

# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

JULY 1989

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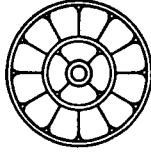
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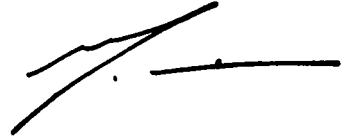
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,  
A new light breaks upon the earth,  
A new world is born.  
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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# MOTHER INDIA

## MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XLII

No. 7

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"*

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## INTUITION AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

A TALK BY THE MOTHER TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON 23 JULY 1958

*Mother, how can the faculty of intuition be developed?*

THERE are different kinds of intuition, and we carry these capacities within us. They are always active to some extent but we don't notice them because we don't pay enough attention to what is going on in us.

Behind the emotions, deep within the being, in a consciousness seated somewhere near the level of the solar plexus, there is a sort of prescience, a kind of capacity for foresight, but not in the form of ideas: rather in the form of feelings, almost a perception of sensations. For instance, when one is going to decide to do something, there is sometimes a kind of uneasiness or inner refusal, and usually, if one listens to this deeper indication, one realises that it was justified.

In other cases there is something that urges, indicates, insists—I am not speaking of impulses, you understand, of all the movements which come from the vital and much lower still—indications which are behind the feelings, which come from the affective part of the being; there too one can receive a fairly sure indication of the thing to be done. These are forms of intuition or of a higher instinct which can be cultivated by observation and also by studying the results. Naturally, it must be done very sincerely, objectively, without prejudice. If one wants to see things in a particular way and at the same time practise this observation, it is all useless. One must do it as if one were looking at what is happening from outside oneself, in someone else.

It is one form of intuition and perhaps the first one that usually manifests.

There is also another form but that one is much more difficult to observe because for those who are accustomed to think, to act by reason—not by impulse but by reason—to reflect before doing anything, there is an extremely swift process from cause to effect in the half-conscious thought which prevents you from seeing the line, the whole line of reasoning and so you don't think that it is a chain of reasoning, and that is quite deceptive. You have the impression of an intuition but it is not an intuition, it is an extremely rapid subconscious reasoning, which takes up a problem and goes straight to the conclusions. This must not be mistaken for intuition.

In the ordinary functioning of the brain, intuition is something which suddenly falls like a drop of light. If one has the faculty, the beginning of a faculty of mental vision, it gives the impression of something coming from outside or above, like a little impact of a drop of light in the brain, absolutely independent of all reasoning.

This is perceived more easily when one is able to silence one's mind, hold it

still and attentive, arresting its usual functioning, as if the mind were changed into a kind of mirror turned towards a higher faculty in a sustained and silent attention. That too one can learn to do. One *must* learn to do it, it is a necessary discipline.

When you have a question to solve, whatever it may be, usually you concentrate your attention here (*pointing between the eyebrows*), at the centre just above the eyes, the centre of the conscious will. But then if you do that, you cannot be in contact with intuition. You can be in contact with the source of the will, of effort, even of a certain kind of knowledge, but in the outer, almost material field; whereas, if you want to contact the intuition, you must keep this (*Mother indicates the forehead*) completely immobile. Active thought must be stopped as far as possible and the entire mental faculty must form—at the top of the head and a little further above if possible—a kind of mirror, very quiet, very still, turned upwards, in silent, very concentrated attention. If you succeed, you can—perhaps not immediately—but you can have the perception of the drops of light falling upon the mirror from a still unknown region and expressing themselves as a conscious thought which has no connection with all the rest of your thought since you have been able to keep it silent. That is the real beginning of the intellectual intuition.

It is a discipline to be followed. For a long time one may try and not succeed, but as soon as one succeeds in making a “mirror”, still and attentive, one always obtains a result, not necessarily with a precise form of thought but always with the sensations of a light coming from above. And then, if one can receive this light coming from above without entering immediately into a whirl of activity, receive it in calm and silence and let it penetrate deep into the being, then after a while it expresses itself either as a luminous thought or as a very precise indication here (*Mother indicates the heart*), in this other centre.

Naturally, first these two faculties must be developed; then, as soon as there is any result, one must observe the result, as I said, and see the connection with what is happening, the consequences: see, observe very attentively what has come in, what may have caused a distortion, what one has added by way of more or less conscious reasoning or the intervention of a lower will, also more or less conscious; and it is by a very deep study—indeed, almost of every moment, in any case daily and very frequent—that one succeeds in developing one’s intuition. It takes a long time. It takes a long time and there are ambushes: one can deceive oneself, take for intuitions subconscious wills which try to manifest, indications given by impulses one has refused to receive openly, indeed all sorts of difficulties. One must be prepared for that. But if one persists, one is sure to succeed.

And there comes a time when one feels a kind of inner guidance, something which is leading one very perceptibly in all that one does. But then, for the guidance to have its maximum power, one must naturally add to it a conscious

surrender; one must be sincerely determined to follow the indication given by the higher force. If one does that, then .. one saves years of study, one can seize the result extremely rapidly. If one also does that, the result comes very rapidly. But for that, it must be done with sincerity and.. a kind of inner spontaneity. If one wants to try without this surrender, one may succeed—as one can also succeed in developing one's personal will and making it into a very considerable power—but that takes a very long time and one meets many obstacles and the result is very precarious; one must be very persistent, obstinate, persevering, and one is sure to succeed, but only after a great labour.

Make your surrender with a sincere, complete self-giving, and you will go ahead at full speed, you will go much faster—but you must not do this calculatingly, for that spoils everything!

(*Silence*)

Moreover, whatever you may want to do in life, one thing is absolutely indispensable and at the basis of *everything*, the capacity of concentrating the attention. If you are able to gather together rays of attention and consciousness on one point and can maintain this concentration with a persistent will, *nothing* can resist it—whatever it may be, from the most material physical development to the highest spiritual one. But this discipline must be followed in a constant and, it may be said, imperturbable way; not that you should always be concentrated on the same thing—that's not what I mean, I mean learning to concentrate.

And materially, for studies, sports, all physical or mental development, it is absolutely indispensable. And the value of an individual is proportionate to the value of his attention

And from the spiritual point of view it is still more important. There is *no* spiritual obstacle which can resist a penetrating power of concentration. For instance, the discovery of the psychic being, union with the inner Divine, opening to the higher spheres, *all* can be obtained by an intense and obstinate power of concentration—but one must learn how to do it

There is nothing in the human or even in the superhuman field, to which the power of concentration is not the key

You can be the best athlete, you can be the best student, you can be an artistic, literary or scientific genius, you can be the greatest saint with that faculty. And everyone has in himself a tiny little beginning of it—it is given to everybody, but people do not cultivate it.

## THE MOTHER WHOM WE ADORE

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

(Continued from the issue of June 1989)

THE Avatar brings down and embodies a higher principle of human life, a greater consciousness which he infuses into the existing patterns which have so far served his purpose. But they become time-barred and need to be remodelled. The Mother has taken a physical form which signifies the physical pressure that is exerted for the new manifestation. Sri Aurobindo says about the Mother: "The Divine Mother is the consciousness and force of the Divine—or, it may be said, she is the Divine in its consciousness-force"<sup>1</sup> He has commented further. "Her embodiment 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>2</sup>

The Mother herself has asserted in one of her talks: "The truth I bring will manifest itself and will be embodied upon earth; for, it is the earth's and world's inevitable destiny. The question of time is not relevant. In one respect the truth which I say will be made manifest is already fully manifest, is already realised and established there is no question of time there. It is in a consciousness timeless or eternally present. There is a process, a play of translation between that timeless poise and the poise in time that we know here below. The measure of that hiatus is very relative, relative to the consciousness that measures, long or short according to the yard-stick each one brings. But that is not the essence of the problem: the essence is that truth is there active, in the process of *materialisation*, only one should have the eye to see it and the soul to greet it"<sup>3</sup>

On November 26, 1915 the Mother, in a letter to Sri Aurobindo, describes a fundamental experience

"The entire consciousness immersed in divine contemplation, the whole being enjoyed a supreme and vast felicity.

"Then was the physical body seized, first in its lower members and next the whole of it, by a sacred trembling which made all personal limits fall away little by little even in the most material sensation. The being grew in greatness progressively, methodically, breaking down every barrier, shattering every obstacle, that it might contain and manifest a force and a power which increased ceaselessly in immensity and intensity. It was as a progressive dilatation of the cells until there was a complete identification with the earth: the body of the awakened consciousness was the terrestrial globe moving harmoniously in ethereal space. And the consciousness knew that its global body was thus moving in the arms of the universal Being, and it gave itself, it abandoned itself to It in an ecstasy of peaceful bliss. Then it felt that its body was absorbed in the body of the universe and one with it, the consciousness became the consciousness of the universe,



immobile in its totality, moving infinitely in its internal complexity. The consciousness of the universe sprang towards the Divine in an ardent aspiration, a perfect surrender, and it saw in the splendour of the immaculate Light the radiant Being standing on a many-headed serpent whose body coiled infinitely around the universe. The Being in an eternal gesture of triumph mastered and created at one and the same time the serpent and the universe that issued from him; erect on the serpent he dominated it with all his victorious might, and the same gesture that crushed the hydra enveloping the universe gave it eternal birth. Then the consciousness became this Being and perceived that its form was changing once more; it was absorbed into something which was no longer a form and yet contained all forms, something which, immutable, sees,—the Eye, the Witness. And what It sees, is. Then this last vestige of form disappeared and the consciousness itself was absorbed into the Unutterable, the Ineffable.

“The return towards the consciousness of the individual body took place very slowly in a constant and invariable splendour of Light and Power and Felicity and Adoration, by successive gradations, but directly, without passing again through the universal and terrestrial forms. And it was as if the modest corporeal form had become the direct and immediate vesture, without any intermediary, of the supreme and eternal witness.”

To this letter Sri Aurobindo answered on 31.12.1915 as follows:

“The experience you have described is Vedic in the real sense, though not one which would easily be recognised by the modern systems of Yoga which call themselves Vedic. It is the union of the ‘Earth’ of the Veda and Purana with the divine Principle, an earth which is said to be above the earth, that is to say, the physical being and consciousness of which the world and the body are only images. But the modern Yogas hardly recognise the possibility of a material union with the Divine.”<sup>4</sup>

*(To be continued)*

NILIMA DAS

#### REFERENCES

- 1 *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol 25, p 65
- 2 *Ibid* , p 49
- 3 *Glances of the Mother's Life*, Vol I, p 2
- 4 *The Mother Prayers and Meditations*, Vol I, p 309

## GOLCONDE: A LOOK BEHIND

*(Continued from the issue of June 1989)*

### 7. THE BUILDERS (3)

*This series is an arrangement of material about Golconde that has been deposited with the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Archives and Research Library. The compiler and the Archives would be happy to receive additional information about this exceptional building and those who were the Mother's instruments in realising it.*

*Shraddhavan*

#### **George Nakashima: Sundarananda**

We have presented what Antonin Raymond, Golconde's chief architect, had to say about his experience of working on Golconde. The first of the designers to come here, George Nakashima, has also recorded his memories of that time on several occasions. The following account is woven together from various published statements of his

NAKASHIMA. The story of Golconde begins in Tokyo in 1934-35. I spent five years there with Anthony Raymond. He came to me with a sketch that wasn't more than 3 inches square. He wanted me to design the plan for it. So I designed the building and worked on the engineering with a friend of mine. Then he asked for a volunteer to go to India to work on the building. No one else seemed to volunteer, so I did. I was very happy to go. I was interested in India; so I made my first trip to Pondicherry in 1938.<sup>1</sup>

I travelled by boat to Colombo, Ceylon, and then by train up the east coast of India, going via Trichinopoly to Pondicherry. I arrived at the Ashram quite early in the morning. Here I was received warmly by the Mother, Mirra, and members of the Ashram. It was not long before I slipped into the routine of the simple life led there. I made friends almost immediately, joined them at meals, participated in the few set occasions, like evening meditations, and began my task of designing and constructing the Ashram's major building.<sup>2</sup> I spent a month seeing the grounds and working out the plans. I had worked out all the details of design for putting up a building in that environment. I had the idea of having louvers for complete ventilation. I thought it was a very important idea for that kind of climate. I knew it got hot there. I think I spent that first month there in the summer, then went back to Japan and finished the drawings and also bought equipment.<sup>3</sup>

This was some ten years after the Ashram community had been organized

When I arrived, there were about two hundred men and women from all over the world living there. The monklike life was beautiful and unadorned. The day had not yet come when the Ashram would have a more direct relationship with the outside world. Since I felt I was receiving more than I was able to give—the answer to all my searches, finally conferring meaning on my life—I refused a salary and joined the community. Sri Aurobindo gave me the name of Sundarananda, which translates from Sanskrit into English as “one who delights in beauty”.

