spiritual view sees and declares that it is the Brahmic consciousness that holds, inspires, builds up Matter, the physical body and form of Brahman.

The highest ideal, the very highest which God and Nature and Man have in view, is not and cannot be kept in cold storage: it is being worked out even here and now, and it has to be worked out here and now. The ideal of the Life Divine embodies a central truth of existence, and however difficult or chimerical it may appear to be to the normal mind, it is the preoccupation of the inner being of man—all other ways or attempts of curing human ills are faint echoes, masks, diversions of this secret urge at the source and heart of things. That ideal is a norm and a force that is ever dynamic and has become doubly so since it has entered the earth atmosphere and the waking human consciousness and is labouring there. It is always safer and wiser to recognise that fact, to help in the realisation of that truth and be profited by it.¹

¹ Collected Works of Nolini Kanta Gupta, Vol. 2, pp. 49-51.

A PAGE FROM HISTORY

This article by M.P. Pandit, which gives very valuable insight into subtle events, is taken from a past issue of his weekly "Service Letter" with acknowledgments to its author.

IF history is a process of the evolution of the human consciousness on its various levels, surely Mother's life is a continuum of concentrated history, and that too not on the earth-plane alone but also on several other orders of existence. For a close observer it was an intense education to watch how she made and unmade things, how weaklings were transformed into heroes, agelong impediments were dissolved with one smile. Her course of action was always first to set things moving on the subtler planes and then to shape their results on the physical. Dimensions lost their meaning when it concerned the Mother: she could be at the same time high above and here below, concentrated on one point locally but at the same time aware of calls from all over the universe. She was supremely divine but equally intensely human. She held innumerable threads in her beautiful hands and knew which one to pull and when. She knew but would not appear to know, she could effect but did not want to. Some would say she was complex. But the way she operated was so natural. In her the divine and the human elements were delightfully fused. No instance would be happier to illustrate this side of her life than her meeting with a long lost friend who had returned to her from beyond the gates of Death. We speak of Marguerite Lidchi, that little, blithe spirit who arrived at the Ashram early in 1960. This writer was one of the first persons to meet her and inform Mother of her arrival.

Maggy—for that is how Marguerite was known to everybody—happened to read Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita* in France and was bowled over. Irresistibly she was held in the grip of Lord Krishna and she was, in spite of herself, drawn to Sri Aurobindo. She set out for Pondicherry forthwith. She knew nothing of the Mother at that time. And when she arrived she found herself quite at home. Everyone liked her, her petite form, her agile gait and above all her perpetual smile. Inquisitive minds found out that at her home in South Africa there were fourteen servants working for the family. And here she was moving about without a care in the world—or so it looked.

All the while things were taking shape in another direction. When word was reached to Mother about this visitor's arrival, Mother made a cryptic comment: "It is someone I know." We looked for further elucidation, but none was forthcoming. We had learnt not to press for more than what she would say.

Well, Maggy was presented to Mother on the first of February, 1960. Champaklal remembers—as only he can—the full contour of Mother's smile and Maggy's tear-filled eyes. This was in the Pranam Hall where Mother was giving blessings to all.

Very soon afterwards Maggy met Mother alone upstairs. Her first words to the Mother were, "I know you already, I have known you before", and tears streamed down her face. Both meditated together for a long time.

How did she feel she had known Mother before? Obviously her inner being knew it though on the surface Maggy could not perhaps explain. But Mother explained it in detail to Champaklal. And here is the story, or rather facts which look like a story.

When Mirra¹ was young, pursuing her studies in art in Paris, she had a friend of her own age, a dear friend—"and the only friend" as Mother took care to mention—and her name was Valentine. Their friendship was deep, so deep that when after her marriage Valentine had to leave for Egypt, she was so miserable to part from Mirra that she lost all taste for life. She left her body—soon afterwards—in childbirth a day before André was born to Mirra.

It is interesting to recall that Mother had painted a picture of this friend, a miniature which still retains its exquisite fresh pastel colours because it was painted on ivory. It is a portrait of a beautiful young woman dressed in the style of the time, just before the turn of the century, in a white gown with a white gardenia pinned to the shoulders. She wears a triple row of pearls. The face is sensitive but the eyes show the sadness at the impending parting. Mother had brought the miniature with her to India and later gave it to Maggy, telling her, "I loved you very much then and I love you even more now. You came back very quickly." Of course to Maggy it seemed to have taken a long time. Once they met here, however, Mother showered her blessings and gifts, both inner and outer, so lavishly on her that all the longing of the past was forgotten.

