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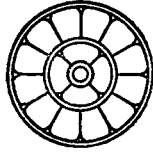
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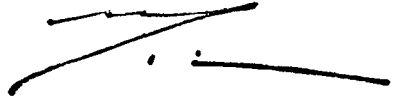


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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All correspondence to be addressed to:

MOTHER INDIA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry - 605 002, India

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Vol. XLI

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"*

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## SRI AUROBINDO ON SARAT CHANDRA CHATTERJI

IT is well-known that, when discussing great prose-writers with Dilip Kumar Roy, Sri Aurobindo wrote: "As for Bengal, we have had Bankim and have still Tagore and Sarat Chatterji. That is sufficient achievement for a century."

We are familiar also with what Sri Aurobindo wrote to DKR in general about this novelist: "Novels deal with the vital life of men, so necessarily they bring that atmosphere. Sarat Chandra is a highly emotional writer with a great power of presenting the feelings and movements of the human vital."

What will come as a surprise to most readers is a number of exchanges between DKR and Sri Aurobindo and between Sarat Chandra and DKR. In 1934 DKR wrote to the novelist about his urge to translate the latter's exquisite novellette, *Nishkriti* (*Deliverance*). The author agreed and Sri Aurobindo consented to revise the translation. DKR thanked Sarat Chandra and enclosed the copy of a letter of Sri Aurobindo's to him about this novelist as well as a copy of the marginal note by Sri Aurobindo on a moving story by Sarat Chandra centred on the life-history of a cow, *Mahesh*. The note ran: "A wonderful style and a great creative artist with a profound emotional power." The letter enclosed seems to have been the one which is published by DKR with the date March 1935 instead of the same month in 1934. It reads:

Dilip, what is stamped on Saratchandra's work everywhere is a large intelligence, an acute and accurate observation of men and things and a heart full of sympathy for sorrow and suffering. Too sensitive to be quite at ease with the world and also perhaps too clear-sighted. Much fineness of mind and refinement of the vital nature.

In reply, Sarat Chandra wrote to DKR in January 1935 a long letter from which the following are a few passages translated from the Bengali by DKR:

Dilip,

I am so glad to know that the typewriter I sent you has proved satisfactory... By giving you this present, however, I have got more than you have....

I have kept carefully the letter Sri Aurobindo has written about me. It will remain with me, a rich treasure.

I knew, of course, that you would spare no trouble to make your translation of *Nishkriti* as flawless as possible—not only because you love me, but also because those who are vowed to tread the path of saintliness must feel a compulsion in their nature to achieve perfection in all their endeavours. They may, indeed, say no to a request; but once they say yes they can't help doing their very best. And then when Sri Aurobindo himself has undertaken to revise your work how can it possibly fail?

I feel, however, that it is only when your translation of *Srikanta* has appeared that the Western reader may perhaps grow to esteem a Bengali story-teller. And who knows, even such a miracle may, some day, be a *fait accompli* if you put your shoulder to the wheel, fortified by the blessing of Sri Aurobindo....

You have requested me to let you have a free hand in translating my writing. I comply unreservedly, because you are not merely a translator, but a great writer as well. I know that there are many critics who are set on denigrating all your achievements and that their perseverance is inexhaustible.

But rest assured, your genius and single-mindedness will prevent them from doing you down, the more so as your great Guru's blessing will sustain you throughout. Can your detractors prevail in the end against the light that has awakened in your soul? Such a thing cannot come to pass, Dilip.

I am really very grateful to you, Dilip. What more can I say? For it is impossible to express myself in a letter as coherently as I would like to. Do believe me: it is because of this that I have left unsaid many things that I ought to have said.

Sri Aurobindo's prayer for the new year is, indeed, wonderful. He is assuredly a magnificent poet.

Dilip sent the Bengali letter to Sri Aurobindo commending its glorious vitality. Sri Aurobindo promptly wrote back:

Dilip,

Saratchandra's letter is not a glory of the vital at all, even though it may have come through the vital—but not from it: it is psychic throughout, in every sentence. If I were asked how does the psychic work in the human being, I could very well point to this letter and say: "Like that"... The psychic is the soul, the divine spark animating matter and life and mind, and as it grows it takes form and expresses itself through these three—touching them to beauty and fineness—it worked even before humanity in the lower creation, leading it up towards the human: in humanity it works more freely, though still under a mass of ignorance and weakness and hardness, leading it up towards the Divine. In Yoga it becomes conscious of the aid and turns inward to the Divine. It sees behind and above it—that is the difference.<sup>1</sup>

*(With acknowledgements to Pearl Publishers Private Ltd. and Orient Paperbacks who published Sarat Chandra Chatterji's Mothers & Sons in Dilip Kumar Roy's translation.)*

<sup>1</sup> Editor's Note: The last two sentences are not quite clear. Perhaps the transcription from Sri Aurobindo's handwriting was not wholly right.

## A TALK BY THE MOTHER

TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON 24 JULY 1957

*“In fact, a supermind is already here but it is involved, concealed behind this manifest mind, life and Matter and not yet acting overtly or in its own power: if it acts, it is through these inferior powers and modified by their characters and so not yet recognisable. It is only by the approach and arrival of the descending Supermind that it can be liberated upon earth and reveal itself in the action of our material, vital and mental parts so that these lower powers can become portions of a total divinised activity of our whole being: it is that that will bring to us a completely realised divinity or the divine life. It is indeed so that life and mind involved in Matter have realised themselves here; for only what is involved can evolve, otherwise there could be no emergence.”*

*The Supramental Manifestation, p. 43*

*Sweet Mother, what is the involved supermind?*

It is the same as the uninvolved one!

It is the same thing when Sri Aurobindo says that if the Divine were not at the centre of everything, He could never manifest in the world; it is the same thing when he says that essentially, in its origin and deepest structure, the creation is divine, the world is divine; and that is why this divinity will be able to manifest one day, become tangible, express itself fully in place of all that veils and deforms it at present. Up to now, all that has manifested of this divinity is the world as we know it; but the manifestation is boundless, and after this mental world as we know it, of which the apex and prototype is man, another reality will manifest, which Sri Aurobindo calls the Supermind for it is in fact the next step after the mind; so, seen from the world as it is, it will naturally be “supramental”, that is, something above the mind. And he also says that it will truly be changing of one world into another, for so far the whole creation belonged to what he calls “the lower hemisphere” as we know it, which is governed by Ignorance and based upon the Inconscient, whereas the other one will be a complete reversal, the sudden appearance of something which will belong to quite a different world, and which instead of being based on Ignorance will be based upon Truth. That is why it will truly be a new world. But if the essence, the principle of this world were not included in the world as we knew it, there would be no hope of the one being transformed into the other; they would be two worlds so totally different and opposed that there would be no contact between them and that necessarily, as soon as one came out of this world and emerged into the world of Truth, Light and Knowledge, one would become, so to speak, imper-

ceptible, non-existent for a world belonging exclusively to the Ignorance and the Inconscience.

How is it that even when this change has taken place, there will be a connection and this new world will be able to act upon the old one? It is that in its essence and principle the new is already enclosed, involved in the old world. So, in fact, it is there, inside, in its very depths, hidden, invisible, imperceptible, unexpressed, but it is there, in its essence. Still, unless from the supreme heights the supramental consciousness and force and light manifest directly in the world, as it happened a year and a half ago, this Supermind which in *principle* is at the very bedrock of the material world as it is, would never have any possibility of manifesting itself. Its awakening and appearance below will be the response to a touch from above which will bring out the corresponding element hidden in the depths of matter as it is now.... And this is precisely what is happening at present. But as I told you two weeks ago, this material world as it actually, visibly is, is so powerful, so absolutely real for the ordinary consciousness, that it has engulfed, as it were, this supramental force and consciousness when it manifested, and a long preparation is necessary before its presence can be even glimpsed, felt, perceived in some way or other. And this is the work it is doing now.

How long it will take is difficult to foresee. It will depend a great deal on the goodwill and the receptivity of a certain number of people, for the individual always advances faster than the collectivity, and by its very nature, humanity is destined to manifest the Supermind before the rest of creation.

At the basis of this collaboration there is necessarily the will to change, no longer to be what one is, for things to be no longer what they are. There are several ways of reaching it, and all the methods are good when they succeed! One may be deeply disgusted with what exists and wish ardently to come out of all this and attain something else; one may—and this is a more positive way—one may feel within oneself the touch, the approach of something positively beautiful and true, and willingly drop all the rest so that nothing may burden the journey to this new beauty and truth.

What is indispensable in every case is the *ardent* will for progress, the willing and joyful renunciation of all that hampers the advance: to throw far away from oneself all that prevents one from going forward, and to set out into the unknown with the ardent faith that this is the truth of tomorrow, *inevitable*, which must necessarily come, which nothing, nobody, no bad will, even that of Nature, can prevent from becoming a reality—perhaps of a not too distant future—a reality which is being worked out now and which those who know how to change, how not to be weighed down by old habits, will *surely* have the good fortune not only to see but to realise.

People sleep, they forget, they take life easy—they forget, forget all the time.... But if we could remember... that we are at an exceptional hour, a *unique*



time, that we have this immense good fortune, this invaluable privilege of being present at the birth of a new world, we could easily get rid of everything that impedes and hinders our progress.

So, the most important thing, it seems, is to remember this fact; even when one doesn't have the tangible experience, to have the certainty of it and faith in it; to remember always, to recall it constantly, to go to sleep with this idea, to wake up with this perception; to do all that one does with this great truth as the background, as a constant support, this great truth that we are witnessing the birth of a new world.

We can participate in it, we can become this new world. And truly, when one has such a marvellous opportunity, one should be ready to give up everything for its sake.

*(Questions and Answers 1957, pp 156-59)*

# THE MOTHER WHOM WE ADORE

## IN THE LIGHT OF HER PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS

*(Continued from the issue of June 1988)*

THE Mother has said: "When the surroundings, circumstances, atmosphere, the way of living and above all the inner attitude are altogether of a low kind, vulgar, gross, egoistic, sordid, love is reluctant to come, that is, it always hesitates to manifest itself and generally does not stay long. A home of beauty must be given for Beauty to stay. I am not speaking of external things—a real house, real furniture and all that—I am speaking of an inner attitude, of something within which is beautiful, noble, harmonious, unselfish. There Love has a chance to come and stay. But when, as soon as it tries to manifest, it is immediately mixed with such low and ugly things, it does not remain, it goes away. This is what Sri Aurobindo says: It is 'reluctant to be born'—it could be said that it immediately regrets being born."<sup>1</sup>

The above statement of the Mother is an explanation of what Sri Aurobindo has written: "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."<sup>2</sup>

The Mother gives a further picture in the following words: "Men always complain that love does not stay with them but it is entirely their fault. They give this love such a sordid life. Mixed with a heap of horrors and such vulgarity, things so base, so selfish, so dirty, that the poor thing cannot stay.... To tell the truth, they should be very grateful that it manifested in them in spite of the sordidness of the house they gave it."<sup>3</sup>

These words from the Mother suggest to us a physical situation in which she found herself in 1914, during Paul Richard's election campaign. At that time the Mother paid a visit to Karaikal and stayed there a few days. This visit gave her an opportunity to witness the poverty, misery, ugliness and ignorance prevalent in parts of India. She had a dirty and delapidated room to stay in and yet under such external conditions she realised an inner harmony and beauty. Her experience runs in the prayer dated April 13, at Karaikal:

"Everything works together to prevent me from remaining a creature of habits and in this new state, in the midst of these circumstances, so complex and unstable, I have never before so completely lived thy immutable peace or rather the 'I' has never before disappeared so completely that Thy divine peace alone is alive there. All is beautiful, harmonious and calm, all is full of Thee. Thou shinest in the dazzling sun, Thou art felt in the gentle passing breeze, Thou dost manifest Thyself in all hearts and live in all beings. There is not an animal, a plant that does not speak to me of Thee and Thy name is written upon everything I see.

“O Sweet Lord, hast Thou at last granted that I may belong entirely to Thee and that my consciousness may be definitively united with Thine? What have I done to be worthy of so glorious a happiness? Nothing except to desire it, to want it with constancy—that is very little.

“But, O Lord, since now it is Thy will and not mine that lives in me, Thou wilt be able to make this happiness profitable to all; and its very purpose will be to enable the greatest possible number of beings to perceive Thee.

“Oh, may all know Thee, love Thee, serve Thee; may all receive the supreme consecration.

“O Love, divine Love, spread in the world, regenerate life, enlighten the intelligence, break the barriers of egoism, scatter the obstacles of ignorance, shine resplendent as sovereign Master of the earth.”

Sri Aurobindo says: “Mahasaraswati is the Mother’s Power of Work and her spirit of perfection and order.... The science and craft and technique of things are Mahasaraswati’s province. Always she holds in her nature and can give to those whom she has chosen the intimate and precise knowledge, the subtlety and patience, the accuracy of intuitive mind and conscious hand and discerning eye of the perfect worker.”<sup>4</sup>

Nolini Kanta Gupta has explained to us the Mother’s Mahasaraswati aspect when she took up the responsibility to organise the Ashram and her power to manifest the new order and perfection.

He says: “She taught us to use our things with care... she uses things, not merely with care, but with love and affection. For, to her, material things are not simply inanimate objects, not mere lifeless implements. They are endowed with a life of their own, even a consciousness of their own, and each thing has its own individuality and character.”<sup>5</sup>

The Mother has admonished the sadhaks:

“Not to take care of material things which one uses is a sign of inconstancy and ignorance.

“You have no right to use any material object whatsoever if you do not take care of it.... because it manifests something of the Divine Consciousness.”<sup>6</sup>

(To be continued)

NILIMA DAS

#### REFERENCES

1. *Collected Works of the Mother* Vol 4, p 403
2. *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol 25, p 31
3. *Collected Works of the Mother* Vol 4, p 403.
4. *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol 25, p 33
5. *Reminiscences* p 80
6. K R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *On the Mother*, Vol I, p 77

## VIGNETTES OF THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO

*(Continued from the issue of June 1988)*

### Work

AN erudite scholar came to visit the Ashram and asked Nolini-da for some work. He was expecting to be asked to lecture to the higher classes on the subject on which he was an authority. Nolini-da asked him to come back later.

When he went again, Nolini-da told him to go and help in washing vessels at the dining-room. The visitor was taken aback. Thinking that surely Nolini-da had not realised his worth and had made a mistake, he asked the Mother in the playground to allot him some work. The Mother replied, "Aren't you going to the dining-room to wash utensils?" The man had not realised that in the Ashram there is no high or low work and that his task had been given by the Mother herself.

### If you are afraid

A certain devotee, who had come on a visit, was staying at Golconde—the beautiful Ashram guest house. In spite of the beauty and peace of the place he was passing terrible nights. Frightful things happened to him during his sleep. One night a lion came and sat on his chest; another night he saw Sri Aurobindo in red clothes telling him, "The day after tomorrow you will die." He was frightened by this constant onslaught and reported everything to the Mother. She looked at him severely and said almost explosively, "If you fear so much, this path is not for you."

### Outwitted

X had settled in the Ashram. Somebody from outside started writing threatening letters to him. One day he narrated the whole story to Nolini-da and asked him, "Should I also write a befitting reply?" Nolini-da at once replied, "I'll ask the Mother and let you know." X was very much impressed by this attitude of a childlike and total dependence on the Mother. Later Nolini-da informed him, "The Mother said, 'Do not take delivery of the letters'" X complied and the letters stopped.

After a few weeks Nolini-da asked X if the letters were still coming. When X replied in the negative, Nolini-da remarked,

"He has been outwitted"

*Compiled by S*

## HOW THEY CAME TO THE ASHRAM

11

X WAS practically born with a serious problem. At the age of four or five he had, while watching a film, a traumatic experience which, he says, was probably a revival of a similar earlier experience at home. This caused him great uneasiness and distress, particularly as he could not understand what was happening to him. This, later, created a serious problem which remained painful and unresolved for many decades.

At the age of twenty-two X had a private interview with J. Krishnamurti who talked with him for nearly one hour with great affection and compassionate understanding. At the end of the interview X asked for his autograph. Krishnamurti wrote, "Meditation of the heart is understanding." Some time after this X went for a walk. Standing on top of a hill he remembered the words of Krishnamurti's advice: "Don't get entangled with the problem, don't suppress it either. Understand it." Instantaneously X's consciousness rose to a new dimension. He was poised in a total silence of the mind. That experience has remained with him even after half a century and whenever he wants he can get back into it.

