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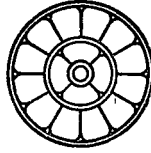
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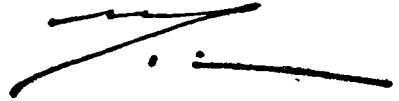


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XLI

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"*

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# FAITH AND PATIENCE

## SRI AUROBINDO ON THE FIRST REQUISITES OF YOGA

IN all Yogas the first requisites are faith and patience. The ardours of the heart and the violences of the eager will that seek to take the kingdom of heaven by storm can have miserable reactions if they disdain to support their vehemence on these humbler and quieter auxiliaries. And in the long and difficult integral Yoga there must be an integral faith and an unshakable patience.

It is difficult to acquire or to practise this faith and steadfastness on the rough and narrow path of Yoga because of the impatience of both heart and mind and the eager but faltering will of our rajasic nature. The vital nature of man hungers always for the fruit of its labour and, if the fruit appears to be denied or long delayed, he loses faith in the ideal and in the guidance. For his mind judges always by the appearance of things, since that is the first ingrained habit of the intellectual reason in which he so inordinately trusts. Nothing is easier for us than to accuse God in our hearts when we suffer long or stumble in the darkness or to abjure the ideal that we have set before us.

For we say, "I have trusted to the Highest and I am betrayed into suffering and sin and error." Or else, "I have staked my whole life on an idea which the stern facts of experience contradict and discourage. It would have been better to be as other men are who accept their limitations and walk on the firm ground of normal experience." In such moments—and they are sometimes frequent and long—all the higher experience is forgotten and the heart concentrates itself in its own bitterness. It is in these dark passages that it is possible to fall for good or to turn back from the divine labour.

If one has walked long and steadily in the path, the faith of the heart will remain under the fiercest adverse pressure; even if it is concealed or apparently overborne, it will take the first opportunity to re-emerge. For something higher than either heart or intellect upholds it in spite of the worst stumblings and through the most prolonged failure.

But even to the experienced sadhaka such falterings or overcloudings bring a retardation of his progress and they are exceedingly dangerous to the novice. It is therefore necessary from the beginning to understand and accept the arduous difficulty of the path and to feel the need of a faith which to the intellect may seem blind, but yet is wiser than our reasoning intelligence. For this faith is a support from above; it is the brilliant shadow thrown by a secret light that exceeds the intellect and its data; it is the heart of a hidden knowledge that is not at the mercy of immediate appearances.

Our faith, persevering, will be justified in its works and will be lifted and transformed at last into the self-revelation of a divine knowledge. Always we must adhere to the injunction of the Gita, "Yoga must be continually applied with a heart free from despondent sinking." Always we must repeat to the doubting intellect the promise of the Master, "I will surely deliver thee from all

sin and evil; do not grieve.”

At the end, the flickerings of faith will cease; for we shall see his face and feel always the Divine Presence.

## **AN EXPERIENCE AND ITS INTERPRETATION**

### **AN OLD LETTER AND SRI AUROBINDO'S ANSWER**

Sweet Mother,

I am having an ineffable experience since yesterday (meditation), continuing till now. That is why I could not check myself from coming to you last night after meditation—I was so much moved.

A blazing flame was burning within me and bursting out of my body. I felt that this flame was of the One Existent Brahman, of whom I had an experience the other day. Now it was like this: In my meditation I saw a golden sun far above and I was soaring towards it and as I started entering into it I suddenly saw that it was neither round nor a sun but something from within clearly pointed out that it was the golden all-pervading One Existence! And the flame within me was the flame of that One Existence.

This experience has brought me an exuberance of joy and ecstasy with feelings of love, devotion, gratitude and humility.

I am also feeling sometimes that my body is a vessel in which this flame is burning.

SAHANA

### **SRI AUROBINDO'S ANSWER**

The Sun is the Truth-Light of the One Existence and the flame the dynamic power of action (yogic) of that Truth-Light.

July 17, 1941

## **THE ARTIST AND THE PUBLIC MAN**

### **A LETTER OF SRI AUROBINDO TO DILIP KUMAR ROY**

As to Krishnaprem's misunderstanding you, the matter is of no great importance. The mistake was made by him because something of the "old (musical) Adam" got through subconsciously in your letter to him. Every artist almost (there are rare exceptions) has got something of the public man in him, in his vital physical parts, which makes him crave for the stimulus of an audience, social applause, satisfied vanity, fame etc. That must go absolutely if he wants to be a yogi and his art as a service not of man or of his own ego but of the Divine.

## A TALK BY THE MOTHER

TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON 17 APRIL 1957

*“Perfection is the true aim of all culture, the spiritual and psychic, the mental, the vital and it must be the aim of our physical culture also. If our seeking is for a total perfection of the being, the physical part of it cannot be left aside; for the body is the material basis, the body is the instrument which we have to use. Sariram khalu dharmasadhanam, says the old Sanskrit adage,—the body is the means of fulfilment of dharma, and dharma means every ideal which we can propose to ourselves and the law of its working out and its action. A total perfection is the ultimate aim which we set before us, for our ideal is the Divine Life which we wish to create here, the life of the Spirit fulfilled on earth, life accomplishing its own spiritual transformation even here on earth in the conditions of the material universe. That cannot be unless the body too undergoes a transformation, unless its action and functioning attain to a supreme capacity and the perfection which is possible to it or which can be made possible.”*

*The Supramental Manifestation, p. 5*

*Mother, how can the functioning of the body “attain to a supreme capacity”?*

PRECISELY by transformation. This implies a total transformation. Sri Aurobindo speaks about it later in what follows.

For the moment, our body is simply a doubtful improvement on the animal body, for if we have gained from a certain point of view, we have lost from another. It is certain that from the point of view of purely physical capacities many animals are superior to us. Unless by a special culture and transformation we succeed in really transforming our capacities, it could be said that from the point of view of strength and muscular power a tiger or a lion is far superior to us. From the point of view of agility a monkey is far superior to us; and, for instance, a bird can travel without needing any exterior mechanism or plane, which is not yet possible for us... and so on. And we are bound by the animal necessities of the functioning of our organs; so long as we depend, for instance, on material food, on absorbing matter in such a crude form, we shall be quite inferior animals.

Therefore, I don't want to anticipate what we are going to read, but all this purely animal functioning of our body, all this part which is exactly the same as in animal life—that we depend for life on the circulation of the blood and to have blood we need to eat, and so on, and all that this implies—these are terrible

limitations and bondages! As long as material life depends on that, it is obvious that we won't be able to divinise our life.

So, we must assume that animality in the human being should be replaced by another source of life, and this is quite conceivable—not only conceivable but partially realisable; and this is obviously the aim we ought to set before ourselves if we want to transform matter and make it capable of expressing divine qualities.

In the very, very old traditions—there was a tradition more ancient than the Vedic and Chaldean which must have been the source of both—in that ancient tradition there is already mention of a “glorious body” which would be plastic enough to be transformed at every moment by the deeper consciousness: it would express that consciousness, it would have no fixity of form. It mentioned luminosity: the constituent matter could become luminous at will. It mentioned a sort of possibility of weightlessness which would allow the body to move about in the air only by the action of will-power and by certain processes of control of the inner energy, and so on. Much has been said about these things.

I don't know if there ever were beings on earth who had partially realised this, but in a very small way there have been partial instances of one thing or another, examples which go to prove that it is possible. And following up this idea, one could go so far as to conceive of the replacement of material organs and their functioning as it now is, by centres of concentration of force and energy which would be receptive to the higher forces and which, by a kind of alchemy, would use them for the necessities of life and the body. We already speak of the different “centres” in the body—this knowledge is very widespread among people who have practised yoga—but these centres could be perfected to the point where they replace the different organs by a direct action of the higher energy and vibrations on matter. Those who have practised occultism well enough, in its most integral form, it could be said, know the process of materialisation of subtle energies and can put them in contact with physical vibrations. Not only is it something that can be done, but it is something which is done. And all that is a science, a science which must itself be perfected, completed, and which will obviously be used for the creation and setting in action of new bodies which will be able to manifest the supramental life in the material world.

But, as Sri Aurobindo says, before this can be done, it is good to utilise all that we have in order to increase and make more exact the control of physical activities. It is very obvious that those who practise physical culture scientifically and with coordination acquire a control over their bodies that's unimaginable for ordinary people. When the Russian gymnasts came here we saw with what ease they did exercises which for an ordinary man are impossible, and they did them as if it was the simplest thing in the world; there was not even the least sign of effort! Well, that mastery is already a great step towards the transformation of the body. And these people who, I could say, are materialists by



profession, used no spiritual method in their education; it was solely by material means and an enlightened use of human will that they had achieved this result. If they had added to this a spiritual knowledge and power, they could have achieved an almost miraculous result... Because of the false ideas prevalent in the world, we don't usually see the two things together, spiritual mastery and material mastery, and so one is always incomplete without the other; but this is exactly what we want to do and what Sri Aurobindo is going to explain: if the two are combined, the result can reach a perfection that's unthinkable for the ordinary human mind, and this is what we want to attempt.

As he goes on to say—we shall probably read it next time—first one has to fight against a formidable mass of stupid prejudices which create an irreconcilable antagonism between material and spiritual life. And it is something so deep-rooted in human consciousness that it is very difficult to eradicate it, even in those who think they have understood Sri Aurobindo's teaching! And many people said, when for altogether different reasons I began to hold meditations again, "Ah! at last! we are returning to spiritual life..." This was indeed what prevented me from holding them for a long time. It was in order not to encourage this stupidity. But for other reasons it was necessary to do it and so I did. So long as this foolishness is not uprooted from human consciousness, the supramental force will always find it considerably difficult not to be engulfed in the obscurity of a human thought which understands nothing. That's all. All the same, we shall succeed.

I chose this book, *The Supramental Manifestation*, in order to have the opportunity of putting you into contact with a truth expressed in an almost combative form, in order to fight against this old division, this total lack of understanding of the eternal Truth.

And perhaps, when we have finished reading it, I shall be able to tell you why we have started the meditations again—but certainly not "to return to spiritual life!"

And it is so deep-rooted; oh! even those who outwardly profess to understand—when they think of the spiritual life, they immediately think of meditation.

There we are. Now, we shall have one all the same, but for another reason!

(*Meditation*)

(*Questions and Answers 1957, pp 84-88*)

## WHAT IS SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM DOING FOR HUMANITY ?

WE are often asked what we are doing for society. We would answer:

### **Indirect work**

(a) The Ashram provides an unparalleled opportunity for the aspirants of the Higher Life to live in a dynamic atmosphere, conducive to spiritual growth, under the direct guidance and protection of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo and to perfect themselves in the Truth of the Divine Spirit.

(b) The vast literature of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo and their disciples, continuously published and circulated by the Ashram, is a force for widening of the intellectual horizon of humanity, and has gone a long way in rooting out beliefs and traditions of a dead past and sowing in their place new seeds of a luminous future.

(c) Thousands of visitors coming to the Ashram go back with the breath of a new atmosphere, charged with the vibrations of a collective endeavour, to grow in the ways of a Higher Knowledge, Power and Beauty, and they carry back with them a living inspiration.

(d) Many of the disciples and followers of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo staying outside the Ashram have organised themselves into groups and centres all over the world, and are working effectively, in ways suited to their environment, to spread the light of their inspiration among the public in different spheres of their life.

(e) The Ashram is helping the economy of this place by opening up job opportunities for the common men in Pondicherry. The Ashram provides work to about 2000 people directly for domestic work and in its various departments. Shopkeepers, vendors, restaurants, hotels, rickshawallas, house-keepers, etc. get their clients from thousands of visitors coming regularly to the Ashram. Devotees of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, wanting to stay independently near the Ashram, open business centres, workshops, factories, mills, etc. and a good number of people get employment there.

### **Our work**

We do not believe in the efficacy of social, economic, political, religious or similar effort, devoid of a central Truth of the soul, in helping humanity to get rid of its misery. These approaches cannot permanently solve the problems of man, though they may provide temporary relief from distress and alleviate suffering to a certain extent. As long as the nature of man remains what it is, he will be

subject to limitations and sufferings. Even the most prosperous and materially advanced countries of the world have not been able to solve these problems. People are not contented there. They may have food, clothes, shelter, comforts and security in plenty, yet, necessary as such things are, they alone have not been able to bring them happiness. There is still a vacuum waiting to be filled and it is that, that we are trying to get hold of for the total benefit of humanity.

### **Sri Aurobindo's teaching**

Sri Aurobindo has said, "To fulfil God in life is man's manhood." With the teaching, influence, example and guidance of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, we are trying to evoke and establish the Divine Truth in us, change our nature and "bring heaven down on earth." We firmly believe that this is the only way to remove the misery of man at its roots. We are set to it with an attitude of "do or die".

### **We must not grudge the time**

No doubt, this is a very difficult and laborious work, but success here will take man forward in the path of evolutionary progress by a very big stride. The path is long and our patience has to be unending. Considering the magnitude of the work and the revolutionary nature of its goal, even a few centuries of effort are not too big a price or too long a wait for its accomplishment.

### **Why we do not want to go out of the Ashram**

For the practice—Sadhana—leading to the fulfilment of our Ideal, certain conditions are needed in the environment. The Mother has organised the life of the Ashram with this object in view, namely, to provide surroundings, conditions and opportunities for such a growth and She is actively helping it to blossom under the protective wings of Her Divine Grace. We have no wish to lose this golden opportunity even for a moment. Besides, it is futile to go out on any mission until we are really equipped in an adequate measure. That is not yet.

### **Why we do not work amongst worldly people for their uplift**

Though on the way to fulfilment we do not claim to have achieved it yet. Our gains are still to be gathered and stabilised. At present, we neither come in the category of men of the world governed and guided by their own standards of life and conduct, nor have we arrived at a full status in the Higher Life, with its own godly values. It would be helpful to none but only add to the chaos, if anyone in this transitional stage were to set out on "future work."

**The Truth is active**

But one thing is certain and that is: the Divine Force embodied in the Mother and Sri Aurobindo is actively at work in each individual, not only in the Ashram but everywhere in the world in proportion to each one's capacity to receive it and his or her aspiration. The power may not be visible but it is acting and to those whose eyes are open, the results are fully visible, though man in the mass is not conscious of it or perhaps is unwilling to recognise it.

Slowly but certainly, the Ashram is taking humanity through the process of a Silent Revolution.

PRANAB KUMAR BHATTACHARYA

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# THE MOTHER WHOM WE ADORE

## IN THE LIGHT OF HER *PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS*

(Continued from the issue of March 1988)

“THOU hast placed in my heart a peace so total that it seems to be almost indifferent and in an immensity of calm serenity it says:

Just as Thou wilt, just as Thou wilt....

THE MOTHER, July 15, 1914

The Mother in her *Prayers and Meditations* has given a wide total view of peace. She means by peace something profound and permanent that is sovereign in action as well as in inaction, in life as well as in death. Her experiences and teachings are not for her personal salvation, not an ascetic union on the heights of her being. It is the peace that is the immutable support of the cosmic movement.

According to the Vedantic view, peace is a part of the supreme originals of what are here *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* of the lower nature. These three principles correspond in the Divine to *Prakāśa*, the divine light of knowledge—*Tapas*, the divine force of action—*śama*, the divine passivity on which everything is based.