In the beginning, things were slow to develop, but very soon the old intimacies seem to have returned, though of course with some new dimensions added.

Writing on 3rd November 1964, Mother turns Maggy into Maggi (Ma-ggi—close to Mother); she writes:

*Maggi, my dear child,
I am really happy with the manner in which your sadhana is developing and
your growing receptivity.*

Interesting developments followed. Mother became aware of a Fairy who had attached herself to Maggi and was always present. Of her Mother was to write:

I have to tell you that my perceptions concerning you are becoming more and more precise—and that I am convinced that your vital is united to a charming little fairy, charming, smiling, attractive, who likes to do pretty little miracles that give a special flavour to human life, quite dull in general.

¹ Mirra was the name of the Mother.

*Your presence is a joy and your collaboration is precious...
And I too love you.*

That was not all. Maggi herself turned into Mother's Fairy. For on her birthday. Mother wrote:

To my sweet little fairy who brings a ray of sunshine to this earth.

Mother would address her as her sweet fairy, her good fairy, on the cards and letters addressed to her.

Maggi once asked Mother if the fairy had been with her since her birth and Mother said, 'Probably', but that in any case she had arrived with her in the Ashram (in order to come into contact with Mother).

I hope I am breaking no confidences if I were to mention that Mother's Love for Maggi would flow at times in enveloping embraces, peals of laughter. Mother observed that when Maggi came into the room it was like being in a garden. The fairy used to weave gardens around them.

One day in a more solemn moment Mother asked Champaklal to bring a card. He brought one, she asked for a bigger card. Then she took Maggi's hand and, with her forefinger, drew four circles in the palm and joined them with lines. Then she took a deep breath and put her chin on her chest and closed her eyes in concentration. "I have just created an order," she spoke. Thereupon Champaklal gave her the card and she wrote:

*Maggi
Chevalier de la Gentillesse*

which can perhaps be put in English,

Knight of the Order of Nobility.

There was an interesting sequel. Much later, when Nata and Maggi started a home for children in Udavi where there is the Auroshikha Agarbatti factory and the school, and Maggi was asked to give a name, she heard the Mother's voice saying:

GENTILLESSE

Speaking of Nata, Maggi considers that one of the biggest gifts she was to receive from Mother was her companionship with Nata. Nata, it will be recalled, was a splendid nobleman (Italian) who had settled in South America. On his very first visit to the Ashram, he had been taken to see the Lake Estate when the developmental programme had yet to take shape. But what he saw before him

moved him so deeply that without a single thought, he took out all the money that was in his pockets—some thousands—and gave it as his contribution to the sadhak who had accompanied him there. He was responsible for initiating and developing the programme of publishing Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's writings in Italian; he even started a journal. He was generosity personified. I may mention that though we hardly met once or twice, a deep inner relation had developed between us. He would occasionally write asking for certain clarifications. He would suddenly inundate me with boxes of high quality incense. The contact did not cease with his passing a few months ago. He visits our place now and then, warming it with his soothing presence.¹

Mother's last Birthday Card to Maggi reads:

Good secretary and excellent disciple.

Incidents bringing out the depth of the relations between Mother and Maggi could be multiplied. I will only cite a couple of interchanges. In one letter Mother writes:

Maggi, my dear little fairy, you are adorable and it is a great joy to be served by you.

With all my tenderness and my blessings,

Maggi writes:

Adored sweet Mother,
I love you now and for ever.

Your Maggi.

Mother replies:

*Adorable little Maggi,
I love you.*

And the LOVE continues, Mother's physical withdrawal has not interrupted it. Maggi is never alone.

*

A couple of months after Mother had left, an Italian disciple, an artist, by the name of Judi Cozzi visiting the Ashram met with a serious accident, and while she was being operated on, she left her body. She met Mother whom she asked if she must really go back to her body lying on the operation table. Mother directed her to return explaining to her what her work would be.

¹ Editor's Note. It was Lalita who first saw him there.

She told her also to give Maggi the following message: Mother would send a little child to Maggi and that Maggi must not forget that the child came from her.

So Judi called Maggi and spoke of this. Maggi, however, did forget. When she took the child to visit Judi in Dr. Sen's Nursing Home, Judi said to her, "There is the child that Mother sent you." You can imagine Maggi's feelings.

It was a joy to meet Maggi the other day and exchange notes. Though physically we live close by, we hardly meet. I have watched her and her work from far. I have known that she carries something very unusual with her. I had glimpses of it when I once reviewed a novel written by her. She is one of the rare ones who think first of Mother's convenience before they think of their own needs.