Though this experience was profound it was a partial realisation and led to a one-sided point of view. X rejected all ideas and concepts about religion and God, regarding them as merely noises made by the mind. He also rejected all ethical questions as to what one should do or not do. He felt all such questions to be mere mental agitations. Years later he came to know that this meditation which bypasses all theories and problems as well as all laboured efforts, techniques and systematic stages was the same as the meditation called "Mindfulness" recommended by the Buddha in his sermon on "The Foundations of Mindfulness."

In 1933, after his M.A., X proceeded to Oxford for his doctorate. After two years he submitted his thesis but was asked to revise it. He was greatly depressed by the verdict of the examiners. One afternoon, as he moved towards his bed to seek relief in the temporary oblivion of sleep he heard a command, or a thought rose spontaneously in his mind: "Go to the Park." He obeyed the inner prompting. On reaching the Park X's depression fell off him like a cloak and was replaced by a feeling of great exaltation filled at the same time with a total humility. It was an experience of the Divine Presence, but due to the influence of Krishnamurti X did not offer himself to the Divine. During that period his devotional side was held in abeyance. This state of exaltation and later on a complete calm remained with him for a long time even though his serious problem, following on his earlier traumatic experiences, remained unresolved. Later X had no difficulty in reconciling the Buddhist meditation, Satipathana,

with the triple Yoga of the Gita and with Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga.

X returned to India and joined the Bombay Educational Service. In 1937 he went back to Oxford for a term and got his doctorate. In 1942 he enlisted in the Army as an Education Officer. In 1946, after demobilisation, he rejoined his work in the Bombay Education Service. He was posted to Dharwar, but as he did not want to go out of Bombay he went on leave of one term and decided that during that period he would go and stay in some Ashram for a short while.

A friend arranged for his stay at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. X came to the Ashram and stayed at Golconde and had the darshan of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo on 24th November 1946. Still strongly under the influence of Krishnamurti and his 1935 Oxford experience, he was unimpressed by the darshan and said to himself, "The best Ashram is the home."

However, he came again the next year and this time his impressions were different. He started reading Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine* and remarked to himself, "Every page is like a leaf blown down from Heaven." He also met the Mother in a special interview and from that time onward he considered himself a disciple of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. In the subsequent years he had several private interviews with the Mother and on one occasion he told her about his long-standing problem. The Mother listened and said, "I have never come across such a problem, but I shall speak to Sri Aurobindo about it." She added, "Sri Aurobindo will contact you directly." X, a little surprised, asked, "But will he know where I am?" The Mother smiled and with a wave of her hand said, "Oh yes." When she met X the next time she told him what explanation Sri Aurobindo had given about the complexity of his problem.

Soon after, X left for Bombay. In the train he heard a voice within him saying, "Think of the Mother for five minutes every day and she will do the rest." This was Sri Aurobindo directly contacting X. One curious thing X noted about this message was that the whole of it was heard by him in a second, as if the fourteen words were heard both as a *single* sound and as a *succession* of sounds.

One evening, on his next visit to the Ashram the Mother was talking to him in the Playground while walking together with him towards her room. Stopping outside her room she, without his asking, gave him a Mantra. "Use this Mantra," she said. "It is a very powerful Mantra."

The two last darshans which X had of Sri Aurobindo, in 1949 and 1950, were most remarkable. In the first of these, after standing in front of Sri Aurobindo, X moved to his left and stood in front of the Mother. After a few seconds he looked up and saw that Sri Aurobindo was gazing steadily at him and not at the person who was then standing in front of him. Before going up for his last darshan in 1950, X wondered if Sri Aurobindo would do the same thing this time. So when X moved to stand in front of the Mother he immediately looked at Sri Aurobindo and was thrilled to find that Sri Aurobindo was looking intently at

him with his head upraised, like a God gazing at a mortal.

In 1958 X fell seriously ill. The cause was later diagnosed as Meningitis. Ten days after the fever started X had a vision in a dream. He was in a field in Italy outside a monastery. He saw the monks come rushing out and picking up something from the ground and calling out, "Come and collect, come and collect the love of God, the friendship of God." Then they all disappeared into the monastery and X was left standing alone in the open field. Then a Light descended from above through his head and went all the way down his body and a voice said, "Fear not. I shall lift you up and transform you." The rest of the night X dreamt that a vast Cathedral was being built with his bed and himself lying on it as the foundation. The Cathedral was completed before sunrise. St. Joseph came and declared the Cathedral open "in the name of my son Jesus." X still does not understand the significance of this part of the dream. The vision in the Italian field and the experience of receiving the Light in his body saved X's life because he became absolutely calm and inwardly certain of recovery and nothing could disturb him.

The Mother used to be informed regularly about X's condition through his intimate friend Y. One day when the doctors had given up all hope of X's recovery his sister sent Y a telegram for the Mother saying, "Only a miracle can save X." Y took it to the Mother and said, "Mother, you must perform a miracle." The Mother replied, "Miracles cannot be made to order." "No, Mother," said Y, "these people are not ordering, they are pleading with you." the Mother remained silent for a while and then said, "I have put the Decisive Force on X." She explained to Y, "This means that if the soul wants to leave and the body is trying to hold it back, the body will not succeed. On the other hand, if the soul wants to stay, the body will not be able to push it out."

Some time later another telegram was received by Y requesting him to inform the Mother that the doctors were thinking of performing an operation on X's brain. The Mother's opinion was asked. At that time Y had the privilege of sitting near the room where the Mother took her lunch. When Y's wife came and handed him the telegram, he went into the intervening passage and called out, "Mother, may I come for just a moment to see you?" Nobody had ever disturbed the Mother during her lunch-time like this. But she at once said, "Yes." Y went in, knelt down and showed her the telegram. The Mother said, "In such cases I don't give answers." Y pleaded, "Mother, they have asked you. Please say something." The Mother said, "Wire: Mother does not favour an operation." The wire was received after the time fixed for the operation. But the operation would not in any case have taken place, for very late at night before the day on which it was fixed X's sister was sitting in front of the portrait of her Guru, Sai Baba of Shirdi, praying to him. She received a message saying, "Stop the operation." So she phoned to her (and X's) brother who was in the hospital with X to inform the doctors that the permission for performing the

operation had been withdrawn. It could well be, says X, that the timely message his sister received was sent by the Mother herself and took a form natural to the recipient.

Later another telegram came asking about the use of penicillin which was to be given to X in massive doses. At that time the Mother was at the Tennis Ground. When she finished her game and was going to her car Y consulted her. She said, "It is difficult to say anything. It is not advisable to interfere. Let the doctor do what he thinks best." She narrated a case where the patient had died due to the use of penicillin. Y concluded that whatever the doctor might do the Mother had put her protection over X. Incidentally, the doctor humorously told X when he was convalescing that he, X, held the world's record for penicillin intake. After about eight weeks from the start of the illness X's condition suddenly took a turn for the better and he continued to improve steadily. Later the doctor told X's brother-in-law that he could not understand how X got well. He confessed that it was certainly not his medicines that had cured him.

After his complete recovery X came to the Ashram in October 1958. He was to have come on the 13th but due to a derailment the direct railway route was blocked and X had to make a detour that would add two extra days to his journey. So he sent a telegram to Z to inform the Mother that he would come not on the 13th but on the 15th. Z took the telegram to the Mother and started to inform her about its contents. But the Mother interrupted Z and said, "Yes, I know that X is coming on the 15th." Z thought that perhaps the Mother had forgotten the date originally mentioned to her and so again started to explain but the Mother interrupted again and said, "Yes, yes, I know. I knew from the beginning that X would come here on the 15th." On arrival X went to the Playground to meet the Mother. As soon as he entered her room she exclaimed, "Ah!" After doing pranam X said to her, "It is through your grace that I am alive." The Mother's face lit up with a smile and she held out both her hands and held X's hands for a couple of minutes.

Some time in the early 'fifties X found himself struggling with another problem—the fear of death. One night he had a dream. X says that the contents reveal that it was more than a dream. X found himself lying on a bed in a room which he had never seen before when the door opened and he saw Sri Aurobindo standing at the door with a walking stick in his hand. Sri Aurobindo briefly glanced outside and then walked towards X, limping slightly. He sat beside the bed and X started asking him questions about death. Later X realised that the answers Sri Aurobindo gave had already been given by him in his writings. Then suddenly Sri Aurobindo put his hand on X's lap and said, "But why are you afraid of death? You are living eternally in the Heart of Sri Aurobindo." That was the end of the fear of death.

X has now settled abroad but comes every year to the Ashram. His last



meeting with the Mother was when he visited India in 1972 on the occasion of Sri Aurobindo's Birth Centenary. The Mother was sitting with her head bowed and Champaklal told her that X was standing in front of her. X had placed his hand on the table which was beside the Mother. When Champaklal finished speaking, the Mother slid her hand across the table and pressed it against X's hand. That was the last physical act of the Mother's grace.

*Compiled by K*

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## WARNING

PURE at heart we wander now:  
Comrade on the quest divine,  
Turn not from the stars your brow  
That your eyes may rest on mine.

Pure at heart we wander now:  
We have hopes beyond to-day;  
And our quest does not allow  
Rest or dream along the way.

We are in our distant hope  
One with all the great and wise:  
Comrade, do not turn or grope  
For a lesser light that dies.

We must rise or we must fall,  
Love can know no middle way:  
If the great life do not call,  
Then is sadness and decay.

A. E.

## POETRY-LIFE-YOGA

### FROM LETTERS TO A FELLOW ASPIRANT

I FEEL very happy and proud that my photo is in front of your typewriter. To be close to you in any way adds value to myself. The place you have chosen is most appropriate, for I am so often near my own typewriter with the aspiration that from a worker with types I may rise to be a worker with archetypes and create Platonic perfections—images of

Words that live not save upon Nature's summits,  
Ecstasy's chariots.

What you say of my appearance is quite encouraging. But impressions can differ. Twelve years ago a Sannyasin came to see me. After a while he asked me: "What is your age?" I said: "70." He looked a little surprised and said: "You don't look it." With a shy smile I inquired: "Really I don't?" His prompt reply was: "No. You look 75." A good prick to my ego! But I was soothed when I realised during the course of further talk that he meant I looked as wise as if I had been 75. I suppose a lot of wisdom can be gained within that 5-year period. Now having completed 82 last November I must have the face of a super-sage! But I would prefer to embody AE's vision:

Age is no more near than youth  
To the sceptre and the crown.  
Vain the wisdom, vain the truth—  
Do not lay thy rapture down.

(17.1.1987)

\*

I know that the day of *Savitri* hasn't come yet. The "Symbol Dawn" in which its truth and beauty will be seen by all hasn't broken in people's consciousness. But here and there we shall find inner wakers. They have to be people with a wide sense of poetry and not sticklers after one kind or another and they must be ready to feel and see and hear even when they can't quite grasp. By sensitive feeling, penetrative seeing and sympathetic hearing they will begin to make out the substance and realise the traffic of the gods both as they move in their own empyrean and as they cast their shining shadows on the earth. A profound aesthetic approach is demanded by all poetry, for here is an art and, although art should not be cut off from life nor meaning be a matter of indifference, it is by a receptivity to form, that poetry goes home to us. There must be a response to the gesture made to the sensuous heart by the suggestive way the words are

linked, the images interplay, the sounds get woven together, to evoke by the vivid expression a sense of the inexpressible. The epithet I have prefixed to “aesthetic approach” is important: the approach, for all its aestheticism, has to avoid being superficial—else we shall have only a preoccupation with the technique. I have spoken of “the sensuous heart” and my epithet “profound” points to this inner enjoyer. What I am trying to say with regard to *Savitri* is that if one searches the art of it with no fixed ideas as to what a poem should convey and how it should do so, one is bound to be touched by it.

... I was delighted to learn that you are a Sagittarian, for so am I. I was born on November 25. What's your date? The astrological sign—a Centaur shooting with a bow—suits me very well. To be at least half a horse is a great honour. Horses have been my passion ever since my childhood and because of the defect in one of my legs I have lived dangerously on them. Five poems of mine bring them in. Sagittarius also sums up the essentials of education in ancient Persia, the country in which the ancestors of modern Persis lived. Herodotus records that the Persian youth was taught three things: to ride a horse, to shoot straight and to tell the truth. I suppose the straight shooting implies psychologically not only accuracy of mind but also straightforwardness of heart, leading to a characteristic like yours: being outspoken to a fault, telling the truth without mincing matters. Of course, truth-telling can have subtler forms: one's writings may be directed to reveal verities, get to the living centre of every topic and, at the finest point, lay bare the fundamental reality of things. Do the astrologers actually say that the Centaur-natures aim darts carelessly as you say you do? Some degree of horse-play is to be expected, a kind of jolly practice of hurling arrows suddenly on all sides and tearing through pretences and disturbing humdrum. I don't think you are irresponsible. People may be taking you to be such because you may not be discreet. But surely there's no indiscretion in telling me that you have doubts about the feasibility of convincing anyone at present of *Savitri*'s unique status in world-literature.

(4.12.1987)

\*

I have dipped into a book of poems inspired by the conviction that the “Sacred” is the goal of all genuine poetry, not necessarily by a direct reference to it but essentially by a feeling of its “Presence” as permeating whatever one refers to. From the few passages I have gone through I get a sense of “tears in the nature of things”, as C. Day Lewis translates Virgil's “Sunt lacrimae rerum”. These tears are inevitable as long as things yield only a glimmering evidence of the Great One. Merely to experience things as symbols is not enough. The reality symbolised has to be known in one manner or another: either the Light beyond the mind has to be caught or the Liberty of the universal Self has to be entered or else the Laughter that is causeless and endless in the deeps of the heart where

the Soul, at once child and sage, is seated has to be shared—any of these secrets must be penetrated if not all of them possessed. Then alone can the sadness which persists in spite of what the symbol transmits fade away or at least weaken sufficiently to get shot through by the ultimate Mystery which a favourite poet of yours has hailed:

Fount of all, fire of all, fate of all—Bliss!

Poets of “the Presence” need to set their feet on the mystical path if their faces are to be serene and smiling.

Perhaps these poets will say: “Such faces are bound to be cold, wrapt in their own happiness.” Here is a big mistake. To live in the Spirit’s presence in a direct way is not to be self-confined: it is to be free of the ego and capable of going out to meet the Divine who is the same hidden splendour in others as in one’s own being. Warmth of an understanding sympathy will flow forth and seek to kindle the identical happiness everywhere and words will come into play which will guide others to find within their depths the very glow whereby the poet turned mystic carries that serenely smiling face. What this poet will not undergo is an answering quiver to the grief or the pain of others. He will surely know their grief or pain, for has he not felt it in the days when he was like them? Nor is it necessary for one’s heart to be wrung and torn in order to console and heal. The balm will come automatically from the inexhaustible source of joy he has tapped. And indeed along with that tapping goes the winning of an insight which gets a precise sense of the sufferer’s condition without having to receive a similar wound. Rather it is the woundless state that can best salve the stricken by communicating to them the power to rise above their hurt. Why is the figure of Buddha the supreme representative of compassion? It is so because he has passed beyond the Virgilian “mortalia” which Lewis in the second half of that wonderful line renders by “human transience”. Buddha’s compassion is so mighty because his Nirvana is so complete, so transcendent of all sorrow. One who has not himself become whole cannot truly heal.

What you say about Sri Aurobindo’s poetry and mine is not necessarily “heresy”. My work is possibly closer to “the literary intelligentsia” by being more sophisticated, more modernly diverse in subject-matter and imaginative mood. It is not so Himalayan as his, but perhaps more accessible to the contemporary mind. If it can get accepted, the way to Mount Everest may prove easier. But I doubt whether even I can get easy entrance. When long ago I sent a copy of *The Secret Splendour* to a well-known English poet and critic, I got the opinion that a number of pieces “spoke” to her but she picked out only one from nearly a hundred as being almost “English poetry”. This was the short poem “Each Night”. I dare say others may not be so doctrinaire as she. You should be a good judge of the English poetry-loving public. I have always in mind your plan

of "Collected Poems of K. D. Sethna." Just yesterday I looked again at the various sets already made. By my side in the latest one—of poems discovered in the nooks and corners of my rambling attic, as it were—I chanced upon a semi-pathetic lyric written ever so long ago, addressed to the Mother. The date is 24.3.1954, a little after my second home-coming. The first was on 16 December 1927, the second on 19 February 1954. Do you mind my typing it out for you? I hope you'll find it not too un-English in sentiment and expression.

### AN APPRECIATION AND AN APPEAL

Thus far you've drawn my soul  
 Out to the doors of sense—  
 Now you are pushing my sight  
 Deep to the hushed intense

Core of the secret heaven  
 Hung in the heart  
 Where sits your beauty forever  
 Alone, apart

From the crowding hands of the world—  
 A love complete,  
 Offering to one sole clasp  
 Its deathless feet.