The Mother tries her best to have settled peace in her entire being. In the beginning of her *Prayers* we feel a growing peace only in the centre of her consciousness. But afterwards the peace expands from the centre and gradually steps and encompasses the whole nature. On August 15, 1913, she says: “In this even-fall, Thy peace deepens and grows more sweet and Thy Voice more clear and distinct in the silence that fills my being.” Again she prays to the Lord on November 19, 1912: “All my thoughts go towards Thee, all my acts are consecrated to Thee; Thy Presence is for me an absolute, immutable, invariable fact, and Thy peace dwells constantly in my heart.”

The Mother realises that the peace is universal in her consciousness and eternally equal to all impacts of the world. She says in the Prayer on December 5, 1912: “In Peace and Silence the Eternal manifests; allow nothing to disturb you and the eternal will manifest; have perfect equality in face of all and the Eternal will be there....” The Gita says: “When the soul is no longer attached to the touches of outward things, then one finds the happiness that exists in the Self; such a one enjoys an imperishable happiness, because his self is in yoga, *yukta*, by Yoga with the Brahman.”<sup>1</sup> In the words of Sri Aurobindo: “That happiness and that equality are to be gained entirely by man in the body: he is not to suffer any least remnant of the subjection to the troubled lower nature to remain in the idea that the perfect release will come by a putting off of the

body; a perfect spiritual freedom is to be won here upon earth and possessed and enjoyed in the human life.”<sup>2</sup>

The Mother goes beyond the basis of peace experienced by all traditional disciplines. They have found that the foundation of the sadhana depends on the sense that all activity is incompatible with inner poise. But she exclaims on December 15, 1914: “O Lord, Thou hast given me peace in power, serenity in action, immutable happiness in the heart of all circumstances.” The Prayer on December 7, 1916 runs: “Apparently my life is as ordinary and banal as can be; and inwardly what is it? Nothing but a calm tranquillity without any variation or surprises; the calm of a something which has realised and no longer expects anything from life and things, which acts without reckoning upon any profit, knowing perfectly that this action does not belong to it in any way, either in its impulsion or in its result; which wills, being aware that the supreme Will alone wills in it; a calm all made of an incontestable certitude, an objectless knowledge, a causeless joy, a self-existent state of consciousness which no longer belongs to time. It is an immobility moving in the domain of external life, yet without belonging to it or seeking to escape from it.”

In a letter to a disciple Sri Aurobindo has expounded the true aspect of peace as differentiated from other states which seem comparable to it.

“The words ‘peace, calm, quiet, silence’ have each their own shade of meaning, but it is not easy to define them.

Peace—*śānti*.

Calm—*sthīratā*.

Quiet—*acañcalatā*.

Silence—*nīścala-nīravatā*.

*Quiet* is a condition in which there is no restlessness or disturbance.

*Calm* is a still unmoved condition which no disturbance can affect—it is a less negative condition than quiet.

*Peace* is a still more positive condition; it carries with it a sense of settled harmonious rest and deliverance.

*Silence* is a state in which either there is no movement of the mind or vital or else a great stillness which no surface movement can pierce or alter.”<sup>3</sup>

In the Prayer of March 10, 1914 the Mother revealed in a fuller and more comprehensive way the presence and pervasion of peace: “In the silence of the night Thy peace reigned over all things, in the silence of my heart Thy Peace reigns always: and when these two silences were united, Thy Peace was so powerful that no disturbance of any kind could resist it. Then I thought of all those who were watching over the boat to safeguard and protect our course, and in gratefulness I wanted to make Thy Peace spring up and live in their hearts; then I thought of all those who, confident and free from care, slept the sleep of inconstancy, and with solicitude for their miseries, pity for their latent suffering which would arise in them when they awoke, I wanted that a little of Thy

Peace might live in their hearts and awaken in them the life of the spirit, the light that dispels ignorance. Then I thought of all the inhabitants of this vast sea, both visible and invisible, and I willed that Thy Peace might spread over them. Then I thought of those we had left far behind and whose affection goes with us, and with a great tenderness I wanted Thy conscious and lasting Peace for them, the plenitude of Thy Peace as far as they could receive it."

Apropos of the phrase about peace to "all those who were watching over the boat to safeguard and protect our course" in the above prayer we may cite an incident several years earlier. The Mother has recorded it.

She narrates: "When I was coming back from Tlemcen, Théon accompanied me to make a tour round Europe. While at sea a violent storm assailed us. The sea became very rough, high waves were continually tossing the ship up and down, and there was apprehension of some catastrophe. The passengers on board got very nervous and some of them began to cry. The captain himself was anxious and said, 'The passengers may be in danger.' Théon looked at me and said, 'Go and stop it.' The captain was astonished: he did not understand what it meant, but I understood. I went to my cabin, lay down there, and leaving my body went freely to the open sea. There I found innumerable formless beings were madly jumping about and creating havoc over the waters. I approached there and very humbly and sweetly appealed to them to stop this mischief saying, 'What can you gain by torturing these poor people? Please calm down and save their lives.' I went on demonstrating and appealing to them for half an hour, after which they refrained from their activities. The troubled sea became calm. I then went back to my body and came out of my cabin. When I went on deck I found all the people gathered there happily engaged in jovial talk."<sup>4</sup>

In the Prayer dated July 7, 1914 the Mother has expanded her idea about the perfection of peace. She has written about the peace of infinity and its work equally in all yogic action.

"Not the peace of an unconscious sleep or a self-satisfied inertia; not the peace of a self-forgetful ignorance and a dark, heavy indifference, but the peace of the omnipotent force, the peace of perfect communion, the peace of integral awakening, of the disappearance of all limitation and all darkness... the force is there; it is there, as a boundless love, a sovereign power, an indisputable reality, an unmixed peace, an uninterrupted beatitude, the Supreme Benediction; it is self-existence, the endless bliss of infinite knowledge... and it is something more which cannot yet be told, but which is already at work in the higher worlds beyond thought as the power of sovereign transfiguration, and also in the unconscious depths of Matter as the Irresistible Healer..."

Sri Aurobindo says: "One who wants his Yoga to be a path of peace or joy must be prepared to dwell in his soul rather than in his outer mental nature."<sup>5</sup>

On February 20, 1914 the Mother implored for the sovereign peace: "O

Lord, give me the peace of perfect disinterestedness, the peace which makes Thy Presence effective, Thy intervention efficacious, the peace ever triumphant over all bad will, all obscurity.”

“It is the Vaishnava feeling that the Vedantic peace is not enough, the love and joy of the Divine is more precious. But unless the two things go together, the love and joy felt is perhaps intense, but impermanent, and it is also true that it gets easily mixed, misdirected or turns to something that is not the true thing at all. Peace and purity must be got as the foundation of the consciousness, otherwise there is no firm standing ground for the divine play.”<sup>6</sup>

Sri Aurobindo in his poem Nirvana points to the peace which is static:

“Only the illimitable Permanent,  
Is here. A Peace stupendous, featureless, still  
Replaces all.”<sup>7</sup>

But the Mother has given a deeper aspect of peace than the Nirvanic. Even in the Gita a more positive sense is given to the word “Nirvana” than in the Buddhist account. As Sri Aurobindo in his commentary says, “We get the description of a yoga which would seem at first sight to be incompatible with works and we get the repeated use of the word Nirvana to describe the status to which the Yogin arrives. The mark of this status is the supreme peace of a calm self-extinction, *sāntim nirvāna paramān* and, as if to make it quite clear that it is not the Buddhists’ Nirvana in a blissful negation of being, but the Vedantic loss of a partial in a perfect being that it intends, the Gita uses always the phrase *Brahma-nirvāna*, extinction in the Brahman; and the Brahman here certainly seems to mean the Immutable, to denote primarily at least the inner timeless Self withdrawn from active participation even though immanent in the externality of Nature.”

But the peace that both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother want is not confined to *Brahma-nirvāna*.<sup>8</sup>

The Mother in her prayer on November 21, 1914 says: “O Lord, Thou hast given me Thy Power that Thy Peace and Joy may reign over the world.

“And this being is now only an embrace of peace enveloping the whole earth, an ocean of joy breaking over all things.”

(To be continued)

NILIMA DAS

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2. *Ibid*
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# VIGNETTES OF THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of March 1988)

## A RECOLLECTION BY MOHANLAL BAJPAI

“MEMORY is like a child walking along a seashore,” said a perspicuous writer; “You never can tell what small pebble it will pick up and store away among its treasured things.” Such indeed is the little incident that occurred on my first visit to the Ashram forty-six years ago.

An inexperienced traveller, I discovered on my arrival in Pondicherry that I had lost the key of my attaché-case which contained some essential items like the shaving kit, the tooth-brush and paste, the towel and a few similar things with which the morning begins. I lost no time in contacting my mentor, Shri Sisir Kumar Mitra, and requested him to put me in touch with someone in the Ashram who would have the necessary tools to break the flimsy lock of the flimsy attaché-case and solve my problem in a trice.

Sisirda did direct me to someone in the nearby Foundry but the sadhaka there needed the permission of the Mother in order to carry out the job. I felt a trifle dismayed, wondering whether I was justly called upon to bother the Mother with such an insignificant problem as the breaking open of a Miller Company’s cheapest possible lock, costing in those days hardly four annas. But being a stranger to Pondicherry, I had no alternative except to appeal to Nolinida for the necessary permission of the Mother. Nolinida smiled and asked me to leave the attaché-case with him and return a little later to collect it, so that the sadhaka at the Foundry could give it the attention it deserved or, truly speaking, did not deserve.

But when I eventually presented the attaché-case at the Foundry, I was asked to make myself comfortable and wait while the sadhaka in question attended to the job. But it should not take more than a minute to break it open, I protested, only to be told that the lock should not be broken under any circumstances and that a proper key would be made to open it as smoothly as any well-behaved lock was entitled to.

And so I waited, trying to control my simmering impatience, while our sadhaka went on with infinite patience to try different keys and finally selected one that seemed to resemble the original wayward one. This he rubbed and smoothed and I found to my great delight that it doubtless knew the magic password of the *Arabian Nights*. I jumped to my feet as the lock clicked open. Thanking my friend profusely I prepared to leave with the attaché-case and the new key, as I had already been told that I was not supposed to pay for the services rendered;

but the sadhaka would not let me go till he had prepared a duplicate one. This seemed to me to be the limit but my expostulations had no effect on the sadhaka who appeared to be calmly and cheerfully engaged in making a companion key to the newly fashioned one. This, however, did not take much time and the moment did at last come when I could receive back my fussy attaché-case that had created such an ado about nothing. I dismissed the question from my mind whether our well-meaning friend could not shorten the whole exercise by rendering the lock inserviceable as I was pressing him to do. After all I was the rightful owner of the lock—wast't I?

It seemed as though he was something of a thought-reader, for he showed me the Mother's remark apropos of this lock business. The Mother had clearly instructed that the lock should *not* be forced open and that *two* fresh keys must be made for future use. The sadhaka looked at me with a winsome smile and asked: "Could I do otherwise?"

*Compiled by S*

## HOW THEY CAME TO THE ASHRAM

8

### UDAR'S STORY

I CAME to Pondicherry to earn money so that I could bring Mona from England and marry her. We had been engaged and I did not want to marry on my father's money. So I came to Pondicherry in 1935 to earn my own. I joined up with Monsieur Gaebelé, a French businessman whose house is now the Good Guest House. My business was successful and Mona came out in January 1937 and we were married at Pondicherry.

At the time I was not at all interested in Yoga or in any kind of spiritual life. I was living a good material life and was happy. I had some friends from the Ashram such as Amal, Purani, Dr. Ramchandra the Homeopathic doctor, Ambu, etc. Amal would join me in a drink sometimes, and when The Mother came to know of this, She is supposed to have said: "Who is this Mr. Pinto who is giving drinks to my children?"

I came to know about Sri Aurobindo and The Mother from my friends and had great respect for them, but was not one bit interested in joining the Ashram. This went on for two years. But after I got married in February 1937 my friends from the Ashram increased and in August of that year they suggested that I take my English wife to something traditional of India and have a Darshan of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. So we agreed to go to the August 15th Darshan of 1937.

At that time there were few persons who went for Darshan so each one was given a specific time for it. There was no queue but one just went up at the given time. So we both went up, all smartly dressed up as if we were going to see some great people. When we got to the door of the Darshan room and saw Sri Aurobindo and The Mother sitting on the sofa, I got a shock. I do not know what I expected but when I saw Sri Aurobindo, I said to myself: "At last I have seen Majesty!"

I had seen Kings and Queens and all that, but only the robes were majestic. The persons inside were quite ordinary. Here was a person clad in just a dhoti and chaddar, but looking like an emperor.

I had a sense of awe; but when I looked at The Mother, I was quite overwhelmed with the Love that flowed from Her. So I went up to Her and put my head in Her lap and She caressed it with so much love. Then I put my head in Sri Aurobindo's lap and found that from His Majesty also a very great love poured out. Then They both blessed me. Mona also had blessings from both of Them.

I began to read some of the things that Sri Aurobindo had written and es-

pecially about spiritual experiences. One night I had what I felt was a great spiritual experience, but was in some doubt that I might just have imagined it, after all the reading I had done. So I wrote to Sri Aurobindo, described my experience and asked Him if it was a genuine one or only from my imagination.

Sri Aurobindo replied that it was a genuine experience and He went on to write about my Yoga as if He had already decided that I had to take up the Yoga.

Well, after that what could I do? So The Mother had caught me in such a very, very happy net.

*Compiled by K*

# POETRY-LIFE-YOGA

## Extracts from Letters

You write: "On page 19, line 8 of the new edition of *The Future Poetry* I stumbled over translating the following passage: 'Nevertheless, mere force of language tacked on to the trick of the metrical beat does not answer the higher description of poetry...' The word 'trick' in the sense of 'device' does make sense, but could it not be that the original has the word 'tick' which seems to fit in more perfectly here?"

Your perplexity over "trick" and "tick" has a point, but I am afraid "tick" won't do: "the metrical beat" is itself a "tick", so there will be an unnecessary repetition hardly conducive to either substance or style. In this context, "trick" means not only "device" but "feat of skill or dexterity, knack, best way of doing something". It is suggestive, in addition, of "peculiar or characteristic practice or habit, mannerism". The metrical beat is a thing which one can learn up and be an expert at and employ to striking effect, like the trick of a conjuror. All these shades would be lost if "tick" is used, signifying no more than mechanical recurrence, which, as I have said, is already implied in "beat". The background sense of Sri Aurobindo's phrase is not that the metrical beat is always a "trick"—in fact, metre is a great truth of inspired utterance—but that it can become just a skilful device by which uninspired utterance may try to pass off as genuine with the help of the repetitive and therefore impressive swing of the language. True poetry is measured speech with a moving precision in it: there metre or at least marked rhythm serves as a winging power which makes the moving precision go home to the depths in us and become a memorable part of them. However, metre can also be a contrivance because of the general regularity in it of short-long or slack-stress and one can be a good hand at it without achieving what the poet Hopkins calls

. The rise, the roll, the carol, the creation,

and, at the intensest, the mantric pitch, what Sri Aurobindo terms with the mantric pitch itself

Sight's sound-waves breaking from the soul's great deeps.

26.6.1987

\*

Some words of yours have put me on the track of what is happening to you. Generally speaking, you are in the transitional passage between one *yuga* and

another, when the past is a disembodied spectre and the future an unembodied ghost. It is important to realise that there are two things. If one feels that everything is just the past grown empty, one becomes the current "you" and speaks of

my thoughts,  
my desires and impulses  
pale, dull images  
of once-bright sculptures.

What is necessary in the transitional passage is to discern shadows cast by events still to occur. Sculptures, that are bright but beyond, throw into the mist of this passage their images. Naturally these images are pale and dull. They are so not because their reality has vanished and lies in an irrecoverable past but because it is waiting to appear in its true solid shape. You have to look forward and try to discern what is ahead from what has fallen—as Shakespeare would visionarily tell you—

In the dark backward and abysm of time.