It was once a period of financial crisis in the Ashram. Someone told Maggi of it. She immediately took out all the money that was with her at the moment and made it over to Mother. Mother was to narrate this to me much later, adding, "Maggi is a good girl." And beautiful too, beautiful of form and soul.

M. P. PANDIT

ATTACHMENT

BASED ON AN OLD TALE

ONCE upon a time Narad came down incognito to our earth from the high plane where he resided. He was passing through a city when by chance a Seth—a rich businessman—recognised him. The man was overjoyed at his good fortune and ran to fall at the feet of the Saint. He pleaded with Narad to accept his hospitality. Narad graciously accepted his loving invitation and accompanied him to his well-appointed house.

The Seth seated the Saint on an appropriate seat and himself washed his feet and then worshipped him with camphor and flowers, etc. He got a feast of many courses prepared for him. Narad was won over by his spontaneous love and service. He accepted only a glass of milk. With folded hands the Seth enquired,

“Maharaj, from where are you coming?”

“From heaven,” replied the Sage. The Seth asked again,

“Where will you go now, O Saint?”

“I will wander around for a while on the earth and then go back to heaven.”

“Please, Sir, take me to heaven with you,” prayed the Seth.

Narad had been pleased by the love and devotion of the Seth; moreover, he had accepted the Seth’s hospitality and was bound to reward him. So he replied:

“All right. I will come back in a few months. Be ready to accompany me to heaven.” Assuring the Seth thus Narad proceeded on his trip around the world. He was rarely visible to anybody nor could people easily hear the divine music of his Veena but wheresoever he passed people felt an inexplicable peace or a sudden widening of heart.

After a few months the Sage returned to the house of the Seth and asked him, “Are you ready to accompany me to heaven?” The Seth said a little uneasily, “Sir, I am truly eager to go to heaven. But alas, my children are yet too young to be left uncared for. Grant me a few years and by then they will grow up and will be capable of taking charge of the family business. Then I will accompany you.”

A secret smile flitted across the lips of the Sage. He nodded assent and left for heaven. Time passed quickly, saplings grew into trees and after four years one day the Sage stood again on the door-step of the Seth’s mansion. This time the joy of the Seth at his great good fortune was not so spontaneous. The Sage asked, “Seth, are you ready to accompany me to heaven?” A little shamefacedly the man answered, “Sir, by your grace now my sons have grown up but yet they have not gained the requisite expertise in business. Let me marry them off, then I will accompany you to heaven.”

“Narayana, Narayana,” exclaiming thus, the Sage went on his round-the-earth travels.

After four years again Narad came to the shop of the Seth but he was not there. His sons were looking after the business. On enquiring they told the Saint, “Father died. We are heart-broken. He used to bear the burden of this extensive business. Now who will look after us?” Saying this they broke into tears and fell at his feet. Narad reassured them with words of wisdom and then turned his gaze inward to find what had happened to the soul of the Seth. He found that he had taken birth as a calf in the same household and was now a strong ox. Narad went to him and asked, “Why, Seth! Now that you are no more a man, there can be no hitch to your coming with me?” The ox replied, “Maharaj! here all the other oxen are very lazy. I remain in front and pull the carts with maximum strength. Moreover, a new lot of oxen are to be purchased. Till they arrive let me help with the work. After that I will gladly accompany you.”

Narad went back to heaven. But he was uneasy because he had to fulfil his promise about taking the Seth to heaven even if the Seth was unwilling. For he had accepted a glass of milk and the great souls pay a million times more than their debts. So, on the next trip again, he came to the shop of the Seth and asked his children about the ox that worked so hard.

The sons told him, “That surely was the best ox we ever had, but alas he died of overwork.” Again the Sage looked within and found that the Seth had become a dog and was guarding the house. Narad went to him and asked, “O Seth, it is your third life. Are you ready to come to heaven?” As usual the Seth answered, “Maharaj! You are truly gracious and kind. But these sons of mine are too careless. If I do not guard the house thieves will loot it in one day. As long as I am alive I’ll guard it. After that I’ll surely accompany you.”

Narad sighed and left because one can’t be forced into heaven and yet he had to keep his promise.

On his next trip he found the dog missing and was informed of its death. He again looked within and found that the Seth had become a king-cobra and was guarding the underground treasure-room of the family. The Saint went to the cobra in his subtle body and asked him, “Are you not yet satisfied with your degradation? Do you want to continue in this terrible species? Look, I can take you to heaven this very moment.”