If my life takes not their seal,  
 Never shall I win  
 Safety from gloom and greed.  
 The abyss is all within.

Time must be conquered there  
 For the Eternal's play  
 To flower into flesh  
 And never fade away.

I know that your sweet limbs  
 Withdraw from gaze and touch  
 Because the outward light  
 I crave and prize too much.

I know that the dim distance  
 You place between us two

Is only the beckoning path  
Of an inward rendezvous.

But O my earth-embodied  
Darling divinity,  
Be not too swift in the grace  
You are plunging now on me.

Keep yet a visible smile—  
How in so short a span  
Do you hope to make a griefless  
God of this fragile man?

(4.12.1987)

\*

I have received your picture-card with its revelatory reminiscence of the Mother's words that to some she gives red roses and these are the people she wishes to make Knights of the Order of Truth (*Chevaliers de la Vérité*). Your allusion, with the parenthetical phrase "even *en rêve!*", is evidently to the dream I had at night after the very evening on which the Mother left her body—17 November 1973. In that dream she gave me a bunch of red roses and told me to put them on my head. Receiving red roses from the Mother in a dream seems rather appropriate if they point to the Order she has mentioned, for it is to the inner being that the honour and the duty of it are given. To be asked to put the roses on the head is directly symbolic of the role allotted, since the mental self is the chief warrior in the lists of Truth. They would serve to suggest also a spontaneous intuitive rising up of the correct conception in the mind, a natural emergence of illumining secrets of existence. I should think the rose-emblem a pointer to the Keatsian formula: "Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty"—and the redness is a sign that the Verity discovered is not a cold abstraction but a living vision, a glowing insight into the ultimate Mystery, a glimpse of the heart of the Unknown.

The word "heart" is significant here—a necessary term in the colourful rose-context. A mind which both sees subtly and feels sensitively is the Truth-finder whom the Mother would appoint: it brings, in a deeper connotation than the Spinozistic, the *amor intellectualis Dei*, "the intellectual love of God". A further shade of the Truth-finder's activity may be caught from the Mother's French phrase for "Knights of the Order of Truth". The Knights are *Chevaliers*, riders of horses, drawing strength from those swift embodiments of vitality: the Truths found are life-values as well as thought-values—they are spiritual *idées forces*. And the Mother not only appoints *Chevaliers* but also empowers them. As I remarked during your last visit to me, when the Mother gives one a work to do she gives at the same time the capacity and the joy in it

“Your last visit”—the phrase is almost like the word “forlorn” which brought Keats back from his nightingale to his “sole self”. It was such a delight to be with you and talk endlessly. Now that the “immortal bird” that is in you—or should I mention Browning’s equivalent apropos of his Elizabeth: “half angel and half bird”?—has flown, my forlornness is somehow not as bad as Keats’s, for the communication can still go on by means of letters. There is also the prospect of the Air-line making Madras a stop and letting you have the chance of partaking more frequently in the golden silence of the Samadhi and the perhaps-not-too unsilver speech at your friend’s place.

(3.3.1988)

AMAL KIRAN  
(K. D. SETHNA)

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## A FAMOUS HINDI SONG

*(Translated into English by Dilip Kumar Roy)*

Whose heart is Rama’s dear abode,  
What matter if at all he pray  
And fast, or nay?

Whose refuge is some Saint’s pure feet,  
What matter if the pilgrim’s way  
Be his, or nay?

Whose soul is moved with love for all,  
What matter if he gives away  
His wealth, or nay?

Whose thoughts the form of Rama fills,  
What matter if his lips should say  
His name, or nay?


# THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

(Continued from the issue of June 1988)

The Mother's Message

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



Volume Three: 1959

No. 19

NEW snow heaped up in unblemished charm all around the house. The garden was a bright blanket. The white snow weighed the bare branches of trees like a canopy of frosted sugar.

Miss Jarret and Mrs Snowdon decked themselves in long white aprons and



were busy making the traditional Christmas pudding. While beating a big volume of it, they asked the residents to stir it once and express their wishes.

When my turn came, Miss Jarret joked: "Well, miss Hindocha, what is your wish—for Luck? Have you dreamed of a wealthy and handsome husband?" I was amused and said with a quizzical smile: "Yes, indeed, I have wished so. He is everything: Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent—my beloved Eternal Companion who will accompany me life after life."

She remarked; "Ah, what an extraordinary idea!"

After a few days when they were making the traditional Christmas cake, I asked them about its process. They explained:

"First to check and scale the various dried fruits. Almonds to blanch, pound and mix with orange-flower water; glace cherries to halve and dust with cornflour so that they may not sink in the mixture. Then Brazil nuts, spice-flavoured sweeting, candied peels to chop finely

"A huge slab of unsalted butter softened in a big bowl with a wooden spoon. Resifted fine sugar, flavoured with vanilla pods over it. Separate the egg-yolks, and mix in mace and cloves. A stiff whipping of the whites. A gill each of brandy and of red wine added at the end. A big baking cake-tin to be lined with greased paper.

"Cream butter and sugar with a wooden spoon till fluffy. After adding flour which is to be sifted with baking powder, mix gradually dry fruits, spices, egg-yolks, egg-whites, etc. Blend the mixture with brandy and red wine.

"Pour the mixture into the cake-tin and bake slowly to a certain degree of temperature. After that the cake has to be baked very slowly and left overnight in the cooling oven."

Well, I would not encourage my readers to follow the recipe, because I have gathered it in snatches. If anybody tries it the result may be disastrous!

"Wishes" reminds me of my visit to Rome in 1952 with one of my brothers and his wife. At the Fontana di Trevi, with its water-gods and stone-horses pawing the air, and cascades beneath which the rock-nymphs glistened in the water, we threw pennies into the basin and made our wishes. The saying goes that if we threw a coin into the basin, we would come again to Rome. In my case it is still a dream!

\*

We decorated the Christmas tree in one corner of the dining room. It sparkled, resplendent, hung with fragile coloured baubles that tinkled in the soft breeze. Some sang Christmas carols.

I watched the days which were tardy and long. The roofs lay carpeted in white while a veil of new snow made it even whiter. The snow whirled and spattered against my window. The clock ticked the minutes away. Yet I sat on the sofa—musing endlessly.

Christmas was on Friday. We had our grand lunch in the decorated dining room. We wore various kinds of funny caps and pulled the crackers, and whatever we found inside them were our gifts. I got a strange kind of tiny whistle. We enjoyed the sumptuous vegetarian food—especially the pudding and the cake.

In the afternoon I was invited to visit Aunt Margaret. She greeted me with a big hug and kisses on my cheeks. We exchanged “Happy Christmas”—Uncle Peter wished me enthusiastically.

I told Aunt Margaret all about the Christmas celebration at Mercury House. She teased me: “Have you stood under the mistletoe?” I said: “No. why?” She said with laughter in her voice: “If you stand under it, any man is entitled to kiss you and you cannot refuse, because this is the old-time custom.” I said: “Strange, I have never heard such nonsense. However, Aunt, nobody likes to kiss an Indian girl. So I would not bother.” “Do you think so?” She challenged. The whole room was filled with our mirth.

After our high-tea I went with them to their Swedish friend, an Ambassador to the U.K. His apartment was decorated beautifully with a Christmas tree in its centre. The view gave an impression of a fairy-land.

His wife was confined to her bed, because she had just given birth to a baby-boy. We could not meet her. The Ambassador gave us fruit-juice and chocolates.

It was very late. Aunt asked me to stay overnight at her place. I politely refused, because I once spent a night in her apartment and had a very bad experience. As soon as I went to bed in her guest-room, I had a jabbing headache and pain all over my body, which made me restless. There was something eerie in the atmosphere. I was shivering with cold and fear. I felt like death and could not sleep a wink. It was the longest night I had ever known and the most unhappy. I lay in the darkness, a clock chimed one hour after another.

The next morning Margaret inquired whether I had had a good sleep. I said, “No, I was too frightened and sick.” She was concerned and said: “Then why didn’t you call me?” I said: “I hate to disturb you. Now I feel better.” After many years Aunt wrote to me and revealed:

“You had an unpleasant time because an American who had come from the Ashram to London to have an operation done had also stayed there some weeks before and left behind here an atmosphere which you found disagreeable. She died not many months afterwards.”

I was and am hypersensitive.

\*

A few days later George Hubbard came from Birmingham. He greeted me

and gave me a comb in a brownish-gold leather case which had "HUTA" embossed on it in gold. It was a present from him and his family.

We talked about a lot of things including spirituality. I gave him the *Bulletin* and *Mother India*. He quoted a charming poem by Evelyn Underhill which suited Christmas time, reminding us of the birth of Jesus:

"I come in the little things,"  
 Saith the Lord:  
 "Yea, on the glancing wings  
 Of eager birds, the softly pattering feet  
 Of furred and gentle beasts I come to meet  
 Your hard and wayward heart. In brown bright eyes  
 That peep from out the brake, I stand confest.  
 I come in little things," saith the Lord:  
 "My starry wings I do forsake.  
 Love's highway of humility to take:  
 Meekly I fit my stature to your need.  
 In beggar's part  
 About your gates I shall not cease to plead—  
 As man, to speak with man—  
 Till by such art  
 I shall achieve  
 My Immemorial Plan:  
 Pass the low lintel of the human heart."

He also quoted these lines which George called "A Challenge" from *St. Parish Monthly*:

"Ye call me Master and obey me not,  
 Ye call me Way, and walk me not,  
 Ye call me Wise, and follow me not,  
 Ye call me Fair, and love me not,  
 Ye call me Rich, and ask me not,  
 Ye call me Eternal, and seek me not,  
 Ye call me Gracious and trust me not,  
 Ye call me Noble, and serve me not  
 Ye call me Mighty, and honour me not,  
 Ye call me Just, and fear me not.  
 If I condemn you, blame me not."

Christmas reminds me now of a talk by the Mother on Christ:

“Christ came into the world to purify not to fulfil. He himself foreknew the failure of his mission and the necessity of his return with the sword of God into a world that had rejected him.”

Are not Sri Aurobindo's verses in *Savitri*, Bk. I, Canto I, telling us of earth's antipathetic response, appropriate here?

“Inflicting on the heights the abysm's law,  
It sullies with its mire heaven's messengers:  
Its thorns of fallen nature are the defence  
It turns against the saviour hands of Grace,  
It meets the sons of God with death and pain.”

\*

Days passed rapidly. It was the last day of the year 1959. I stood near my window in a melancholy mood watching the vast vista of the snow.

My heart was filled with a longing to return to those days when the Mother and I meditated in her room. I aspired for Light to make my future bright and successful.

*(To be continued)*

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## NOTES FROM A SADHAK'S DIARY

*(Among Nolini Kanta Gupta's papers, a notebook was found in which he had himself copied in his own hand a few extracts from the notes in the diary of Dara, a Muslim sadhak of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram who passed away in 1970. He also gave the title, "Dara in Excelsis", to these extracts. They are published here as they reveal a quality of sincerity, humility and profound devotion which is so very rare.)*

### DARA IN EXCELSIS

8.5.53

I am happy and enjoying myself these days. It means I am like the ostrich that closes his eyes and hides his head in the sand when he sees danger approaching him. I too am like any animal that is concentrated on small matters of his small self. No wideness, no greatness, no newness, no variety, no change!

10 6.53

It is not easy for those who are wicked at heart and cruel by nature and deaf and dumb and blind by circumstances and choice to imitate the avatar!

25.7.53

He (Sudhir Kumar) said, "I know hundreds of jokes of Sri Aurobindo. He was very very humorous in those days, but above all he was our mother. He really was a mother for us all. He was, I tell you, Dara, the mother." I said, "Certainly, I believe it and I know that He has left the Mother for us. It is His gift to the world."

24.7.53

Is the playground turning me to you or is it the approach of the Great 15th (August) that is drawing our hearts to the centre of the Truth?.... This is the punishment of being dissipated or too ego-centric! Everything in nature demands a price from us and if we don't pay it we don't get what we want. But do we get it after the price is paid? The Saints say we do get it. Let me hope that I have paid the price for something or other and may get what it is worth. But what is the price I have paid?....

23.7.53

Yesterday I wished I had a yogic mind. I wished I had a fund of concentration of thought in favour of yoga. I wished I had devotion and knowledge. I found that denials and revolts do no good in life. They are good for literature only. One must be firm in the Truth. One must have a big reserve fund of godliness.

26.7.53

(Physical) exercise does not give us all that we want. It beautifies one's life and does us a lot of good, but it is the mind and the psychic that rule the being and give it realisation and joy

11.8.53

What is her (Mother's) position on the Sports-Ground? Her place is that of the Witness and the Umpire. That is what the world thinks of Her, but we know that She is the Divine. She knows the place of the Divine in games and quietly takes that seat! Sri Aurobindo had concentrated so much on God that he became God through and through.... He too had taken God's place in this world and all other places were too low for Him. I know it is Truth, for I saw him and wondered and thought and observed and imagined Him for years and years and this is what I believed always. After having drunk deeply of the heavens above and the God beyond, He chose to live in the glorious Present that is unreal and ever changing.

4.9.53

We are lucky, we who have a heaven created by you to live in.

13.3.54

Old age is a name for a condition of the body's mechanism. The spirit is ageless and feelings can also be as young and childlike as thoughts.

\*

It is only the saint and the yogi that claim Joy and Bliss and Perfect Good as the reward of his great life. All others die in misery or have great disappointments and sorrows that shake their nerves and batter their minds or break their hearts. So we are happy that we are saints and yogis.

3.3.55

*(After seeing Mother at Prosperity)*

I imbibed your attitude and mood and felt happy. You were so strong in a world of all kinds of confusing difficulties. I saw that one could win even in such a place and even in such a condition and be firm and correct and true. I really can't describe it but I felt so happy. Even after all day's work I still feel that, and feel that I have seen a great thing. It is a great thing to see you. Your work is so divinely great!

Oct. 8, 1961

I believe that my life has not been a failure. I have at least read Sri Aurobindo's books in this life and have seen the Mother and Him! How can one call it a waste?

DARA

# GLIMPSES OF PAVITRA

## FROM THE REMINISCENCES OF PAVITRA AND MRITYUNJOY

*(Continued from the issue of June 1988)*

### Part 3

#### After the War: France: 1918-1920

*Pavitra narrates how he left the French army and became a junior engineer in Paris, then how he decided to leave France for the Far East*

PAVITRA: In 1918 in France there was an epidemic of what used to be called Spanish flu, an epidemic which lasted quite a long time and killed twenty million people throughout the world. (I recently read a study on this.) Well, I had that flu just when the Armistice was called—in November 1918. I was at the Front; we had just broken through the German lines and were advancing towards Germany. I caught the flu in the German lines. But it was not restricted to Germany, it was everywhere, in every country. I can say that that was the decisive day of my life. In the camp-hospital where I was—at the Front, under canvas—people were dying. Every morning, three or four were dead. Well, I remember very clearly the very strong idea which took all fear of death away from me: it was a giving, a self-giving, an offering of myself for the fulfilment of my destiny, my spiritual destiny, whatever it might be; with the sincere offering of my life, if I was really supposed to die. And if I was to live, consecration to the Divine.

I was twenty-four then, just over twenty-four.

After that I was demobilised quite soon, and I had to take up my studies again. I did it to finish something that had been started, without much enthusiasm; but anyway, I had nothing else to do.

*Mrityunjoy adds:*

MRITYUNJOY: When Pavitra was demobilised from the army, he returned to his parents in Paris. There he rejoined the Polytechnique, which he had left four years earlier. The School authorities permitted students who had gone to the war to take the final examination without going through the full term of studies. Thus Pavitra got the chance to finish the regular course within a few months.

But for his final year he had to specialise in one branch of engineering. He intended to become a mining engineer, for which he had to attend the Ecole des Mines. In the examination his place in the order of merit was 16th out of 72

candidates, in spite of having been absent on war duty for four years. So he was certain to be accepted into the Ecole des Mines. At the last minute, however, one of Pavitra's school fellows asked him for his seat. The classmate wanted to enter that course, but was not likely to be admitted because he was much lower down in the order of merit. Pavitra agreed to stand down, and applied instead to the Ponts et Chaussées, the Roads and Bridges section.

*Pavitra continues:*

PAVITRA: So I finished the course at the Ecole Polytechnique, in the Department of Civil Engineering, and was appointed as a junior engineer in Paris. Then a very strong feeling that I could no longer live that life seized hold of me. In itself there was nothing about that life to repel me: an engineer's life, with quite a lot of interesting projects. A whole section of the River Seine, including Paris especially, was under my jurisdiction, with all the new projects, repairs, all that. But... how to put it? I had had enough—it no longer interested me. I did it because it had to be done, but my heart was no longer in it.