The practical affairs of the Ashram were in the Mother’s care. Among other things, she was in direct charge of the current building project. All important spiritual problems and questions of a psychic nature, as well as less important matters, were sent to her in writing for decision and advice.

The daily routine was extremely simple. There was no early morning saying of the offices, no dogma or ritual, no mantras, no ablutions under a waterfall, no counting of beads—only a complete freedom, as long as one’s aspirations were sincere. The search for pure illumination took precedence over a spirituality-stifling dogma.

The only fixed event of the day was the evening meditation, conducted by the Mother. At about seven o’clock, she would come part-way down the staircase and stay for about thirty minutes before returning upstairs. Not a word was said. Many people were present, sitting at random on the polished red lime floor of a room that opened onto the courtyard. Most sat in the cross-legged Indian fashion, but some in the lotus position, and a few on chairs. The object of the meditation was first to quiet and control the mind, and then, in silence, to aspire to unity with the higher divine forces. I am sure that many achieved this. The silence would be intense. In season, the strong, sweet odour of oleander would float into the room. Even this small formality of the evening meditation was not obligatory, and many did not attend. At any given time there would be only about fifty of the group present, but this would be quite enough to fill the available space.

Once a month there was a semi-rite, called “Prosperity”, at which disciples received their simple needs: a *dhoti*, a bar of soap and two rupees. Often a disciple would refuse the rupees. These gifts were presented directly by the Mother, so we felt doubly blessed.

My particular task was to design and help construct Golconde, a multi-storey dormitory for the disciples. This was to be the major structure in the Ashram. It was to be one of the first high-strength, reinforced concrete buildings in India. Since the design was to be completely open, the task was to build a straightforward structure that would solve the problems peculiar to this type of architecture in a tropical country. Since ventilation was important, large horizontal louvers were installed. These could be closed during the rains, which at times would come in horizontally. All of our architectural problems had to be

solved within the spirit of Sri Aurobindo's teachings.

Golconde was something of a "do-it-yourself" project. I found myself not only the designer, but something of a general contractor. Besides providing the usual architectural drawings and details, and arranging for construction equipment from Japan, I designed the shuttering (formwork) and also the steel, which came from France.

Gradually our building rose. With the devotion and concentration of the Ashram spirit, we were able to achieve a workmanship of extraordinary quality, extremely difficult in any other society. We tolerated only one-eighth inch off plumb in our verticals, and even at the butt joints there was little cement leakage.

There were many innovations, such as the large thin, bowed concrete roof tiles, approximately three and a half feet by five feet and one inch thick. These were made at the building site with a double thickness, the lower being a concrete slab. The double thickness was important because of the almost continual intense heat of the tropics. The concrete work had almost a metallic ring when struck, rather than the usual thud.<sup>4</sup>

It was a real task because it was the first building of its kind in Pondicherry. There wasn't any equipment there for constructing such a building. They didn't have steel or cement. So Chandulal and I worked together ordering material. We got the steel from France. There wasn't any wharf in Pondicherry and that was a problem for unloading steel. We had to take the steel off the ships with those catamarans which are a couple of palmyra logs tied together. You have a little paddle and six men rowing. We got the steel off the boats with these men and their boats. It lay on the shore like a mass of spaghetti. Then they hauled it from the shore to the site. We just dragged it. There weren't any paved roads then but it sure messed up the dirt roads. And then the coolies had to straighten it. Then we had to make the shuttering. That was a complete design problem in itself. I made all the main details of the shuttering. I had to figure out the stresses in the framework. Then we had to make the appropriate construction. I had to detail all the steel work. It came all bent and we had to do the straightening and bending according to our needs. We had to make tests to see that the concrete was of appropriate quality. We had to be extremely careful to get concrete that held together instead of breaking off the aggregate. Mother was very insistent that it be of the highest quality. We got a very good quality with proper strength.

We didn't know how to build it, so we made a mini-Golconde as a trial. It was a one-room model to see what we were getting into. Chandulal worked with me. Pavitra helped some but he was not as deeply into it. We talked everything over with Mother. She was interested in all the details. She had an amazing knowledge of what we were doing and what was going on with the construction principles. She took my design and recommendations and gave me her opinion. But as far as the construction and final design she left it pretty much to me.

When it came to the construction, there were three of us working on it: Jotin Bal, a Bengali engineer, Chandulal, the Ashram engineer, and myself. You have to work together on a building like that. Not one of us took the sole credit for Golconde. We worked together on it. It was team work. We got going on the building. The three of us supervised. Everybody pitched in and it was a wonderful kind of feeling.<sup>5</sup>

(*To be continued*)

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- 1 "Sundarananda an interview with George Nakashima" in *Collaboration* Vol 13, no 1, Fall 1986 p 47
- 2 *The Soul of a Tree a woodworker's reflections*, by George Nakashima, Tokyo 1981, p 61 ff
- 3 *Sri Aurobindo's Action*, Vol 16, no 9 Sept 1986 p 7
- 4 As note 2
- 5 As note 1

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## ILLUSION

In the misrepresentation by illusion  
 is a cruel reality suppressed sometimes,  
 as when the trickling tears of a crying, hungry child  
 left lonely on the pavement,  
 look pearly in the soft moonlight—  
 as when the soft moonlight  
 plays on the face of a half-asleep pavement dweller,  
 lighting up his dreams of heavenly joys—  
 as when the poor man's diluted buttermilk,  
 his food for the night,  
 looks milky in the soft moonlight—  
 as when the cheap, gilded lace of his little daughter's skirt,  
 sparkles unusually in the soft moonlight,  
 sending waves of joy through his heart.

R. SUNDARESON

## HOW THEY CAME TO THE ASHRAM

20 (*Continued*)

I STARTED attending university lectures whenever and wherever possible on topics of philosophy. . but got no result. For 2/3 years I became an ardent follower of M. N. Roy's paper *The Radical Humanist* His burning words, "Man is born essentially good", attracted me so much that I hoped to get some reply to my haunting query, but I did not.

At last a period of hammering pain came in my life when I was posted back in Jaipur around the year 1963 and there I stayed continuously for seven years of my service career

It happened that I had the chance for nursing and taking care of a lady who was a psychological patient and had come to Jaipur for treatment. I had a deep affection for her and wanted her to be cured by my nursing. The question spontaneously arose in me Was she born with a psychological imbalanced mind? Oh no, as far as I knew by remaining very close to her from my very young age, she had a quite normal and healthy mind and gave almost motherly love to me. My continuous day-after-day attendance on her, sometimes throughout the night, as well as my observations and analysis of her mental disturbance gradually revealed to me that the stringent social norms inflicted on her were the deep-seated cause of the malady which had mutilated her entire life. A life which could have blossomed had she been put in healthy surroundings psychological and physical. I knew she had brilliant talents and was very affectionate by nature and she always stood against social injustice.

Even during this period of life when I was quite advanced in age I hardly read about the Mother and Sri Aurobindo But what I have now read from *On Education* by the Mother aptly fits this case. She writes that the business of education is "to enable and help the child to educate himself. . and grow freely as an organic being and not to be kneaded and pressurised into form like an inert plastic material."

A long continuous period of nursing a tortured and suffering soul pained me very deeply as my utmost effort to cure her failed. She was a lost case of mutilation beyond hope... so much so that later on I wanted to get myself relieved of this painful duty, but finding no suitable reliever I occasionally started praying very intensely to the Supreme.

I had one Yugal Murti, *i e.*, a picture of Lord Krishna and Radha together whom I had adored since my childhood days and whenever I was in difficulty I used to concentrate on them in a secluded place.

In the middle of 1966 all of a sudden, almost in a miraculous manner, a written proposal arrived to me for my marriage It was quite surprising how this had come when I was so adamant not to get into an ordinary married life,

particularly at this advanced age. I had already settled in my mind to lead a peaceful life on retirement from service, but my fate proved to be otherwise. This negotiation and happening were particularly miraculous because the proposer and I had never seen each other before, neither had I any details of his family history but the mere information which was received that he was one of the most ardent among the old stalwart devotees of the Pondicherry Ashram and that his visits to the Ashram were almost every year, gave me a strong internal spiritual pull with the feeling that perhaps this union might carve a way out for me and that the Pondicherry Ashram might give some solution to my haunting query

The marriage took place without any formal social ceremony which we both never wanted. It was performed with simple Hindu rites, on 18.11 1966.

The day after the marriage we both left for the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. There was a great sensation of joy throughout the journey for the chance of visiting a place about which I heard so much from my husband on the way. He never gave me any instruction nor did he sermonise, only he told me that before I got the date for the darshan of the Mother, I must prepare my mind keeping myself wide open to the beauty of nature. I was taken to vast stretching fields, beautiful beaming flower-gardens, lake-sides and, of course, the vast hazy-horizoned sea-side with its enchanting sunrise, its attractive rippling surface and its waves dashing against the shore. All these visits had a tremendous widening effect on me. I was taken to an exhibition of paintings and photos in the Ashram. Some of them were very revealing and attracted me so much that still I remember one of the pictures displayed. It was a picture showing a mighty hand pulling out with a chain from a dark abyss a glimmering soul. This picture touched me very much.

Thereafter on the 8th December 1966 (at 10 a.m.) I had the fortune of the first 'Darshan' of our sweet and mighty Mother who touched me giving me white roses as I bent down for offering my pranam.

The radiance which emanated from Her entire being with Her radiant smile and particularly Her deeply penetrating look purged out all the so-called dirt of ignorance within me and filled me with immense peace and an internal bliss charging me with some inexpressible spiritual ecstasy. This darshan of the Mother made me feel that certainly here I would get the answer to my haunting query.

On returning from the Ashram of Pondicherry, as I proceeded through the routine course of my life, some concrete events happened and got me entangled. I felt and gradually became convinced that the so-called spiritual net of the Mother had been cast by Her and I was caught.

Since the first darshan of the Mother onwards, I have started reading some of the preliminary books and writings and quotations of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. I am not a vigorous reader but whatever I could read, grasp and

assimilate, gradually unfolded my inner being and convinced me that life has a purpose.

The process of inner unfoldment is still being continued pouring down the immense grace of the Mother which flooded away the so-called "Yugal Murti" of Lord Krishna and Radha placing in its stead the figures of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, filling my inner being with a feeling which can be better expressed by the following lines of Sri Aurobindo which I read recently.

"I saw my soul a traveller through Time,  
 From life to life the cosmic ways it trod,  
 Obscure in the depths and on the heights sublime,  
 Evolving from the worm into the god.  
 A spark of the eternal Fire, it came  
 To build a house in Matter for the Unborn,  
 The unconscious sunless Night received the flame,  
 In the brute seeds of things dumb and forlorn  
 Life stirred and Thought outlined a gleaming shape  
 Till on the stark inanimate earth could move,  
 Born to somnambulist Nature in her sleep,  
 A thinking creature who can hope and love.  
 Still by slow steps the miracle goes on,  
 The immortal's gradual birth mid mire and stone "

"The Miracle of Birth", *SABCL* Vol 5, p 147

*(To be continued)*

*Compiled by K*



# LIFE—POETRY—YOGA

## SIX PERSONAL LETTERS

You have inquired about the life here I'll touch on what appears new to me. The call from the Beyond which is also the Within has been growing more and more intense in a particular point for a year or so. It is as if we were drawn to plunge not only our mind and heart but also our sense of being a body into that alchemic crucible which is the soul. This means—in addition to offering our body in service to the Divine—the attempt to remove, from our outermost being, all push of desire, all pull of attachment, and make every component clod of it rhyme with God.