The snake said, “Look, Lord! if I would not guard this treasure my spend-thrift sons would squander this wealth in a trice. Otherwise I am ready to come.”

The sage understood that the fetters of attachment were too strong and a cobra lived a long life. How to fulfil his promise? At last he went and told the sons of the Seth, “There is a dangerous cobra in your vault. He may bite one of you some day. It would be better to beat him severely so that he would go elsewhere. To kill him will be a sin, so beat him in such a way that his head will not be crushed.”

Very impressed by this advice the sons of the Seth called some strong men and made them beat the cobra mercilessly. When he became half-dead they had him thrown out and thanked the Sage for his advice. Narad went to the writhing snake and asked, "Seth, now are you ready to come to heaven?"

By the Saint's grace the soul of the Seth became free from attachment. He gladly consented to accompany the Saint.

SHYAM KUMARI

THE ETERNAL CHILD AND THE ETERNAL MARVEL

THE MYSTERY OF THE BODY

(Continued from the issue of October 1988)

So the monkey of God descended into the world of men.

AND it happened to be a time when only monkey-men were left: not a single real man remained. Every human being was the prisoner of his animal body, incarcerated in the skin of a beast; not one mind was free, not one soul master of itself.

The Age of Materialism, in fact... although the scientists had just discovered that this 'matter' was simply condensed energy; The Age of Rationalism... although the psychologists had already noticed that rational thought is only one of the many activities of consciousness. Of course no one had yet taught them to make a connection between energy and consciousness. Only Faust had tried it, that evening long ago—at the price of his soul! Fortunately for him, Marguerite's love could redeem his lost soul from the Devil—at the end of his life. But what about the body, and life, and love?

Ask Paris, whose belief in love was so great that it reduced his country to ashes! (Nowadays Snow-white was advertising soap-powder, and Sleeping Beauty pills against insomnia...!) The only body left from all that story was the mummy of Ramses—and no one took any notice of *him*! Midas's Truth-love made him an ass, Medea became a jealous murderous witch, and as for Oedipus and Bilwamangal—better not even to mention their shameful tales. Besides, who was left now to believe all those stories? Children... yes, they would still care to hear such fairy-tales.

But even the children, after a time, would start to ape the men. For those men, after all, had once been children—who had started aping men, who had once been children, who had started to ape men, who had once been children who had started aping...

So who began all that?... The original ape-man, our Darwinian ancestor?

Whoever he may have been, before becoming ape or man, he must have been a *child*. That is what the Darwinians missed: the true being must have preceded even the primate.

That had been Narad's *first* discovery here: man's truth lies in the eternal child:

Child, soul's divine royalty

But how to remain eternally a child? How to escape from the monkey-syndrome,

the imprisonment in a human life, in the all-enveloping coils of an issueless thinking-machine?

There is a remedy, which every child can tell you: never cease to pursue the eternal wonder.

This is what Faust learned at the end. But Narad knew it in his soul even before he began: Mohini!

His *second* discovery is also a remedy:

Love

Yes, but... what about all the things we *don't* love?

"Such as what?" questions the Other, the Third, the Queen of Shadows.

"Ah, well... *nothing*," confesses the Prince, swallowing the enchanted apple ... which is not the fruit of sin, for there is no evil except in man's mind;—which we don't mind, since we have stopped aping the apes. Anyway, that is what Paris discovered on the other side of the mirror.

One, two, three.

But then,

if all darkness is pregnant with light,
 if the old Night is preparing the Dawn,
 if all life is one wave of love-bliss—
 Why are *things* still so far from this Truth?
 There lay the key to the ultimate secret,
 that alchemical squaring of the circle,
 the arcana of a mysterious fourth dimension
 which Narad comes from heaven to discover—
Here, in the world of Man and body of Earth.

"I felt his Force pouring into me. I think I closed my eyes (probably it was unnecessary). From the base of the spine to the crown of the head a column of transparent, compact, crystalline energy transmitted to the body the teaching of the Lord of Transmutation, the message of immortal life, in the form in which it has been worshipped since time immemorial in the lap of the Himalayas, at the sacred cave of Amarnath—the Self of Light, *jyotir-liṅgam*."

The body as if dissolved under that massive downpour of still wideness, I stood transfixed, identified with that new self of light.

Where was the body there?

What of the world?

And man, was he at his end, or at a new beginning?

There, being was vibrant as a seed of light, the birth of a new body in a new world.

Man was the bridge, the leap, the turning-point, between the old slavery in an animal hide, and the infinite freedom of an existence conscious of all being.