The difficulty is that the "once-bright" is fused with the "not-yet-bright". Only the soul in you who, as the Katha Upanishad implies, is today from yesterday and will be tomorrow from today can do on the individual scale what Shakespeare with another powerful vision, refers to as being done by

the prophetic Soul  
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come.

You are "disinterested", as you put it meaning "uninterested", because the "gone" is lost for ever and there's no sense in catching at phantoms. Perhaps you'll protest that even the future does not attract you and you don't care about what may materialise from the fog in front. Your double-aspected indifference, which is like being suspended in a void, is due to your not understanding the Mother's cryptic declaration that the Supramental Transformation has already been achieved but hasn't yet taken physical expression. The glory promised by her and Sri Aurobindo is nothing uncertain any more than India's Independence provisioned by the Mother in 1920 was such. Sri Aurobindo too said to Purani that the fiat for the country's freedom had gone forth and he need not be agitated about it but plunge gladly into the non-political life calling him to Pondicherry. Both our Gurus have done in the subtle dimension what they came into the gross to announce and prepare and, if possible, establish. That is why the Mother once told me that Sri Aurobindo had so arranged his work that nothing could stop its fulfilment on earth—even if the present civilisation broke down, the work would come to pass in due course. You may also remember his saying that what he had willed had always happened and would happen no matter what hostile attacks might delay it and even create the semblance of

its failure. If you hold the light of this certainty in your heart and mind, your present neutral grey will slowly feel upon its cloudiness a faint rainbow and the "disinterested" condition will be like a suppressed smile rather than like an unexpressed sigh.

You have asked for "illumination" from me. Here is at least a candle to help you grope your way to your own hidden glory. 11.11.87

\*

I thank you for remembering me and sending me such a nice present for my birthday.

The day passed very harmoniously. People asked me what special wish I had made for it. I replied, "None. There is one single wish running through all the years—and that is to be open more and more to the transforming grace of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. On each birthday it gets an extra spurt."

The prayed-for opening is not a boon only for me. By it I would be rendered more helpful to my friends—a deeper sense of my oneness with them will grow, an intenser feeling of gratitude to them will develop and the Mother and Sri Aurobindo will be more present with them.

Somebody put me the question: "Where in your being is the centre of your sadhana?" As I write on various subjects and read also a lot and have been a frequent expositor of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual philosophy, the expectation seemed to be that I would point to my head. It appeared to be a surprise when I put my hand on the middle of my chest. But ever since I came to the Ashram it has been my aspiration to be open there. Again and again at the beginning of my stay I used to plead with the Mother to break open the heart-centre to the Divine. I did not realise at that time that the Divine Himself has His central presence in us deep in our heart and that the true soul of us is secretly poised there, an evolutionary emanation of the Divine and His developing companion through the ages. Of course one can be aware of the Divine from any centre, but He is approached most directly through the heart.

It is interesting to note that when one is speaking of oneself and affirming the "I" in some way or other, one never puts one's hand on one's head or one's belly but always instinctively on the middle of one's chest.

Perhaps St. Augustine voiced the profoundest truth of life when at the beginning of his famous *Confessions* he wrote: "Thou hast made us for Thyself and our heart is restless until it rests in Thee." At one stroke he indicated that the whole problem of our being lay in the state and movement of our heart and that its solution for good could come only by the heart's turning towards God and that God must be behind the heart if it is to find its rest in Him.

Apropos of the subject in hand I may recount a little episode from the Indian epic *Mahabharata*. Once when Draupadi, the heroine, was about to be disgraced in public by her enemies, she appealed inwardly to Sri Krishna for help. "O

Sovereign of the Highest Heaven, come!" No response. "O Master of the Seven Worlds, come!" Nothing. "O Ruler of the Four Quarters, come!" Still no answer. Then desperately Draupadi called out, "O Dweller in my own heart, come!" Immediately Sri Krishna appeared to her subtle vision and signed to her not to be afraid. The enemies were foiled in their attempt to undrape her. The sari went unfolding endlessly. Later Draupadi chided Sri Krishna and asked why he took so long in coming. He explained: "You see, the Highest Heaven, the Seven Worlds, even the Four Quarters are far away and it takes time to come from them. But when you called me from your own heart where I dwell, I could come at once."

27.11.1986

\*

I am sorry to learn that your mother passed away a few days back. You must be feeling rather lonely, but if that is our Divine Mother's Will you have to accept it as the best thing for you, no matter what the appearance. Whitehead once said, "Religion is what one does with one's loneliness." Plotinus much earlier framed the famous formula: "The flight of the alone to the Alone." So surely there is an inward-pulling and upward-pushing power in the state of loneliness. But in Aurobindonian terms a deeper truth lies in a spiritualisation of that remark of Emerson's that the most developed man is he who preserves a state of solitude in the midst of crowd. Or else the converse may be visualised as a complementary truth to the full Aurobindonian: against a background of the realisation of the one immutable Brahman there has to be a foreground realisation of the multitudinous many-splendoured Divine—a combination of what is called in *Savitri*

White chambers of dalliance with Eternity  
And the stupendous gates of the Alone.

I hope you will excuse me for this semi-poetic semi-philosophic sidetrack from the subject of your dear mother's death. But perhaps this digression—in tune with my typical digression-full lectures on poetry which you were always interested to attend—may help to take you out of whatever sadness you were plunged into by the departure of a long-standing or at least long-sitting if not long-reposing affectionate companion who had been ailing of late. 27.11.1986

\*

I was indeed glad to hear from you—a voice from the past so sweetly wafted and reminding me of a happy occasion when I had the pleasure of speaking to fresh young souls and I was myself just across the border of being sixty years old and felt much less loaded with years, for, as Wordsworth put it when face to face with a bank of daffodils,



A poet cannot but be gay  
In such a jocund company.

The “secrets of secrets” which I passed on to this company from the Mother’s whispering lips has been my master-key right up to now and has opened many locks which otherwise would have remained deadlocks in my life. I must, however, add something which is also equally important. I wonder if I referred to it twenty-three years ago. While the gesture of “Remembering and Offering” is to be made all the time from the heart confronting the world, there has to be in the background an attitude as of an eternity supporting that gesture—an attitude pictured in those three unforgettable lines from *Savitri*:

A poised serenity of tranquil strength,  
A wide unshaken look on time’s unrest  
Faced all experience with unaltered peace.

Your letter has asked me to go back not only by twenty-three years but also more than sixty, requesting me as you have done to recount the incident of the “shoes”. I had already felt the call of the Infinite and started my search for a teacher. I had come across a number of Yogis but none touched me to the core. A theosophist friend who had met Sri Aurobindo had said to me that nobody except Sri Aurobindo would satisfy a complex fellow like me. I had read somewhere that Sri Aurobindo was a great philosopher and linguist and poet on top of having Yogic attainments. But somehow he had not come alive to my soul. Then, one day, I went to the Crawford Market of Bombay to buy a pair of shoes. The shopkeeper put my purchase in a cardboard box and wrapped the box in a big newspaper sheet and tied it up. When, on reaching home, I untied the box and unwrapped it, the newspaper sheet fell open right in front of me and disclosed a big headline: “A Visit to the Ashram of Aurobindo Ghose.” I at once started reading the article. At the end of it I said to myself: “This is the place for me.” The destined Guru’s Grace had come to meet the searching soul. I wrote to the Ashram seeking permission to stay in it. In those days nobody was allowed except after his photograph had been studied by the Master and the Mother. In the reply to me through Purani who used to manage the correspondence of Gujarat no photo was asked for: I was simply told that I could come. A few months after, I went to the Ashram with my wife who was later given the name “Lalita” by Sri Aurobindo—I went wearing those very shoes: they proved to be the shoes of a pilgrim on his march to the Goal. Most seekers are drawn to the Divine through their hearts or through their heads: He drew me through my feet. Quite a feat, I should think, even for an omnipotent God!

I may say that once a seeker’s feet are caught he can never go astray from the path, no matter what the mobile heart and the mutable head may suggest in the course of the trying journey that is Yoga. In spite of all my vagaries of emotion

and thought Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have kept me treading "the razor's edge". When I first went to Bombay from the Ashram after a stay of six and a half years, I told the Mother I had only one prayer to make: "Never let go your hold on me even if anything silly in me lets go its hold on you." She replied with a soft smile: "You know, I am like a fairy-godmother. Whatever you ask I can grant. If you want to leave me, I can enable you to do so. But if you want me to hold you to myself always, I will certainly do it." And indeed she did and has ever brought me home through all hell and hot water.

14.1.1988

\*

You have put me a question which is not easy to answer, but I shall make an attempt to meet it.

Face to face with the Divine—either the Divine incarnate or the Lord in the heart—we have to be absolutely, unreservedly, transparently truthful—there sincerity, straightforwardness, openness cannot be crossed by the slightest shadow. With regard to human beings, one surely should not indulge in lying, but there is no obligation to be utterly transparent on all occasions. Frankness and the avoidance of falsehood are ideals here too—and yet we have at times to be discreet, judicious, diplomatic. For we are in the midst of a huge ignorance which may misuse our virtues. This does not mean we can freely deceive people; in that case we ourselves add to the huge ignorance. What we have occasionally to do is to be careful about our words: the substance of our speech has to be the truth but the form can be so shaped that without creating a lie it may not give out information that may be misused.

A famous instance of this "equivocation" is St. Athanasius's reply. He was being pursued by his enemies who had heard of his being in a place but had not seen him. They did not know what he looked like. He took a boat and went down a river which had many bends clustered with groves and thick-growing trees. His enemies were behind him. He turned round a bend and then instead of going straight ahead he veered in the opposite direction and went sailing towards his pursuers. They naturally could not take him to be the man they were after. And they asked him: "Did you see somebody go down the river?" St. Athanasius answered: "Just a while back a man went round this bend." This was the exact truth, but no lie could have served better to put the enemies off his track. He saved his life by an equivocation. In certain circumstances we can equivocate. It may be that in a complicated world like ours even a lie may be justifiable in a rare situation if the cause to be served is particularly great—like saving one's own life or somebody else's. But as far as we can help we must be strictly truthful.

It is difficult to sit in an armchair and dictate what is perfectly right and

perfectly wrong in the savage hurlyburly of life. Still, some broad principles can be enunciated—and that is what you must take me to have done.

1.5.1956

\*

Your remark about wintertime reminds me of two poets in whom the cold season somehow set free the inner founts of creativity. First, Milton whose inspiration used to flow most in the six months after the autumnal equinox. Somehow the chill of the grey months without used to stir the blind poet and evoke the heat within to generate *Paradise Lost*. Then there was the arch-symbolist Mallarmé who wrote of

L'hiver, saison de l'art serein, l'hiver lucid  
(Winter, serene art's season, lucid winter)

with the sheet of snow mutely suggesting the beyond of some ineffable White towards which his reverie yearned.

The onset of winter, which, as you say, makes your gaze turn more inward, should ultimately lead you to your final decision—the word from the depths, telling you whether for the nonce you should stay in the West or soon pack up your present concerns and make for the Samadhi-centred silence waiting for a new world to be born. Of course, even where you are, you can hold that silence within you—the advantage of the Ashram is that one does not only hold the Divine but also feels the Divine enveloping one from all the quarters. However, do not be in a hurry to make up your mind. Go on doing the work that comes most sweetly to your hand.

What you have chosen to do sets me thinking of myself. I cannot but identify myself with “the elderly and handicapped” to whose needs you are helping to minister, except that I have a fire in my heart which age cannot quench and I do not look backward to muse on past irrecoverable joys but gaze forward to a future of more and more bliss of self-giving to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. All the same I can be called “elderly” because of my semi-bald head and a bit of difficult hearing. If the latter is due more to some extra wax in the ears than to any defect in the tympanum I should be able to say, “My deafness waxes and wanes.” As to being handicapped, I have to plead guilty, though the appropriate term would be the coinage “legicapped” rather than “handicapped”. As long as my fingers can tap the keys of my typewriter I don't feel debarred from the world's work—but finding my legs deteriorated during the last ten years I feel I can't quite be considered “alive and kicking”. Perhaps this shortcoming which enforces a peaceful existence may save me for more time than otherwise from kicking the bucket.

12.11.1987

AMAL KIRAN  
(K. D. SETHNA)

# THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

*(Continued from the issue of March 1988)*

The Mother's Message

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



Volume Three: 1959

No. 16

THE weather was exceedingly cold, gloomy, dull, depressing.

It was a Sunday night. Before I went to bed I looked through the window at the downpour of rain which had now subsided to a drizzle. The bitter wind blew incessantly.

I sat on a sofa in a frozen silence, helpless to sort out the jumble of varied suggestions wrought in my mind. Life, I knew, was not a bowl of cherries.

Reluctantly I retired and began drifting into sleep. Meanwhile I thought of all my past lives—each of them I believed was connected with the Divine. This present life was no exception—how the Mother showered her Grace and Love, how her tender care gave me courage to live. All this came welling up into my half-conscious mind.

I tried to open my eyes heavy with sleep, then eventually they closed firmly.

To my relief the rain ceased at the soft sunrise. The grey clouds dispersed with the first glimmer of light—with that the feeling of desolation was gone.

I soaked myself in a scented hot bath, emerged refreshed, dressed leisurely, went downstairs to eat breakfast. Then I peeped into the pigeon-hole marked H where all my post was kept. To my sheer joy I found a thick envelope from the Mother. I took it and rushed to my room, opened it and saw a folder—in front there was the reproduction of a sketch “Ascent to the Truth” done by her, inside on the right her own photograph in which she was clad in a sari. Her words on the left were:

“To my dear little child Huta,  
Special blessings during these days of Puja.  
With love.”

The Mother sent beforehand four messages which she was to distribute to people in the Ashram.

Each of them brought me inner peace and happiness. I should like to quote all, because they were exalting.

First was for the Durga Asthami:

“The seed of Godhead sleeps in mortal hearts,  
The flower of Godhead grows on the world-tree:  
All shall discover God in self and things,  
But when God’s messenger comes to help the world  
And lead the soul of earth to higher things,  
He too must carry the yoke he came to unloose;  
He too must bear the pang that he would heal;  
Exempt and unafflicted by earth’s fate  
How shall he cure the ills he never felt?”

SRI AUROBINDO—*Savitri*

The next was for Vijaya Dashmi:

“Misery shall pass abolished from the earth;  
The world shall be freed from the anger of the Beast,

From the cruelty of the Titan and his pain.  
There shall be peace and joy for ever more.”

SRI AUROBINDO—*Savitri*

The following was for the Mahalakshmi Puja:

“Thou shalt be one with God’s bare reality  
And the miraculous world he has become  
And the diviner miracle still to be  
When Nature who is now unconscious God  
Translucent grows to the Eternal’s light,  
Her seeing his sight, her walk his steps of power  
And life is filled with a spiritual joy  
And Matter is the Spirit’s willing bride.”

SRI AUROBINDO—*Savitri*

Then finally a small enclosure for October 31, 1959—for the Mahakali Puja. A special blessing packet of Pomegranate flower-petals was attached inside. Beneath it the Mother had written:

“To my dear little child Huta  
With love and blessings.”

The message for the occasion was in Sri Aurobindo’s words:

“There is nothing that is impossible to Her who is the conscious Power and universal Goddess all-creative from eternity and armed with the Spirit’s omnipotence.