So far the body used to be a devoted channel for the inner being to flow in the direction of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Now one feels thrown out into one's physical stuff and called upon to realise its own divine inwardness, so to speak, its own soul-dimension. The stress of the Yoga is put on the most external consciousness—on one's very feeling of having physical limbs. This stress does not make for much comfort in the being, but when the response of the external consciousness is keen, there is, as it were, a far and faint mirroring intuition of some supernal substance out of which are made

Bodies of fire and ecstasies of line,  
Where passion's mortal music grows divine.

These two verses from a poem I wrote long ago may seem a flight of fantasy, but Sri Aurobindo has considered them to be revelatory along with another couplet in the same poem which refers to the God-goal of our Yogic life—

All things are lost in him, all things are found:  
He rules an infinite hush that hears each sound.

To be "revelatory" means that the expression catches a profound truth not only as an idea accompanied by emotion and image but as a word-form springing directly from a supra-intellectual reality and carrying the very self-sight and life-thrill of this reality in any of its aspects. (20.10.1985)

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Thanks for your solicitous inquiry whether I had reached my eightieth year. I arrived at that milestone on November 25, 1984. So now I have gone a little beyond the point at which, according to the Mother, complete blossoming should take place. We do not have enough records of what this point meant in

the lives of well-known people. But some mixed interesting information is available about a few of them.

Sophocles, on becoming an octogenarian, heaved a sigh of relief, saying: "Now at last I am free from passion." A pretty good climax to the human drama—as notable an achievement as having penned *Antigone* or *Oedipus Tyrannus*. Goethe at the same age put the finishing touch to his *Faust*, the last lines of the great chorus with which it ends. In English they would read:

The Eternal Feminine  
Is leading us onward.

Around this time I believe Goethe had also his last *affaire du cœur*, falling in love with a girl in her late teens. Victor Hugo at 80 was in full blast both as poet and novelist. In addition, he had eyes so good that he could recognise all his friends from the top of Notre Dame de Paris, had his entire set of teeth in such strength that he could crack the hardest nut, kept his shock of hair with nothing in it to tell his age except its greyness. His facial hair is said to have been so stiff that barbers blunted their razors trying to shave his beard and advised him against being clean-shaven. About Bernard Shaw, the critic and iconoclast and humbug-hater, it was reported that his satiric temper remained unabated in his old age and that we could suggestively declare: "The only difference between Shaw young and Shaw old was that his beard which was red with anger is now white with rage!"

To go to a higher grade of the world's life: we may record that Sri Aurobindo at 78 was in full career not only as a master Yogi but also as the mighty poet of *Savitri* and, though his eyes had grown somewhat hazy in the physical sense, the subtle seeing behind them was supreme: one could well quote his own epic—

A universal light was in his eyes—

or

His wide eyes bodied viewless entities—

and assert that whatever he dictated to Nirodbaran had the vision and vibrancy of the *Mantra*:

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

If he had decided to live longer and cross the 80-year mark he would have gone from glory to greater glory in his world-work. Our Divine Mother at 80 was playing tennis every afternoon and participating in the Ashram's activities and giving us the benefit of what Sri Aurobindo had called "the Mind of Light" which, as she told me, had got realised in her the moment he had left his body

and about which I wrote a poem in 1954, whose first two lines she declared to be sheer revelation:

The core of a deathless sun is now the brain  
And each grey cell bursts to omniscient gold.

Of course, it would be absurd to expect Amal Kiran to have so brilliant a record as even the non-Aurobindonian oldsters, but he has the well-founded hope that by the time you return to India his body will not have faded to a shadow and his post-80 blossoming will have something more to show than a blooming fool. How can his body shrivel up or his mind lack brightness or his heart lose warmth when he has the invigorating luck of being among your “loved ones”?  
(17.12.1985)

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I am glad you are delighted with the anthology you have bought of 400 years of English poetry. Your re-discovery of Donne (pronounced “Dun”) must have been thrilling. The lines you quote are famous but are surely worth repeating.

Our two souls, therefore, which are one  
Though I must goe, endure not yet  
A breach, but an expansion  
Like gold to ayery thinnesse beate.

They are representative of his inspired wit, his blend of vivid feeling with curious bits of learning. But one would miss the full music of the lines if one didn’t know how to say “expansion” as Donne wanted according to the seventeenth-century and earlier usage. To get the true rhythmic value of line 3, you have to expand this word to “ex-pan-si-on”, four syllables which will make the line a tetrameter like the others and set it rhyming with the opening verse ending with “one”.

The several phases you have touched upon, of your present state are all promising. The diminished flow of memories is perhaps the most important. When the soul in us, the hidden “psychic being”, takes control of our life and gleams on its very surface, everything that belongs to the old self tends to get erased—not necessarily that part alone which we would wish to erase but also the normally good part which used to alternate with the peccant one. The old goodness no less than the old badness may fade away, for both are complementary, and sometimes the former by its self-satisfaction is more a covering up of the psyche. The sustained emergence of the soul removes the need of the past happiness, the past sweetness which existed in contrast to their opposites, and brings forth a spontaneous light, either a sheer steady smiling white or a dancing

play of rainbow hues, a shimmering sequence of varied rapture, a condition whose both aspects may produce an annulment of the past. I should add that even the future ceases to pose hopeful or fearful questions: nothing is there except an all-pervading present in which we are effortlessly carried from one exquisite intensity to another. This is the salvation to which we are pointed by that picture of the Mother under which is written, "Have faith and He will do everything for you."

You have mentioned Ganapati Muni. Yes, I met him long ago. He was a fine traveller on the Upward Path—not with the substantial solidity of a Raman Maharshi evocative of the Eternal, but with a delicate fluidity, as it were, suggesting the Temporal as the Eternal's mirror. When he first attended the Morning Meditation with the Mother and all of us, the result was unusual: the Mother remarked afterwards that the area of light had been distinctly enlarged by his being there. I think the story of his having been allowed to visit either Sri Aurobindo or the Mother without any appointment is apocryphal. There never was any meeting between Sri Aurobindo and him, with or without appointment. I have watched Ganapati Muni getting inspiration in Sanskrit. Purani jotted down the translation Ganapati made of several passages of Sri Aurobindo's little book, *The Mother*.

The *ghazal* you have translated is pretty—it has some charming poignancies typical of the Persian temperament at its inwardly sensitive. What is wanting is the sheer plunge to the innermost for the Divine Beloved:

Your spirit in my spirit, deep in the deep,  
Walled by a wizardry of shining sleep.

But, of course, there is room for all kinds of poetic attempts to utter the Unutterable with as unforgettable a failure as possible. (15.12.1985)

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What you say about words and their sounds is quite like my own perception. It has been so ever since my childhood when at the age of five and a half I was found repeating through half the night the expression "Lafayette Galeries" after having visited that place of pictures with my papa and mamma during our stay in Paris. The expression seemed to be sheer nectar in my mouth. I suppose all poets are enamoured of verbal music. I can imagine Shakespeare smacking his lips when he wrote—

Rare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang—

and Sri Aurobindo must have had a delicious moment in Baroda, composing the line in *Love and Death*—

Art thou too whelmed in this fierce wailing flood?

The largest opportunity to get wonderful effects out of words and their combination was in ancient inflected languages where one could shift words as one liked because their tails automatically linked them to make sense no matter how separated they stood for the sake of euphony. Thus in Latin, if one fancied the sonority, one could arrange, without impeding the sense, Sri Aurobindo's line in some such pattern as

Fierce in too flood art whelmed this wailing thou.

In modern times Mallarmé practised harmoniously mysterious rearrangements of common sequences as far as the partly inflected nature of the French tongue would allow. His aim was not only musicality but also a suggestion of strange secret dimensions of being by an unusual distancing of noun and adjective, verb and adverb

I can understand your delight in ghazals which marry Sanskrit to Arabic words and Hindi words to Persian ones and bring out an extraordinary beauty of both sense and sound, particularly when the wedlock is guided by an inner feeling and not just by the ear's joy in match-making. Actually, in the inter-marriage of different languages the most natural and successful medium is English which has assimilated Greek, Latin, French, even a bit of Hebrew and Hindi, into its Anglo-Saxon structure and its mixture of a Celtic sensibility with Teutonic strength. Thus in that line from a Shakespearean sonnet, "Bare" is Old High German, "ruined" is Medieval Latin Frenchified, "choirs" is Old Latin, "late" is Germanic Latin, "sweet" is Gothic, "birds" is Old English and "sang" Germanic.

I fully sympathise with your cry, "O Mother! I am tired of not getting tired, of not getting impatient." I have often had the sense that I was happily stagnating. But when this cry arises in the midst of such a state, one has to understand the situation with some intuitive penetration. The urge to sadhana is surely shown by an appeal to make the Mother spur one to greater effort; but at the same time the strange happiness accompanying the sense of stagnation shows that one is in touch with one's soul and one is slowly progressing by the baby-cat method, in which effort is almost nil but by which one is carried forward by the mother-cat in a quietly careful way. So long as one is not complacent but is peaceful around a small inner flame, one need not believe that one is in a bad situation. No doubt, the inner flame has to spring up and break through to a beatific Beyond without limit, but fretting does not help. What does help is giving oneself up more and more to the baby-cat consciousness, so that the feeling of being happily carried becomes intense and the small inner flame suffuses one's whole outer being and an ecstasy of self-surrender fills every limb

Why are you afraid of being swallowed by the sharp-toothed giant of “aloneness”? If you could really be alone you would, by a paradox, know omnipresence:

Silence that, losing all, grows infinite Self. (10.1.1986)

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It's gladdening news that you are physically better. Perhaps your friends and your family were interested in your health problems, but I would expect them to make at least a faint inquiry about your inner life—what they might consider your erratic rush to the hellish heat of unknown India from the equable climate of that familiar paradise: Lausanne. Maybe they feel it wouldn't be tactful to refer to your “folly”. Otherwise it is inexplicable how they can refrain from showing the slightest interest—unless they are in Cimmerian darkness. Perhaps they are—and that is what you mean when you say they are still in what Sri Aurobindo designates as the “conventional” stage of social evolution.

I can see that the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are proving a great standby in the sort of world you are living in. As to your question about the rending of the veil I can't say offhand what is meant in *The Life Divine* without the context being given. In general I should think the expression means four different things. First, the passing from the outer to the inner consciousness, culminating in the discovery of the true soul that is a pure emanation of the Divine. Then, the opening out into the Cosmic Consciousness—the still Self of selves or the dynamic play of a universal Force. Next, the breaking through into the infinite luminosity above the mind. This is the state described in the following lines of *Savitri*:

For him mind's limiting firmament ceased above...  
 A gap was rent in the all-concealing vault..  
 Abolished were conception's covenants  
 And, striking off subjection's rigorous clause,  
 Annulled the soul's treaty with nature's nescience.  
 All the grey inhibitions were torn off  
 And broken the intellect's hard and lustrous lid;  
 Truth unpartitioned found immense sky-room...

Fourthly and finally, there is the entrance from the Overmind into the Supermind. The Overmind is the top of the “lower hemisphere” After it, begins the “higher hemisphere” consisting of the Supermind, the Bliss-plane, the plane of Consciousness-Force and that of sheer Being (*Vijñāna*, *Ānanda*, *Chit-Tapas* and *Sat*). I may add that the lower hemisphere consists of two parts: the universe of

Ignorance and the universe of Knowledge. The emergence of the human consciousness from the one into the other is spoken of in the *Savitri*-lines I have quoted. “Knowledge” here means the inherent experience of the one Self in all.