“For this world-image that had just dissolved—even this last, most luminous one, this golden mask of divinity—this skin of things which imprisons their life and imposes on them the need to die... what was it, if not dream and illusion: absurd fixing of a flow forever uninterrupted, though cradled upon immobility; trust in a man-made law, obedience to a power that was only a shadow of the true strength of his being?...

“Midas, King at last in the aureate purple of his Fire almighty, waited divinely for every crust of his being to turn to flame in this Energy that restored to him his face of light and freedom; for every wave of Becoming to break upon this fabulous continent of Being arisen from the waters like a mountain-peak in resplendent certainty beyond all mist and cloud... like a sun that, having created worlds out of its cast-off radiation, rises at last above their night to illumine them, to make them live, to turn into the rainbow-splendour of its origin everything that had forgotten, in its blind wheeling towards a non-existent goal, its destiny of Light.

And *so be it*.

And so be *what*?

Truth!

What truth?

“The *whole* truth!” Oedipus had claimed, obsessed by his human destiny—and ended by blinding himself, for there is no such truth in the human world; and by disappearing, for there is no such truth in the human being.

Where could such Truth be then, here in this world?

Don Juan Tenorio, our penultimate hero, sensing precisely that *man* was devoid of truth, or beauty, eagerly sought them in his alluring counterpart: *woman*.

Yet—he couldn’t help asking himself—what cherished blossom was this, that seemed to surprise him unfolding from the mystery of a face unknown, seizing his heart in an irresistible charm, summoning him inexorably to pursue it, court, seduce, possess, enjoy it—until, also inexorably, waking him after a night of love to the dawn of its absence from a face now too well-known, it always faded away like dream-dew dissolved in morning mist...?

And what curse would then drive him away from the spot contaminated by a hope betrayed, an encounter missed, an obvious sin? He would flee away from the doom of his dream, just as Beauty vanished from his sight—to pursue her again as soon as she appeared, in a gesture, a smile, a glance that would burst open life's dull chrysalis with the flashing sweep of soul's winged phantoms....

Until one day—was it a too-close encounter with Evil's naked energy, or would it be sacrilegious to call it a too-daring overture to Heaven's world-shattering bliss?—he too disappeared, vanished body and soul from man's world; or shall we say, from woman's?

Perhaps when he discovered that the marvel his body and soul longed for so ardently eluded the clasp of earthly limbs' embrace, in that instant when it seemed to withdraw, his body could not separate itself from his pursuing soul....

Whatever may have happened to Don Juan, when the great rishi Yajnavalkay found that the marvel which he too sought resided in none of the created beings of this world of ours, nor in any uncreated being in any other world, *neti neti*, he decided to take the path of absolute solitude, *sannyāsa*, renouncing all that life could offer as a diversion from that single goal.

So he summoned his two consorts, and before taking leave of them, shared between them his fabulous possessions. While one submitted silently to her Lord's command, the other, Maitreyi, had a last question—or rather, a prayer for a last word of wisdom from the Sage.

He smiled and waited, for that last time, while she enquired whether those riches would bring her nearer ultimate bliss, the Spirit's immortality, *amrita*. On being told that they would not, she added, "What then have I to do with all these things?"

A last glow lit the face that was to turn forever towards loneliness, for he had recognised behind those words the echo of the great call stilling his mind to silence.

—"You are now dear to me more than ever you were, O my beloved; and my last word shall be a word of love."

"For Love makes dear to us all that we love: husband, or wife, child, friend, possession, study, godhead or man, knowledge or act or being, all that we love, we love because of Love."?

The person or the thing is just a channel, just as music is heard from lute, drum, pipe, yet comes not of these things, but flies in its own ether.

So, Love lies not in any thing we love.

Love is the wonder that holds together lover and beloved, Love is that oneness which is the source of being and of knowing, That by which all is known, yet which none knows. Still, That pure Self of Knowledge, That sole Reality is all we are, for *we are* that, there is no other *being*. And this is that immortal bliss you seek."

He spoke and went to That Oneness, alone.

And Don Juan had his last laugh in hell.

While Narad, back on earth, would find his love at every step, each moment of his life.

Yet she, the soul's wonder, eternal charm, Mohini—here, in a body, alive in her own form: unearthly beauty, dream of paradise, love's love... when will that Marvel dawn in our midst?

“And when he opened his eyes, a new marvel awaited him: the cold silver mirror had vanished. In its place, a point of light, like an atom-sun, revealed in its innumerable rays the miracle of a limitless world.