“The Shakti in her workings will strike ruthlessly at all forms of ignorance and blindness and all even that trusts wrongly and superstitiously in her, and we must be prepared to abandon a too persistent attachment to forms of faith and cling to the saving reality alone.”

Tears of gratitude sprang to my eyes when I finished reading all the messages.

\*

Miss Doris Tomlinson reached Pondicherry on 24th October 1959. I got a letter dated 26th October from the Mother:

“To my dear little child Huta,  
I have just received all the nice things you have sent through Doris with your love and I am very glad to have them.  
My love and blessings are always with you.”

Also there was a quotation from her own writings:

“Always do the best you can and leave the result to the Supreme. Then your heart will be in peace.”

At the same time I had a letter from Doris advising me to wear warm clothes and be very careful during the winter. She added:

“I was so happy to see the Mother. She inquired all about your welfare and thanked me for assisting you in London. I felt really embarrassed. Did you write to the Mother?”

“The Mother affirmed: ‘Now London has come under my Consciousness.’ ‘Huta, isn’t it wonderful?’”

*(To be continued)*

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# NOLINI KANTA GUPTA BIRTH CENTENARY

## NOLINI-DA AND VARUNA

### Compiler's Note

ON 24th November 1926 after Sri Aurobindo withdrew to his "cave of Tapasya" the Mother took charge of the sadhana of the inmates. The months following are known as the golden period of the Ashram, for the Mother brought down different Gods and Goddesses into the Sadhaks and Sadhikas. Something of the Varuna-Consciousness was established in Nolini-da. Here is a description in general of that high-endeavour in Nolini-da's own words, along with some revelatory excerpts on Varuna by him.

SHYAM KUMARI

The Mother would now sit down daily for her meditations with all of us together, in the evening after nightfall. That was the beginning of collective meditation. She made a special arrangement for our seating. To her right would sit one group and to her left another, both arranged in rows. The right side of the Mother represented Light, on the left was Power. Each of us found a seat to her right or left according to the turn of our nature of the inner being. I was to her right, Amrita sat on her left.

A strange thing used to happen every day at these meditations. Purushottam was one of our number in those days. He used to sit directly in front of the Mother, a little apart from the rest of us. As soon as the meditation began, he would begin to sway his body and even move about with his eyes closed while still meditating. He would come and get hold of some of us, give them a thorough kneading and would not even hesitate to tear at the hair on their head or face. In those days, almost all of us sported a beard and a moustache and wore our hair long. He used to say that this was his allotted work, this work of purification and helping in the purification. Not only did any one never raise any objection to this kind of molestation, it was accepted by all with perfect equanimity, with joy almost; it was considered to be a necessity, a sign of the Mother's Grace. But these attentions were reserved only for two or three people. During this process, the Mother of course remained silent and engrossed in meditation. All was done, no doubt, under her control and guidance, but from an inner poise. One day Purushottam proclaimed to the Mother in a loud voice, "Mother, I do not mean it as a boast, I mention this to you in utter humility: Mother, just as you are the highest Force of the Supreme, even so I am the lowest force of this earth-nature. You have given me the privilege of being a collaborator in your Work." He used to say that Seshanaga, the primal energy that sustains the material world, had manifested in him, that he was Seshanaga itself. He was the spirit



of Inconscience, of the Force in the nether world; his task was to work in that darkness, sweep it clean and make room for the Light, the Higher Forces of the Mother. This manner of working continued for some time; then it came to a halt, and we had only meditations.

The Mother's endeavour at that time was for a new creation, the creation here of a new inner world of the Divine Consciousness. She had brought down the Higher Forces, the Gods, into the earth atmosphere, into our inner being and consciousness. A central feature of that endeavour was that she had placed each of us in touch with his inner godhead. Every individual has what may be described as his line of spiritual descent and also ascent; for into each individual consciousness has come down from the supreme Maha Shakti an individual divine being, a particular godhead following a particular line of manifestation of divine power, *vibhuti*. To bear inwardly the touch of this divinity and found it securely within oneself, to concentrate on it and become one with it, to go on manifesting it in one's outer life, this was the aim of the *sadhana* at the time. This was a period of extreme concentration and one-pointedness, a "tortoise phase" of the *sadhana* one might call it. Like the tortoise one had to gather oneself in, limbs and all, and hide as in a shell by cutting oneself off from all outward touches. This was a temporary necessity in order to maintain the consciousness of the individual and the collectivity always at a high level and keep it unsullied and unchanged. Our give and take with the outside world was very little indeed and it was carried on under the strictest vigilance. All around us there had been fixed a cordon, an iron curtain almost. Even among ourselves, personal contacts like meeting one another or the paying of visits had been reduced to the barest minimum. To use the poetic language of Tagore, we seemed to be blossoming forth

Like a flower in the air, stemless  
and sufficient unto itself...

But after following out this line for some distance, the Mother could see that the new creation, even if it came about, would be something narrow and confined to a limited circle, and for the most part effective only for an inner action. But that has not been her aim. The new creation must embrace the entire human race, a new race of men must be created and not merely a small select group. And in that new creation must be included not only the inner being of man but also his vital and physical life. In other words, we have to come down to the lower levels and work for the purification there, in order to raise them beyond themselves by the infusion of the higher consciousness and make them fit instruments for the higher things. We are still continuing with that work, through the "ups and downs of an uneven path."

Let me just illustrate, from my own experience, to what extent we had become self-gathered and indrawn. One day, for some reason or other, I happened

to have come out of the Ashram precincts and away from its atmosphere; that is to say, I was going about the town and through the market area. Suddenly I began to feel rather queer, as if I were not walking on the ground. There was no weight in my legs, I floated on air through a mist as in a dream and there was no solid ground or a settled path. I felt terribly uneasy, almost like a fish out of water. I hurried my steps back and it was not till I had reached the Ashram precincts that I could heave a sigh of relief.

We have left that stage far enough behind us now. We have in fact reached the opposite end perhaps. We have taken a plunge outwards, identified ourselves with the outer being—a tendency against which the Upanishad has used a word of warning, *Parāñci khāni vyatrat*, our senses have a natural pull towards the outer things. But this too was necessary and still is. We form part of the world, we are united with it and inseparable. We are an image of the entire world, its symbol and representative. We have to share in its work and suffer its deeds. Even Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have not spared themselves this, but that is another matter. Whatever changes we succeed in effectuating in ourselves here will initiate similar changes all the world over. Therefore, not to become wholly externalised—a tendency which is uppermost here in our collective life-today,—but to keep the path open for the inner *sāadhanā*, this should be our endeavour. We have to harmonise the two extremes, for not to disjoin but to unite, that is Yoga.<sup>1</sup>

### Excerpts on Varuna

The Veda draws a graphic picture of the eternal stability, the sameness, almost the oppressive monotony of the material universe through millions and millions of aeons of its existence. The eternal recurrence without beginning and without end of the rising and setting of the sun and the stars, the inviolable law of Varuna, suffers no break or change.<sup>2</sup>

Varuna is the presiding Deity of vastness. The harmony and the union that came into existence from the infinite expanse of Varuna are the gifts of Mitra. Lord Varuna removes the limitation, isolation and disunion of our ordinary knowledge. He tears away the hostile force that compels us to remain narrow and small. Hence he is called *Riśādasam*. And Mitra is our divine Guide. With his clear vision he unites all the objects together in perfect harmony. When an aspirant attains to the level of indivisible harmony in the infinite, in the limitless, he arrives at the fundamental Truth and his action then becomes the infallible manifestation of that Truth. Indra possesses pure intelligence. Behind him stand the two powers of the Infinite, Varuna and Mitra. It is they who have made intelligence full of Knowledge and Energy. They are also called poets, i.e., the seers of Truth. It is because of their infinite expanse, eternal rhythm, and

<sup>1</sup> *Collected Works of Nolini Kanta Gupta*, Vol 8, pp 204-207

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 4. p. 369.

inborn power of truth that the aspirant is able to draw the stupendous inspiration of energising power and an unobstructed pure genuine capacity to carry on all his activities in life.<sup>1</sup>

Varuna means also one who has the vast consciousness and vision. He can see far, far into the longest distance, into the unseen future.<sup>2</sup>

Varuna forms the basis on which stand Mitra and Aryama — in the vast expanse of freedom, in the wide unbarred progress of the spiritual vision heaves up in surges the gracefully rhythmic dance of the forces.<sup>3</sup>

Many interests have to be served, many lines of growth have to be encouraged, liberty for contraries all in the framework of a wider harmony. The ancient Rishis invoked the aid of the gods Mitra and Varuna for the establishment of that wide harmony, the builders of the new age too can do no better.<sup>4</sup>

Varuna seems to be an emanation of Mahavira, a son of Maheshwari: for he is pre-eminently the god of the pure and vast consciousness who releases us from the triple bonds and shows us the winding way into the embrace of the infinite Mother.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 7, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 294.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 207.

## SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER ON BEAUTY

SRI AUROBINDO states that what the human consciousness is... “seeking through beauty is in the end that which we are seeking through religion, the Absolute, the Divine. The search for beauty is only in its beginning a satisfaction in the beauty of form, the beauty which appeals to the physical senses and the vital impressions, impulsions, desires. The soul of beauty in us desires the contact, the revelation, the uplifting delight of an absolute beauty in all things which it feels to be present, but which neither the senses and instincts by themselves can give... nor the reason and intelligence... for beauty is suprarational, supra-intellectual. It is through all these veils that the soul seeks to get in touch with this universal, absolute beauty. God is Beauty and Delight hidden in the variation of his masks and forms.”

Sri Aurobindo says that by identifying with beauty we “identify ourselves in soul with the Divine in all forms and activities of the world and shape an image of our inner and our outer life in the highest image we can perceive. “Thus the aesthetic being in us “has risen to its divine consummation to reveal, to embody, to create. The highest beauty is to bring out of our souls the living image and power of God.”

No doubt all of us have memories of moments of this highest beauty which Sri Aurobindo speaks of. I think immediately of those breath-taking moments when I've walked into Mother Nature at her heights of perfection. There was the clear, cold night when the stars seemed close enough to reach and touch as I ascended the hill in Darjeeling for a view of Kanchenjunga. I've had the delight of going to the beach in Auroville on a full moon night and seeing the phosphorescent lights dance on the waves... I have my collection of photos which have attempted to capture sunsets, rainbows, mountains, dewdrops on roses, or shell fish on rocks. I have rocks and pebbles from the beaches of Maine and driftwood from Lake Michigan and clay babies from Vermont. All of these things were a passing moment, a fleeting glimpse of “the soul behind, the self and spirit.”

I have also tried to create things which have something of myself and yet something that is beyond myself. How many times have I taken a piece of clay and tried to impose some design on it and in the end find it to be just another piece of pottery? How many times have I found the pot within the ball of clay and looked at it sitting on my table wondering where it came from or who made it?

Sri Aurobindo says that the artist or the Yogi has a transmuting vision because he “discovers what is behind the object, the something More that it is.” “In the Yogi's vision of universal beauty, all becomes beautiful, but all is not reduced to a single level. It all depends on the ascending power (Vibhuti) of Consciousness and Ananda that expresses itself in the object. All is the Divine, but some things are more divine than others. There are not only aesthetic values, but life-values, mind-values, soul-values that enter into the expression of beauty.”

I often think of how I have become more aware of expressing harmony and beauty in all of my habits, since living in Auroville. Mother leaves her indelible mark on her disciples through an aspiration to express beauty through speech, work, and daily habits. This beauty is often very simple. A flower is in just the right place, a red tile floor is laid out in a geometric pattern, or a hand-embroidered blouse or handwoven cloth is made or worn. Mother saw the cultivation of an aesthetic sense as part of every disciple's education. She thought that we should develop; "The capacity to choose and adopt what is beautiful and harmonious, simple, healthy, and pure. For there is a psychological health just as there is a physical health, a beauty, and harmony of the sensations as of the body and its movements. As the capacity of understanding grows in the child, he should be taught, in the course of his education, to add artistic taste and refinement to power and precision. He should be shown, led to appreciate, taught to love beautiful, lofty, healthy, and noble things, whether in Nature or in human creation. This should be a true aesthetic culture, which will protect him from degrading influences. For, in the wake of the last wars and the terrible nervous tension which they provoked, as a sign, perhaps, of the decline of civilization and social decay, a growing vulgarity seems to have taken possession of human life, individual as well as collective, particularly in what concerns aesthetic life and the life of the senses. A methodical and enlightened cultivation of the senses can, little by little, eliminate from the child whatever is by contagion vulgar, commonplace, and crude. This education will have very happy effects even on his character. For one who has developed a truly refined taste will, because of this very refinement, feel incapable of acting in a crude, brutal or vulgar manner. This refinement, if it is sincere, brings to the being a nobility and generosity which will spontaneously find expression in his behaviour and will protect him from many base and perverse movements."

Those who had the opportunity to live in the Ashram with Mother express this aesthetic education in various ways. In some disciples it is simply a blissful smile. In others, it is an abundance of love, personal warmth, and harmony in the being. Many disciples express beauty through physical development and the discipline it requires. Still others cultivate roses and hibiscus, or produce hand-marbled paper or cloth... In fact the Ashram in Pondicherry is unique within the context of India for its cultivation of beauty and harmony on the physical plane.

Mother wrote "It is one of the greatest weapons of the Asura at work when you are taught to shun beauty. It has been the ruin of India. The Divine manifests in the psychic as love, in the mind as knowledge, in the vital as power, and in the physical as beauty. If you discard beauty it means that you are depriving the Divine of this manifestation in the material and you hand over that part to the Asura."

She couldn't be more explicit! We have a choice and an example. Look

at any photo of Mother, listen to her music or contemplate a flower with its significance. There is an immediate sense of that which is within. As Mother says, "A complete and universal appreciation of beauty and the making entirely beautiful our whole life and being must surely be a necessary character of the perfect individual and the perfect society."

"Harmony and beauty of the mind and soul, harmony and beauty of the thoughts and feelings, harmony and beauty in every outward act and movement, harmony and beauty of the life and surroundings, this is the demand of Mahalakshmi... where love and beauty are not or are reluctant to be born, she does not come."

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## SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA

(Continued from the issue of March 1988)

IN regard to the Vedic dawns of the far past Sri Aurobindo has re-visioned the mystic revelations, the spiritual victories of the Rishis. They pointed to the evolution of man in the future. The seers of old were aspirants for an ascent to the highest planes of consciousness. They were not recluses from life but concerned with the general welfare of society. Their experiences made the first of the many syntheses known to India's spiritual history.