As to your inquiry about ancient Indian physics, we can't properly appraise it unless we understand that it is based on the direct spiritual perceptions of the ancient Rishis. It may sound queer by modern standards, especially its nomenclature may distract one, but if one takes it in the way it was meant a good deal of light would be shed. In matter itself the Rishis saw several levels. What science has explored so far is the level of “Agni”—the formative fire-principle. Here there are three kinds of fire: the earthly, the electric, the solar. Science has reached the solar fire, what is known as the constant explosion of the hydrogen bomb, so to speak, in our sun, accounting for its inexhaustible-seeming energy of light and heat. Beyond the level of “Agni” is that of “Vayu”—the aerial principle which makes contacts and interactions possible, preliminary to the formation of objects. Sri Aurobindo has said that only when this level is penetrated we shall have the true explanation of “gravitation”. As you know, Newton's theory of gravitation has given way to Einstein's, which yields very good observational results. But it is as queer as anything a modern scientist may see in the old physics of India. We are asked to believe that space is not filled with any subtle matter such as the physicists of the nineteenth century called “ether”—space is utterly empty and yet physical bodies create a “curvature” in it along which lesser masses gravitate towards bigger ones. Thus sheer emptiness can be structured! This is one of the concepts of the famous general theory of relativity. Perhaps I am just as comprehensible when in a jocular mood I summed up to an Ashram audience the result of my research in physics. I said something like: “Newton showed that all physical bodies attract one another. Einstein with his relativity theory provided the reason for it. He said that the attraction is due to the fact that all these bodies are relatives!” Don't you think I deserve the Nobel Prize for this illuminating rapport I have made between Newton and Einstein? So far they have been set at loggerheads. (1.2.1986)

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The Upanishad's saying is: “When the knot of the heart-strings is rent asunder, the mortal, even in this body, enjoys immortality.” The rending takes place either by a spontaneous growth of the being—a calm detachment from the world and a happy devotion to the Divine—or by a stroke of circumstances, causing keen disappointment and deep distress. The first way is naturally straight, the second may be quite winding. For the stroke may not drive home the Gita's high liberating world-pessimism. “Thou who hast come into this transient and unhappy world, love and worship Me.” The stroke may make one yearn for a better experience with one's fellow-creatures or with life's chances. Then it takes

long to “enjoy immortality”—that is, to come into close warm touch with one’s psychic being or into wide cool contact with the single Self of selves, and thus experience something within one that is for ever and participate in the Ultimate Reality. Of course, this experiencing may not be full at once, but even a hint or glint of feeling

Rapt thoughtless, wordless into the Eternal’s breast

is enough to make one know the abyss of difference between the grip of the world’s delusion and the breakthrough into a luminous Beyond. With most of us the way to inner freedom is a mixture of a sincere attempt to walk, as you say, without crutches and a forcible taking away of crutches by “fate”. Yes, our attempt is sincere, but we are not prepared for quick results. We want a slow independence of props. The Spirit presiding over Yoga is not averse to giving us time, but when it notes that the central part of us is ready for a leap and that only peripheral parts are holding us back, it lets circumstances so shape themselves that we get pushed into crutchlessness and are forced to find the needed balance of unaided walking

The state into which we are thrust is not easy to cope with, but if we attend to the call with which it comes—the call to take our consciousness deeper in order to draw the necessary strength to meet the new outer situation—the going on without comfortable props will be less painful than it is likely to be on account of the sudden push towards developing stronger legs.

Are you answering sufficiently the more inward pull which would make this push more bearable? Here some relevance may be discerned of my past comment: “Not to think of living but only of loving will take you out of the world where life-problems exist.” For a turn of events may be such as to put us ill at ease and someone we love may do things we never expected and may thus take on an unlovable aspect. At this crisis-point of the heart, the soul’s capacity to love without demand has to come to the fore, replacing the emotional self’s demand that the one we love should prove worthy of being loved, as then alone living would be worth while. If we can get beyond wanting such a rationale for life and let the psychic being’s “joy without a cause” relate itself to our immediate circle in the form of “love without a reason” we shall get out of the grip of the world of life-problems. To effect the change, one’s personal effort is required, but it must mainly be directed towards putting one’s various personalities—mental, vital, physical—more and more into the Divine Mother’s ever-stretched-out hands of help. In other words, the effort is towards becoming free of effort—towards getting those hands to draw closer and closer and catch hold increasingly of all one’s personalities. This would be the dynamic, active surrender which I have spoken of—the constant happy cry to be at all moments the child of the Divine Mother.



I am glad you have no doubts that you are very near me. You have really been so from the beginning of our friendship. But perhaps now you realise that you are sharing in whatever little Yoga I may be doing—and, strange as it may seem, you are sharing it most when you write: “There is no zest either for living or for dying”—but a small impediment enters when you add: “I am impatient with this long transition.” You are impatient because you have not understood that passing beyond the pleasure and pain of either living or dying is to be within the aura of the state whose description I have quoted from the Upanishad. For, the immortality spoken of there is that of a consciousness unbound by the process of birth and death—on the one hand the true soul which goes from embodiment to embodiment by surviving death again and again as well as by transcending life repeatedly—on the other the secret spirit whose delegate is the soul and which never enters the birth-and-death process and is the individual focus of the universal Atman. You fail to realise the great thing that has happened to you because you have caught it by the negative end and missed the positive: namely, the zest of neither living nor dying. I suppose the negative experience has to be gone through first, but if you understand it to be a blessing in disguise the “transition” to an entry into the aura of the great deliverance with its two-sided blissful beyond will not be “long” and whatever span of time will occur will be faintly tinged with the psychic silver or the spiritual gold or, by their blend, a mystic platinum.

Perhaps you will ask me why I mention only the “aura”. I mention it because I myself can claim no more than a distant glimmer and I make it a point generally to refer to nothing that I have not personally known in however vague a manner—unless, of course, when I am Sri Aurobindo’s philosophical exegete, the Mother’s intellectual expositor, rather than one who, echoing that invocation “*O divine adorable Mère!*” from *Prières et Méditations*, reveals the truth of his life:

O not by keen conceiving is she known  
 Our very self must mingle with her own!  
 Descend, O seer, from thy majestic top  
 Of azure contemplation, learn to implore  
 With sightless awe and frailty’s fear of sin,  
 Disclosure of the unutterable Grace  
 Whose image is her blissful countenance!  
 Enclasp her feet in prostrate ignorance,  
 Till, from the measureless vacancy within,  
 A holy gleam is shed on the dark gaze,  
 And the still heart drinks heaven drop by drop. (25.3.1989)

AMAL KIRAN  
 (K. D. SETHNA)

# IN MEMORY OF SHRI M. L. PARASHAR

## 1. FROM SHYAM KUMARI

SHRI M. L. Parashar, who had lived at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Delhi Branch for nearly half a century, came to Pondicherry on 9th April 1989. It was to be a very special journey. He had earlier written to his adopted son and friend Professor Olivier Pironneau to come from Paris to accompany him on this trip. Anu who looked after him with the devotion of a daughter came too. I met them on the 10th and it was decided that they would go to Sri Aurobindo's room the next day, namely, on the 11th and in the afternoon they would come to visit me and then I would take them to Amal Kiran (K. D. Sethna) whom Parasharji had particularly wanted to see.

The Mother has said that eleven is the number of perfection. And surely the 11th of a Darshan month is doubly hallowed. On this 11th at about 11 a.m. we met in the Ashram. I got the group a permission card to visit and meditate in Sri Aurobindo's room. Then I gave the three of them four flowers each to take to Sri Aurobindo's room—Agni (Fire), Prosperity, Surrender and a Hibiscus named by the Mother "The Beauty of the New Creation" Out of these four flowers Parasharji was attracted specially towards the flower Agni and he twice ascertained its significance. About this salmon-pink flower with deep red veins and a deep red centre the Mother has said, "Agni—the Flame of purification which must precede all contact with the invisible worlds."

The later events reveal the reason for his instinctive fascination for this particular flower. On this eleventh he had a tryst with death and a tryst with life. This seemingly paradoxical statement is not truly so, for a tryst with death opens doors to a birth in a new body which would be capable of housing the developed consciousness which the old and the worn-out body could not contain or support. That is why a tryst with death is also the promise of a new-birth.

Masterji, as he was known to many whom he inspired and who loved and revered him, came to Pondicherry in his eighty-third year as if to leave his body at this place—a destined death, it seems. Let me look back a little. My contact with Parasharji started when my poem "Divine Madness" appeared in the May 1986 issue of *Sri Aurobindo's Action*. Since Parasharji had experienced this exalted state which the poem pictured and which the Shastras call *Unmattavata*—"like mad"—he felt an affinity with me and, later, on one of his visits to Pondicherry he met me. With time the contact deepened. Once on an inner impulse I enclosed a blessings packet in my answer to a letter from him. He received it while he was having a heart-attack. The blessings packet gave him the needed strength, and though great damage was done he cheerfully went on to play the game of life for two more years, though the doctors would wonder what kept him alive. It was the Mother's Grace and his own firm will and the loving

care of his 'children' that kept him going. At that first meeting when he said he came to Pondicherry to see me he narrated his life-story which afterwards appeared under the serial "How They came to the Ashram" in *Mother India's* September, November and December 1988 issues.

To come back to the present. on the 11th April at about 4 30 p.m we met in the Ashram courtyard and from there proceeded towards my house. On the way we went to Golconde on an unscheduled visit for him to see the beautiful wall-painting done by Krishnalal. After passing some delightful time in the beautiful ambience of Golconde where Commodore Satpal showed Olivier and Anu this architectural marvel, we came to my house where Parasharji partook of some fruit and snacks and drank some lemonade. Later he recounted some stories of the Mother's Grace and promised to write them for the second volume of my book *Vignettes of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother*. He told me how he had liked very much the portions of the first volume of *Vignettes* he had read the previous day. He was trying to collect money to publish my Hindi poems.

At 5.30 unaware of the Invisible Summoner waiting in the wings, we went to see Amal Kiran where Parasharji reminded Amal how several decades earlier when he had come on his first visit to Pondicherry, they had travelled together from Villupuram. Amal, he said, was the first Ashramite he had met. It so happened that he was the last Ashramite Parasharji made it a point to visit. Parasharji had a remarkably clear memory and quoted a striking sentence which had ended one of Amal's articles written in a 1950 issue of the then fortnightly semi-political *Mother India*, published from Bombay.

A little after, at 6 p.m the group left Amal's place. He thanked me warmly. I took my leave of him little realising that it was farewell. Parasharji said he wanted to go to the Samadhi. So he, Olivier and Anu went to the Ashram. There he asked Olivier to give him some water. After drinking the sacred water of the Ashram and paying his respects at the Samadhi, Parasharji and Anu proceeded towards the International Guest House while Olivier and Shipra (who had been waiting for them in the Ashram) went to arrange for a taxi for a visit to Auroville the next day. Outside the Ashram Anu wanted to take a rickshaw but unluckily there was none in sight. So they walked slowly towards the International Guest House. A few metres' distance from the Guest House Parasharji suddenly trembled. Anu made him sit on a stool in front of a tea-shop. There two or three times he repeated, "Ma, Ma", and his soul left his body.

Two years ago Anu had seen her father pass away just like this when she had returned from a visit to the Ashram. She understood that all was over. She put him in a rickshaw with the help of some onlookers and tenderly resting his head on her shoulder drove to the Trésor Nursing Home, where not finding any pulse the persons there directed Anu to take him to Dr. Raichura. But when Death takes over what can doctors do? It was evidently his soul's secret choice to die in the sacred land of Pondicherry in the Shukla Paksha—the fortnight of

waxing moon. Meanwhile the people of the Trésor Nursing Home called Chamanlalji who along with Shipra had been very close to Masterji. Promesse and Lata—his old students—came too. Since he belonged to the Delhi Ashram it was in the fitness of things that he was carried to a room of the Delhi House (the erstwhile Ira Boarding), which Shipra made beautiful with her artistic touch.