Paris stretched out his hands. Yet again he invoked the smile of beauty. And the point was dancing in his heart. The golden egg, the lost sun, opened its omnipotent eye upon each instant of his life. Helen was coming yet again to kindle the world of men to flame with her mystic gaze. She would awaken in every atom the dawn of a life that Night had pretended in vain to conceal behind its mystery-play...

*and on the knees of the Virgin of the Abyss,
the dark magician-woman of the worlds,
new-born from the new love of Sky and Earth,
a child of light smiled at eternal dawn.”*

In that eternal instant when a child recognizes the marvel ever-loved, then shall be born a form that in this world shall manifest what man has ever missed; what every soul is longing to possess, what all are seeking, though none has yet found—yet all are carrying deep within themselves...

... and Narad shall find at last Mohini here on earth...

*The world shall then become the eternal wonder,
the body wonderfully live in that eternity;
and man shall wonder, being eternally only a child
pursuing through all life his soul's one dream of infinite delight.*

And shall this be the end, or the beginning?

“Perhaps both at once, as in that equally eternal image of the serpent which bites its own tail....

Or perhaps....

And even while, in a glowing apocalypse, the crumbling Tower of Babel shuddered the cracked and grimy plaster of the numberless slow spirallings of human evolution, there appeared to me—linking the ancient Satya-Yuga to the yet-unknown marvel of the new world beyond humanity—like the lingam of Mahadeva whose end and beginning even the gods could not discern, an immense Tower of Light, Truth-Energy, that sustains the worlds and the ages, and is even now bringing back to the Earth, our primordial paradise, the lost truth that has always really been hers; and to the soul which inhabits her and has clothed itself through the fleeting millennia of the history of Mind in a human shape, the sunlit glory of a new form, light, luminous, love-transparent, free: its true form: *morphé, rūpa*—which in the ancient Indian and Greek tongues signifies

Beauty.”

(*Concluded*)

B. PETRIS

THE MOURNING MOON

A FOLKTALE FROM PONDICHERRY

SEVERAL centuries ago (only the moon knows when) lived an unhappy couple. They were unhappy because they had no children.

The husband, of course, was an understanding and gentle fellow. Never did he show a hard face to her, nor used a harsh word against her over her barrenness. But since every other couple in the village was blessed with a brood of children, they found delight in teasing the childless woman. Whenever she happened to pass by, they spat on the ground and treated her presence as a bad omen. They never allowed their children to go near her for they believed that a barren woman is a cursed creature, destined to spread her evil spell on the children. Beggars too didn't take alms from her for they feared that if they took anything from her they would have a tough time for the rest of their lives and their begging bowls too would go barren.

The childless woman wept over her fate. There was not a single temple that she did not visit to offer her oblations and there was not a single god to whom she didn't pray. But no god listened to her prayer.

Since everyone in the village hated her, she stopped going out of her house. Her husband and her widowed mother-in-law were her only human contacts.

After some time, the mother-in-law too began to show signs of hatred. Once she complained: "What a woman have I brought to my house for my son! A cock too may lay eggs. But never, never will this wench give birth to a babe. Is my son destined to be the last in the long list of the great lineage?"

The daughter-in-law unable to hold herself broke down. The husband played deaf to her cries which only indicated that he didn't disagree with his mother's words.

One day she overheard her mother-in-law brainwashing her son to marry some other girl who would bring forth children.

At first the husband was reluctant. But since his mother insisted that he should opt for a second marriage in order to leave a copy of himself in this world, he agreed.

The childless woman wept over her fate. As a protest against the decision taken by her husband, she began to live in the backyard of the house. She spent most of her time with tear-flooded eyes raised heavenwards.

Meanwhile the mother-in-law busied herself consulting astrologers in order to select a fertile woman for her son.

The husband, though for want of progeny he nodded to his mother's wishes, didn't in the least develop any sort of hatred for his wife. He pleaded with her to come back home. But she didn't budge. Amidst her tears she said: "It's enough if you allow me to live here in the backyard of your house. The cowshed is the

right place for a barren woman like me to live in. Let your would-be bride who is supposed to be fertile occupy the house. Two wives of the same husband can't live under one roof."

Though all the attempts of the husband to bring his wife back home fizzled out, he didn't fail in his duties as a husband. He saw to it that she was regularly fed.

Days passed. On one full-moon night, she sat in the open air with her silver plate containing sauce-mixed rice. She was not hungry enough to eat. Hence she went on looking at the glorious moon. Within seconds she forgot herself and all her gnawing worries. She imagined that there sat a lovely child on the moon with all smiles. It opened its wee mouth as if it was eager to take food from her hands.