And then, in 1920, I took the decision to leave that life in order to devote myself to the search for my spiritual master, my guru. I knew (“knew”—for me it was a certitude) that my life was intended for spiritual realisation, that nothing else counted for me, and that somewhere upon earth, ON EARTH, there must exist the one who could... lead me to the light.

This was at the beginning of 1920, in the first months of the year. I went on for several months, with increasing inner difficulties, and finally I asked to be released.

You will understand that my whole family was against it. Quite naturally. I had a father, a mother, a brother—none of them could understand what I was doing, or why. My father understood me as far as he could—I mean that he had tried to understand the reason for my actions, and he gave me his sympathy. But he said, “Look here! If these things interest you, these psychic phenomena, it's all right, you can... if you like, I'll give you whatever you need to become a doctor and study them as a doctor. You can study medicine as long as you need, and you can study those phenomena with all the science and methods of a medical doctor.”

But what he could not understand was that I wanted to *live* that life.

“No, you shouldn't get involved; then you lose your critical outlook. You can't discover the truth if you adopt an idea and try to put it into practice.”

These were the kind of difficulties that I met with at home.

Of course I was rather fanatical, like all beginners. For example, I didn't tell you that at the Front, since I was a junior officer, I was in charge of the Mess—the officers' dining room. I had to order the food with the cook and handle the accounts. Well, I had become a vegetarian—with full conviction.



To be a vegetarian at the Front, in a French officers' mess, I can tell you it wasn't easy! Not at all! Everyone made fun of me—or else they pitied me and wished that I would return to commonsense, to the traditional French ideas about food.

I must tell you that before the war I used to drink wine sometimes, like other young people of my age. I was not particularly fond of alcohol, but for the French wine is something absolutely normal. You must not think that it is completely bad. When I tell you this, you mustn't see it from the standpoint of your Indian tradition and think, "Oh, he must have been a very bad character"—because in India someone who drinks wine is usually a bad character. I don't want to blacken myself... I am just telling you the truth.

So, I was a bit fanatical, and I was ready to smash everything to get out of that life.

Well, an opportunity presented itself. I had some friends who were leaving for the Far East—for Japan; and I decided to go with them. That brought me a step nearer. I didn't make any great distinction between Buddhism and Hinduism—the same spiritual truths lie at the heart of all the Indian religions. So I set off for Japan. And I went, not as an engineer, but as a private individual. So I had to earn my living there—which was not very easy. It is not very easy in an Asian country such as Japan, which did not want to take foreigners unless, just as in India today, they were well known, or unless they brought money with them or were supported by business concerns. I had neither reputation nor money.

But anyway, after some wandering around, quite a few difficulties, a rather hard time, I did remain in Japan for four years. Lots of experiences: studying Buddhism, especially Zen Buddhism, life in the temples, work in laboratories, and at home in the evening going on with my studies—studies in Indian, Chinese, Japanese spirituality. With alternations of light and darkness, progress and stagnation: all the difficulties that come to those who are searching for the Light, and who are searching alone, or at least apparently alone.

*(To be continued)*

## THE HAUNTING ACTION-AT-A-DISTANCE THROUGH THE AGES

*(Continued from the issue of June 1988)*

INDEED, very weird things seem to be happening under the cover of the great Uncertainty Principle. It allows, by putting blinds over our eyes, the spontaneous appearance and disappearance of particle-antiparticle pairs in a vacuum. One good way of defining a vacuum would be: where, in addition to the absence of matter as we understand it, all the laws of physics are suspended—including the much-respected law of conservation of energy. The ramification of the Uncertainty Principle vis-à-vis the time-energy conjugate pair is therefore as follows. Consider the creation of a particle-antiparticle pair from a vacuum. For this to happen the process will have to borrow energy from the vacuum. But the debt can go undetected if it is paid back—annihilation of the pair—within the limit of time of observation set by the Uncertainty Principle. In this way the creation and annihilation of such particle-pairs can go on happening continuously in such a nothing. Thus what we designate as a vacuum is in actuality endowed with a physical property or status where these processes happen unceasingly. The vacuum is full of dynamism. Yet, while these processes are virtual, they can become real or observable on supplying the real inputs. Certainly, then, such a dynamic vacuum would be the best medium for action-communication. If these virtual processes can become observable, then the question is: Can they produce gravity? Quantum mechanically the answer should be 'Yes'. Relativistically, a flat space-time continuum would mean a vacuum, but with these kinds of physical processes, vacuum fluctuations, going on continuously, there will be a gravitational field generated by them and space-time will become curved.

Strange! But we do not know whether it is truly strange or strangely true. Professional physics is quite far away from the answer. There are doubts in the minds of physicists, doubts at the most fundamental level. Einstein never considered Quantum Mechanics to be a complete theory. Even Schroedinger, one of the founders of this theory, was not sure about the meaning of quantum jumps. Referring to the transition probability of these jumps he says: "... one can speak of the probability of an event only assuming that, occasionally, it actually occurs. If it does occur, the transition must indeed be sudden, since intermediate stages are disclaimed. Moreover, if it takes time, it might conceivably be interrupted halfway by an unforeseen disturbance. This possibility leaves one completely at sea."<sup>1</sup> Einstein's dream that "the grand aim of all science is to cover the greatest number of empirical facts by logical deduction from the smallest possible number of hypotheses or axioms" lies unfulfilled.

<sup>1</sup> *Scientific American*, September 1953, p 52

Quantum Mechanics and Relativity are still two independent schemes describing the physical world. Dirac, who predicted in 1928 the first antiparticle of the electron—the prediction was confirmed experimentally by Anderson in 1932—and who shared the 1933 Nobel prize along with Schroedinger, however, takes a positivist's stand as far as the fundamental aspects of these formulations are concerned. He emphasises that these questions are “really not so important, that if one can make progress with them one can count oneself lucky, and that if one cannot it is nothing to be genuinely disturbed about.”<sup>1</sup> One is not sure whether this is a sound proposition. After all, major progress in human thought has been made because one is disturbed about things, one is concerned about issues, there is an unquenchable urge to reach the source of all the truths, one is restless in search of that foundational knowledge. Perhaps getting genuinely disturbed is a surer sign of a greater discovery. Should one miss it? Einstein wouldn't. He knew the difference between the fact of professionalism and the truth of a matter. Let us take his stand about General Relativity.

In this theory a continuous field acquires a greater fundamentality behind the physical reality; particles or their motion have a secondary status. “Without this restrictive principle,” says Einstein “it would be practically impossible for anybody to hit on the gravitational equations.... No amount of collection of facts could lead to these equations.... This is the reason why all attempts to obtain a deeper knowledge of the foundations of physics seem doomed to me unless the basic concepts are in accordance with general relativity from the beginning. The situation makes it difficult to use our empirical knowledge, however comprehensive, in looking for fundamental concepts and relations of physics, and it forces us to apply free speculation to a much greater extent than is presently assumed by most physicists.” We do see here an idealistic pragmatism, an ennobling positivism, in Einstein making a headway in the problems of physics. But the origin of this idealism lies still higher up. In answering the question “Why do we devise theories at all?”, he tells us that it is because “we enjoy ‘comprehending’ i.e. reducing phenomena by the process of logic to something already known or (apparently) evident. New theories are first of all necessary when we encounter new facts which cannot be ‘explained’ by existing theories. But this motivation for setting up new theories is, so to speak, trivial, imposed from without. There is another, more subtle motive of no less importance. This is the striving toward unification and simplification of the premises of the theory as a whole.”<sup>2</sup>

Einstein lived on a very high intellectual plane and certainly must have received at times reflections of truths from the World of Ideas. Very often his theoretical perceptions transcended the immediate methodology of physics and showed the seeker of truth what he was. The simplicity and beauty of a theory,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, May 1963, p 45

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, April 1950, p 13

though of an abstract kind, were themselves satisfying to him. But in spite of such occasional lofty flights and the accompanying successes science had, what we witness is a great deal of 'ad hoc'-ism in its approach and in its scheme of things. That is perhaps the epitome of the human endeavour itself. Physics, like the earlier speculative philosophies, has not answered conclusively the question of Action-at-a-Distance. Mary Hesse is right when she says: "The empirical issue between field theory and Action-at-a-Distance at the most fundamental level of physics seems to be as wide open as ever."<sup>1</sup>

Can it ever be closed? The chances are remote. The cause lies in the very method of mind. Empiricism does give a certain definiteness but that itself is here based on a speculative or an analytical approach. Such an instrument of knowledge as mind or such a method of approach as empiricism cannot discover what Sri Aurobindo calls the "creative power in the material energy."<sup>2</sup> While explaining the limitations of the scientific method, he tells us: "Science, like most mental and external knowledge, gives you only truth of process. I would add that it cannot give you even the whole truth of process; for you seize some of the ponderables, but miss the all-important imponderables; you get, hardly even the how, but the conditions under which things happen in Nature. After all the triumphs and marvels of Science the explaining principle, the rationale, the significance of the whole is left as dark, as mysterious and even more mysterious than ever." Indeed, if we have to understand Action-at-a-Distance, we will have to look into the very basis of the appearance of the material universe itself; we will have to recognise not only the ponderables which may be within the reach of the empirical science but also the "all-important imponderables." But the mind of science will have to face a fundamental difficulty here. Of course, this difficulty should not matter for us if we have to really see the role of Action-at-a-Distance in the physical world. The difficulty will be, for instance, to accept that a force can be a very concrete tangible thing, a thing which can be sent, thrown, hurled, withheld, received, and can have different effectivities depending upon its origin and the set of counter-forces in which it will have to operate.

As Sri Aurobindo points out in a sonnet:

The objects that you probe are not their form.  
Each is a mass of forces thrown in shape.  
The forces caught, their inner lines escape  
In a fathomless consciousness beyond mind's norm.<sup>3</sup>

For Newton matter was a "brute" thing; Einstein considered the curvature of

<sup>1</sup> *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, 1967, p 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters on Yoga (Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, Vol 22)*, pp 196-97

<sup>3</sup> *Collected Poems (SABCL)*, Vol 5, p 168

the space-time continuum equivalent to a force; in Quantum Mechanics the exchange particle plays that role. But in all these the "inner lines escape". For science the basic concept of the force itself remains ungrasped and hence undefined.

The ancient traditions of Indian physics, originating in the Vedas and running through the Upanishads and Puranas, saw things from a higher level, with the sight that sees the Truth in its own home. They saw the foundations above from where the material universe's building went on below. Even the metaphysical schools of India such as Vaisheshika, Nyaya, Sankhya, or the Buddhist and the Jainist schools saw things that way. The *panchabhuta* or the five-element doctrine conceived of the material creation arising from and consisting of Akash, Vayu, Tejas, Apas and Prithvi—Ether, Air, Fire, Water and Earth. But the important point is that apart from these five material elements, there are five sense organs for perception and knowledge. Of course, finally, these themselves become projections of the higher, or *para*, Nature. Thus, for instance, the Gita says:

रसोऽहमप्सु कौन्तेय प्रभास्मि शशिसूर्ययो ।  
 प्रणन सर्ववेदेषु शब्द रवे पौरुषं नृषु ॥  
 पुण्यो गन्धः पृथिव्या च तेजश्चास्मि विभावसौ ।  
 जीवन सर्वमूतेषु तपश्चास्मि तपस्विषु ॥

*The Gita, Ch. 7, 8-9 Slokas*

"I am taste in the waters, O son of Kunti, I am the light of sun and moon, I am pranava (the syllable OM) in all the Vedas, sound in ether and manhood in men. I am pure scent in earth and energy of light in fire; I am life in all existences, I am the ascetic force of those who do askesis."—Anilbaran Roy's Translation.

Without going into the metaphysical details of those processes at this stage, let us see how Sri Aurobindo recognises the spiritual Truth behind this material building:

"Matter is the presentation of force which is most easily intelligible to our intelligence, moulded as it is by contacts in Matter to which a mind involved in a material brain gives the response. The elementary state of material Force is, in the view of the old Indian physicists, a condition of pure material extension in Space of which the peculiar property is vibration typified to us by the phenomenon of sound. But vibration in this state of ether is not sufficient to create forms. There must be some obstruction in the flow of the Force ocean, some contraction and expansion, some interplay of vibrations, some impinging of force upon force so as to create a beginning of fixed relations and mutual effects. Material Force modifying its first ethereal status assumes a second, called in the old language aerial, of which the special property is contact between force and force, contact that is the basis of all material relations. Still we have not as

yet real forms but only varying forces. A sustaining principle is needed. This is provided by a third self-modification of the primitive Force of which the principle of light, electricity, fire and heat is for us the characteristic manifestation. Even then, we can have forms of force preserving their own character and peculiar action, but not stable forms of Matter. A fourth state characterised by diffusion and a first medium of permanent attractions and repulsions, termed picturesquely water or liquid state, and a fifth of cohesion termed earth or the solid state, complete the necessary elements.”<sup>1</sup>

We have similar descriptions in *Savitri* too, for instance, the passage at the beginning of the *Book of Fate* describing Narad’s coming from his home in Paradise to Aswapathy’s Madra.

In the context of Action-at-a-Distance the operative element is the aerial. It establishes relationship; to forms built by *Agni* it gives a mutuality. In the Talk dated May 8, 1926 recorded by Pavitra, Sri Aurobindo explains the role of *Vayu* as follows:

“According to the experience of the ancient Yogis, sensible matter was made out of five elements, *bhutani*: *Prithvi*, *Apas*, *Agni* (*Tejas*), *Vayu*, *Akasha*.

“Agni is threefold:

1. ordinary fire, *Jala Agni*,
2. electric fire, *Vaidyuta Agni*,
3. solar fire, *Saura Agni*.

Science only entered upon the first and the second of these fires. The fact that the atom is like the solar system could lead it to the knowledge of the third.

“Beyond *Agni* is *Vayu* of which science knows nothing. It is the support of all contact and exchange, the cause of gravitation and of the fields (magnetic and electric). By it, the action of *Agni*, the formal element, builder of forms, is made possible.

“And beyond *Vayu* is the ether *Akasha*”.<sup>2</sup>

Action-at-a-Distance therefore belongs to the domain of *Vayu*, Air.

(Concluded)

R. Y. DESHPANDE

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine* (Centenary Edition), pp. 80-81

<sup>2</sup> *Sri Aurobindo Circle*, No. 8, 1952, p. 99

# NOLINI KANTA GUPTA BIRTH CENTENARY

## Compiler's Note

ONE day I said to Nolini-da, "Today I have read two of your articles." After a pause he asked, "Which ones?" "*The End of a Civilization* and *On the Brink*," I answered. "H'm," he muttered.

The silence became heavy with shadows. I gathered my courage and asked him, "Is there no hope for humanity?" He replied forcefully and with disgust, "This humanity has become so corrupt, it is bound to go." In the context of the present world trends of duplicity, deceit, naked self-seeking and self-aggrandisement, cruelty and animality where truth, compassion and gratitude are daily sacrificed on the altar of commercialism, fundamentalism and nationalistic sadism, it will give us a needed jolt to read these articles.

Once Nolini-da wrote—

"In the deluge of Doomsday the Lord himself appears and holds aloft the supreme Knowledge, the matrix of a new creation—the divine ark. Indeed those alone who have souls, who are made of self-consciousness, who are in effect parts and points, centres of the Divine Being, will survive and form the nucleus of the new humanity—the rest if they cannot be corrected or converted will naturally be extirpated, annihilated or relegated to a status of barbarism worse than the animal-life. But we expect a better fate for mankind."<sup>1</sup>

Humanity has chosen to side with the Asura, and Nolini-da changed his stance from "But we expect a better fate for mankind" to "This humanity is so corrupt, it is bound to go."

One of the two articles to which I have referred is reproduced below.

SHYAM KUMARI

## THE END OF A CIVILISATION

(Based on a Talk by the Mother)

The world has been going down in its course of degradation with an increased momentum since the very beginning of the present century. One of the great symptoms of the decline is the prevalence of wars. It can be said in fact that there has been no real peace or even truce upon earth since the century opened with the Russo-Japanese War. Wars have continued since then uninterruptedly: some part or other of the world has always been involved. Indeed one can say it has been a single war carried on on many fronts, breaking out at different times. Another noticeable thing about these wars is their nature; with the lapse of time they have become more and more extensive and more and more devas-

<sup>1</sup> *Collected Works of Nolini Kanta Gupta*, Vol 4 p 346.

tating. It is no longer now simply a clash of armies or professionals, of that section of society whose business it is to fight. Whole nations—literally the whole of a people including men, women, children of all ages—are now mobilised, have to take part in the fight and share the same danger.