And there he lay serenely, till 5 p.m. of the 12th. His friends Rachna, Dr. Matish and a cousin flew from Delhi to pay their last respects. The Mother's music was played. Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's garlanded photos were looking benignly at him. He lay on an Ashram sheet and was covered with an Ashram sheet (he had come by air and had brought no bedding), and went to the pyre wearing an Ashram dhoti. There was no sorrow in the atmosphere. His young friends to whom he was very precious bore the sudden blow yogically.

He had always had a child-like aspiration to bring bus-loads of young people to the Mother's Lotus Feet. His aspiration was fulfilled. With some of these young bright souls around him he went on his last journey, on the sacred soil of Pondicherry, carried by young hero-warriors of the Mother and his body was consigned to Agni—to the spirit of the flower he had chosen to take to Sri Aurobindo's room.

## 2. FROM OLIVIER PIRONNEAU

Dearest Parasharji,

Smt Shyam Kumari asked us to report on your passing away two days back and I volunteered.

It is a bit awkward to write to you when I feel you are so near but it is hard to resist the pleasure, of going once more to the keyboard, to direct my thoughts to you and let my heart open to express this psychic love that you sowed fifteen years ago when we met for the first time in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Delhi Branch.

News of your death has spread like wild fire in the Pondicherry Ashram and people say to us:

*How wonderful! Mr. Parashar has died like a yogi, he came specially to Pondi to leave his body.*

And we answer: "Yes, of course," because we knew that you were a yogi.

Before relating the events that show how you left your body, perhaps I should try to explain to the reader in what way you were a yogi. This is also interesting; in particular it brings up another subject. If one is a yogi then one's own life is an example and thus friends could become disciples. In your case everybody was your fellow-traveller on the path. But how can that be when we have the unsurpassable teachings of our divine Masters, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother?

A yogi you are indeed but of an unusual path, the path of life, of human passions turned to the Divine, as the Mother told you. It takes a lot of courage to accept that nothing is intrinsically bad, that adverse forces can be seen as having the Divine behind them if one looks deep enough and to believe that “not a blade of grass can move without His will” is wonderful, but to live the far-reaching consequences that this poetic phrase implies in our daily struggle for happiness is indeed the work of a yogi in the true sense.

“Thus nothing is to be discarded really but our attitude; nothing is to be changed but our outlook on things. Life is a riddle with God as its key. Problems, unwanted vibrations or situations, even sickness and death are God-sent and the problem lies really in our incapacity to follow Nature in its evolution, in our egoistic reactions (a denial of our true nature), in our mental way of looking at this far-reaching plan of perfection which is leading this universe.”

These true words of yours you lived so convincingly that by speaking with you one could get by contagion some of the delight that seemed to be the basis of your consciousness. Of course all is described in Sri Aurobindo’s writings, in the chapters on Bhakti yoga, for example, and also in many lines of *Savitri*; so nothing is new. All right, nothing is new and truly when everything is harmonious an hour of reading of *Savitri* sends the reader to heaven, carried by the words of the poet into the vastness of his supramental visions; every line adds to the delight of the heart, oh! to read Sri Aurobindo is to be with him, surely it is a wonderful experience that can be renewed so many times, tirelessly. But to reach that state of equality to begin to appreciate *Savitri* is not given to everyone at birth, and the presence of a friend who can explain things or even where to start from is a blessing. Not to speak of the countless occasions that man’s mind can find to lose its way and get stuck in obscure corners. In these fifteen years that we have known each other, hundreds of people have crossed the tiny doorstep of your room with a depressed face and come out with a smile full of enthusiasm for life. And to many who have had this experience you have become very very dear.

To others it looked a bit strange; what do you find in this man who can’t see, can’t hear, can’t walk properly, spends most of his time reading Sri Aurobindo again and again as if he did not understand what he read? So the people who did not know you, or those who could not come close to you, could not guess that your mind had been silent since 1932 and that you had attained a very rare state of equality from where you would spend days together without a thought coming, turning to the Divine the minutest reaction of your various selves.

The common man wants miracles and to him of course your realizations were not very visible. *So Mr. Parashar, was a yogi?* Some even would object to your free habits (and they didn’t know that you could eat meat, drink whisky if offered...) “Asceticism is not for me,” you used to say; “in most people it is suppression of their vital nature; I prefer to watch my nature and wait till it is

ready to change.” When one’s vital nature grumbles, Sri Aurobindo’s yoga can appear dry and abstract but we have all learnt from your living example that the Integral Yoga aims at delight, delight right down to the veins of the body, and for this one needs to catch the difference between mental control and true understanding

Anyway, here we are, four from Delhi, two from Pondi, sitting in Ganpatram’s café around a cup of tea, one day after a sleepless night, the last homage given. United by your love but silently missing something, each one of us feels in his heart gratitude for what you were, for having known you, such a wonderful paradox.

How did it happen? I don’t know; none of us was to come to Pondi this month because you had been here already in December and I had come in August; but I cancelled my trip to the US because I felt it was more important to meet you and Anu wanted to pray at the Samadhi. So once again we are here, the three of us, astounded by the pervading vibrations of the place. For the first time in your life, at the age of 83, you have come twice in twelve months to the place of your Love. (In the fifties, some people suggested to you to come and live here, so you wrote to the Mother; she said it was for you to decide, but being passive by nature you decided that you could equally love your masters from Delhi.) Absolutely nothing could point out that you would leave your body on that auspicious 11th of April 1989 after a meditation at the Samadhi and earlier on the same day you were taken to Sri Aurobindo’s room; your health was perfect and you did not show any sign of fatigue. But this you did, to our greatest surprise, precisely at sunset. You went away quickly, without pain, without disturbing the solid peace of this place.

We will miss you, dear Parasharji, unless the presence of the Divine that we saw in you has already entered our heart, unless the work is done; in your happy childlike approach to things you used to say:

*I want to bring bus-loads of people to the Mother.*

Your friends, with Love and Gratitude.

**P.S.** The following is a transcript of the last part of the only recorded conversation I have had with Parasharji; it was made a few days before leaving for Pondy. It is all the more striking that when, fifteen years ago, I crossed the road from IIT to find someone who could teach me meditation, I was introduced to Parasharji who told me that I did not need to meditate and that all my problems would be solved by taking the witness attitude. Thus the circle is completed.

*... What I like is that you don’t force your meditation on you.*

Oh no! I don’t like it, I don’t like it! no! because that is ego. And the fact of meditation is there, I mean to say if after meditation you don’t find any change in you it means that you have not meditated at all. And sometimes though you

don't meditate the meditation catches you; that is the best meditation; even for half an hour as compared to twenty-four hours, it is much better. You know, something in us is always meditating, you have just to catch it and spread it to other parts.

*Is that what you do?*

Oh yes. In fact, I was never interested in meditation, I mean to say to sit cross-legged and all that. But now when I meditate, I sit like this (back straight), automatically it happens. If I sit otherwise, I am not comfortable. This has come.

When I talk about the Divine, then I am more meditating because the Divine comes on the surface; he is not very far then. He gets into my words, into my feelings; and when someone comes and is really anxious to know something, when he goes away I wonder whether he has given me something or I have given him something; such a relation it is.

I can imagine a life, a complete life where one is all the time totally one with the Divine, that I can imagine, totally, in all parts.

*(The conversation continued but the tape finishes here.)*

# THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

*(Continued from the issue of June 1989)*

The Mother's Message

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



Vol. Three 1959

No. 31

ON 1 October 1960 the Mother distributed to people at "Prosperity" a small plastic bag of sugar from The New Horizon Sugar Mills Ltd.

The following morning I did a portrait of Mounnou Samsukha, which the Mother liked.



I painted several pictures as studies. The Mother gave meanings to them. A few paintings were taken by Mr. Parmanand Mehra of Bombay to print them in his press. One of them was the vision the Mother had seen in 1957.

There was an endless flow of inspiration, but often I suppressed it.

\*

The weather had turned dull and depressing. The sky was shrouded by the rolling grey mass of clouds, which seemed to portend rain.

On 4 October the Mother gave the following message to all, along with her special blessing packets containing the petals of pomegranate flowers—“Divine Love—A flower which is said to bloom even in deserts.”

Because Thou art All-beauty and All-bliss,  
My soul blind and enamoured yearns for Thee;  
It bears Thy mystic touch in all that is  
And thrills with the burden of that ecstasy.

Behind all eyes I meet Thy secret gaze  
And in each voice I hear Thy magic tune:  
Thy sweetness haunts my heart through Nature’s ways;  
Nowhere it beats now from Thy snare immune.

It loves Thy body in all living things;  
Thy joy is there in every leaf and stone:  
The moments bring Thee on their fiery wings;  
Sight’s endless artistry is Thou alone.

Time voyages with Thee upon its prow  
And all the future’s passionate hope is Thou.

25-10-1939

SRI AUROBINDO

I could not help the surge of pleasure when I saw the Mother in the afternoon. She looked at me. Her eyes held a fathomless expression. A radiant smile on her face brightened the room. She spoke:

“Do you know Purani? I am arranging your reading *Savitri* with him. My Consciousness and Force will be present during your study.”

She laid her hands over mine—with a light, firm pressure that was assuring. Out of some far vacancy I heard myself avowing to her: “Nothing can ever

satisfy me except the Divine and His work.”

The Mother ran a gentle hand over my forehead. I felt that I was like moulding clay in her powerful hands. A sigh of great relief escaped me.

I gathered together the white roses given by her, kissed them amid my tears of joy, pressed them against my heart and made my exit.

\*

I commenced my study of the Epic with Mr. Purani in his room on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Meanwhile the Mother asked me to do *Savitri* paintings according to selected verses.

I attempted to do a few pictures. She saw and altered them here and there and encouraged me. But I realised my stupidity. To do this type of painting was beyond my capacity. I needed the Mother's direct help. I could not make head or tail of the pictures I had done. Now my inner being warned me to wait for the Mother to teach me, to guide me.

Mr. Purani came to my apartment and saw the paintings. Then he entered my meditation room, remained absorbed a second or two and wept. Afterwards he took his leave in utter silence.

Later he revealed to me: “I experienced in that room an overwhelming Peace, the concrete Presence of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.”

\*

On 10 October during Dipawali time Pondicherry was shaken by violent storms. The sky was darkening rapidly as nimbus clouds spread across it. Lightning flashed, a loud terrifying crack of ear-splitting thunder broke. A fierce squall of rain drenched everything heedlessly, mercilessly, the skies emptying themselves without restraint. All roads were rivers.

A howling, fitful wild wind battered down trees, plants and flowers. It wailed, whistled and thumped.

The poles of electricity bent down, huge trees were uprooted and flung yards away.

Houses were greatly damaged.

The rain continued with fluctuations for twenty days. Ferocious storms like this had occurred in 1943—this I came to know from some people.

The roof of my kitchen leaked and the room turned into a swimming pool!

Thunder clapped without pause, lightning blazed and sizzled—a long glittering revengeful blade shearing the dark sky.

I shuddered and cried with fright and could not sleep a wink. I sat, my face sunk into my crossed arms, and trembled. I went into a tizzy.

The cause of the cyclonic rain involved something occult. But I have

observed that ever since that day we have never had such a horrifying tempest in Pondicherry. Perhaps there must be a pact between the Mother and the Spirit of Rain.

\*

As always I went to the Mother at 4 p.m. I forgot to take flowers for her. She said:

“Child, you have brought your heart.  
It is like a flower.”

Then suddenly she remarked:

“Have you noticed that nowadays women grow their nails very long and paint them red? Don’t the nails look as if they were dripping blood? Disgusting! I don’t like this modern style.”

There were moments when the Mother touched various subjects including the most material in order to voice her view.

\*

Days drifted by—each more difficult than the last. Life was not easy.

1 November was my spiritual birthday. The Mother called me in the morning. I offered her a box, which she opened—there followed exclamations of pure delight at the sight of the golden-silk dress and the beaded bag I had made for her. She especially admired the golden rose attached to the dress. She gave me a big bouquet and a card. After a moment’s silence she said:

“Now the Divine Beauty is establishing itself in this world. You are the true child of this Beauty. We are going to express the beauties of the Higher Worlds through paintings ”

The Mother had countless visions as well as the practical ability to make her visions a reality.