Sri Aurobindo says: "We start with the Vedic synthesis of the psychological being of man in its highest heights and widest rangings of divine knowledge, power, joy, life and glory with the cosmic existence of the gods, pursued behind the symbols of the material universe into those superior planes which are hidden from the physical sense and the material mentality. The crown of the synthesis was in the experience of the Vedic Rishis something divine, transcendent and blissful in whose unity the increasing soul of man and the eternal divine fullness of the cosmic godheads meet perfectly and fulfil themselves. The Upanishads take up this crowning experience of the earlier seers and make it their starting-point for a high and profound synthesis of spiritual knowledge; they draw together into a great harmony all that had been seen and experienced by the inspired and liberated knowers of the Eternal throughout a great and fruitful period of spiritual seeking. The Gita starts from this Vedantic synthesis and upon the basis of its essential ideas builds another harmony of the three great means and powers, Love, Knowledge and Works, through which the soul of man can directly approach and cast itself into the Eternal."<sup>1</sup>

The Upanishads represent a turning point in the historic evolution of India. In a true sense, they are called Vedanta. S. Radhakrishnan writes: "The Vedanta meant originally the Upanishads though the word is now used for the system of philosophy based on the Upanishads. Literally, *Vedānta* means the end of the Veda, *vedasya antah*, the conclusion as well as the goal of the Vedas. The Upanishads are the concluding portions of the Vedas. Chronologically they come at the end of the Vedic period. As the Upanishads contain abstruse and difficult discussions of ultimate philosophical problems, they were taught to the pupils at about the end of their course. When we have Vedic recitations as religious exercises, the end of these recitals is generally from the Upanishads. The chief reason why the Upanishads are called the end of the Veda is that they represent the central aim and meaning of the teaching of the Veda. The content of the Upanishads is *vedānta vijñānam*, the wisdom of the Vedanta."<sup>2</sup>

Radhakrishnan gives the meaning of the word "Upanishad". "The word 'Upaniṣad' is derived from *upa* (near), *in* (down) and *sad* (to sit), i.e., sitting

down near. Groups of pupils sit near the teacher to learn from him the secret doctrine.”<sup>3</sup>

Radhakrishnan further tells us: “In an article on Christian Vedantism, Mr. R. Gordon Milburn writes, ‘Christianity in India needs the Vedanta. We missionaries have not realised this with half the clearness that we should. We cannot move freely and joyfully in our own religion; because we have not sufficient terms and modes of expression wherewith to express the more immaterial aspects of Christianity. A very useful step would be the recognition of certain books or passages in the literature of the Vedanta as constituting what might be called an Ethnic Old Testament. The permission of ecclesiastical authorities could then be asked for reading passages found in such a canon of Ethnic Old Testament at the divine service along with passages from the New Testament as alternatives to the Old Testament lessons.’”<sup>4</sup>

Max Muller, a Western scholar of the Veda and Upanishads, could not express their inner meaning integrally and psychologically as Sri Aurobindo presents it. Sri Aurobindo has pronounced on him: “He could construe Sanskrit well enough, but he could not feel the language or realise the spirit behind the letter. Accordingly he committed two serious errors of judgement; he imagined that by sitting in Oxford and evolving new meanings out of his own brilliant fancy he could understand the Upanishads better than Shankaracharya or any other Hindu of parts and learning; and he also imagined that what was important for Europe to know about the Upanishads was what he and other European scholars considered they ought to mean.”<sup>5</sup>

The Upanishads have imparted to humanity for generation after generation—at least for three thousand years—the sense of an unseen reality, the truth of mystic vision. Deussen’s words on the Upanishads run: “philosophical conceptions unequalled in India or perhaps anywhere else in the world, they tackle every fundamental problem of philosophy.”<sup>6</sup>

The Upanishads reflect an attainment which the best of modern thinkers deem worth pursuing but which seems to them beyond human capacity. Radhakrishnan reports, “A.N. Whitehead speaks to us of the real which stands behind and beyond and within the passing flux of this world, something which is real and yet waiting to be realised, something which is a remote possibility and yet the greatest of present facts, something that gives meaning to all that passes and yet eludes apprehension; something whose possession is the final good, and yet is beyond all reach, something which is the ultimate ideal and the hopeless quest.”<sup>7</sup>

There are many commentaries on the Upanishads from both West and East. But Sri Aurobindo’s interpretations are much wider than those of others. According to him, the Upanishads are not merely a philosophy, they are *brahma-vidyā*, which is the pursuit of wisdom by a way of life.

He says: “The Upanishads are Vedanta, a book of knowledge in the pro-



founder Indian sense of the word, *jñāna*. Not a mere thinking and considering by the intelligence, the pursuit and grasping of a mental form of truth by the intellectual mind, but a seeing of it with the soul and a total living in it with the power of the inner being, a spiritual seizing by a kind of identification with the object of knowledge is *jñāna*. And because it is only by an integral knowing of the self that this kind of direct knowledge can be made complete, it was the self that the Vedantic sages sought to know, live in and to be one with it by identity....”<sup>8</sup>

But what is the “self” of which Sri Aurobindo speaks? We find the answer in his statement: “... The self is not the ego; it is one with the All and the One and in finding it it is the All and the One that we discover in our self: the contradiction, the separation disappears, but the self, the spiritual reality remains, united with the One and the All by that delivering disappearance.”<sup>9</sup> “The Upanishads are the creation of a revolutionary and intuitive mind and its illumined experience, and all their substance, structure, phrase, imagery, movements are determined by and stamped with this original character.”<sup>10</sup>

“The imagery of the Upanishads is in large part developed from the type of imagery of the Veda.”<sup>11</sup> The ritual symbols of the Veda are taken up into a psychological form leading to its own more philosophic field of spirituality. Out of several examples given by Sri Aurobindo, we may pick out one from the Isha Upanishad. Here “Surya, the Sun-God is invoked as the godhead of knowledge whose supreme form of effulgence is the oneness of the Spirit and his rays dispersed here on the mental level are the shining diffusion of the thought mind and conceal his own infinite supramental truth, the body and self of this Sun, the truth of the spirit and the Eternal.

“The face of the Truth is covered with a golden lid: O fostering Sun, that uncover for the law of the truth, for sight. O fosterer, O sole Rishi, O controlling Yama, O Surya, O son of the Father of creatures, marshal and mass thy rays: the Lustre that is thy most blessed form of all, that I see, He who is this, this Purusha, He am I.”<sup>12</sup>

“This Vedic and Vedantic imagery is foreign to our present mentality which does not believe in the living truth of the symbol, because the revealing imagination intimidated by the intellect has no longer the courage to accept, identify itself with and boldly embody a psychic and spiritual vision...”<sup>13</sup>

“The intuitive thought of the Upanishads starts from this concrete imagery and these symbols, first to the Vedic Rishis secret seer words wholly expressive to the mind of the seer but veils of their deepest sense to the ordinary intelligence, link them to a less covertly expressive language and pass beyond them to another magnificently open and sublime imagery and diction which at once reveals the spiritual truth in all its splendour.”<sup>14</sup>

According to Sri Aurobindo, the Upanishads are a supreme creation and work of the Indian mind and its sublimest poetry which is the embodiment of

a spiritual influx. They indicate a great life-movement too, and the Chhandogya and Brihadaranyaka Upanishads record, as he puts it, "an epoch of immense and strenuous seeking, an intense and ardent seed-time of the spirit."<sup>15</sup>

*(To be continued)*

NILIMA DAS

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## HERE'S A THOUGHT

1. PUT a smile on the inside of your face and the outside will take care of itself! Try it today.
2. If life seems not to be giving you what you deserve, try giving life what it deserves—your whole and undivided attention! You'll like what happens.
3. Our judgements tell more about us than they do about our environment.
4. There are those who act as if the mind has only one opening—the mouth. An open mouth loudly reveals the contents of the mind it represents.
5. Nothing really belongs to us until we appreciate it.
6. As we walk up and down the streets of life, we meet our own thoughts and beliefs outpictured as events, persons and environment.
7. We often find it difficult to invoke God's presence in the big needs of life because we have left Him out of the small things.
8. With gratitude for the past and a blessing for the future, concentrate on living in the eternal now.
9. We are not to try to reform the world but to inform it through example.
10. Prayer without ceasing is a persistent effort to educate our mind and heart in the qualities of God's nature—not to inform Him of our needs.
11. I would rather be condemned for the audacity to believe that man is divine, and therefore more than he appears to be, than for the weakness of faith that bows cravenly at the altar of limitation.
12. An interesting world always surrounds one who is interested in it!
13. The capacity to love, live, believe, think, feel, imagine, enjoy grows in one way: through exercise.
14. He who lives by Grace is gracious, graceful, and grateful.
15. Live boldly and confidently. When we back into life, we deserve to be kicked in the pants—and we usually are.
16. Ingratitude is a virulent disease of the soul.
17. Our spiritual assets are often on the rolls of the unemployed. Gratitude, forgiveness, faith, joy, imagination, love—how often have you employed these spiritual giants today?
18. How unhappy the lot of the ungrateful! No matter how much they have or get, they remain in misery.
19. A critic is always surrounded by the objects of his criticism.
20. True prayer is the greatest act of power in the world, not because it changes things, but because it changes our attitudes, convictions, thoughts, feelings, words and actions.
21. There is only one way to fail, and that is not to try again.
22. When problems seem to be chasing you, don't try to run away! Turn around in your God-given strength and face them calmly and confidently, knowing that He who is within you is greater than any outer circumstances.
23. There is no way of changing the law of giving and receiving, but we can

- change the fruits its operation brings forth in our life, by changing the nature of what we give.
24. If our job seems to be drudgery, we can be sure it is our attitude and not the job that is at fault.
  25. Waiting to be happy until there is a rearrangement of our outer conditions brings only one thing—the state of waiting to be happy.
  26. Happiness is a choice—a choice of happy and pleasant thoughts and emotions, regardless of outer conditions.
  27. Strange how some insist that the passport to heaven is an unyielding belief in the reality of evil... whereas the only residence possible to one holding such a belief is hell itself.
  28. The power of God will never act for the good of an individual or group at the expense of someone else.
  29. A constant rehearsal of our troubles and problems is really a prayer for their continuance.
  30. We never have trouble with others, only with our reactions to others.
  31. The perfect universe is here now, but it takes perfect vision to see it.
  32. Hate will corrode anything it touches, particularly the one who acts as its host.
  33. Here are some forms of prayer that have great healing power: a kind word or look, a twinkle in the eye, a smile, a pat on the shoulder.
  34. The things we sweep under the rug have a disconcerting habit of creeping out on the other side.
  35. The quickest way to lift our living level is to lift our giving level.
  36. People are wonderful, once love has cracked the shells of heart and mind they hide behind.
  37. We can never appreciate another person until we stop trying to reform him.
  38. Children should be the teachers of the race.
  39. A man who has to eat his own words often gets indigestion.
  40. Spiritual growth leads us out of selfishness into selfhood.
  41. I learned enjoying life when I stopped trying to understand it and began appreciating it.
  42. Indecision is the most expensive of all habits.
  43. Too many irons in the fire often put it out.
  44. We love another to the extent that we free him to be himself.
  45. People can disagree with us without necessarily being wrong.
  46. Fighting a bad habit often strengthens its grip on us. It is more productive to build a new, constructive habit to replace the bad one.
  47. The quickest way to lose your peace of mind is to give the world a piece of it.
  48. Religion dies when it becomes a philosophy rather than a way of life.
  49. It usually takes less energy to do something than to worry about it.

# HUMOUR IN THE PLAYS OF SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of March 1988)

## Part 4. THE PRINCE OF EDUR

THERE are two other great comedies of Sri Aurobindo i.e. *Eric and Vasavadutta*. These are glorious tales but in working them out the Divine Playwright chooses love alone and not laughter to go with it. There is a happiness throughout *Vasavadutta* but it never comes out in the open, is never predominant. Elsewhere Sri Aurobindo took more cruel tales of more sombre times and turned them into gushing fountains of humour laced with laughter. In *Eric and Vasavadutta*, though high emotion is etched in breathtaking language, the savour of humour is absent. The characters in these two plays go about the business of love and war rather grimly, in an atmosphere so surcharged that the least inadvertent movement may become the cause of tragedy. There is an ocean-like joy, a Kalidasian felicity in *Vasavadutta* but with so much dignity and nobility that even smiles are subdued: outright laughter is of course, banned and chuckles and guffaws are for another time and place. Even when the situations cry out for open-hearted laughter, the love-making, the wooing and winning are violent, the characters take the affairs of life too earnestly.

In *Eric* also the love-note is passionate, hovering between tragedy and comedy, so finely balanced that the reader fears the outcome. There is sweet release but no breaking into laughter. Even if Aslaug says to Eric—

“... I rejoice that God has played  
The grand comedian with my tragedy  
And trapped me in the snare of thy delight,”<sup>1</sup>—

this delight is the delight of ocean-depths, not the merry rush of wave upon wave breaking on the shore.

That leaves only *The Prince of Edur*, an incomplete play. Let us review it for its treasury of fun.

Laughter is the hall-mark of young people of all ages, the old being more often the cause of the laughter. To laugh with a carefree attitude towards life, to play with circumstances like sun-rays sporting with the ocean-waves—this by itself ensures youth. To achieve such a felicitous state one must have a sense of adventure, a strong faith in oneself and one's destiny, an aptitude for living unto the day, nay, unto the moment and to take neither life nor death too seriously.

This incomplete tale brings out with artistry that attitude of Rajputana where Rajput men and maidens valued valour above kingdom, cherished brave death

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, Vol 6 p 534

on the battlefield more than a mediocre or even glittering life, sought honour more than comfort—this glorious Rajputana which is an inexhaustible store-house of stories of matchless self-sacrifice and valour.

Whatever country, age or milieu Sri Aurobindo takes up, he unfolds it in his plays with perfect mastery. In this play the Rajputs' ethos of chivalry, their sublime disregard for self-preservation, their inner impulsion to wager one's life at each step, their joy in battle and on testing of one's own mettle and that of one's opponents are depicted with such authenticity that if one did not know the author one would have suspected him of having been a Rajasthani.

To the Rajput warrior the line between life and death seemed ephemeral, and both were equally welcome. Dishonour and lowering of the family's pride were the only things he was afraid of. It was the age when young brides used to boast to their friends, "It is good that my husband died fighting during the battle. Had he returned defeated I could not have faced the world and would have died of shame." The funeral pyre was a glory to a Rajput woman. High birth and valour were the two things she looked for in her paramour. These obtained, if death came soon it didn't matter. One moment of glory, a war well-fought, a duty done, a debt of honour paid—these made life a tale told well. They were prized more than riches, pomps and thrones, won or maintained by dishonour or lowering one's self-respect.

This characteristic is the key to the strange-seeming behaviour of the Rajput beauties of this play. Outwardly it may seem like giddy girlishness. But at the core of their action is a steely resolve to choose a valiant and noble youth as a husband, even if he be a Bheel, even if a princess be forced to fetch water like a servant. The three Acts of this incomplete play give us a glimpse of three brave sisters of queen Padmini, who once along with eighteen thousand other souls chose the flames rather than the kingdom of Delhi, and of beautiful Madi Rani who cut her own head to send as a gift to her husband so that love for her may not deflect him from his path. However, in this play the author has chosen to temper the steel of valour with the alloy of humour.

The play opens at a time when Muslim invaders had gained a firm foothold on the soil of India. The Scythians and Huns held sway in the north. The Rajputs were impaled on the horns of a dilemma—to befriend the invaders or to shun them, to follow in the steps of a Mansingh or in those of a Rana Pratap. The beauty of Rajput princesses was the perpetual cause of battles between the Muslim rulers and the proud Rajputs. In this play we find King Curran following the example of Mansingh. King of Cashmere, mighty Toraman the Scythian asks for the hand of princess Comol Cumary. Rana Curran plans to give her to Toraman in spite of the objections of his queen and of his brother-in-law, the King of Ajmere. He decides on a strategy to do so without seeming to do it by making the marriage look like an abduction. He sends Comol Cumary with insufficient escort to another castle and at the same time sends a message to

Toraman to carry her off *en route*. His Queen Meena Devi would not have the Princess wed to a Scythian. She sends a message to the hero warrior Rao of Ichalgarh, a Chauhan noble, to abduct the Princess. Visal Deo, the Brahmin minister of Rana Curran, while obeying the contradictory orders of the King and the Queen, has his own plan regarding who should wed the Princess. He first sends post-haste his messengers to Bappa—the son of the late Gehelote Prince of Edur, who doesn't know of his own royal descent and lives amongst the Bheels as a Bheel.