Naturally, war meant always killing; but the nature of killing has changed and even the motive too. Killing is now attended with cruelty, done with methods terribly atrocious and revoltingly ingenious. And this has affected the very consciousness and morale of man. Not only is there no decency or decorum, not to speak of magnanimity and nobility of attitude and behaviour—once familiar things in stories of the Kshatriya, the Samurai, the Knights of old—there has come into the field a phenomenon for which it has itself found a name, *sadism*, wanton violence and on a mass scale. Man seems to have thrown off all masks, all the rules of civilised social life and has become worse than the animal: he is now the Pisacha, the ghoul and the demon. He seems to have reached the bottom of the pit.

We know of worlds—vital worlds—which are made of the most unimaginable horror and ugliness and devilry. Many have contacted such domains either consciously in the course of their yogic experiences or unconsciously in nightmare. They bear testimony to the stark monstrosity of these worlds—the gloom, the fear, the pain and torture, the doom and damnation that reign there. That entire inner world seems to have precipitated itself upon earth and taken a body here. A radiant poet spoke of Paradise being transplanted upon earth in the shape of a happy city (the city of the Raghua): today we have done the opposite miracle, the devil's capital city is installed upon earth, or even something worse. For, in the subtler worlds there is a saving grace, after all. If you have within you somewhere an aspiration, a trust, a faith, a light the enemy cannot touch you or maul you badly. You may have also around you there beings who help you, a teacher, a guide who is near visibly or invisibly to give you the necessary warning or protection. But here below when the enemy has clothed himself in a material form and armed himself with material weapons, you are almost helpless. To save yourself from a physical blow, it is not always enough to have the proper inner consciousness only. Something more is needed.

Therefore misery stalks large upon the earth. Nothing comparable to it, either in quality or quantity, can history offer as an example. Man finds no remedy for his ills, he does not dare to hope for any. He feels he is being irretrievably drawn into the arms of the Arch-enemy.

Perhaps it was necessary that it should be so. A *pralaya*, a Deluge has to be there to end an epoch and begin a new one. Indeed the civilisation that man has built up over the millenniums, that has reached its culmination in modern *scientism*, whatever gifts it might have brought to him, however great and powerful and beautiful it might have been at its best in its own sphere, still it had and was a limitation, acted as a deterrent to a further leap and progress of the con-



sciousness. It is the humanistic cycle that has reigned, from ancient Greece down to modern America. Is it not time that another consciousness should intervene, other gods make their appearance?

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And yet if the civilisation really goes, it will not be a small thing, even when measured on the cosmic scale. A civilisation is to be judged and valued not at its nadir, but at its zenith, in its total effect and not by a temporary phase in its course. Civilisation really means preparation of the instrument: the human instrument that is to express the Divine. The purpose of creation, we have often said, is the establishment of the highest spiritual consciousness in the embodied life on earth. The embodied life means man's body and life and mind; individually and socially these constitute the instrument through which the higher light is to manifest itself. The instrument has to be prepared, made ready for the purpose. Actually it is obscure, ignorant, narrow, weak; at the outset and for a long time it expresses only or mainly the inferior animal nature. Civilisation is an attempt to raise this inferior nature, to refine, enlarge and heighten it, to cultivate and increase its potentialities and capacities. The present civilisation, we have said, is a growth of thousands of years—at least five thousand years according to the most modest archaeological computation. In this period man has developed his brain, his rational intelligence, has unravelled some of the great mysteries of nature; he has controlled and organised life to an extent that has opened new possibilities of growth and achievement; even with respect to the body he has learnt to treat it with greater skill and endowed it with finer and more potent efficiencies. There have been aberrations and misuses, no doubt; but the essence of things achieved still remains and is always an invaluable asset: that must not be allowed to go.

If the civilisation goes, it means the instrument is gone, the basis on which the edifice for the Divine Consciousness is to be raised is removed, nothing remains to stand firmly on. So the labour has to start again: one must begin from the beginning. The work has to be done and will be done, it cannot be allowed to terminate into a labour of Sisyphus.

Look at the individual. Why is there in him the life-urge to persist, to endure, to survive? If life had no other meaning than mere living, then the best thing would have been to drop the body as soon as it is badly damaged or incapacitated through illness, accident or old age. Instead, why this attempt to prolong it, to refuse to accept the present difficulties and disadvantages? The reason is that life requires time to grow in consciousness, to acquire experiences, to assimilate and utilise them so as to transform them into powers of being, time, that is to say, to build and forge the instrument so that it may house the higher consciousness and existence. In the present make-up, the body, at a certain stage, has to be given up; for the frame becomes too rigid and stiff to keep pace with the

growing and fast moving inner consciousness. The thread is taken up again in another life; but there is always a considerable reduplication in this *natural* process, one has to repeat the stage of babyhood and immaturity, a retempering of the instrument till it is capable of newer uses. True, something of the experiences, their essence, is stored up somewhere in the depth of the being; but it is not utilised fully, it is not an effective element in the normal consciousness. And although one always bases oneself upon one's past, the edifice constructed seems new every time. Yoga in the individual seeks to eliminate this element of repetition and unconsciousness and delay in the process of growth and evolution: its aim is to complete the cycle of individual growth in a single life.

Now the same principle can be extended to the wider collective development. Civilisation has reached a status today when the next higher status can be and must be attempted. Man has risen to a considerable height in the mental sphere; the time and occasion are now here to step beyond into the supramental, the dynamically spiritual. Dangers are ahead, even around and close: all the forces of the infra-human, the submerged urges of animal atavism are pushing and pulling man down to a regression, to a reversion to *type*. The choice is indeed crucial. If the civilisation is to perish, it means mankind has to start over again its life course, begin, that is to say, at the baby stage, once more to go through the slow process of centuries to acquire the mastery that has been attained in the physical, the vital and the mental domains. Already there have been such lost periods in man's evolution now submerged in his consciousness and their gains are being with difficulty recovered. But a landslide at this critical hour will be a colossal catastrophe—humanly speaking, something almost irremediable.

For here is the sense of the crisis. The *mantra* given for the new age is that man shall be transcended and in the process, man, as he is, shall go. Man shall go, but something of the vehicle that the present cycle has prepared will remain. For, that precisely has been the function of the passing civilisation, especially in its later stages, viz, to build up a terrestrial temple for the Lord. The aberration and deformation, rampant today, mean only an excess of stress upon this aspect, upon the external presentation which was ignored or not sufficiently considered in the earlier and higher curves of the present civilisation. The spiritual values have gone down, because the material values came to be regarded as valueless and this upset the economy or balance in Nature. It is true that we have gone far, too far in our *revanche*. And the problem that faces us today is this: whether mankind will be able to change sufficiently and grow into the higher being that shall inhabit the earth as its crown in the coming cycle or, being unable, will go totally, disappear altogether or be relegated to the backwater of earthly life, somewhat like the aboriginal tribes of today.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Collected Works of Nolini Kanta Gupta Vol 3 pp 213-217.

# HUMOUR IN THE PLAYS OF SRI AUROBINDO

## PART 4: THE PRINCE OF EDUR

(Continued from the issue of June 1988)

NOLINI-DA wrote in the context of Sri Aurobindo's play *Eric*: "A heroic soul to be genuinely heroic and complete must be a loving soul and in the same way love in a woman must carry in it a strong heroic element"<sup>1</sup>. These words affirm a general truth which applies equally to the characters of *Prince of Edur*. Love and valour laced with a strong dose of gaiety are the triple characteristics of Comol's character. The Bheels have attacked, her escort is vanquished, she is in the power of the enemy. Amongst them Kodai is no Aryan, he is dark and savage. If he be like his master it does not augur well for these Princesses. Yet in that tense moment Comol in a carefree and light vein asks,

"Where is this mountain thief who wars with Kings  
And lays his hands on Edur's princesses  
As if his trunk were an immortal piece  
And he unhangable?"<sup>2</sup>

Suddenly the forest glades turn into Vrindavan and Comol has found the one without whom the world was a desert for her. Even her words smile,

"Why, Coomood, it was Krishna after all.  
Monarch of caterans; I am Edur's princess,  
Comol Cumary. Why didst thou desire me?"<sup>3</sup>

The hero and heroine spar with each other. Their inner joy flows out as the three measure one another with words and swords. The inner beings know that their fates are irrevocably linked—in modern parlance, they are made for each other—yet without a little teasing and testing, a *souçon* of danger, a Rajput princess cannot yield. Comol wants to savour to the full this sweet moment of meeting and knowing:

"I swear I pity you.  
You rush upon you know not what. Come now,  
If 'tis a gentle serving-girl you need,  
Here is my sister, Coomood, who can cook  
Divinely. Take her, let me walk on to Dongurh.  
You will regret it, youth

<sup>1</sup> *Collected Works of Nolini Kanta Gupta*, Vol 4, p 384

<sup>2</sup> *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol 7, p 771

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p 772

Coomood Cumari—

Believe her not,  
'Tis she's a Droupadie; and who possesses her  
Is fated to be Emperor of the west.

Bappa—

Nay, you are twin sweet roses on one stalk  
And I will pluck you both, O flowers of Edur."<sup>1</sup>

Her heart sings, but she cannot yield, her honour demands that she be overpowered, her heart stipulates that she be forced to yield. After a short fight Bappa disarms her and one is sure that Comol's wrist didn't hold her sword firmly, otherwise Rajput princesses were no mean warriors. She lost because here defeat was sweeter and more welcome,

Comol Cumary—

Take me if you can

Bappa—

Thus then I take you.

*(disarms her)*

Rose, where is thy thorn?

Now thou must yield indeed.

Comol Cumary—

Foul play! Foul play!

It was not fair to rob me of my sword.

Call you this fighting? I'll not yield myself.

Bappa—

Thou hast no choice.

*He seizes her.*

Comol Cumary—

I was not fairly won.

Avaunt! this is mere highway robbery."<sup>2</sup>

She teases, tantalizes her captor and makes him equally a captive of her antelope eyes. Later she writes a letter so full of sweet barbs and reproaches that one wants to quote it—

“Cateran, I will show thee the sum of thy bold and flagitious offences, though I dare not to hope that it will make thee ashamed. Thou hast laid injurious hands on a royal maiden, being thyself a mere Bheel and outlaw and of no parentage, thou hast carried me most violently to this thy inconsiderable and incommodious hut, treating the body of a princess as if it were a sack of potatoes; thou

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, pp 772-773

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p 774

hast unmercifully and feloniously stripped my body with thy own rude Bheel hands of more ornaments than thou hast seen in thy lifetime and didst hurt me most cruelly in the deed, though thou vainly deniest it; thou hast compelled and dost yet compel me, the princess of Edur, by the infamous lack of women-servants in thy hut, to minister to thee, a common Bheel, menially with my own royal hands, so that my fingers are sore with scrubbing thy rusty sword which thou hast never used yet on anything braver than a hill-jackal, and my face is still red with leaning over the fire cooking thy most unroyal meals for thee; and to top these crimes, thou hast in thy robustious robber fashion taken a kiss from my lips without troubling thyself to ask for it, and thou yet keepest it with thee.”<sup>1</sup>

One who knows the Rajput ethos knows that, once touched or taken, the hands or lips of Rajput maidens never yield to another and that these two are for ever one. But the Princess has to test his mettle—she has spurned her mother’s choice—Rao of Ichalgurh—and chosen him, the Bheel, who must defeat the Rao to satisfy her honour, as his face has satisfied her heart. She nettles and baits him by a description of the superior prowesses of his antagonists. The meaning is clear to Bappa, “Add glory to our heart’s union. Vanquish the other suitors so that my choice stands vindicated before the world”, she seems to beg. Her language reflects her inner exultation and her surrender—

“...since thy followers call thee Smiter of the Forest and Lion of the Hills, let me see thee smite more than jackals and rend braver than flesh of mountain-deer. Cateran, when thou trundlest the Scythian downhill like a ball, thou mayst marry me in spite of thy misdeeds, if thou darest; and when thou showest thyself a better man than the Chauhan of Ichalgurh, which is impossible, thou mayest even keep me for thy slave-girl and I will not deny thee.”<sup>2</sup>

Thus love and laughter, youth and bravery prepare for the Feast of May. A gay, light and carefree inner stream of joy breaks forth, drowning the grim noise of steel on steel. The fights seem staged, the combats seem lost before fought. While in *Eric* and *Vasavadutta* one is afraid from moment to moment for the hero or the heroine, in *Prince of Edur*, the tone is so jaunty that one forgets to fear cruel fate.

Sri Aurobindo’s humour is so high, and refined that he had no need to use the grotesque or the ribald to entertain the reader. Nor does he fall back on buffoonery. It may seem that in Harkoos of the *Viziers of Bassora* the author has taken the help of a cheap prop to raise a few guffaws—but is it so? Harkoos does have a tendency to make us laugh at his funny remarks made with a deadpan face. But on the whole we suspect him to be an intelligent person with a deep understanding of life who deliberately chooses to be happy though God knows there is nothing much in a slave’s life to be happy about.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, p 787

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, pp 787-788

But in the character of Canaca Sri Aurobindo has not stooped but rather consented to note this representative human type—the jester, the buffoon, the lowly—by including him in a play of his—though he has elsewhere scrupulously avoided the traditional prop of the comedian. Life does exhibit such characters. Sri Aurobindo introduces Canaca naturally. Toraman is not going to war, so what is more natural than for a King to be accompanied by his court-jester to his wedding? And who could be lowlier than he to marry the Princess to punish her for the Rajput treachery of palming off a servant as the Princess, to make

“... her pride a jest,  
Her purity a puddle and herself  
The world’s sole laughing stock?”<sup>1</sup>

But Canaca is not eager to impale himself on Rajput swords—

“... Do you take me for a lettuce that you would have me sliced for a Rajput salad? Oh, I’d love to be a prince if only to comfort myself with one full meal in a lifetime; but an empty plebeian paunch is a more comfortable possession than a princely belly full of Rajput lances.”<sup>2</sup>

Here we meet the other extreme—the noble Rajput who lives only for his honour, Canaca the representative of a greater part of humanity which lives only for its belly—the sharp contrast between the Kshatriya and the Sudra. Honour for him is too high a word, a frightening stranger. He clings to life and to achieve prolongation of life and his creature-comforts would do anything. Face to face with mighty Ichalgurh he tries to take cover under compassion and pretends he would rather not kill the Rajputs, while in truth he is quaking with fear,

“Put up your skewers! Quiver not, ye wretches; steady, steady your quaking kneecaps. Though I have cause for anger, yet am I merciful. Ye would have robbed me of some very pretty property, but ye are mountain thieves by nature and nurture and know no better. Therefore peace. Sleep in thy scabbard, thou dreadful servant of the wrath of Toraman; await a fitter subject than these carcasses. Courage, Rajputs, you shall not die.”<sup>3</sup>

The Sudra in the mantle of a Kshatriya, the jackal in the skin of a lion, does not deceive anybody but he goes on with his laughter-provoking pretension—

“I am the very formidable and valiant hero and Scythian, Toraman, prince of Cashmere. Nevertheless, tremble not. I am terrible to look at, but I have bowels;—ay, a whole paunchful of them.”<sup>4</sup>

And truly bowels are all of which the Canacas of the world can boast. Canaca delights the reader with the invention of ruse after ruse to escape the bloody

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, p 782

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, pp 780-781

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p 784

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, pp 784-785

frightening business of war. When Ichalгурh mocks him with the proposal to become his ally to fight the Bheels, he wriggles out like the worm he is with a pathetic attempt to save face,

“Am I to be so easily bamboozled? Wilt thou insult my cranium? Thou wouldst use my valiant and invincible sword to win her, thinking to steal her from me afterwards when I am not looking?”<sup>1</sup>

Canaca’s business in life is simply gluttony. When the letter of the Princess, that heart-throb of the whole of Rajasthan, is brought to him, he laments—

“It will not fill. This paltry barren Rajputana has not the wherewithal to choke up the gulf within me. Ha! avaunt! Dost thou flutter paper before me? I have no creditors in Rajputana.”<sup>2</sup>

Canaca’s gaffes prove that Sri Aurobindo could sketch the lowly as adroitly as the high. To survive, to preserve his carcass is the sole aim of Canaca. He plays at being high and haughty yet retreats at the first sign of danger,

“Is it so? Well then, thou mayst kneel and lay it at my feet; I will deign to read it. (*The Captain flings it into his hands.*) What, thou dirty varlet! (*The Captain lays his hand on his sword.*) Nay, it is a game? Oh, I can catch, I can catch.”<sup>3</sup>

Comol’s letter leaves him cold. He calculates the risk and weighs the possible gain against the supreme loss—life, very dear to all of us but a hundred times more to the lowly:

“No, no, no; there is too much butter about thee. No hope of reward! what! I shall fight like an enraged rhinoceros, I shall startle the hills by my valour, I shall stick three thousand Bheels with my own princely hand like so many boar-pigs; and all this violent morning exercise for what? To improve my appetite? I have more gastric juice than my guts can accommodate. They roar to me already for a haunch of vension.”<sup>4</sup>

Hooshka, Toraman’s commander, suffers for the honour of his country and King. He tries to put some life in this mass of impotent jelly. But one cannot make an Arabian steed out of a donkey. Who can make one see who chooses not to? Canaca again parries,

“Thou liest through thy long nose! I can do much less than that. I will not suffer thee to put limits to my infinite ability. And I can tell a decoy-duck from a live gander. Shall I waddle my shins into Bappa’s trap? This letter was written under compulsion.”<sup>5</sup>

A worm can wriggle out of any earthly situation and so does our priceless Canaca. In effect he tells Hooshka though in a less naked way that if he was so concerned for the honour of the Princess then he should take the initiative. Canaca finds fold upon fold, way after way to hide his shame, to save his worthless life,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, p 785

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p 791

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p 792

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, pp 792-793

“Why, genius will out, you cannot stable it for long, Hooshka; it will break bounds and gallop. Yet go, Hooshka, go; take all my men, Hooshka. Hooshka, slay the Bheel; rescue the lady, Hooshka. I wish I could go with thee and swing my dreadful blade with my mighty arm till the mountains re-echoed. But the simple truth is, I have a bleeding dysentery. Willingly would I shed my princely blood for my sweet lady, but it is shedding itself already otherwise.”<sup>1</sup>

True, that is the only way the blood of the gluttonous coward flows. He holds and clings to life like a leech, a limpet. Even Yama would find it difficult to pry such characters loose from the quag of life.