In the afternoon at the “Prosperity” she wore the dress I had offered her. When she saw me her eyes sparkled. My face lit up at the golden-silk dress which suited her admirably.

Later Vasudha reported to me the Mother’s compliment:

“The girl is doing lovely things for me. She is very clever.”

That night I was musing over the time I had spent with the Mother in the morning. Her words about the Divine Beauty and the Higher Worlds kept ringing in my ears.

The Mother has written in *Art—Revelation of Beauty*:

“In the physical world, of all things it is beauty that expresses best the Divine. The physical world is the world of form and the perfection of form is beauty. Beauty interprets, expresses, manifests the Eternal. Its role is to put all manifested nature in contact with the Eternal through the perfection of form, through harmony and a sense of the Ideal which uplifts and leads towards something higher.”

Sri Aurobindo has stated:

“The highest aim of the aesthetic being is to find the Divine through beauty; the highest Art is that which by an inspired use of significant and interpretative form unseals the door of the spirit.”

One morning I went to the Mother. She stood very close to me. I caught a whiff of her perfume. She looked into my eyes and exclaimed:

“Child, your eyes are red. I knew it, because your being came and informed me last night. They must be aching terribly. Wait, I’ll bring you a bottle of blue-water and an eye-cup. You must wash your eyes twice a day and you’ll be all right.”

Then she wrapped the bottle in her own handkerchief and gave it to me saying:

“Keep the handkerchief. I don’t want people to see what I am giving you.”

I thanked her in the silence of my heart and left.

\*

I worked for sometime in *The World Union Organisation* according to the Mother’s wish. But I never felt easy with it. For, it was not my real work.

I was given numerous clippings from newspapers and psalms from the Bible—in extremely small print. I had to type forty to fifty pages whose sense I could hardly understand. The idea of the Organisers was to adopt the theory of Vinoba Bhave to go from place to place and preach. I thought his method was not in tune with Sri Aurobindo’s Consciousness. My soul disagreed.

It was raining heavily when I attended the first meeting in November. The Mother gave me the leaves—Sweet Marjoram, “New Birth”—and said with certitude:

“Today is the new Birth of the World Union. Distribute these leaves to people present there.”

I handed the leaves to the Organisers with the Mother’s message.

I got really fed up with the tedious typing and the boring meetings. So one morning I took to the Mother the Bible given to me and explained the situation. She still wished me to continue. Then I gave her a definite reason: “Mother, I feel that first unity must be formed in oneself, then among the co-workers. After that in the Ashram, in the town, gradually in India and eventually in the world.”

She nodded with a slight smile and put out her hand to touch my cheek gently. She said with conviction:

“Child, I set you free. You have a glimpse of the Eternal Truth in your heart and this Truth must unite with the Supreme Truth.”

Sri Aurobindo’s words are apt here:

“Art can express eternal Truth, it is not limited to the expression of form and appearance.”

One of the organisers came to persuade me to resume the work. I politely refused and that was the end. However, the following message given to *World Union* by the Mother appealed to me very much:

“The World is a unity—it has always been, and it is always so, even now it is so—it is not that it has not got the unity and the unity has to be brought in from outside and imposed upon it.

Only the world is not conscious of its unity. It has to be made conscious.

We consider now is the time most propitious for the endeavour.

For, a new Force or Consciousness or Light—whatever you call the new element—has manifested into the world and the world now has the capacity to become conscious of its own unity.”

Some quotations from Sri Aurobindo make us understand his position towards life:

“My truth is one that rejects ignorance and falsehood and moves to the

knowledge, rejects darkness and moves to the light, rejects egoism and moves to the Divine Self, rejects imperfections and moves to perfections. My truth is not only the truth of Bhakti or of psychic development but also of knowledge, purity, divine strength and calm and of the raising of all these things from their mental, emotional and vital forms to their supramental reality.”

“I don’t believe in advertisement except for books, etc. and in propaganda except for politics and patent medicines. But for serious work it is a poison. It means either a stunt or a boom and stunts or booms exhaust the thing they carry on their crest and leave it lifeless and broken high and dry on the shores of nowhere—or it means a movement. A movement in the case of a work like mine means the founding of a school or a sect or some other damned nonsense. It means that hundreds or thousands of useless people join in and corrupt the work or reduce it to a pompous farce from which the Truth that was coming down recedes into a secrecy and silence. It is what has happened to the ‘religions’ and is the reason for their failure.”

“Not the blind round of the material existence alone and not a retreat from the difficulty of life in the world into the silence of the Ineffable, but the bringing down of the peace and light and power of a greater divine Truth and Consciousness to transform Life is the endeavour today of the greatest spiritual seekers in India. Here in the heart of such an endeavour pursued through many years with a single-hearted purpose, living constantly in that all-founding peace and feeling the near and greatening descent of that light and power, the way becomes increasingly clear. One sees the soul of India ready to enter into the fullness of her heritage and the hour of an unparalleled greatness approaching when from her soil shall go forth the call and the leading to the highest destinies of the race.”

“I am not here to convert anyone; I do not preach to the world to come to me and I call no one. I am here to establish the divine life and the divine consciousness in those who of themselves feel the call to come to me and cleave to it and in no others.”

\*

On 24 November—Realisation Day—the Mother handed this message, written by Sri Aurobindo, to all of us in the Meditation Hall upstairs:

“Forsaking my godhead I have come down  
Here on the sordid earth,

Ignorant, labouring, human grown  
Twixt the veils of death and birth.

I have been digging deep and long  
In a horror of mud and mire  
A bed for the golden river's song,  
A home for the deathless fire."

*(To be continued)*

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## SYMPHONY

LET my whole being resonate with your transcendental notes.  
Let my heart fill with your eternally sweet melodies.  
Let my mind echo your supremely harmonious octaves.  
Let my life be your divinely spiritual symphony.

SURESH HINDOCHA

# CONVERSATIONS OF THE DEAD

TRANSLATED BY SATADAL FROM THE BENGALI OF  
NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

2

Mirabeau, Danton, Robespierre, Napoleon

## Mirabeau

THE epoch-making brain is here. The utterances of this voice have billowed the first rising of a great revolution. When the lashes of injustice and tyranny made of a nation a crouching wretch not only in body but also in mind and life, when people were charred within in a suppressed anguish and yet were unable to find a way out or dare to tread it even if one were found, at that very moment this pioneer laid his breast bare to the enemy-bayonet without fear, has uttered the hearts of all like a mantra: the master of a country is not a person, nor even a class—the master of a country is the country itself. With a single breath from this mouth, all the charming spell has disappeared—the massive rocky loads, which were continually heaped upon the breast of the country through centuries, have been split into pieces by a single leonine jerk of this head, a thunderous roar from this throat has released from somewhere the flood of liberty

## Danton

This Danton has made the flood pervasive and concrete. Courage you have given to the country, Mirabeau, but I have given it the spirit of adventure. It is not very difficult to start a thing, but it is difficult to make it grow and lead it. It may be possible to dislodge a leaning heap of stones from a hill-top even with a single kick, but when those stones start crumbling and crashing down with a reckless speed, then it is no work of any ordinary force to keep pace with the movement or to give it a greater push. It is rather easy to call the demon but to feed him with ample daily work, to become another demon, so to say, sitting tight on his shoulders needs a superhuman vigour and a miraculous capacity. Maybe you are the creator, Mirabeau, but your creation is greater than yourself, it has surpassed you. You did not have the courage to face your deeds. You did not realise the full significance of the force awakened by you; far from allowing it to accomplish its work, you wanted to tie it down within the limits of your ego before it could even proceed a little. You wanted to be the leader of the masses and of the country but from a distance, by keeping intact the pride of your aristocracy. You can't save both the banks. You wanted to restrain the flood of truth with an embankment of falsehood, but you couldn't



**Mirabeau**

I had wanted destruction, but for the sake of creation. I had showed the way to demolish but at the same time to indicate the process to build. If a calm brain and a clear vision are not there behind the uncontrollable vital passions and the blind urges of the heart, then all endeavours, all desires turn into smoke. One must control the present by observing the trend of the past and base the future upon it. To build upon a caprice of the mind is to try to build in the air. However ugly be the semblance of the past, there is no denying the fact that it expresses a collective life-spirit; that is why I did not want to shear it off out of overwhelming anger—I wanted to keep its truth, give it a living form in the present and tie up the people of France with a sublime future strung with some deeper threads of harmony. But you pulled at the very roots of the country, dug the supporting soil loose and strewed it all over. You aroused and invited the demonic and horrid forces of ignorance, impatience and vengeance from the very bottom. I did not like to join this frantic ghostly dance.

**Danton**

As is the disease so is the remedy. It is foolish to try to cure what is old, decayed, wretched and poisonous. It causes disease just because it is old. It was then a necessary to raze everything to the ground—not only that, the task of that hour was to dig out the whole of France ten cubits deep and to throw it into the waters of the Atlantic, if possible. I am proud that I pulled at the roots of the country. I have made an opening into the source of the life-force of the nation. There must first be life and vitality befitting the light of intellect. Not that I did not know how to build. But I did not want to do patch-work like you. I wanted to have a strong foundation built completely anew. That was what the inner being of the country wanted. Who could have resisted it even if one had wished to? You want to place a pile of grass before a storm? Who will command and demolish this much here, protect that much there, take a turn this side to go over to the other? The massive flow of a great revolution follows its own course, its own law.

**Robespierre**

That law has worked through this hand. You were a vital embodiment of total devastation, Danton, I admit. But even that vitality of yours hesitated at one stage and wanted to retreat. So I had to move forward like a raised baton—heartless, uncompromising, unperturbed. When even Danton himself started saying, “Thus far and no farther”, the spirit of the country took the dire sword-form of the guillotine and appeared within me in full fury. That destructive spirit-force does not consider great or small, Danton, that’s why it removed even you without any hesitation. What has to be done should not be left half-finished. Done it must be and for that one must go to whatever extent necessary. The ideal must be totally fulfilled. The seeker, who becomes eager for a compromise and

settlement mid-way because the ideal is difficult and formidable has gone off the track and is fallen, an enemy of the ideal.

#### **Danton**

You are the living example, Robespierre, of what happens when the hand wants to surpass the power behind it, when the instrument wants to drive the worker as his master. Danton never hesitated, never wanted to retreat. I sought only the ideal but you wanted to make the means everything in place of the ideal. The aim should remain intact but the steps to reach it are alterable with time and necessity. You are the one who forgot the goal and made of a discipline the ultimate thing. When the life-pulse of Danton throbbed no more in your material instrument, it crumbled down at once. How long could you survive after my departure?

#### **Mirabeau**

The life-force moves the hand but behind the life-force is the brain. Robespierre is only an inevitable culmination of yours, Danton. Why blame him? The day the country followed Danton's path leaving aside Mirabeau's, the day the life-force rejected and threw away the dictates of the brain, that very day I saw through my inner eye what calamity was writ large in the destiny of France. That's why I departed beforehand.

#### **Danton**

A new life-force was needed for the brain of the country, that's why I applied there a severe surgery. There is no mistaking that France has been initiated to a novel truth by following my path and discarding yours—have a look at the present for confirmation.

#### **Robespierre**

The present would not have been what it is if Robespierre too would have wanted to draw back his hands like Danton and Mirabeau.

#### **Napoleon**

All of you have supplied materials. But a great artist was needed to build the edifice of a new life and culture out of it. Your collective efforts have attained their fruition, your great endeavour has been fulfilled and embodied with success in this very Napoleon.

# ROMANTICISM AND HISTORY

## A SURVEY OF SOME OPINIONS

THE term "Romanticism" may not be so troublesome as "Realism", "Transcendentalism", "Existentialism", and "Structuralism", which conceal rather than reveal the true significance of the works they are supposed to classify. But it has also been found to be only an approximate but necessary definition of a peculiar kind of sensibility in a fixed historical period. "Romantic" is from a medieval Latin adverb, "romance". A tale written in Romanica, a vernacular language derived from Latin, was a roman and since it was filled with improbable happenings, 'romantic' came to mean "improbable". In the eighteenth century the word's meanings ranged from "silly" to "highly appealing to the imagination".