Thus we see three suitors converging with their armies, in Bappa's case only a band of young Bheels, to wed a single maiden. Sri Aurobindo has laid the lines with such a craft that there is bound to be a jolly tangle. It will not be amiss to remind the readers once again that these Rajput maidens held life overlightly and awaited death over-eagerly and that one should not take the words or actions of the young Princesses as the giddy frivolousness of youth. Behind them is a resolve to weigh their own and their beloved's actions in the scales of honour and chivalry. Keeping this at the back of our minds let us hasten to meet them—on to the women's apartments in the palace at Edur.

In the first scene the King, Queen and the Minister decide to act each in their own way. In the second scene of the first act the author introduces us to the beautiful Comol Cumary and her half-sister Coomood Cumary. Comol Cumary wants to give the benefit of the doubt to her father's intentions about her marriage.

Comol Cumary—

.... My father's heart is royal;  
The blood that throbs through it he drew from veins  
Of Rajput mothers.<sup>1</sup>

Coomood Cumary at once counters her with more insight and a none-too-flattering summing up of the King's character.

But the brain's too politic.  
A merchant's mind into his princely skull  
Slipped in by some mischance, and it will sell you  
In spite of all the royal heart can say.<sup>2</sup>

When Comol Cumary protests—

He is our father, therefore blame him not.<sup>3</sup>

the pert Coomood adroitly reinforces her criticism—

<sup>1</sup> *S.A.B.C.L.*, Vol 7, p 747

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

I blame his brain, not him. Sweetheart, remember  
Whomever you may marry I shall claim  
Half of your husband.<sup>1</sup>

To Coomood's staking a claim in her future husband, Comol makes a delightfully generous offer—

If't be the Scythian, you may have  
The whole uncouth barbarian with Cashmere  
In the bad bargain.<sup>2</sup>

The two sisters tease each other about the choice of a bridegroom. There is a murmur of spring-leaves in the conversation of these young carefree girls. They surely are not inhibited or scrupulous, and have very decided views about what sort of a person they will espouse, a father's or a king's orders notwithstanding. Comol Cumary is adamant that she will not have the Hun and Coomood Cumary is as sure that she will share whichever husband falls to the lot of or rather in the net of Comol Cumary, for the Princess is not above using her womanly weapons—as we will see by and by. What they think and what they plan, how they tease each other and play like lightnings in mock combats will be better reflected by their own words. These two love each other deeply and have no secrets from each other. Though it may seem strange to us, even to this day two Rajput Princesses are married to the same Prince. Coomood Cumary knows Comol has set her heart on wedding a hero-warrior.

She teases her thus—

We will not let him have you.  
We'll find a mantra that shall call Urjoon  
From Eden's groves to wed you; great Dushyanta  
Shall leave Shacoontala for these wide eyes  
Which you have stolen from the antelope  
To gaze men's hearts out of their bodies with,  
You lovely sorceress; or we'll have Udaian  
To ravish you into his rushing car,  
Edur's Vasavadatta. We'll bring crowding  
The heroes of romance out of the past  
For you to choose from, sweet, and not a Scythian  
In all their splendid ranks.<sup>3</sup>

Comol adroitly turns the tables on her sister—

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p 748

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*



But my poor Coomood,  
Your hero of romance will never look at you,  
Finding my eyes so beautiful.  
What will you do then?<sup>1</sup>

Coomood's answer shows deep attachment to her sister. She is not to be outdone in raillery—

I will marry him  
By sleight of hand and never let him know.  
For when the nuptial fire is lit and when  
The nuptial bond is tied, I'll slip my raiment's hem  
Into the knot that weds your marriage robes  
And take the seven paces with you both  
Weaving my life in one piece with yours  
For ever.<sup>2</sup>

The saucy badinage and forward thrusts of these fencers bespeak spring-tide. Meanwhile enters the third beauty Nirmol Cumary prancing like an excited filly—

News, princess, news! What will you give me for a sackful of news?

Comol Cumary—

Two switches and a birchrod. A backful for your sackful!

Nirmol Cumary—

I will empty my sack first, if only to shame you for your base ingratitude. To begin with what will please you best, Prince Toraman is arrived. I hear he is coming to see and approve of you before he makes the venture; it is the Scythian custom.<sup>3</sup>

Nirmol Coomary is cast in the mould of Doonya and Brigida. She answers to Comol Cumary's assertion with a careless toss—

He will not listen. These Scythians stick to their customs as if it were their skin; they will even wear their sheepskins in midsummer in Agra.<sup>4</sup>

To Comol Cumary's suggestion that she should marry Toraman Nirmol cloaks her dislike of the proposal with the only weapon handy—irony and caricature darting from a nimble tongue—

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p 749.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*

I would not greatly mind. They say he is big as a Polar bear and has the sweetest little pugnose and cheeks like two fat pouches. They say too he carries a knout in his hand with which he will touch up the bride during the ceremony as a promise of what she may expect hereafter; it is the Scythian custom. Oh, I envy you, Princess.<sup>1</sup>

*(To be continued)*

SHYAM KUMARI

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

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## WHEN MAN AND MOUNTAIN MEET

My scattered thoughts polarised in dumb wonder,  
 Drunken and dazed I behold the majestic presence,  
 Head held high, not in pride—earth's folded hands  
 Raised in prayer to God's pedestal of eternity.  
 Mantled in green with the crown of dazzling snow—  
 Nature's monument of matter turned out  
 Of all the heavenly hum of creative pulsation—  
 A stanced fount of music to drown all my being.  
 I believe you were always there timelsss and steady,  
 The lofty book of earth and stone holding the secret of reality.  
 Concealed, a tender heart hidden under a granite exterior  
 Melts in compassionate thaw, flowing down to thirsty plains—  
 Riverine messengers of joy—couriers of continuity.  
 Take me up to your dizzy heights untrodden,  
 Static, still ever effusive of motion forward and beyond,  
 Set my body and soul free to unite with the unknown.  
 Oh no, not the audacious aimless space-sojourn  
 Rocketted by man in brazen bravado.  
 I want to rise as you rose to the clouds, to the skies.

DEBANSHU

## ‘RADHA’S PRAYER’

### FIRST EXPERIENCE OF GRACE

SOMETIME after settling down in the Ashram I got a copy of ‘Radha’s Prayer’ written by the Mother. Every night before sleeping I used to read it with devotion. So after a while I had memorised each word of it so well that it used to come automatically from my heart.

As days went on, slowly the insects started spoiling it by eating and making small holes here and there. I was feeling very bad and began to be sad as I had no money to frame it. At times I wept and prayed to the Mother, “Mother, I have no money. How to get it framed?” I did not know anyone whom I could ask for help. Moreover, I was too shy to approach anyone. My nature was such that even if I starved I would not ask for anything from anybody. With a great effort I had got the copy from someone. Now if it was spoiled by insects how would I get another one? All these thoughts were making me very sad.

After a few days my friend, Panjab Rao, told me that a money-order had come in my name. I took it as a joke and did nothing. “Who will send me money? I have not written to anyone and I do not expect money from anyone!” I said to myself and remained quiet. But after two days again he told me. “You have not gone to take your M.O.? If you do not take it, they will send it back. Why don’t you go and see? If it is yours, take it, otherwise come back.” I was feeling too shy to go and see because if it was not mine I would feel very bad. But I thought that I must go and see, otherwise I might lose the money.

So somehow I went and looked at the M.O. form. To my utter surprise I saw that it was for me and my own elder brother Shri Ajitsinghji had sent not five or ten rupees but one hundred! In those days in 1946-47 a hundred rupees for me was a huge amount because I did not need money at all. At first I could not understand why my brother had decided to send me money. How could he know that I was so much in need of it and weeping every night before ‘Radha’s Prayer’?

At once I knew that this was the Mother’s Work-Help-Grace, whatever you may want to call it. She had heard my ardent prayer and had seen me weeping for money to frame the ‘Prayer’. When I realised this I broke down like a child—overwhelmed by the Greatness and Presence of the Mother everywhere.

I took the money and at once decided to frame the ‘Prayer’. Half of the money I offered to the Mother and half I kept for myself. When I offered the money in the Meditation Hall at 9 a.m., when the Mother came as usual to give Blessings to sadhaks, She not only looked at me but stared at me for some time and gave me a big smile, patting my head and blessing me. I understood very well the why of it and will never forget. It is still alive and present before my eyes as if it had happened recently.

MAHENDRA

# A PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE UPANISHADS

(Continued from the issue of March 1988)

## ISHA UPANISHAD

THE Upanishads embody insights or intuitions regarding life and existence. They are, therefore, on the whole, concise statements of consciousness. They are not elaborate expositions giving reasons for their conclusions.

These insights and intuitions are sometimes limited and sometimes comprehensive. In the Mandukya Upanishad, *e.g.*, the intuition is that the Self is fourfold. And it states the four statuses of consciousness, the waking, the dreaming, the one of dreamless sleep and the fourth beyond all these. This is all the intuition expressed. The Rishi would naturally elaborate in his teaching.

The Isha Upanishad presents a number of intuitions, which together possess a complete view of perfect living for man. The first intuition is regarding the existence of God and the world, that God permeates and possesses the world, is its Lord, Isha. The second intuition is regarding true enjoyment. That is to say, that one enjoys not by clutching at a thing in the ego-way, but by being free and unattached as a soul, considering the thing God's and enjoying it.

This is a deep psychological truth, one enjoys a thing best and most when one receives and enjoys it with freedom. It is a common enough experience that when one eagerly desires something, hankers after it and eats it with strong indulgence, he enjoys it the least. He gets excited, agitated and misses the calmness necessary for enjoyment.

The third important intuition is that works done as a free person do not create involvement or bondage. Thus, acting as a detached and free soul and not as an ego eagerly fastening on a result, one remains free. This is indeed a great truth of life, which one can test for oneself.

The Upanishad further develops the idea of the spiritual reality of God and soul, of Ignorance and Knowledge, of Being and Becoming, of Non-Birth and Birth of the Worlds of Light and the Worlds of Darkness, and of ultimate Truth as covered by our conceptions and perceptions. These are elaborations and consequences of the intuitions mentioned above.

The first intuition of Divine Reality becomes so vivid that the Rishi claims, "He am I." With this realisation as of integral Truth all contradictions, all anomalies of life get reconciled, Being and Becoming, Knowledge and Ignorance become one. Delusion and sorrow find no place then. Knowledge as knowledge of unity *alone* is ignorance. Thus integral knowledge comprehends unity and multiplicity.

All this amounts to a life of works, of complete freedom and of perfect en-

joyment in union with the Divine Reality. In fact, the Upanishad presents a possibility of divine living here and now, in this body and in this world. The basic perceptions or intuitions are of the Divine Reality, the truth of enjoyment and the truth of free action. These given, one can enjoy perfect living.

(To be continued)

INDRA SEN

## SILENCE

AMONGST the voiceless ethers of inward self  
 Wrapt upon each other in luminous folds  
 There gleams a Silence of ocean deeps,  
 Vibrating to the rhythms of the dance of God.  
 A boundless container of the huge universe,  
 Unstirring supports the wheeling stars  
 Or in myriad deep densities of sunlit Self  
 The trespassless regions of the massive Truth-Sun.  
 Grammar and expression of Infinite Being,  
 In soundless recesses it pronounces the Word,  
 It writes in fire-scripts' strange hieroglyphics  
 The purpose, the meaning of the galaxies  
 And the tumult of life into which we come.  
 An ocean oneness underpins in joy.  
 Like a sleep of ecstasy, or a mantric chant  
 It presses upon hidden ancient springs  
 To release into Light what recondite remained  
 A far glimmer, a slow vast smile,  
 Horizons our self and is the whole.  
 Intent, indrawn, we faintly hear  
 The vocables of Eternity  
 Murmured above some dark echoing Deep  
 Like sound-seeds thrown into a void  
 To swell in reverberation and space  
 Till the cosmos in quiet resonance is drowned  
 And a prayer surrounds each lost memory of God.  
 A hum of creative muse is formed,  
 It penetrates into our day and night  
 Eroding the rock of primal gloom,  
 Kindling heaven-glow in body and soul

And the unforgetfulness of the One in all.  
 A Vision awakes, and we no more live,  
 It brings a Power that ever has been  
 And Death's freedom tempts not the spirit.  
 Descended, we arise to the mission of our souls,  
 An understanding surpasses the dim voice of thought  
 And the intermingling myriad wheelings of Life  
 Lie bare, sans escapement, to a huge regard.  
 The millionly intersecting ripples of Force  
 Are withdrawn into their secret source  
 Where, immobile, the One moves all and is unseen:  
 The stirless Shiva of supreme limitlessness.

There is no stress in that perfect calm,  
 No energetic motion of will or being;  
 The resilient fibre, the quivering flesh,  
 Are marble. Emotion is a lone circling whisper  
 Wandering formless in a dissolving wave.  
 Thoughts fall breathless from that steep altitude.

Slowly there appear as if from behind a screen  
 The features of a Face cast in some stupendous Peace;  
 Eyes that, fathomless, gaze unerring at the Sun.  
 Lips, seals of Silence, move  
 To pierce by becoming the Truth they reveal.  
 Upon that brow's cliff diamantine  
 Shines a rich lustre of ineffable Will  
 Or a Flame of the future dances in delight.  
 A Spirit-Light skin fronts with in-formed Deity.

A stilled pure Passion and moveless Ecstasy,  
 A meditation carrying open envisioned eyes,  
 A Will that we are and that no Destiny can abridge,  
 A Force arrowlike of smouldering Consciousness  
 Inviolate by the sanction of the Supreme.  
 We turn upon the world with a mastering Might,  
 He moves us now whom we had for ages sought,  
 We become unobstructed channels of His Love,  
 And embodiments of tenderness no pain can resist.  
 Environed with the aura of His Grace,  
 Impregnate with the density of His Ray  
 We become the discovered children of Immortality.

## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**Sri Aurobindo Circle: Forty-third Number. Sri Aurobindo Society Annual 1987.**  
Published by Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry. Price: Rs. 25.00.

SRI AUROBINDO'S gospel of the Life Divine is a trajectory that arcs into the future but its hallmark is an all-encompassing total perspective. In a world torn by one-sided affirmations, single-vision ideologies jostling roughly with each other it is most reassuring to strike into the vast orbit of a personality like Sri Aurobindo who takes the whole human enterprise in its purview and points the way to the radiant future with endless spiritual possibilities.

Mankind today faces an embarrassing dilemma. On the one hand there is the call of the ascetic who seeing 'what man has made of man' turns away from all the achievements of modern civilisation with the sneer, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world but lose his soul?" And there is the equally vehement counter-question posed by those who put their faith in the perfectibility of the race, "What shall it profit a man if he gain his soul and lose the whole world?" A humanist like Charles Lamb is well within his rights to ask "Sun and sky, and breeze and solitary walks, and summer holidays, and the greenness of fields..., and society, and the cheerful glass, and candle-light, and fireside conversations, and innocent vanities, and jests, and irony itself,—do these things form no part of your eternity?"

In reviewing the forty-third number of Sri Aurobindo Circle I am struck by the wide range of selections from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother which have bearing not only on the various aspects of human life but also on the burning issues of the day. There is the Mother's talk on Woman and the War given during the First World War that throws light on the truth that is struggling to rise to the surface behind such movements as Feminism. Sri Aurobindo left his body thirty-eight years ago and the world has turned over many times since then but his guidance still offers abiding solutions to the problems that baffle those at the helm of affairs because what is lacking in our leaders is a global and profound historical perspective and then above all a vision of the future which transcends all human calculations. A modern historian Eric Hobsbawm observes as his final insight into history in his book, *The Age of Empire*, "The only certain thing about the future is that it will surprise even those who have seen furthest into it." Sri Aurobindo saw clearly that each nation had a unique role to play in the universal symphony and for India the role has been fixed since years sempiternal to reveal spiritual values and stand firmly for them and not be deflected from its sunlit path by the siren voices of achievements in the material field.