On the other hand there are those who believe that love lasts forever. What Nolini-da wrote about Rodogune is many more times true of Rajput maidens:

“The end of the body is not the end of love, it exists even while in the body apart from the body. The legend of lovers frustrated in this life but reunited in another world is not a pure fiction but a truth obvious to the seeing eye. In fact love is an immortal being and human persons are its receptacles and formations for a special play upon earth. Earthly fate only serves to increase the delight that forms the true body of love.”<sup>2</sup>

The Hindu women realised this truth. This belief was woven in the very fibres of their being and the funeral pyre was for them love’s fiery robe, a quick way to union with their beloved. Life was held lightly, honour was cherished most. And for the few moments our lovers are together they make the best of it. Comol teases her jailor, or rather her captive, by first asking of him a promise and, having got it, wriggles out of her own promise—

“Which, having won, I do deny, unsay,  
Wholly recant and absolutely abjure  
Whatever flattery I have said or done  
To win it. You are still my Bheel and Brigand,  
My lawless cateran; I great Edur’s princess.  
I love you! Do not dream of it. Six days!  
By then my father’ll smoke you from your lair  
And take me from your dreadful claws, my lion,  
An antelope un-devoured.”<sup>3</sup>

Thus we see *Prince of Edur* is a play of spring and sunshine, laughter and love. Here the Divine Playwright had decreed that all should be well. The forest is clad in flowers and Kama darts from tree to tree piercing the fiery hearts of Bheel warriors as well of the soft Princesses, here the very arrows laugh and no one dies. The play is pure fun and frolic, a teenage extravaganza, where all things serious have to first smile and pay court to the God of Love.

(Concluded)

SHYAM KUMARI

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, p 793

<sup>2</sup> *Collected Works of Nolini Kanta Gupta*, Vol 4 p 384

<sup>3</sup> *S A B C L* Vol 7 p 806



## SRI AUROBINDO, THE SOUL OF INDIA

(Continued from the issue of 24 April 1988)

IN the preceding two articles I have discussed Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of the Veda, Vedanta, Upanishads and Gita. The grand and creative synthesis Sri Aurobindo achieved in his writings is the direct reflection of the living synthesis of his own personal life.

Sri Aurobindo's life and work are a revelation of the inmost truth of India's soul "The need of the hour was a man of God." When men forget their real existence, deviate from the true path and plunge into the abyss of the lower forces nothing but the forces of God himself can rescue him. Heroic souls must then be born to lift them up. Inspired voices must announce the ideal, utter the word of liberation. They show a new trail for others. It was therefore at crucial moments in the history of India that mighty souls appeared on her soil.

Dr. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar says: "The representative men of the East and the West have already paid their homage to Rishi Aurobindo. As early as 1907, Rabindranath addressed this poem to Sri Aurobindo, then only thirty-five:

O Aurobindo,  
Rabindranath bows to thee!...  
When I behold thy face, 'mid bondage, pain and wrong  
And black indignities, I hear the soul's great song  
of rapture unconfined... the spirit of Bharat-land,  
O poet, hath placed upon thy face her eyes afire  
With love, and struck vast chords upon her vibrant lyre."

Dr. Iyengar further tells us: "Twenty-one years later, Rabindranath saw Sri Aurobindo again—but now at Pondicherry in his 'Cave of Tapasya'. The impression of the visit is as follows:

"At the very first sight I could realise that he had been seeking for the soul and had gained it, and through this long process of realisation had accumulated within him a silent power of inspiration. His face was radiant with an inner light and his serene presence made it evident to me that his soul was not crippled and cramped to the measure of some tyrannical doctrine, which takes delight in inflicting wounds upon life.

"I felt that the utterance of the Hindu Rishi spoke from him of that equanimity which gives the human soul its freedom of entrance into the All. I said to him, "You have the Word and we are waiting to accept it from you. India will speak through your voice to the world, *Hearken to me!*"<sup>1</sup>

K.M. Munshi had the darshan of Sri Aurobindo in April 1950. He wrote: "A deep light of knowledge and wisdom shone in his eyes.... He was the absolute integration of personality, the Central Idea in Aryan culture materialised in human shape, one of the greatest architects of creative life."<sup>2</sup>

In his *India on the March*, Romain Rolland described Sri Aurobindo as "The completest synthesis that has been realised to this day of the genius of Asia and the genius of Europe... the last of the great Rishis holds in his hand, in firm unrelaxed grip, the bow of creative energy."<sup>3</sup>

V. Chandrasekharam, in his book *Sri Aurobindo's The Life Divine: A Brief Study and Other Essays* (1973) has declared: "Himself, he [Sri Aurobindo] was living inwardly in a kindred world of spiritual effort and aspiration and so he was able to enter into the heart of the Vedic Rishis and their sacred mysteries.... And because of him, we are able to enter into that glorious world of ancient knowledge wherein illumined seers forge the human into the God-like birth in the divine smithy of the yajna.... The Riks, as their name testifies, are hymns to Light—to the Light that leads man from mortality into immortality. After a long age of obscurity they now stand re-revealed. We see them as the fount and origin of India's spiritual knowledge, ready henceforth to guide man in his supreme quest."<sup>4</sup>

The Aurobindonian interpretation of the Veda has been with scholars and students over seventy years. But even at the very outset of his Vedic studies Sri Aurobindo won earnest listeners. Among them was the renowned Tamil poet, Subramaniam Bharati, a sterling patriot and a fiery journalist of Nationalism. Bharati was already in Pondicherry when Sri Aurobindo arrived there. Exiled from the very busy schedule of journalism and oration at Madras, Bharati was Vedantic by temperament. He really took up the study of the Veda in the light of Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo's views came to him as a Godsend, and he accepted the former's interpretations and translations as inspired truth. He said: "It is a common experience with poets that they receive their best songs from above. A few days ago, I asked Sri Aurobindo Ghosh how he got his new and marvellous theory of Vedic interpretation. He said, 'It was shown to me.' And I knew he meant it in a very literal sense. All truth is inspired. The popular mistake is to suppose that this revelation, this inspiration, must ever be the unique privilege of a few souls specially favoured by the Gods. But the Veda tells us that we can all bring forward our complete energy by fully yielding to the dawn."<sup>5</sup>

Who can speak such revealing words? Only the soul within us can express such insights.

When Sri Aurobindo invoked the Soul of India, he saw the Mother that is India. He worshipped her in the depth of his soul. That is why the liberation of the country became Sri Aurobindo's first work and his dominant passion.

He says, "It has been the mantra of my life to aspire towards the freedom of my nation."<sup>6</sup> "Nationalism is the *dharma* of the age, and God reveals himself to us in our common Mother."<sup>7</sup> "The sun of India's destiny would rise and fill all India with its light and overflow India and overflow Asia and overflow the world."<sup>8</sup>

That is why poet Rabindranath Tagore hailed him as “the voice incarnate, free, of India’s soul.”

(To be continued)

NILIMA DAS

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- 3 *Ibid*
4. *Sri Aurobindo's The Life Divine: A Brief Study and Other Essays*, pp. 75, 104.
5. Subramaniam Bharati, *Essays and Other Prose Fragments* (1973), pp 15-16.
6. *Sri Aurobindo's Speeches*, p. 106.
7. *The Ideal of the Karmayogin*, p 56
- 8 *Sri Aurobindo: Speeches*, p. 89.

# THE ETERNAL CHILD AND THE ETERNAL MARVEL

## THE SQUARING OF THE CIRCLE

(Continued from the issue of June 1988)



*And so be it!*

And so be *what?*

NARAD closed the manuscript. He looked before him at the assembled gods, the heavenly sages, the divine dancers—the Apsaras, and at the musicians of space—the Gandharvas: motionless, all were plunged in an ineffable trance of conscious ecstasy.

What was still left at the end of his tale? With what new marvel could he delight and astonish the most refined audience of Paradise, *swargaloka*, the realm of the divine Intelligentsia? What had he to teach the gods—he, Narad, who once had lived a man upon the Earth?

So the memory of his earthly past had not been utterly erased by that supreme liberation that elevated him, soul and body, to the blissful realms of the Immortals? He who so many times, Hermes-like, had gone down to bear to men the words of the Masters of Destiny—what message from Man had he for the gods, at the end of the sombre prelude of Mind's evolution? What lesson from Earth for the impassive heavens? Hermetic still, stripped of the last vestige of language, Narad let his soul expand in the silence of that divine consciousness. It glided above and among the gods and the sages, seizing the immobility of the infinite dances of the Apsaras and the mute contemplation from which sprang forth the sidereal harmonies of the Gandharvan orchestras. He described the motionless movement, the eternal spinning of stars and spirits, the perfect Ring, the immense Wheel beyond Time and Space, the long-lost Eden

circle

zero

prelude

oracle and source of Being, fullness of the Void, all-pervading weightlessness...

*... it was the moment when God holds his breath....*

1

And the first-born of Brahma, the direct Emanation,  
had dared to break the Ring that knows no pain or pity....

For, since what determines a circle  
is the point at its centre,  
when one tires of turning in circles  
one may simply shift the central point.

Thus the One, the Centre had descended  
out of eternal unmoving motion  
leaving the heavens, the stars, the angelic spirits;  
like a seed of light  
the Child who was King, the King who was God,  
had come to impregnate the dark womb of Earth.

Invisible Sun at the core of the planet  
and in the heart of every creature,  
in his slow spirals ever-widening  
by the growth of Being, he discovers Becoming—  
*Eternal voyage into Infinity*  
*where the Child shall be God*  
*and King among the gods.*

## 2

But—mystery of Love!—this human heart  
thrills to the shock of meetings unexpected;  
for deep within it lies a mirror-pearl  
beaming the light descending from Above.  
By that magic reflection, love-mirage,  
our gleam of dream is mirrored in a smile  
and all the Ideal's charms materialise  
their magnet-beauty in a human face.  
*Is it you or me? Who is it, or what?*  
*Riddles none can solve...*  
*while the flames of the Ordeal*  
*burn love to ashes.*  
Yet all these enigmas  
can loose their grip on our hearts dissolving  
like clouds in the Sun's rays when love soars flying  
back to the Soul-Delight where 'you' and 'I'  
melt in the embrace of the ecstatic One—  
  
*while lingers yet the taste of being two.*

Finding this little poem rather facile, especially for an audience of gods, Narad, still and always Hermes-like, attempted to complicate things slightly—or rather let us say, tried to render their true complexity.

For if the light of an ideal projected from a man's heart seems always to spread before him the comforting clarity of his dream-vision, behind him, no less faithful companion, ever-untiring, the shadow of all that he has not yet acknowledged to be part of himself always dogs his footsteps. So that, although it may happen that he closes his eyes (the eyes of his heart) to the light that smilingly beckons him on his way, the Other, on the contrary, never ceases to goad him onwards, driving him relentlessly forward—along the very same path, towards the one Goal.

Inseparable guardian of our steps, Black Angel, faceless Night, her mysterious perfume is nevertheless comforting and reassuring, and her shadows sometimes seem to hold a brilliance no dawn has yet revealed in her splendours.

Perhaps, at the end of our human journey, when, purged of all mortality, we have attained the supreme transparency, this shadow will no longer have reason to exist; then our new vision, in a single global glance, will be able to encompass all the light and beauty

*of a total undivided existence.*

What a trio: Paris, Helen and the Sorceress... Indra looked quite entertained!

Yes: one, two, three—even the gods could count so far, Narad told himself. The 'eternal' triangle, Olympus peak, Father God with his monocle... It had taken Midas and Medea to disconcert them a little. But how to reach that *fourth* dimension, the flame of Being on the vault of the three worlds, that marvellous dawn born to Heaven by his two spouses Night and Day; the red-gold flight of the phoenix fulfilling all alchemy of black and white, the brilliance of that hidden Sun forever reconciling every contrast of light and shade? Narad concentrated, entered into meditation, this time with wide-open eyes.

His vision broadened to contain all heavens and all gods, dancers and singers, sages, bards and heroes; and all seemed to merge into one single image, innumerable and sole, like many millions of facets in the sparkling of a single immense diamond-star. And on its peak, and at its very centre, embracing all in its indescribable smile, the solar-face of his sweet Lord and Lover seemed to look out at him full of compassion and beatitude beyond all comprehension.

Narad was about to join his hands, prostrate himself at the feet of his divine Master.... But, far above the gods and angels, something in that perfect face

intrigued him. For if one of His eyes, a lotus-lake, seemed to shine a little more than half-open, the other, enigmatic, seemed, for an imperceptible and yet undeniable instant, to quiver a little more than half-closed.

Was it possible? Narayana winking at him? What could this strange response mean?

Ever Hermes-like, Narad understood this mystery too:

He felt love in his heart growing intense, concrete, becoming solid; and as if under the weight of this new discovery, this new *reality*, he felt himself being borne far away from the gods and angels, far from the ecstatic faces of the deities, down, down once more towards the sombre centre of the human universe, to this dark planet. He who had once mounted to the skies, soul and body, must once again descend to this earth, to forge here a steadier soul and a new body, fit for an immortal life here below as well as there above.

For it is on earth and in life, in the body and by the world, that the secret of that fourth dimension is hidden; and Narad-Hermes was coming here to search for the key to that transmutation, that supreme transfiguration, the alchemy of Spirit and Matter, the fusion of the two apparently irreconcilable elements, the unsolvable equation which an ancient tradition had veiled in the symbolic enigma of

*the squaring of the circle.*

*(To be continued)*

B. PETRIS

# ALTERNATIVE SYSTEMS OF MEDICINE

*From the Inaugural Key-Note Address at the Annual General Body Meeting of the T.N.V.H.A., held on 20 March 1987 at Ooty, by Dr. Dinkar D. Palande.*

## What is a Medical System?

ANY medical system is based on a constructed idea-script, called a theory, which represents imperfect human observations of a line of processes that Nature follows; based on the theory there are experiments, further observations that on analysis prove or disprove part of the theory. This is the process of development of such a system. All medical systems have caught hold of some aspects of Nature and subjected her to certain processes. Each has its successes and failures. All are outward means. What really works are unseen understood forces from behind.

## Why Alternative Medicine? What is the Reason for Dissatisfaction with the All-powerful and Prevalent Allopathic System?

The alternative systems were either preexisting, like ayurveda or developed because of dissatisfaction with the allopathic systems—like homeopathy. One of the parents of the present dominating civilisation and medical system is Greece; catastrophes like epidemics and wars stimulated the growth of allied sciences as also the growth of the present system of medicine. State patronage as well as social acceptance has led to vast advances in the allopathic system—at the cost of other systems. It attained high respect and social acceptance—the system as well as its practitioners. This led to a kind of arrogance and intolerance. To maintain its dominant position and patronage the system and its practitioners picked up the methodology of the most successful science: business and its selling techniques. ‘The client is right and has to be made to buy what he does not need,’ is the main motto of business. Used to the idea that time is precious, used to instant foods, people demanded instant medicine, newer medicines, changing fashions. This has led to premature use of new methods, new drugs, unnecessary, and excessive medication, increasing side-effects, and to an increasing insistence on the patient playing a passive role.