According to A. O. Lovejoy the word has "for a century been the scandal" of literary history and criticism. Noting that the Romantic Movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries has meant different things in different countries and that even in a single country "romantic" is often used in contradicting senses, Lovejoy suggested that the term be employed in the plural only, as a recognition of the various romanticisms. Walter Raleigh and Arther Quiller-Couch have even advocated the abandoning of the terms "romantic" and "classic" since their use adds to the critical confusion and causes distortion of the facts of literary history. Barrère gives a detailed account of "the innumerable combinations, reservations, exclusions, and additions involved in the maddening process of arriving at a definition of Romanticism", and attributes many obstacles to the confusion caused by viewing it as a historical phenomenon and an aesthetic term.

All the attempted definitions may ultimately be reduced to two types. In the first group, one or two traits are singled out. To Madame de Stael, Romanticism refers to chivalry. For Hugo, it is Liberalism in literature. "Hedge sees in it mystery and aspiration, Lanson a lyrical expansion of individualism, Lucas an intoxicating dream, Immerwahr an imaginative literary process". Ker and Geoffrey Scott underline its cult of the past, Picon its dedication to originality, Deutschbein its concern with synthesis and Milch its nationalism.

In the second group of definitions, Romanticism is contrasted with Classicism. It is seen as a reaction against the excesses of intellectualism, or as a change succeeding fixity, or as an urge rather than restraint or as strangeness added to beauty or as cancellation of the classical equilibrium by a process of irrationalistic intensification. Croce feels that romantic literature is a spontaneous and violent effusion of feelings which indulges in vaporous and indeterminate images, half-sentences and powerful, dim outlines, while Classicism portrays pacified hearts, sage designs, precise personalities, equilibrium and clarity. Gundolf, while arguing that Romanticism presents no unified "weltanschau-

ung”, compares the contest between “Classic” and “Romantic” to a fight between male and female lovers, between the generative and the birth-giving, the plastic and the musical, day and night, dream and intoxication, shape and motion, centripetality and centrifugality, and Apollo and Dionysus. There are others who aver that Romanticism incarnates the will to love, self-abandonment, individualism, subjectivity, symbolism, exoticism, bizarreness, mystery, suggestiveness, movement, extremeness, uniqueness, incompleteness and infiniteness whereas Classicism stands for the will to power, self-control, social organization, objectivity, stability, finiteness, and the typical.

As Remak’s analysis shows, these contrasting definitions tend to be “aphoristic and subjective”. Goethe’s preference is obvious when he says that the classical is the sane while the romantic is the insane. A. W. Schlegel, on the other hand, would claim that the romantic is organic and picturesque, whereas the classical is mechanical and plastic. To Stendhal, Romanticism is the literature which pleases people today, and Classicism the literature which pleased their great-grandfathers. To Berchet, the contrast between the two amounts to the difference between the poetry of the dead and that of the living. To an avowed classicist like T. S. Eliot, it is Romanticism which suffers by comparison since the difference between the two reminds him of that between “the complete and the fragmentary, the adult and the immature, the orderly and the chaotic”.

Despite these differences and the absence of a fully satisfactory and comprehensive definition of the term, Romanticism, viewed in philosophical terms, does have a fairly definite meaning for the student of literature and the historian. Remak’s in-depth analysis of the five important West European literatures—English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish—leads him to the acceptable conclusion that “the evidence pointing to the existence in Western Europe of a widespread, distinct and fairly simultaneous pattern of thoughts, attitudes and beliefs associated with the connotation ‘Romanticism’ is overwhelming. West European Romanticism is seen to possess a reasonable cohesiveness and shares certain attitudes toward the past, though with notable qualifications and to show ‘sweeping agreement in general attitudes and in artistic tendencies’.”

Recent research, it is to be remembered, rejects the idea that the succession of literary periods corresponds to a predestined, violent swing of the pendulum from one extreme to another and emphasizes the gradual transition between periods. There was a strong pre-Romantic element in what is called the Age of Reason and there is a pervasive rationalistic element running concurrent with Romanticism.

This literary and philosophical theory sees the individual at the very centre of all life and all experience and, therefore, places him at the centre of art, making literature most valuable as an expression of his unique feelings and particular attitudes. “It places a high premium upon the creative function of the imagination, seeing art as a formulation of intuitive imaginative perceptions that

tend to speak a nobler truth than that of fact, logic, or the here and now". If Realism finds its values in the actual, and Naturalism in the scientific laws which undergird the actual, Romanticism, employing the commonplace, the natural and the simple as its materials, seeks to find the Absolute, the Ideal, by transcending the actual.

According to the Romanticist point of view poetry is not a mirror of men in action; its essential element is the poet's own feelings. Romanticism brought about a basic shift of stress from the audience to the poet himself, from the mirror to the lamp. The process of composition, being spontaneous, is the opposite of the artful manipulation of means to foreseen ends stressed by the neoclassic critics. Wordsworth carefully qualified this revolutionary doctrine by describing his poetry as "emotion recollected in tranquillity", and by specifying that a proper spontaneity is the result of a prior process of deep reflection, and may be followed by revisions. But the poem, composed in the white heat of inspiration, should be unforced and free of the artificial rules and conventions of the neoclassic predecessors. Coleridge feeling that, could rules be given from without, poetry would cease to be poetry stressed the concept of the organic laws of the imagination by which he meant that each poetic work, like a growing plant should evolve according to its inherent principles into its final form. Shelley ridiculed the fact that the first line of *Orlando Furioso* was revised fifty six times and heroically asked, "Is this the way poetry is written?" Even Keats, whose every poem is a well-wrought urn wrote: "If poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves to a tree it had better not come at all." Byron: "I am like a tiger; if I miss my first spring, I go grumbling back to my jungle."

While the neoclassic writer strove for correctness observing the complex demands of stylistic decorum, and respected the established rules of art, the Romanticist favoured innovation instead of traditionalism in the materials, forms and style of literature. Wordsworth denouncing the poetic diction of the preceding century proposed to deal with materials from "common life" in "a selection of language really used by men".

If neoclassic poetry was about other men, much of romantic poetry represented the poet himself, either directly, as in Wordsworth's *Prelude*, an account of the growth of the poet's mind or in altered form, as in Byron's *Childe Harold*. A similar vogue is to be found in prose in the intensely personal essays of Charles Lamb and William Hazlitt and also in a number of spiritual and intellectual autobiographies like De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, and Carlyle's fictionalized *Sartor Resartus*. In all these accounts, man was no longer part of an organized society but a solitary figure engaged in a long and elusive quest. Many important works had as protagonist a rebel like Prometheus or Cain or the Wandering Jew or the Satanic hero-villain.

Whereas the neoclassicists had written of mature men, the romantics wrote

of personal development and therefore about childhood. Some romantics believed that the child felt while the man merely thought. The child's intuitive wisdom was gradually obliterated by the intellect, which knew only one kind of truth. The romantic interest in childhood was akin to their interest in childlike people such as simple shepherds and villagers who allegedly preserved the powers nature had given them at their birth. This interest extended to cultures that the neoclassicists had neglected. The Middle Ages, scorned by the neoclassicists as immature, provided the background for some impressive romantic works such as Coleridge's "Christabel" and Keats's "Eve of St. Agnes". This taste for the unsophisticated, the remote and the fantastic was sometimes escapist, but it was also a vehicle for the communication of spiritual insight to an age that worshipped machines. The poet, voyaging in his strange seas of thought, looked for a realm more important than the Industrial Age in which his contemporaries lived.

In the Romantic Age, the child emerged from comparative unimportance to become the focus of an unprecedented literary interest. It is a mistake to claim that the Romantic resort to the child is a regressive step celebrating infantilism. As Schiller remarks, the power of our nostalgia for the state of childhood is a sign that this is "what we were" and "what we shall become again" by our attempt to achieve the early simplicity in the higher harmony of maturity. The most highly developed earthly man, according to Novalis, "is very like the child", and in preserving the thesis and antithesis of the process of his evolution, he is "the highest synthetic degree of the child". In Hegel's view, "the harmoniousness of childhood is a gift from the hand of nature; the second harmony must spring from the labour and culture of the spirit. And so the words of Christ, 'Except ye become as little children' do not mean that we must always remain children." Though Wordsworth finds the roots of his creative sensibility in his infant condition, he acknowledges that his growth to maturity involves the discipline and consummation of the poet's mind. Coleridge's description of freshness of sensation in his *Biographia Literaria* does take into consideration the concept of growth as a spiral progress which preserves the values of its earlier stages. "The feelings of childhood should be carried on into the powers of manhood." The responsiveness of the child is to be sustained in what Blake calls the organized vision of the developed imagination. Rousseau wrote in *Émile*: "Nature wants children to be children before they are men... childhood has ways of seeing, thinking, and feeling peculiar to itself; nothing can be more foolish than to substitute our ways for them."

(To be continued)

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# THE TIDES

## A NOVELLA

### I

DR. Bose handed me a packet and asked after a while, "What's in the parcel?"

"Mr. Roy has sent Deepu's diary."

"Has sent his diary? Very good, now read it, no, not from the beginning, read from any page opened at random. That can be very effective at times."

"Who is Deepu?" Alok and Archana asked at the same time. Bose-da got amused at his children's curiosity. He smiled and said, "He was a boy of your age long ago. Now, of course, he must be quite old."

"Where is he now?"

"No trace of him; that is why his diary is being read to see if any clue about his whereabouts can be found in it. Please start," he told me. I opened a page in the middle and started reading.

### Deepu's Diary

... Broken clouds move about in the blue sky. It drizzles, at the next moment the sun shines through the scattered clouds and nature smiles. But alas! my mind's sky remains cloudy as ever, no sun shines there...

All my playmates have gone away with Saroj-da's marriage party to the bride's house. I am left behind alone. My uncle (the husband of my father's sister) did not permit me to go. But Saroj-da did not object to that. Quietly he took the heartless verdict for granted though I am supposed to be one of his intimate followers.

What is this coercion! What right has my uncle got to lord it over me? I am no longer a mere child. History shows that at the age of fourteen one can rule a kingdom even. Whereas he always keeps me under control and treats me as his pet. Helpless and depressed I look at the mighty Muth of the Lord Shiva through the window of my study. It stands towering over all tall trees around it and glitters in the soft light of the cloudy day.

Different birds flit about it. They have made their nests in the fringes of the Muth's wall. They move about from tree to tree and make various kinds of chirping sounds. Is it their game, amusement or quarrel? Have they no father or uncle to punish or mother to scold and love at the same time? Don't they feel sad and suffer from pangs of separation? Yes, they have sorrow. It is said that poetry was born in Valmiki out of the impact of pain at the sight of a bird crying in anguish for the sudden killing of its beloved. And this in the long run made him write the Ramayana. A worthy event indeed

“Deepu-da...” Rasu calls me from outside the window.

“What’s the matter, Rasu? Please come in.”

“No, you had better come with me, let’s go and see.”

“See! What shall we see, Rasu?”

I jump to my feet and hurry out. Then we both start running. We run on the pond-side path and turn round the altar of the swing-seat of Radha and Krishna. We pass beside the Shiva-Muth and proceed behind Hari Pal’s shop where Rasu works. We pass by the big almond tree and finally reach the District Board’s road. We run along it non-stop keeping on the left the dry grass-covered canal and the vast fields of paddy, jute and sugarcane on the right. I almost get out of breath but Rasu shows no signs of fatigue. Oh, what a fine runner he is! Suddenly he stops and with him I also, panting heavily.