Right in the beginning there are two passages under the ominous title, 'The Present Danger to India's True Destiny'. Sri Aurobindo gives the warning in

these words, "There are deeper issues for India herself, since by following certain tempting directions she may conceivably become a nation like many others evolving an opulent industry and commerce, a powerful organisation of social and political life, an immense military strength, practising power politics with a high degree of success, guarding and extending zealously her gains and interests, dominating even a large part of the world, but in this apparently magnificent progression forfeiting its Swadharma, losing its soul. Then ancient India and her spirit might disappear altogether and we would have only one more nation like the others and that would be a real gain neither to the world nor to us.... It would be a tragic irony of fate if India were to throw away her spiritual heritage at the very moment when in the rest of the world there is more and more a turning towards her for spiritual help and saving Light." But he assures us, "This must not and will surely not happen; but it cannot be said that the danger is not there." On the next page is a passage from the Mother, "The Only Way out of the Present Difficulties", "It is total, complete and unconditional surrender. What I mean by that is the giving up not only your actions, work, abilities, but also all your feelings, in the sense that all that you do, all that you are, is exclusively for the Divine. So, you feel above the surrounding human reactions—not only above them but protected from them by the wall of the Divine Grace."

Sri Aurobindo's vision of a divine life on earth is so comprehensive that all the phases and aspects of human life are assigned their right and proper place and role and none is rejected or repudiated as is usually done by future-oriented *avant-garde* ideologies. When some correspondent complained that there was too much stress given to 'this-worldliness' in his yoga Sri Aurobindo rejoined, "One thing I feel I must say in connection with your remark about the soul of India and X's observation about 'this stress on this-worldliness'". I do not quite understand in what connection his remark was made or what he meant by this-worldliness but I feel it necessary to state my position in the matter. My own life and Yoga have always been, since my coming to India, both this-worldly and other-worldly without any exclusiveness on either side. All human interests are, I suppose, this-worldly and most of them have entered into my mental field and some, like politics, into my life, but at the same time since I set foot on the Indian soil, on the Apollo Bunder in Bombay, I began to have spiritual experiences, but these were not divorced from this world but had an inner and infinite bearing on it, such as a feeling of the infinite pervading material space and the Immanent inhabiting material objects and bodies." Further on he writes, "In my Yoga also I found myself moved to include both worlds in my purview—the spiritual and the material—and try to establish the Divine Consciousness and the Divine Power in men's hearts and earthly life, not for a personal salvation only but for a life divine here. This seems to me as spiritual an aim as any and the fact of this life taking up earthly pursuits and earthly things into its scope cannot,



I believe, tarnish its spirituality or alter its Indian character.' (*Letters on Yoga by Sri Aurobindo, Part One, pp. 121-122, Birth Centenary Edition*).

All one-sided affirmations and single-vision ideologies tend towards oversimplification and 'nothing but' reductionism. For Karl Marx, "All history is the history of class struggle." And for Sartre men will always be in a state of war with one another and he suggests a single explanation: *scarcity*. Nature, according to Sartre, is niggardly, there is not enough to go round, and that is why each man is an enemy of the other. Scarcity, then, is "the motor of history" and "hell is other people." Because of such trenchant philosophies the world has become a battlefield of clashing forces so much so that Lord Russell wrote sometime in the forties, "I do not think that the sum of human misery has ever in the past been so great as it has been in the last twenty-five years." However realistic these outlooks may sound, their acceptance means not only that the stars will ever remain beyond our reach but that mud is the only reality. Sri Aurobindo while taking full measure of man's inhumanity will not condemn the human race to this kind of Hobbesian despair of nihilism. He assures us:

A term was set for every eager Power  
Restraining its will to monopolise the world,...

(*Savitri*, p. 267)

In the current issue there is a long article by Sri Aurobindo on Materialism. The seamy side of materialism is everywhere glaringly obvious. Sri Aurobindo observes, "world-wide strife and competition have been, it is said, its fruits, war and the holocaust of terrible strife in which mankind has been squandering its strength, blood, treasure,—though these are no new calamities, nor would it be safe to hope that they are the last of their kind,—are pointed to as its nemesis or regarded as a funeral pyre it has lighted for itself in whose cruel flame the errors and impurities it brought into existence are being burnt to ashes." While assigning it its great role as a liberating force he urges us to "Admit—for it is true,—that this age of which materialism was the portentous offspring and in which it has figured first as a petulant rebel and aggressive thinker, then as a grave and strenuous preceptor, has been by no means a period of mere error, calamity and degeneration, but rather a most powerful creative epoch of humanity. Examine impartially its results. Not only has it immensely widened and filled the knowledge of the race and accustomed it to a great patience of research, scrupulosity, accuracy—if it has done that only in one large sphere of inquiry, it has still prepared for the extension of the same curiosity, intellectual rectitude, power for knowledge, to other and higher fields—not only has it with an unexampled force and richness of invention brought and put into our hands, for much evil, but also for much good, discoveries, instruments, practical powers, conquests, conveniences which, however we may declare their insufficiency for our highest

interests, yet few of us would care to relinquish, but it has also, paradoxical as that might at first seem, strengthened man's idealism."

Thus in human history by indirection is direction found. There are others also who share this insight into the double role of materialism with Sri Aurobindo. Michael Polanyi, a scientist and a philosopher, writes, "If our scepticism itself goes to extremes, it does so in a pursuit of a moral purpose, namely for a relentless intellectual honesty. The two conflicting ideas of our age—its scepticism and its moral passion—are indeed locked in a curious struggle in which they may combine and reinforce each other. This is a strange story." According to Polanyi the first master-idea of modern science is that man himself is but a chance collocation of atoms, without purpose or meaning. The other master-idea standing opposite to scepticism is the new fellow-feeling born indirectly from scepticism. For it was the attack of scepticism on the Christian Churches that released the moral ideals of Christianity from a striving for individual salvation and directed our moral conscience instead to the betterment of human society. The imagination of the new rationalism was soon to be aflame with aspirations for a higher condition of man and society (Michael Polanyi, *On the Modern Mind*). The same paradox is echoed by Paul Tillich in these words, "If ever in history there was a time when human objectives supported by an infinite amount of good-will heaped disaster upon disaster on mankind, it is the twentieth century."

There is a section, "Thoughts from Sri Aurobindo" with such titles as "The Object of the Yoga". There we read: "It is a spiritually essential change of consciousness, not the surface manipulation which is the method of the Mind and Reason, that can alone make life other than it now is and rescue it out of its present distressed and ambiguous figure."

"The Aim of Life in the Ignorance and Its fulfilment in Knowledge" is another title. Here we have a comprehensive description of the spiritual man and beyond him the gnostic being. "The spiritual man is one who has discovered his soul: he has found his self and lives in that, is conscious of it, has the joy of it; he needs nothing external for his completeness of existence. The gnostic being starting from this new basis takes up our ignorant becoming and turns it into a luminous becoming of knowledge." Then there are "Two Alternatives for the Future of Humanity." We read: "Whether the future hope of the race lies in a rational and an intelligently mechanised or in a spiritual, intuitive and religious civilisation and culture—that, then, is the issue." The last sentence in "The Mental and the Supramental Seeing" provides us with the keynote of the Aurobindonian synthetic outlook. "To see things steadily and see them whole is not possible to the mind, but it is the very nature of the transcendent Supermind." This sentence should have been cited by K.D. Sethna in his most profound study of Greek influence on Sri Aurobindo. Mathew Arnold in his famous sonnet, "To a Friend", writes about Sophocles:

“But be his,  
 My special thanks, whose even-balanced soul,  
 From first youth tested up to extreme old age,  
 Business could not make dull, nor Passion wild,  
 Who saw life steadily, and saw it whole,  
 The mellow glory of the Attic stage,  
 Singer of sweet Colonus, and its child.”

Was Arnold a precursor of the Aurobindonian discovery of the Supramental Truth-Consciousness or was it Sophocles? But it is the wisdom of the Supramental Consciousness that can reconcile such polarisations as obscure the truth behind totalist idealogies.

Kishor Gandhi's rejoinder to the modern poet Kathleen Raine which but for its spirited eloquence would have sounded like breaking a butterfly upon a wheel. She is too insular in her outlook and fails to acquire the taste by which Sri Aurobindo is to be appreciated and made a vehicle of spiritual ascension. But there are other sensibilities and more wide-angled responses also. Andrew Motion, a modern critic, observes, “Whatever one's feelings about a native tradition it's hard to defend sustained insularity, and impossible not to applaud publishers, who are prepared to widen our horizons.” Another critic, commenting on the work of Joseph Brodsky who won the Nobel prize this year in literature, writes, “Joseph Brodsky has thus become one of those writers who like Joseph Conrad and Vladimir Nabokov, have enriched their adopted English with new meaning and music.”

A British historian once posed the question, “Is Clio a Muse?” One has only to read the articles by Dr. K.R. Srinivasa Iyenger and Prema Nanda Kumar to give an answer in the affirmative. History, poetry, philosophy and futurology are woven into a beautiful fabric. The poet Robert Lowell once wrote.

We have talked our extinction to death.

Dr. Iyengar gives us a full measure of the premonitory seismic convulsions that threaten us but then there is the saviour Grace that speaks through line after line in *Sayitri* and we know that the world will be saved, for the collective march of humanity *lokasangrahartha* and the *saryabhūtahiterataḥ* are still with us.

K.D. Sethna's second article in the series “Sri Aurobindo and Greece” raises all the questions about the interpretative role of Dramatic Poetry as unfolded by the Greek dramatists and its relevance today. Well, till we have learnt to see life steadily and see it whole the relevance will remain. A part of now human history remains, in the words of Arnold Toynbee, “a story of unlearnt lessons.”

Mr. A.S. Dalal's article, "The Power of Identification" is a lucid exposition of the concept of identification as envisaged by Western psychologists and as expounded by the Mother.

Sri Aurobindo's prophecy about the Future Poetry has been fulfilled in his Ashram. According to him, the first phase of the new trend will be spiritual lyrics. There are in the current issue powerful sonnets and lyrics charged with the light of the overhead planes. I wish some poems of our late poet Romen had been included. He has written poems of the highest order and his untimely demise is a great loss for all who cherished his poetry.

RAVINDRA KHANNA

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**Sitayana:** Epic of the Earth-Born. by K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar. Published by Samata Books, 10 Kamaraj Bhavan, 573 Mount Road, Madras-600 006. Pages: XX-686, Hardbound, 1987. Price: Rs 250.00.

Readers and critics of Indo-Anglian literature have always wondered what new epic would come in the wake of Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*. "What? An epic! And that too in verse!" Even the voluminous writers are said to have remarked so and shrugged their shoulders. Hence the hope of reading another epic was slowly vanishing. But one fine morning Samata Books surprised the literary world by releasing an epic in verse—*Sitayana*, authored by the eighty year old, no, young Dr. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar.

Borrowed heavily from Valmiki's *Ramayana*, occasionally from Kamban's Tamil epic *Ramayanam* and more occasionally from Tulsi Das's *Rama Charita Manasa*, Dr. Iyengar's *Sitayana* retells the story of Rama, highlighting Sita as the chief character. Written over a period of about three years the epic spans Sita's life from her birth in a furrow to her later return to the bowels of the earth. Between the beginning and the end moves the story of her childhood and girlhood, her marriage to Rama, their life as exiles in Dandaka for 13 years, their year-long separation and reunion, their coronation at Ayodhya, her second sundering from Rama, her crown of motherhood and her self-transcendence. Divided into seven books, each of eleven cantos and written in the unrhymed quatrain measure *Sitayana* is the "fitful recordation of the aches, exultations, soul-searchings of the blemishless Earth-born."

"My ideal of a wife is Sita," wrote Mahatma Gandhi, "and of a husband Rama. But Sita was no slave of Rama." (*Young India*, Oct. 21, 1926). Iyengar's Sita too in canto 18 of Book II glorifies wifehood in the following quatrain:

"For a wife, there's neither father, mother,  
Son, friend, but her Lord alone:  
She shares his life as much in foul weather  
as in fair, and all the time." (P. 139)

And she honestly feels that with Rama by her side even Dandaka forest would be paradise enough. Separation from Rama would be more horrible than the dangers in the forest.

In spite of her duty-bound love for Rama, Sita does not behave like a slave. On one occasion, Rama unbalanced by the fast-tongued ogress—Rumour—arraigns Sita thus:

“When you had perforce to live in his place,  
Ravana couldn't have left you  
undefiled, since you are so beautiful  
and hence so desirable.

“All the glory of pristine womanhood,  
all the grace of purity,  
Perfection, all the fire of the true wife,  
all have taken leave of you.” (P. 490)

It is the best example of how the best of men at the best of times could be seized with idiocy. Sita rises like a fury. She finds apt words to express herself:

“Our happy years together are nothing,  
your green eye is everything!” (P. 492)

Finally she curses:

“...as the yokel that cast out a Pearl  
you'll now live in history.” (P. 492)

Sita's wrath seems to be momentary only for when she is exiled again, she tells Lakshmana:

“For a woman, her husband is her God,  
friend, comrade and counsellor;  
I'll therefore do what pleases my Lord,  
aye, give up all joy of life!” (P. 578)

Sumitra, Lakshmana's mother, consoles the bereaved Sita thus: “Alas! Sufferance is woman's name!” and thereby summarises this epic in a single line. *Sitayana* contains some striking insights into the nature of male-female relationship and its implications in a male-dominated world. Listen to the lament of Mandodari:

“Woman’s love—a mother’s, wife’s or sister’s  
 a daughter’s, any woman’s—  
 by its own law fosters and sustains life,  
 but the Male always assails  
 with his pride, ambition, self-righteousness,  
 and the woman pays, hapless  
 mankind pays, the entire commonwealth pays;  
 but woman pays most of all.” (P. 498)

Sita too musing bitterly on the knight-errants of lust whimpers thus:

“Women were but commodities, trophies  
 or pieces of property.  
 Woman was cheap—the Mother of the race  
 was nothing, worse than nothing;  
 Sisters, daughters,—weren’t they expendable?  
 Sufferance was woman’s name!” (P. 546),

The protest of women against male supremacy can be heard throughout this epic. The outbursts of Ahalya (pp. 106-107), Tara’s harpings on male and female relationship (pp. 526-527), Trijata’s musings on womanhood (pp. 458-459) and Lopamudra’s digs and taunts at the whole encyclopaedia of do’s and don’ts for the woman, contrasted with the flagrantly opposite guide-book for the domineering male (pp. 216-217) are a few samples of the bomb-shells that make a Hiroshima of male chauvinism. Dr. Iyengar’s powerful language whizzes like bullets freed from a machine gun, and even a Rama (byword for an ideal husband) can’t escape unscathed.

A wife addressing her husband by his name is not anywhere in our Indian culture, be it Dravidian or Aryan. But the author allows his characters Sita, Urmila and Srutakirti to call their respective husbands by their names. Sita, of course, can’t but call the name of her Lord, when she is carried away by Ravana, and has to seek help. But on all other occasions the word ‘Aryaputra’ is forgotten, though Sita during the scene of her rejection by Rama (p. 491) utters “the word as of old” that is rich with infinite suggestion. Leave alone the youthful Sita and her sisters, Kaikeyi too, tempted by the hunchback Manthara, rises like an incited cobra and hisses.