The woman quickly rolled a handful of rice into a ball and raised her hand affectionately towards the child.

The Moon-god who was hurrying homeward in his chariot looked down by sheer accident. He saw a woman offering him food. What attracted him more towards her was the untold affection and love with which she offered it.

He called a sudden halt to his chariot, got down and began to move towards the woman.

The woman who had been so far in a reverie was startled to see the Moon-god himself coming towards her. Spell-bound she stood and the Moon-god took food from her hands.

The silver plate became empty, and the Moon-god belched with satisfaction. "*Amma!* (Mother)," he called. His eyes were filled with gratitude.

Words would fail to convey the joy she experienced at the uttering of the word *Amma!*

Hot tears began to trickle out of her eyes. The Moon-god stood dumb-struck at the sight of the woman in tears.

"*Amma!*" he called again. "You have given me food mixed with affection and love. And now I do not understand the meaning of your tears. If you have any unfulfilled *aasai* (desire) please tell me. I will try to fulfil it."

The barren woman continued to weep in silence. The Moon-god too stood silently all the time expecting a reply.

Minutes later the woman opened her mouth: "Lord! You have called me *Amma*. I don't have a child to call me so. And my *aasai* is to have one."

The Moon-god smiled and said: "You have showed me love and affection. It's my duty to fulfil your desire... You'll have a son."

The woman prostrated herself before the Moon-god and washed his feet with tears of gratitude.

A few days later, the woman's body began to show signs of pregnancy. The husband jumped with joy and the mother-in-law stopped visiting astrologers. The neighbours too began to be friendly with her.

Every night she waited in the backyard of her house with a plate full of sauce-mixed rice. The Moon-god came without fail and took food from her affectionate and loving hands.

Years passed. The blessed child grew to be a young man. And the Moon-god never disappointed the woman by absenting himself on any of the nights.

One day the woman passed away due to the ailments of old age. Before she breathed her last she told her son to offer food to the moon on her behalf every night. Her son agreed.

On the night of the woman's death, the Moon-god came only to find the woman's son waiting in the backyard.

"Where is your mother?" asked the Moon-god.

"She passed away. I'm here to serve you food," the son replied trembling with fear. It was for the first time he was listening to a heavenly voice.

The Moon-god was disappointed. Tears collected in his eyes and threatened to trickle down. He wiped his tears and said: "I have never before seen such an affectionate mother. Oh! How I wish her to be alive to offer me food with the same sort of love. But now that she is gone I'll mourn over her death once a month."

That is the reason why the Moon-god wears a pitch-dark garment and goes into mourning over the death of the *amma* whose *aasai* he has fulfilled. The night the moon shuts himself in his abode is known in Tamil as *ammavasai* (the new moon). This is also the reason why the living sons of dead mothers offer food to the Moon-god on the night when he goes into mourning.

Collected and retold by P. RAJA

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

Sixty-fourth Seminar

23 April 1988

(Continued from the issue of October 1988)

EDUCATION FOR THE NEW AGE

Speech by Debobroto Roy

WHAT do we mean by education? Do we mean going to Kindergarten, School, College and finally University? Or do we mean something more? In education, is it only the fixed academic career that one goes through? Is it necessary to aggrandise one's name by suffixing letters such as B.A., B.Sc., M.A., M.Sc., or even Ph. D.? Is education a prelude to amassing money, filling the wallet and thereby gaining prestige and high status in today's superficial and corrupted world? Is education meant to acquire the "Bourgeois" qualities?

A very relevant and apt passage regarding "Bourgeoisie" by Sri Aurobindo can be quoted here:

"The safe, respectable man, satisfied with ease and not ambitions of command, content with contemporary repute and not hankering after immortality, the superficial man who, unable to think profoundly, could yet pose among his peers as intellectual, who had no real culture, but wore a specious appearance of education..."¹

This is what we have now become. This is how the present, the actual education has shaped the young who are the builders of the Nation—a pack of Bourgeois. University education or degree is considered as the hallmark, the zenith, the pole-star of education. But Sri Aurobindo says: "An University degree, knowledge of English, possession of a post in Government service or a professional diploma.... these were the badges by which Society recognised its chosen. These signs were all purely conventional. The degree did not necessarily denote a good education nor the knowledge of English a wide culture or successful living into new ideas, nor the Government post administrative capacity, nor the diploma special fitness for the profession."²

The present method of education is simply packing and loading the

¹ *Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research*, April, 1978, p. 9

² *Ibid.*

student's mind with pieces of information; this is not true education.