The basis of the allopathic system is diagnosis, the principle being to find the root and pull it out in order to destroy a tree. Diagnosis is based on a balancing analysis of all information and inputs. These are provided by symptoms, signs, and the results of various investigations. Diagnosis is often not possible and, if made, not infallible. This led to increasing the inputs by increasing the number of investigations, costly oftentimes, sometimes unnecessary



Because it is easier to order investigations than to listen to and record symptoms and signs by detailed examination there has been a great growth in newer investigations and a diminishing doctor-patient contact. Still, in spite of all this, diagnosis is often uncertain and treatment often of a hit-or-miss type. The increasing cost, increasing unfounded claims—unaccompanied by increasing successes—has led to dissatisfaction with this system. The diminution in interpersonal relationship between doctor and patient has added to the dissatisfaction. So people are turning to other systems. The other systems also have their successes and their failures, unnecessary medication, untoward side-effects are common to all systems. But indeed there are instances where one system succeeds when another does not.

### **What are these Alternative Medical Systems?**

These are Ayurveda, Hakimi (Unani), Homeopathy and Siddha which are established systems while the newer ones are Acupuncture, Magnotherapy, Crystal-therapy, etc. All these alternative systems have one deficiency—till recently they did not use the modern methods of proving or disproving their claims, *e.g.*, detailed documentation and analysis, clinical drug-trials following a well-described methodology like double-blind and controlled trials. Fortunately, in our country the government is now actively encouraging research in different systems using modern methods. Without research, looking-back, documentation and analysis, no system, no medical institution, can progress.

### **What are the Main Criticisms of these Systems apart from lack of Proper Evidence of their Claims?**

One common objection is that they are based on symptomatic treatment. It is indeed possible to kill a tree by attacking its stalks and leaves, to cure an illness by striking at its symptoms. This is the method in homeopathy and actually is the method most often used in the commonly practised allopathy too. The other objection is that there is no knowledge of how the homeopathic or ayurvedic drugs or herbs or acupuncture act: where is the site of their action? However, cure of a disease, relief of symptoms is a proof of their action and hence the objection is not quite valid.

### **What is the Nature of Relationship between All the Systems?**

It is mainly competitive, especially because these other systems are often cheaper. But the relationship could be cooperative. In the treatment of diarrhoea today in allopathy the principle of naturopathy is followed—the treatment is by replacing the lost fluids and salts and allowing Nature to throw away

the impurities. There is no interference with Nature—unlike in so many other treatments. In China different medical systems are represented in the same hospital, the patient has the right to choose. If one method is found inadequate the patient can insist on changing over to another system—there is joint consultation. Thus cooperation and mutual respect is built up and encouraged: what matters is effective treatment and its success.

Homeopathy takes into consideration not only the physical symptoms but also the mental make-up of the patient. *The close mind-body* interrelationship is well known today but not taken into account as much as it should by either the doctor or the patient in allopathy. The doctor who inspires confidence in a patient does much better than one who cannot, even though he may have better knowledge. Similarly the patient who is relaxed, confident of getting well, does much better than the anxious patient. What does this mean?

### **Isn't there a Need for Change in our Approach—Change in our Value-system?**

At present dominating importance is given to the disease-process and to the doctor. The patient plays a passive role. Hardly any effort is made to make him aware of his own body, of what is going on inside, of his own self-healing powers, of the inherent risks in many types of treatments. That is why a doctor who wants the patient to play an active role, a doctor who says that a change in diet, a change in habits, exercises, confidence in his own self is necessary, a doctor who does not promise instant cure (which of course does not occur) with unnecessary antibiotics and injections and operations, who does not prescribe tonics but advises better diet—such a doctor has fewer patients, earns less and of course no one wants to earn less. Officials and politicians who inaugurate big hospitals and X-Ray plants are popular, not those who want better water-supply, better preventive measures so that diseases would not occur. This sounds illogical but it is a fact. Why? Because all these are *closed systems*, patients and the public are encouraged to remain in ignorance

Let us change the emphasis from curative medicine to maintenance and preservation of health. Let us bring down to earth—to an equal level—the excessive importance and high position given to doctors, to the curative medical system and let us elevate and give more importance than at present to the lay person, to the patient, to restoring to an optimum the health of the population, to preventing illnesses. An increasing role has to be played by the health-educator, the available knowledge has to be widely made known, a mutual sense of respect and responsibility has to be built up between the medical personnel and the public—the patients—the would-be patients. This is the concept of community health and community participation. In China the doctor gets the same pay and has the same position as any professional and the whole community parti-

cipates in dispersal of knowledge, in preventive measures.

A recent example in our own country is illustrative. Recently in U.P., in a small village, Sunita, a school teacher, inspired her students: the children held processions, plays, dramas, they talked at home, to their friends and elders and the result is that 100 per cent immunisation has been achieved in this village. In Maharashtra the now famous Arole couple trained village-widows and 'dais' as health and family planning workers and have achieved results far exceeding those in any government-planned sectors. In Pondicherry after the International Conference on Alternative Medicine they are planning an information-centre, library, audio-visual material for the ordinary public—for patients to know about different illnesses and their treatments. In Pune and Bangalore there are organisations fighting for banning of unnecessary medications, against costly unnecessary formulations and tonics. Such a wind of change is indeed welcome and we have to think and act and change our approach. That is the need today. In Benaras and A.I.I. of Med. Sc., Delhi, they have shown the great benefit of simple yogasanas and exercises in curing many illnesses.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Ideally we have within us the power and knowledge to become and remain healthy and to cure illnesses. A patient's faith in doctor and medicine is very important but is a clumsy substitute for the natural faith in one's own self-power. It would take long for self-cure to replace medicine, because of the fear, self-distrust and excessive reliance on drugs which medical science has taught to our minds and bodies. In the meantime let us find the truth behind the claims and counter claims of different systems, let us disseminate the available knowledge for healthy living and thinking, let us discourage selling techniques in medicine as if we were dealing with clothes or toothpaste. Let us all become more responsible as doctors, as health-workers, as patients and as members of our society. Let us open more and more windows of knowledge, of respect for each other.

## MAN, MALADY AND MEDICINE

(Continued from the issue of June 1988)

IF all the points that are raised in the arguments are critically analysed we may find that they are based on the main issue that pertains to the teleological element in the theory of evolution. We know that there is an ancient quarrel between physical science and metaphysics on the question—how and why does this world come into existence?

Physical science assumes that this world is a development of indeterminate matter by Nature Force, which is self-operative and hence this creation has no purpose or aim or intention. On the other side the opinion of metaphysics is more serious because it does not give cognisance to the main theme of the *Lila* (Play),—the delight of manifestation. It emphasises that the Absolute has got nothing to fulfil and manifest. It is self-luminous and therefore It has nothing latent in It—which would need gradual unfoldment.

In regard to the points raised by physical science we have to recall what Sri Aurobindo comments in *The Life Divine*—(Book II, Chapter XXIII): “The scientific or materialist objection cannot maintain its validity if there is a secret consciousness behind the apparently inconscient energy in Matter...,” because in that case the theory that there is some purpose of creation cannot be objected to. And because whatever comes into existence out of matter is the result of a tremendous wave of energy in matter, there should not be any doubt in regard to the existence of a secret consciousness behind the apparently inconscient material energy. So, it may well be held that this wave or vibrating motion is the evolutionary will of a secret conscious Being and its push of progressive manifestation is the evidence of an innate intention of that Being in the evolution and that is what has been termed a *teleological element* and it is not irrational to admit it, for the source of this conscious or inconscient urge of nature lies in the deeper truth of existence, a conscious being, that has become dynamic and set out to fulfil itself in an automatic process of material Nature. The ‘teleology’, the element of purpose in the *nisus*, as explained by Sri Aurobindo, “is the translation of self-operation of the Will-Power of that Being and, if consciousness is there, such a Will-Power must also be there and the translation is normal and inevitable”

This inevitable translation would, therefore, be the *fundamental fact of evolution*.

Sri Aurobindo also indicates that the theory of evolution cannot be identical with the scientific theory of *form-evolution* and *physical life-evolution*. The scientific theory is concerned only with the outward and visible machinery and process, with the physical development of things in matter, and therefore, the theory is susceptible to considerable change with discovery of new properties .

in matter, when its present version may have even to be dropped altogether. But a spiritual evolution being an evolution of consciousness and not of the physical form of life, the discovery will not affect its process in any way because it is a progression of the soul's manifestation in material existence

In regard to the points raised by metaphysics that the Absolute is complete in itself and there is nothing within it which requires gradual manifestation, Sri Aurobindo comments that since this material world is not an integral totality, it is a part of a whole, a grade in gradations, the teleology does not bring any factor which does not belong to the whole; it proposes only the realisation of the whole in the part. So, there can be no objection to the admission of a teleology factor in part-movement of the universal totality, if the purpose be the perfect manifestation of all the possibilities inherent in the total movement.

Sri Aurobindo further explains that all exists here, no doubt, for the delight of existence, all is a game or *Lilā*, but a game too carries within itself an object to be accomplished and without the fulfilment of that object, the *Lilā*, would have no completion or significance.

Sri Aurobindo admits as rational and just the metaphysical suggestion that if man is to be the medium to effectuate the evolutionary culmination then it would only be possible for a few especially evolved human beings who will form the new type and move towards the new life. He further admits that there is not the least possibility or probability of the whole human race rising in a block to the supramental level.

And so there is no such scene in the third, the concluding, act of the drama. This act shows that when the capacity of human mentality reaches a certain level or a certain point of stress of the evolutionary impetus, it becomes so profound that it presses towards a higher plane of consciousness and its embodiment in the being. So, the door of Supermind remains open for each individual and not only for a few. The mind of each individual human being can be made capable of reaching that level.

To arrive at the concluding point. the third act also shows, as metaphysics suggests, that so long man has been seen aspiring for something beyond—some heaven or Nirvana—and the spiritual urge turned at its extreme towards a spiritual negation and self-annihilation of the mental-individual. And at the same time, this act indicates that there is the other side,—the dynamic and the positive side of the spiritual urge. This urge presses man to aspire to attain a spiritual perfection so as to divinise his mind, heart and even his body here and not retire to a far-off heaven or an ineffable beyond.

With the end of the drama we come to this conclusion that if a spiritual unfolding on earth is the hidden truth of our birth into matter, if it is fundamentally an evolution of consciousness that has been taking place in Nature, then man as he is cannot be the final term of that evolution. Man is still too imperfect an expression of the spirit and his mind too limited a form and instrument

ation and that is why he is termed a *transitional being and not final*. When he becomes final he will be able to effectuate the manifestation of the Supermind which lies hidden and veiled in his being. Man is the only creature in this world who is capable of rending the veil to accomplish the task. It is he who is to make this spiritual culmination possible. All other living beings have either no such capability or no need of it.

Now, if we summarise the theory of involution and evolution as depicted in the first two acts we come to understand:

- a) that man is a transitional being; he is not final and that his real business is to become final.
- b) that man has in his nature certain shortcomings and limitations which he cannot get rid of, and that at the centre of these limitations there stands his ignorance. He is ignorant of what he actually is. He cannot take the next step because of this ignorance which stands as a stumbling block in the way of his destiny. And therefore this is regarded as the malady from which all mental beings are suffering.

Thus we get the right answers to the first two questions, to which neither the physical scientists nor the metaphysicians have now any objection to raise.

From the third act we come to know what should be the medicine. But that is not enough. We must know the diagnosis and the prescription. We have had Sri Aurobindo's guidance in our search for the answers to the first two questions. It follows that to determine what should be the medicine to cure man of his malady we must also have his guidance, for we are sure that we will have it.

We have already come to know that ignorance is the root cause of all maladies. Since man's first appearance as a biped thinking animal in this material world up to this date, when he has been able to make gigantic developments in his outer life, it has been seen that all his efforts and endeavours were guided by a blind force of ignorance. He does not know, because of his ignorance, that he is not only a physical man though he possesses a physical body made of matter; that he is not a vital man, though he feels a vital urge and emotion to conquer and possess; that he is not even a mental man, though he can imagine and create better outer conditions to live in: and so he remains busy to fulfil the demands of his body, life and mind forgetting his real business. All his activities move around a centre-point known as *EGO*—that is to say, his physical-self, vital-self and mental-self. He cannot think beyond it, cannot move towards surpassing it for he does not know that he is also a spiritual-self. But why is there this *ignorance*?

The second act of the drama already revealed to us that in the world of mind, life and body (the lower hemisphere) the *Sachchidananda* Purusha becomes quite opposite in his poise to what he is in his native domain (the upper hemisphere).

In '*The Hour of God*' Section Two under the title PURNA YOGA, Sri

Aurobindo not only diagnoses the disease but also prescribes what medicines need to be adopted. He indicates: Being in *Sat* is one in multiplicity—it regards its multiplicity without being lost or confused in it and the multiplicity that knows itself as one without losing the power of multiple play in the universe.

Under the conditions of mind, life and body, the body is falsely taken for an independent reality and the *EGO* for an independent personality—as a result the One loses itself in its multiplicity. And that is why when we are absorbed in the world we miss God in Himself, when we see God, we miss Him in the world. Our mental ego creates a bar between ourselves and God. And hence it is not possible for us to realise that this physical world is the consequence of his *Lilā*. We believe that this world has a separate entity exclusive and independent of God. This is our ignorance.

Then how to get rid of it? What is the medicine?

Sri Aurobindo, in the same treatise, prescribes: Our business is to break down and dissolve the mental ego and get back to our divine unity without losing our power of individual and multiple existence in the universe.

But how?

That we of course shall discuss. Let us now have the diagnosis and the prescription.

The next aspect of the Being in the upper hemisphere is *Chit*—that is, Consciousness. Sri Aurobindo explains: *Chit* is luminous, free, illimitable and effective. (*Chit-Shakti* of *Sat-Purusha* is a combination of *Jnana-Shakti* and Tapas, —*Kriya-Shakti*). They are one power of conscious force of God. But in the lower hemisphere, under the conditions of mind, life and body the luminousness becomes divided and broken up into uneven rays, the freedom trammelled by egoism and unequal forms, the effectiveness veiled by an uneven play of forces....

As a result we have states of consciousness, non-consciousness and false-consciousness; knowledge and ignorance and false knowledge; effective force and inertia and ineffective force. And we have to suffer from this malady of anomalies.

Then what are we to do to get rid of this malady?

Sri Aurobindo prescribes: Our business is to resolve divided and unequal individual force of action and thought into the one, undivided universal *Chit-Shakti*—and thus exchange blindness and ignorance for knowledge, and ineffective human strength for the divine effective force.

But how?

That we shall discuss later and not now

The third aspect of the Being in the upper hemisphere is *Ananda* (Bliss). Sri Aurobindo explains: Delight in *Ananda* is pure, unmixed, one and yet multitudinous. Under the conditions of mind, life and body (in the lower hemisphere), it becomes divided, limited, confused and misdirected and owing to shocks of unequal forces and uneven distribution of *Ananda* subject to the duality of

positive and negative movements, it becomes grief and joy, pain and pleasure

Then what is our business to get rid of these dualities so that we may be fully absorbed into unmixed delight?

Sri Aurobindo prescribes: Our business is to dissolve these dualities by breaking down their cause and plunge ourselves into the ocean of divine bliss, one, multitudinous, evenly distributed (*Śama*), which takes delight from all things and recoils painfully from none.

“In brief,” Sri Aurobindo indicates, “we have to replace dualities by unity, egoism by divine Consciousness; ignorance by divine wisdom, thought by divine knowledge; weakness, struggle and effort by self-contented divine force; pain and false pleasure by divine bliss. This is called, in the language of Christ, bringing down the kingdom of heaven on earth or, in modern language, realising and effectuating God in the world.”

But how?

This we have now to discuss.

It is very clear from the diagnosis that the human being on earth is God playing at humanity in a world of matter, with the intention of imposing the law of spirit on matter and the nature of deity upon human nature. Then evolution would be nothing but the unfolding of spirit out of the density of material consciousness and the gradual self-revelation of God out of this apparent animal being.

The diagnosis also reveals that man himself is not at all responsible for the maladies he is suffering from because he has not developed them after his appearance in the world of mind, life and body (the lower hemisphere); on the contrary he has to appear with all his limitations according to the Will of his Creator. Really speaking, his limitations are nothing but the ‘*Gifts of God*’—which are not given to any other living beings in the entire material universe. His ignorance is in disguise a unique opportunity for him to become God. He can avail himself of the opportunity only by doing his real business as suggested in the prescription.