“Let him come, the doddering deceitful  
 King: I’ll sulk, I’ll rave, I’ll rage.” (P. 124)

Dr. K.R.S., no doubt, advocates woman’s equality and he puts this point in a very subtle manner in the Prologue itself. This epic is every woman’s delight,

especially to the members of Women's Liberation Movement; a whip for all "male-chauvinist pigs" and an enthralling work for all lovers of literature.

Repetitions of the asura crow episode (pp. 313 & 344), the story of Hiranyakasipu (pp. 376 & 457) might have been avoided. Careless proof-reading mars the beauty of Dr. K.R.S.'s language. For example "needles of thought" is printed as "needless of thought". Three printing errors in just one page (p. 400) is something unpardonable. Yet these are no obstacles in the long but quite an enjoyable journey from 'Mithila' to 'Ashrama'. The contemporaneity of its appeal is bound to lure more readers. The only deterrent factor is the price.

P. RAJA

# *Students' Section*

## **THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION**

TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

16 August 1987

### **THE PRESENT WORLD-SITUATION**

**Introductory Speech by Kishor Gandhi**

*(Continued from the issue of March 1988)*

(4)

KEEPING our faith firm in the vision and work of Sri Aurobindo, we must remain sure that the advent of the supramental Truth creating a divine life on earth is not merely a possibility or a promise but an absolute certitude which no resistance of earth-nature or of adverse forces can frustrate or prevent. But we have also to bear in mind that this victorious advent of the supramental Truth, though ultimately certain, can occur in two ways and in which of the two it will occur depends partly upon us. This is because the process of evolutionary nature at the human stage requires not only a manifestation of the higher Truth from above: it requires also the readiness of humanity, its willing acceptance and collaboration, to receive it. If that collaboration, at least from a small section of humanity, is not forthcoming, if there is a persistent resistance and blind refusal, then, even though that cannot prevent the supramental Truth from manifesting, it will compel that Truth to remove the resistance by a forceful pressure which may result in a catastrophic destruction of the resisting element in humanity. Man being a conscious species in evolution cannot escape this responsibility of giving his conscious collaboration to evolutionary Nature, especially at the present moment where it is pressing to take the crucial leap from mind to Supermind. It is because of this necessity that even the Supramental Avatar who comes to establish the supramental Truth upon earth, cannot realise his mission without the help of a small section of humanity, at least of a few individuals who by their receptivity can open out a passage for the descending Truth to enter and securely settle in the material layers of the earth.

Even before the passing of Sri Aurobindo the descent from above had already commenced, but was the needed response from humanity forthcoming? In the Mother's opinion it was not, and it is precisely for this reason that



Sri Aurobindo had to sacrifice his body. Here is what the Mother said on 12 April 1953:

“Sri Aurobindo has given up his body in an act of supreme unselfishness, renouncing the realisation in his own body to hasten the hour of the collective realisation. Surely if the earth were more responsive, this would not have been necessary.”<sup>1</sup>

Then, after February 1956 when the Mother announced the manifestation of the Supermind on a global scale, the supramental Power is continuously pressing to overtly manifest in the outer life of humanity. But can we say that even now the needed collaboration from at least a small number of individuals is given? This is a very pertinent question which each one who calls himself a disciple of Sri Aurobindo must earnestly ask himself. The answer is obvious because if the needed response had been given it would not have been necessary for the Mother too to leave her body.

However, even the departure of both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother does not at all mean the failure of their work; on the contrary, as the Mother has said in the message which I just read, the decision to depart was deliberately taken by Sri Aurobindo “to hasten the hour of the collective realisation”.

And the same is true of her departure also. But, however much they may hasten it by their own sacrifice, the necessity of at least some response from humanity cannot be obviated because, as I said, it is part of the law of the evolutionary process which even the omnipotent Divine does not ignore in his world-action.

So the revolutionary situation at the present moment still remains the same as it was before their departure; only it has become, and is increasingly becoming, more acute and critical. The fate of humanity seems to be poised on the readiness of a few individuals to receive the new Truth. This readiness is the present urgent demand of the Time-Spirit or the call of the Supramental Creator and whether the New Creation will come smoothly or will need a catastrophic destruction of the resisting element in humanity depends on this readiness. Here again we should remember the Mother’s warning uttered in 1964:

“The future of the Earth depends on a change of Consciousness.

“The only hope for the future is a change of man’s consciousness and the change is bound to come.

“But it is left to men to decide if they will collaborate for this change or it will have to be enforced upon them by the power of crashing circumstances.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Collected Works of the Mother* (Cent Ed), Vol. 13, p 9

<sup>2</sup> Message to the World Conference of Sri Aurobindo Society, August 1964.

The imminent need for Sri Aurobindo's followers then is to collaborate for this change. But then it may be asked: What are we to do in order to give this collaboration? In Sri Aurobindo's view it consists in making an imperative choice which he has explained at some length in a long letter. The Mother found this letter so very important and so precisely relevant to the present need that she got first an extract from it separately printed in a small booklet, gave it her own title, "What a Sadhak Must Always Remember", and distributed it in April 1951 to all. Then again, as late as April 1973, a few months before her departure, she got the whole letter printed in a separate brochure, gave it a new title, "The Truth to be Realised Now" and got it published as a Supplement to *The Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*. This letter, which is of crucial significance at the present juncture, is also published in *Letters on Yoga* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 24), pp. 1305-1311, and needs to be read again and again, for in it Sri Aurobindo precisely tells us what he expects his disciples to do, and towards the end seems to give a rather severe warning of the consequences that will ensue if it is not heeded in time, consequences not only for themselves alone but for the whole world. I will read here only the extract which the Mother distributed in April 1951.

"This yoga can only be done to the end by those who are in total earnest about it and ready to abolish their little human ego and its demands in order to find themselves in the Divine. It cannot be done in a spirit of levity or laxity; the work is too high and difficult, the adverse powers in the lower Nature too ready to take advantage of the least sanction or the smallest opening, the aspiration and tapasya needed too constant and intense. It cannot be done if there is a petulant self-assertion of the ideas of the human mind or wilful indulgence of the demands and instincts and pretensions of the lowest part of the being, commonly justified under the name of human nature. It cannot be done if you insist on identifying these lowest things of the Ignorance with the divine Truth or even the lesser truth permissible on the way. It cannot be done if you cling to your past self and its old mental, vital and physical formations and habits; one has continually to leave behind his past selves and to see, act and live from an always higher and higher conscious level. It cannot be done if you insist on 'freedom' for your human mind and vital ego. All the parts of the human being are entitled to express and satisfy themselves in their own way at their own risk and peril, if he so chooses, as long as he leads the ordinary life. But to enter into a path of yoga whose whole object is to substitute for these human things the law and power of a greater Truth and the whole heart of whose method is surrender to the Divine Shakti, and yet to go on claiming this so-called freedom, which is no more than a subjection to certain ignorant cosmic Forces, is to indulge in a blind contradiction and to claim the right to lead a double life.

"Least of all can this yoga be done if those who profess to be its sadhaks

continue always to make themselves centres, instruments or spokesmen of the forces of the Ignorance which oppose, deny and ridicule its very principle and object. On one side there is the supramental realisation, the overshadowing and descending power of the supramental Divine, the light and force of a far greater Truth than any yet realised on the earth, something therefore beyond what the little human mind and its logic regard as the only permanent realities, something whose nature and way and process of development here it cannot conceive or perceive by its own inadequate instruments or judge by its puerile standards; in spite of all opposition this is pressing down for manifestation in the physical consciousness and the material life. On the other side is this lower vital nature with all its pretentious arrogance, ignorance, obscurity, dullness or incompetent turbulence, standing for its own prolongation, standing against the descent, refusing to believe in any real reality or real possibility of a supramental or superhuman consciousness and creation, or, still more absurd, demanding, if it exists at all, that it should conform to its own little standards, seizing greedily upon everything that seems to disprove it, denying the presence of the Divine, —for it knows that without that presence the work is impossible,—affirming loudly its own thoughts, judgments, desires, instincts, and, if these are contradicted, avenging itself by casting abroad doubt, denial, disparaging criticism, revolt and disorder. These are the two things now in presence between which every one will have to choose.

“For this opposition, this sterile obstruction and blockade against the descent of the divine Truth cannot last for ever. Everyone must come down finally on one side or the other, on the side of the Truth or against it. The supramental realisation cannot coexist with the persistence of the lower Ignorance; it is incompatible with continued satisfaction in a double nature.”

This then is “the crucial choice” which Sri Aurobindo wants those who profess to be his disciples to make and which according to the Mother is “the Truth to be realised now”. If this choice is made and effectively worked out in their sadhana even by a few individuals *now* then the Supramental Age will arrive by a constructive development; otherwise the possibility of its coming after a catastrophic destruction is also there looming ominously on the near horizon. The rather severe warning which Sri Aurobindo has given at the end of the letter I just read is also contained in another letter written in 1945 in which, speaking about the fate of the present civilisation, he says:

“The present must surely change, but whether by a destruction or a new construction on the basis of a greater Truth, is the issue.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *On Himself* (Cent Ed, Vol 26), pp. 167-68.

(5)

Since the advent of the Supermind, either by a new construction or by destruction is sure, the question which naturally arises in our mind is: How long will it take for this issue to be settled and when will that sure advent take place?

Sri Aurobindo's answer to this question, like his answer to the earlier one, is given from two ends. From the higher end all that occurs in earth-evolution is predetermined by Him whom he calls the Master of Evolution. All here unrolls according to His will like the enactment of the successive scenes of a drama of which all the events are pre-planned by its author. At the present stage, this Master of Evolution is the Supramental Creator and the whole process of supramental manifestation is predetermined by Him in its minutest details. So the time of its arrival is also already fixed. As Sri Aurobindo says:

“There is nothing nebulous about the supramental; its action depends on the utmost precision possible.... The supramental is simply the direct self-effective Truth-Consciousness and the direct self-effective Truth-Power.... I have said that what is not true is not supramental; I will add that what is ineffective is not supramental.”<sup>1</sup>

So also in *Savitri* there are these lines:

“A date is fixed in the calendar of the Unknown,  
An anniversary of the Birth sublime:  
Our soul shall justify its chequered walk,  
All will come near that now is naught or far.”<sup>2</sup>

So from the higher end of things not only the advent of the Supermind is an absolute certainty but the timing of its arrival is also fixed with absolute precision, which no resistance of Nature or recalcitrance of man or opposition of the adverse forces can frustrate or alter.

But from the lower end of things, the timing of the supramental advent also depends upon the extent of our readiness to receive it; the greater the readiness, the quicker will be its arrival; but if there is an obstinately persistent resistance, then it will be delayed until the Supramental Power breaks it down by its increasingly relentless pressure. It is for this reason that Sri Aurobindo repeatedly refused to give a precise time for the supramental advent when asked for it. For example, in 1935 when a sadhak asked when exactly the supramental would come down, he answered:

<sup>1</sup> *On Himself* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 26), pp. 162-163.

<sup>2</sup> *Savitri* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 28), p. 59.

“One day, one week, one month, one year, one decade, one century, one millennium, one light year—all is possible.”<sup>1</sup>

And to another similar question he replied:

“One cannot say whether the conquest is near or not—one has to go on steadily with the process of the sadhana without thinking of near or far, fixed on the aim, not elated if it seems to come close, not depressed if it still seems to be far.”<sup>2</sup>

From our human angle we can therefore say that each one of us can either hasten or delay the supramental advent by the extent of receptive collaboration or obstructive resistance we offer to it. Sri Aurobindo himself being extremely earnest to hasten this advent as much as possible worked for it single-pointedly all through his life, often at grave risk to himself, and eventually sacrificed even his body for the same purpose. And the Mother too did the same after his passing. But then we had also our own share of the work to do in order to fulfil the necessary evolutionary condition of making ourselves ready to receive the supramental Truth. Even after their passing are we really fulfilling this indispensable condition?

The supramental Truth which Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have brought down after making a tremendous sacrifice is now standing very close to the earth. A whole “wonderful world of delight” is “waiting at our gates for our call, to come down upon earth.”<sup>3</sup> Do we feel an urgent need for it, call for it, make ourselves ready to receive it?

How are we to make ourselves ready for it? I have already read to you an extract from a letter of Sri Aurobindo which provides an answer to this question. The simplest answer in the Mother’s words is:

“Aspire and be sincere and obstinate in your endeavour.”<sup>4</sup>

In the present context, what does the Mother mean by being sincere? Here is her own answer:

“In any case what *I* call being sincere is this: if one thinks that this new realisation is the only thing which is truly worth being lived; if what is, is intolerable—not only for oneself, perhaps not so much for oneself... but still, if one is not absolutely selfish and mean, one feels that, truly, it has lasted long enough, that one has had enough of it, that it must change—well, when one feels like that,

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo* (First Combined Edition, 1969), p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters on Yoga* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 24), p. 1677.

<sup>3</sup> *Collected Works of the Mother* (Cent. Ed.), Vol. 15, p. 186.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid* (Vol. 13), p. 14.

one takes everything, all that one is, all that one can, all that one has, and throws oneself into it completely without ever looking behind, and come what may! I indeed feel that it would be preferable even to plunge into an abyss in this way than to be on the shore, trembling and wondering, 'What will happen to me tomorrow if I take this rather rash step?'<sup>1</sup>

In the present situation the sincerity which is needed to make oneself ready for the New World thus consists in taking this attitude which the Mother calls "the sublimest of adventures."<sup>2</sup> Surely, most of the people do not have this sincerity. But there should be a few individuals for whom there comes a moment "when life such as it is, the human consciousness such as it is, seems something absolutely impossible to bear, it creates a disgust, repugnance; one says 'No, it is not that, it is not that; it can't be that, it can't continue.'"<sup>3</sup> These, according to the Mother, are "the exceptional souls" who are ready for the sublime adventure and who can open the gates for the New World to manifest upon earth and fulfil its evolutionary divine destiny.

Friends, on this sublime occasion of Sri Aurobindo's birth anniversary, I have taken the opportunity to cull and present to you some pointers from his writings and the Mother's, which have a definite bearing on the present world-situation and which not only give us a true understanding of the profound issues involved in it but also indicate the only right solution of the crucial *impasse* in which man has landed. It is particularly necessary for us to have this understanding, because as Sri Aurobindo's disciples we have a special responsibility to carry the present world-movement out of its ominous predicament to its luminous solution. A certain task is laid upon us which we have to fulfil if the world is to be saved from a calamitous possibility and safely carried to its divine destiny.

I will conclude with one more prophetic excerpt from a talk of the Mother which states in most poignant terms what at present is demanded from us:

"At the moment we are at a decisive turning-point in the history of the earth, once again. From every side I am asked, 'What is going to happen?' Everywhere there is anguish, expectation, fear. 'What is going to happen?'... There is only one reply: 'If only man could consent to be spiritualised'.

"And perhaps it would be enough if some individuals become pure gold, for this would be enough to change the course of events... We are faced with this necessity in a very urgent way.

"This courage, this heroism which the Divine wants of us, why not use it to fight against one's own difficulties, one's own imperfections, one's own obs-

<sup>1</sup> *Collected Works of the Mother* (Cent Ed), Vol 7, p 328

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 327

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

curities? Why not heroically face the furnace of inner purification so that it does not become necessary to pass once more through one of those terrible, gigantic destructions which plunge an entire civilisation into darkness?

“This is the problem before us. It is for each one to solve it in his own way...

“And I add: Time presses... from the human point of view.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Collected Works of the Mother* (Cent. Ed.), Vol. 9, p. 74.