True education is that which bridges the outer being with the inner being, the central being which harbours in every individual. True education is that which strengthens our contact with the Divine within us. True education is that which ultimately creates the ideal conditions for the accomplishment of our goal: "We are sons of God and must be even as he."¹

In Sri Aurobindo's words, "...man is inwardly a soul and a conscious power of the Divine and...the evocation of this real man within is the right object of education and indeed of all human life if it would find and live according to the hidden Truth and the deepest law of its own being."²

According to the Mother, Truth, Harmony and Liberty should be the guiding principles of the new ideal of education. You may ask, what do you mean by Truth? It may be said that truth changes and differs from individual to individual. Of course, it differs but there are certain truths which hold good universally and are true for all ages.

Truth as a guiding principle in education means to discover the divine portion in us—the soul—and then to act in accordance with the hidden Truth and deepest law of our being.

Liberty does not mean that we can do whatever we like, according to our fanciful whims. Our nature is like a horse which has to be first tamed, trained and then directed to achieve great aims. We should lead a disciplined yet flexible life. In other words, liberty means to live and act according to the intimations and inspirations of the soul. The soul then becomes our guide and we follow its impulsions of truth. Liberty thus has its source in Truth—the truth of our being.

Harmony does not mean here only to live in perfect accord with friends, relatives and, in a wider sense, society. Of course, these relationships demand harmony. But what we mean by harmony in the present context is the sense of accord which results from the inherent sense of unity which the soul naturally possesses.

Thus we may say that all the three guiding principles of education enunciated by the Mother have their root in the soul which is our true self.

The blossoming, the flowering of the soul in this true education, the integral education, in its entirety, depends to a great extent on the student, but to some extent also on the teachers, parents and the general social environment. For, as Sri Aurobindo says, "The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught. The teacher is not an instructor or task-master, he is a helper and a guide. His business is to suggest and not to impose. He does not actually train the pupil's mind, he only shows him how to perfect his instruments of knowledge and helps and encourages him in the process. He does not impart knowl-

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri* (Cent Ed., Vol 28), p 67

² *The Human Cycle* (Cent Ed., Vol 15). p 28.

edge to him, he shows him how to acquire knowledge for himself.”¹ And Sri Aurobindo adds: “The idea of hammering the child into the shape desired by the parent or teacher is a barbarous and ignorant superstition. It is he himself who must be induced to expand in accordance with his own nature. There can be no greater error than for the parent to arrange beforehand that his son shall develop particular qualities, capacities, ideas, virtues, or be prepared for a pre-arranged career.”²

So, in any system of true education the business of the teacher is to arouse interest in the student, and if this is done, then the student will spontaneously work, concentrate and thereby progress according to his pace and manner and temperament. The arousing of interest should not be a dogmatic procedure. It should be flexible and should be according to the capacity, temperament and aptitude of the student. Every student should be given due attention and allowed to proceed independently. The student should set the pace and not the teacher. For this to happen, the teacher should be entirely sincere. There should be no mark of hypocrisy in his character. The educator must be constantly the source of inspiration, admiration and respect for the student. To inspire confidence and a sense of security, the teacher must be steady and unwavering. This demands a lot of discipline, self-control and sadhana on the part of the teacher. It is a formidable task which is set for the teacher and to achieve it he must be truly a person of a high order and status—a true Yogi, as the Mother says. The student is very observant and vigilant. Even a slight slip or a faulty remark or behaviour will ruin the image of the teacher. All hope, all admiration, or respect, all faith, all inspiration, all security will crumble down like a house of cards. Teachers should be aware of their own nature and preach only what they truly practise and not pour out mere words to impress the students. The teacher, in other words, is only like the supports that a horticulturist puts when the seedling is small, tender and vulnerable to harmful impacts. The supports only aid the seedling to grow erect. They protect the small seedling, which harbours in itself the potential of a tree, from disagreeable influences. This is the true relation of the teacher and the student. The teacher is the horticulturist and the student the seedling. Of course, the soil should be fertile, and this is supplied by the parents, the society and the environment in which the student is placed.

These are the main principles of education followed in our Centre of Education. They are based entirely on the teachings and instructions of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Their aim is not merely to produce brilliant students in all fields—science, arts, etc., but to produce the *élite* of humanity, the “living souls”.

¹ *A System of National Education* (Cent Ed, Vol 17), p 204

² *Ibid*