Here also a question, just and legitimate, can be raised: “Is it possible for the ignorant mental being to do the prescribed business by his own effort?”

Sri Aurobindo, in the course of discussing the subject “Supramental Yoga”—in *The Hour of God*—indicates: Man cannot by his own effort make himself more than man; the mental being cannot by his own unaided force change himself into a supramental spirit. A descent of the Divine Nature can alone divinise the human *receptacle*.

Then what has man to do to ensure the descent of the Divine Nature? If his own effort is of no use, how can he become a fit receptacle to receive the aid?

Sri Aurobindo assures us that though the powers of mind, life and body are bound to their own limitations, above which he cannot rise, beyond which he cannot expand, yet mental man can open to what is beyond him and call down a supramental Light, Truth and Power to work in him and do what the mind cannot do.



Sri Aurobindo further emphasises that the supramental Light and Power cannot descend automatically to transform human nature into Divine Nature, man's discerning ascent and *vigilant* surrender must allow the supramental Power to act according to its own profound and subtle insight and flexible potency to bring about slowly or swiftly a divine transformation of man's imperfect nature.

Here we must carefully note the alarming word of Sri Aurobindo—'*vigilant*'—about man's surrender. In other words man must be cautious and careful in taking the medicine or else the medicine may yield an adverse result which may aggravate the malady and make it more complex and difficult to be cured. For this descent, this working is not without its possibility of causing a calamitous fall and danger.

So, man must be serious and sincere in his endeavour to become a fit receptacle for the Light and Power which is to descend in response to his call and with utter vigilance he must surrender to the descending Force.

It is not very difficult to comprehend that all these activities have to be carried out inwardly to bring about the change necessary for man to take the next step in evolution. And therefore, practising Yoga is a 'must' for him if he intends to become final.

As a transitional being man has reached the summit of mental consciousness. He does not know where to go thence. He stands there bewildered. He feels that he has to move further but cannot find the way.

This is the present state of humanity in the world of mind, life and body dominated by human ego, the stumbling block in the path of man's progress, the dark veil of falsehood and ignorance between humanity and divinity. If the block can be removed and the veil rent the way will be revealed. This is the message of Sri Aurobindo to suffering humanity. It may accept or reject it. It is man's individual self who is to decide whether he intends to live in his own nature—in darkness, falsehood, pain and grief—or get his nature transformed and divinised, so that he may live in Light, Truth and Bliss. Since he has reached the apex of his own level, his choice is imperative. For the future of the world depends upon his choice. Or else let the World-Nature take her own course of action to compel the transitional being to become final even by creating crashing circumstances if necessary, because she needs the conscious collaboration of man to carry forward the evolution. If man does not collaborate consciously she has to do the needful. And that is why the crisis in human civilisation has been growing more and more acute as the days pass. And slowly the human mind begins to realise that there is no other way to move forward and upward; no other medicine to cure human ills than what is prescribed. Night has become darkest and humanity begins to aspire for the NEW DAWN. And here lies the hope of man and the world.

(Concluded)

SAMAR BASU

## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**Economics Natural or Integral Economics** by *J.N. Mukherji*, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, pp. 132, HB, 1st Ed. (1987), Rs. 75.00

MOST books are strings of words, some have a message and there are a few which are seminal enough to become generators of whole new ways of looking at things. The book under review belongs to the last category. The learned author has brought to bear on his subject the gifts of a scientifically trained and incisive mind tempered by the touch of grace and an unusual depth based on lifelong reflection. This is an original work, beautifully got-up, well bound and free from printing mistakes, even though the price is a bit on the high side for individual readers who would like to own the book.

The author points out that the root cause of the present-day trend of a fragmented economics dominating considerations of human ecology in relation to life style and resource allocation, leading to extravagance, *e.g.*, in use of finite energy resources, lies in the Concession System implicit in the present society. Eighteenth century industrialisation of Europe and concomitant colonisation of the rest of the world are being currently sustained by Consumerism promoted by greedy multinationals and unscrupulous governments leading to ecological imbalance and social inequity.

The author suggests a fundamental review of the basic premises underlying the economics of today and not just patchwork solutions within existing premises. His contention, as exemplified by data on India in the appendices, is that if the built-in concession system which promotes the present order by falsifying the value of inputs is abolished and true economic values of land, water and time are accounted for, the alternative developments based on sustainable ecology can find a proper niche and the hiatus between ecology and economics bridged. Amongst the positive technologies, he mentions tree farming, agroforestry, low energy input agriculture (*e.g.*, Fukuoka) so that for sustainable production, water, energy and fertiliser are locally made and are low energy inputs and not high cash-flow-based inputs as in the Green Revolution, which are now proved to have aggravated social inequity.

The author lays great stress on the integrality and sincerity of approach and a radical departure from the present falsehood.

This is a book coming at the most appropriate time, as it beckons the nation to stop gimmicks, however subtle or implicit, and get to the real issues of food, inequity, foreign exchange and employment potential. It is the reviewer's hope that it will be widely read and generate a national debate on development alternatives that we still have. India is still open and has the privilege and the possibility of making correct choices even after forty years of independence and this is a privilege, which may not last long.

CHAMANLAL

# *Students' Section*

## THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

Sixty-third Seminar

28 February 1988

### THE VISION AND THE WORK OF THE MOTHER FOR THE FUTURE

*(Continued from the issue of June 1988)*

Speech by Debobroto Roy

THE Mother says:

“Since the beginning of the earth, wherever and whenever there was the possibility of manifesting a ray of consciousness, I was there.”<sup>1</sup>...

“Living in the heart of each atom I kindle in it the fire that purifies and transfigures, the fire that is never extinguished.”<sup>2</sup>

These excerpts from the Mother’s writings reveal the true nature of her vision and work through the ages. She was present on earth from the very beginning of evolution, helping and hastening the evolutionary ascension from Matter to Spirit. So her physical embodiment is of profound significance for the entire world whether the world is conscious of it and admits it or not.

Who is the Mother in her real being? This is a question frequently posed by many people. Well, in her highest original form, she is, as Sri Aurobindo says, the Adya-Shakti, transcendent beyond and above all manifestation and at the same time immanent in it. It is this highest Divine Mother herself who has incarnated in a material body to lift up the suffering world from its original inconscience and obscurity to its divine consummation, the Light and Bliss of the Spirit. She has personally come down upon earth in a physical human form, to show the way and guide ignorant humanity to the supreme Truth, but because of her assumption of this form she “does not cease to be the Divine... The Mother was inwardly above the human even in childhood,”<sup>3</sup> says Sri Aurobindo. Let us elucidate Sri Aurobindo’s statement by the Mother’s own. She says, “From the age of five I was conscious that I did not belong to this world, that

<sup>1</sup> *Collected Works of the Mother* (Cent. Ed. Vol 13), p 37

<sup>2</sup> *Prayers and Meditations of the Mother* (1948), Prayer of 26 1914

<sup>3</sup> *The Mother* (Cent. Ed. Vol 25), p. 48

I did not have a human consciousness. My sadhana began at that age.”<sup>1</sup> The Mother from an early age knew that she had come on earth with a special mission. That mission was not to enjoy the pleasures that life offers but to uplift humanity, to bring true happiness to others, to take the sufferings and miseries of others on her shoulders and relieve them from the heavy burden of sorrow and pain.

Between the age of 11 and 13, the Mother had certain experiences which were most extraordinary in their bearing and deeply spiritual in their significance. She says: “Between 11 and 13 a series of psychic and spiritual experiences revealed to me not only the existence of God but man’s possibility of uniting with Him, of realising Him integrally in consciousness and action, of manifesting Him upon earth in a life divine.”<sup>2</sup>

At the age of 13 the Mother had the clear perception or vision of her mission on earth, the mission which was to be realised later in collaboration with Sri Aurobindo. The Mother relates this vision in one of her prayers: “When I was a child of about thirteen, for nearly a year every night as soon as I had gone to bed it seemed to me that I went out of my body and rose straight up above the house, then above the city, very high above. Then I used to see myself clad in a magnificent golden robe, much longer than myself; and as I rose higher, the robe would stretch, spreading out in a circle around me to form a kind of immense roof over the city. Then I would see men, women, children, old men, the sick, the unfortunate coming out from every side; they would gather under the outspread robe, begging for help, telling of their miseries, their suffering, their hardships. In reply, the robe, supple and alive, would extend towards each of them individually, and as soon as they had touched it, they were comforted or healed, and went back into their bodies happier and stronger than they had come out of them.”<sup>3</sup>

Such experiences were sufficient to indicate to her that she was no ordinary child, but the very embodiment of Divine Love and Compassion and Grace and that she had a glorious mission to accomplish on earth. She was never pre-occupied with herself but always with earth and humanity. She frequently prayed to the Lord, “May something higher, nobler be revealed to mankind.”<sup>4</sup> In an ardent prayer she implored the Divine: “Thou sovereign Master, extreme limit of our thought, who standest for us on the threshold of the Unknown, let some new splendour surge out of the Unthinkable, some possibility of a higher and more integral realisation, so that Thy work may be accomplished and the universe may take one step forward towards the sublime identification, the supreme manifestation.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Mother India*, Feb 1975, p 95

<sup>2</sup> *Collected Works of the Mother* (Cent Ed Vol 13), p 39

<sup>3</sup> Prayer of 22.2.1914.

<sup>4</sup> Prayer of 28.11.1913.

<sup>5</sup> Prayer of 30.9.1914

Her prayers are vibrant with her soul's aspiration to become the perfect instrument of the Divine's work on earth which she regarded as her mission. She writes, "Grant that I may accomplish my mission, that I may help in Thy integral manifestation."<sup>1</sup> In another prayer she explains her conception of integral transformation: "It is in all states, in all modes, in all things, in all worlds, in all elements that we have to discover Thee and be united with Thee; and if we leave out one element, however small it may be, the communion cannot be perfect, the realisation cannot be accomplished."<sup>2</sup>

The Mother was fully aware of the dangers, the difficulties and the obstructions which lurk around every corner on the path she had chosen, those obstacles which invariably accompany the unprecedented mission she had chosen, but she was not to be discouraged nor shaken by them. Her courage was indomitable and her aspiration was as steady as an unswerving flame, never losing sight of the goal. She had altogether a different view with regard to the existence of suffering. She writes: "We must not run away from suffering, we must not love or cultivate it either, we must learn how to go down deep enough in it to make it a lever which will have the power to force open the doors of the eternal consciousness and enter into the serenity of Thy unvarying oneness."<sup>3</sup>

Her work for the earth was constantly directed by the Divine. She distinctly heard the Divine Lord commanding her, "Turn towards the earth and men,"<sup>4</sup> and reassuring the earth, "Poor sorrowful Earth, remember that I am present in thee and lose not hope; each effort, each grief, each joy and each pang, each call of thy heart, each aspiration of thy soul, each renewal of thy seasons, all, all without exception, what seems to thee sorrowful and what seems to thee joyous, what seems to thee ugly and what seems to thee beautiful, all infallibly lead thee towards me, who am endless Peace, shadowless Light, perfect Harmony, Certitude, Rest and Supreme Blessedness."<sup>5</sup>

Truly speaking, the all-compassionate Master has not deserted us as some of us ignorantly think. It is we who have plugged our ears and have created out of our blindness and ignorance a shield in front of our eyes which blocks the divine light and the path of the Lord.

The Mother could hear the Lord saying to her, "Be this love in everything, and everywhere, ever more widely, ever more intensely, and the whole world will become at once thy work and thy estate, thy field of action and thy conquest. Strive with persistence to throw down the last limits which are but frail barriers before the expansion of the being, to conquer the last obscurities which the illumining Power is already lighting up. Fight that thou mayst conquer and

<sup>1</sup> Prayer of 24 3.1914

<sup>2</sup> Prayer of 12 7.1914

<sup>3</sup> Prayer of 6.3.1914

<sup>4</sup> Prayer of 20 12 1916

<sup>5</sup> Prayer of 5 2 1913

triumph; struggle to surmount all that has been up to this day, to make the new Light emerge, the new example which the world needs. Fight stubbornly against all obstacles, outer or inner. This is the pearl without price which is proposed for thee to realise.”<sup>1</sup>

She realised that to eradicate suffering and miseries from this world humanity must undergo a radical transformation. She writes, “Matter has to be vigorously churned if it is to become capable of manifesting entirely the divine Light.”<sup>2</sup> “The heavens have been definitely conquered... But the conquest of the earth is yet to be made.”<sup>3</sup>

The all-compassionate Mother has sacrificed for humanity everything. But her sacrifice is of a higher order. As Sri Aurobindo says: “This is the great sacrifice called sometimes the sacrifice of the Purusha, but much more deeply the holocaust of Prakriti, the sacrifice of the Divine Mother.”<sup>4</sup> The Mother also writes: “For the accomplishment of Thy work I have sunk down into the unfathomable depths of Matter, I have touched with my finger the horror of the falsehood and the inconscience. I have reached the seat of oblivion and a supreme obscurity.”<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, the Mother, with her incessant, unimaginable and unparalleled yogic endeavour had attained complete identification with the Supreme Lord. After identifying with the Divine Lord she says: “... Thus the solid foundations of Thy work upon the earth are made ready, the basements of the immense edifice are constructed.”<sup>6</sup> She thus laid the foundations for the future world, the new age, the golden earth, the golden race. She wrote on 22 July 1914, “O Divine Master, let thy light fall upon this chaos and a new world emerge from it. What is now preparing accomplish and let a new humanity be born which will be the perfect expression of Thy new sublime Law.”<sup>7</sup>

The Mother was always aware that for the fulfilment of her mission she was destined to work in collaboration with Sri Aurobindo, for Sri Aurobindo’s mission was the same as hers. Their joint mission was to bring down the Supramental Truth upon earth. After meeting Sri Aurobindo on 29 March 1914 for the first time, the Mother wrote: “He whom we saw yesterday is on earth; His presence is enough to prove that a day will come when darkness shall be transformed into Light, when thy reign shall be indeed established upon earth.”

The Mother also recorded in her diary on 8th December 1916 the Lord addressing her: “I have chosen thee from all eternity to be my exceptional representative upon earth, not in an invisible way, but in a way apparent to the eyes

<sup>1</sup> Prayer of 25 12 1916

<sup>2</sup> Prayer of 26 5 1914

<sup>3</sup> Prayer of 31 7 1915

<sup>4</sup> *The Mother* (Cent Ed Vol 25), p 25

<sup>5</sup> Prayer of 24 11 1931

<sup>6</sup> Prayer of 3 11 1914

<sup>7</sup> Prayer of 22 7 1914

of all men. And what thou wert created to be, thou shalt be."

Sri Aurobindo has very categorically stated about the identity of his path and of the Mother's. "There is no difference between the Mother's path and mine; we have and have always had the same path, the path that leads to the supramental change and the divine realisation, not only at the end, but from the beginning they have been the same."<sup>1</sup> The Mother also tells us, "Sri Aurobindo and myself are one and the same consciousness, one and the same person"<sup>2</sup> And she has also stated:

"Without him, I exist not,  
Without me, he is unmanifest."<sup>3</sup>

At present the earth is in a state of extreme turmoil; confusion and falsehood reign supreme everywhere. Mankind is enveloped with a cloak of darkness and falsehood. The mission of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo is to vanquish this falsehood and put Truth on the throne.

The Mother says: "The appearance of a new force and light and power, accompanying the descent of the Supramental Consciousness into this world, can alone lift man out of the agony and pain and misery under which he is submerged."<sup>4</sup>

"Her embodiment," says Sri Aurobindo, "is a chance for the earth-consciousness to receive the Supramental into it and to undergo first the transformation necessary for that to be possible."<sup>5</sup>

After a prolonged and Herculean labour the success of her mission was realised on 29th February 1956. For, she declared that on that date the Supramental Light and Force and Consciousness had entered the subtle earth-atmosphere. She gave the following message bearing upon that occasion:

"A new light breaks upon the earth,  
A new world is born.  
The things that were promised are fulfilled."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *On Himself* (Cent Ed Vol 26), p 456

<sup>2</sup> *Bulletin of Physical Education*, Feb 1958, p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> *Collected Works of the Mother* (Cent Ed. Vol. 13), p 32

<sup>4</sup> *Bulletin of Physical Education*, Nov 1954, pp 101, 103.

<sup>5</sup> *The Mother* (Cent Ed Vol 25), p 49

<sup>6</sup> *Collected Works of the Mother* (Cent Ed Vol 15), p 204