He points out, “Deepu-da, look there, have you seen it?” As my tired misty eyes clear up, my heart gets flooded with an on-rush of joy. “Oh, how wonderful!” My eyes feast on the beauty of fresh water stealthily touching the stems of long green grasses and advancing bit by bit from the river into the canal. The magic of flowtide makes it glide forward continuously. We turn about and return following the course of moving water. Life pulsates in us with excitement at sight of the rhythmic turn and twist of water and the small colourful fish darting through the submerged, silvery blades of grass. Meanwhile black clouds come up and cover the whole sky. And in no time it starts raining heavily, jhum... jhum... jhum....

Rain stops after two days, after filling the almost dried-up ponds, pools, ditches and canals to the brim with water. At this time fishing is a pleasant game for me and for my playmates also. None of them being present at the moment I alone fancy to go with a fishing rod in hand to the ditch just under the huge almond tree near Haripal’s shop. I am about to sit at my favourite spot when I hear a call, “Deepu-da...” I raise my head and find Rasu sitting comfortably high up amidst the branches of the almond tree. “Hello Rasu, how did you get up there? The trunk is so thick and tall that I could never climb it, no matter how much I tried.” “Just come and see yourself.” I go near the tree trunk and cry out, “Oh, how nicely you have made a ladder-like device with the bamboo pieces! Thank you very much.” Forgetting fishing for the time being I get up beside Rasu within a few minutes. He makes room for me to sit. I sit down and with a deep sigh murmur to myself, “At last my long cherished desire is fulfilled.” I look out at the panorama before me Green, green and green as far as the eye can see. My sight takes a dip into an ocean of greenness. The earth is dressed in a green sari with a multicoloured border. Its border is the river flowing along the horizon bearing on its bosom innumerable boats with brightly coloured sails. Their tremendous speed is not perceptible from a distance and they appear to be fixed forming the border encircling the earth’s waist. The blue sky leaning down from above whispers in her ear who knows what...



Suddenly the vast and beautiful sight beckons me towards something remote and unknown. I decide to free myself anyhow from the yoke of my uncle's domination and tyranny. I shall surely go out wherever my heart leads me. Perhaps my mood affects Rasu as well. He also broods on, silently gazing at the horizon. Surrounded by a leafy bower we two remain absorbed in our individual thoughts how long we don't know. The heat of the sun diminishes, the day nears its end, the red-gold rays play lovingly with the silvery flow of water of the canal in front. Suddenly Rasu cries out, "Deepu-da, look, Saroj-da is coming back with his wife. Let's go and see the bride, quick." So saying he hurries to get down and run towards the Ghat where the boat is supposed to anchor. I see a big boat entering the canal from the river. I sit on as before as the boat will take about half an hour before reaching the Ghat.

But... what's this? Why this peculiar anguish and uneasiness in me? A kind of reaction and hurt feeling against Saroj-da and his wife forbid me to go to see the bride. No, I must not see her. Who is she to me? There is none whom I can call my own. I have no friend, no father, no mother, brother or sister. I am alone and shall remain so hereafter. Alone I shall go out and stand face to face with this apparently false, foolish, selfish and noisy world and try to decipher its riddle. If I succeed, an entirely new and novel picture of the world will be depicted by me.

Oh, what an inspiration, what enthusiasm! An emotion hitherto unknown fills my mind and heart. My whole being throbs with hope and expectancy and I remain absorbed. A moving shadow makes me conscious of the surrounding. The big boat has anchored at the Ghat. A group of women are there to accord a ceremonial reception to the couple. Members of the marriage party get down one by one. Finally the figures of the husband and wife appear. I turn my face and resolve anew not to see Saroj-da's wife, no, never...

I find myself sitting with many others at the long open verandah of Saroj-da's family house. In front of each of us there is a freshly washed green banana leaf. Food has not yet been served. There is a lot of noise. Everybody is speaking excepting myself. I sit silently with lowered head looking only at the green leaf in front. No, I have not seen Saroj-da's wife and will not do so. I have joined the marriage feast only at the insistence of my uncle. To defy his order means to go without food for the whole day and that would be a very hard task indeed for me. I cannot fast for long. Of course to join the marriage feast has nothing to do with seeing the bride. I may eat but need not see her, that's all. With lowered head I justify my coming here, although under compulsion.

Abruptly the noise stops and an absolute silence prevails. I am about to raise my head but then remember my resolution and remain immobile. I presume that the bride has come to serve food. I stoop down more to strengthen my determination. After a while I find a pair of lac-dyed pretty feet just before my eyes and my eyes betray me. I look at the face of the owner of those feminine

feet without my knowing it and get spell-bound. I fail to tear my eyes away from its unearthly splendour and exquisite beauty Oh, how divinely noble and glorious is the face! It is like that of the image of Durga at the altar of worship In short, such an unspeakable influence assails me that I cannot but muse, "Is she a goddess or a human being? Whoever she may be, she is simply adorable. Why has she consented to be a wife at all? "

Meanwhile the object of my muse, the face, has disappeared after serving me food. I stare at the food for a few seconds and then start eating but cannot discern the kind, quality or taste of what I eat.

\*

"What kind of diary is it? It seems to be an autobiography," observed Bose-da.

"But it is very fine, papa," exclaimed Archana and with the gesture of her hand signed me to continue. I read on.

\*

My playmates have come back with Saroj-da but I don't see them anywhere, neither in the school nor in the playground. For days together I don't know their whereabouts and am left alone. But that does not matter much to me now. Now I am busy finding out ways and means to break out of the confinement put on me by my uncle. But before that, I should see Saroj-da once to seek his advice and directions. After all he is my well-wisher, a fact I am about to forget under the pressure of circumstances. But I am not going to search him out. It will be very fine if I meet him somewhere by chance.

The big pond annexed to Saroj-da's house is now full to the brim with water. And now is the time for swimming, diving, jumping and amusing oneself in a group there. But where can I get a group? Even Rasu, Haripal's shop-boy, has not met me after that day Doesn't matter! I shall swim alone. Getting ready forthwith I start for the pond Though I go on hoping every moment to get a companion on the way, unfortunately I get no one till I reach near the private parlour of Saroj-da, when I hear a very sweet sound of laughter coming out from within it I am all attention and wait to hear it again Yes, it comes once again but this time in chorus So, they gather here to chat and joke. That is why they are not found in school, playground or anywhere else

Saroj-da also must be here then. He has forgotten me now, amusing himself with them only. But a time was when.. however, better not add fuel to the fire. I already suffer from a wounded feeling towards him. I tiptoe towards the parlour and hide myself behind one of the window planks. I peep inside; no, Saroj-da is not there. But what I see instead astonishes and enchants me. I find Baudi, his

wife, there. Her appearance is quite different from what I saw the other day. Black, curly, long hair hangs on her back, her sweet face is smiling and becomes sweeter with an occasional outburst of musical laughter. She is in a festive mood, playing Hooly with my playmates using lack-dye and vermilion instead of liquid colour and red powder...

I gaze on forgetting time and place, my eyes glued to her face and then suddenly... "Good God, what's this!" Leaving the window I run away as fast as I can. An emotional upsurge, a mixture of doubt, surprise, shame and a touch of unknown joy assail me abruptly. Reaching the pond I dive straightway into the water and start swimming. After I complete three rounds my mind clears up and I reproach myself. "Fie on you! What a fool she has taken you for! This is really a disgrace!" In fact I wanted to see Saroj-da and stood hidden behind the window. How could she see me? Is she omniscient? What does she actually mean by smearing my face with lac-dye and vermilion? I was not a member of the marriage party, she does not know me and never has had any talk with me. Still...

But where is Saroj-da? Has he left home already? I feel an anguished yearning for him all the time. He whom I respected and loved, how could he be so heartless as to depart without a word with me? And as for me, how could I be such a fool as to neglect him for petty grievances? I ardently wish to apologise to him for my folly. But how to get him?

Luckily I get him. I get him after two days while returning home from school. I am overjoyed to see him coming out of our house. "Saroj-da, you have not gone away, then!" I exclaimed. "No, I haven't, as you see. Listen, I have come to you to say that Baudi wants you to see her. Come as soon as possible as she is waiting for you." Before I can open my mouth, he turns his face and hurries away. The news incites a turmoil in me. "Baudi wants me to see her, but why? What business does she have with me? She has her favourites, my playmates who crowd around her most of the time. If I go, they will make me a laughing-stock mentioning the event of that day and, who knows, Baudi also may join with them. No, I won't go. I shrink at the thought of being laughed at. Rather I shall go to the river-side with my small boat."

Back into the house I imagine the marvel of nature which adorns the western sky at this time. I close my eyes and see a myriad colours on the scattered clouds and the silhouette of trees and their trembling reflections in the river-water. Just then the bright face of Baudi appears in my memory creating an irresistible longing to go to her. I think that there must be some deeper reason for her to call me. So I should go without care of the consequence. I shall speak the truth about my presence there that day.

After a while I appear before the door of the parlour. But today there is no noise, no merry-making or laughter inside. However, to know if there is anybody within, I tap the closed door with the crook of my finger. "Yes, come in," I am

shocked at first but then all is peace and sweetness. I enter and find Baudi seated alone on a sofa. She is stitching a garment with rapt attention, she is quiet, calm and self-absorbed. She looks at me with deep meditative eyes and signs me to sit down. While I am sitting, the thought comes to my mind, "Is there no end to her beauty and tenderness? Is she like a diamond showing different hues in different settings?" Her absolute silence makes me conscious that I have been observing her from the outset without a word. Ashamed I apologize, "Excuse me, I am a little late in coming."

"Doesn't matter, I am glad that you have come after all." Is she joking? I look closely at her. No, she is simple and sincere, her expression is candid and transparent. She gets up, fetches a plateful of sweetmeat and places it on the table in front of me. "Eat," she says slowly. "I have already taken my tiffin." "Why?" "Shouldn't I? Don't I feel hungry after the school hours?" "But I invited you to come here." "Invited me! Oh no, you simply wanted me to see you." "See me, yes, but for what?" "At least it did not occur to me that it was for taking tiffin." "Then, what did you think?"

I remain silent and think about what I thought. Baudi looks at me intently and a ray of a smile plays on her lips. I lower my head and consider, "No, it's no good hesitating. I must be free and frank, that was what I resolved before coming." I ask bluntly, "Well, I was not a member of the marriage party and have not had any talk with you. Still how could you know me?" "Know you when, you mean?" "The other day when I stood beside the window." "I knew you even before that, but you have not touched a single sweet yet! I myself prepared these and for you only." I hasten to lift a sandesh, "But how could you know me before?" "That you won't understand." "Why not, if you tell me in a way I can understand. I am fourteen."

Baudi's glance makes me aware of the implied vanity in my words and I blush. She is not slow to observe that and asks me forthwith, "Do you remember your mother?" "No, I lost my parents perhaps before I was conscious of them." "Do you love your mother?" "How can I when I have not seen her or remember to have seen her?" "You mean one cannot love without seeing?" A difficult question to answer. I remain silent. "Do you love your country? Have you seen her?" 'COUNTRY' the vibration of the sound startles me and my head whirls. The word was charged with such a force that it bewildered me and I realise that I have not seen my country, have not known or recognised her yet. "No, I have not seen my country," I reply after a long silence. "You have stopped eating, flies are sitting on the sweets." "I cannot eat any more." She asks me again, "Do you love God?" A still more difficult question. What reply can I give to it? I remind her instead, "You have not told me yet how you came to know me."

"You are also avoiding my question. However, answer me this time. Do you love me?" I am taken aback, I grope within me for an answer but without avail... "That means, you don't know this either. Let me tell you then. Yes, you love

me.” “How can you know what I myself don’t know or comprehend?” “Listen, during the wedding feast you sat with lowered head. But when I came before you, abruptly you raised your head and looked at me. Immediately I knew that you loved and adored me.” The simple and frank statement flashes into my mind a new vision. I muse, “She is vast and clear like a cloudless sky, pure and soothing like the spring-time breeze. It is futile and meaningless to hide my feelings from her. I murmur as if to myself, “That day I looked at you without my knowing it. But as I looked, an unearthly influence-occupied me. I had a feeling the like of which I had experienced never before. And it is simply beyond my power to express it. I don’t know whether it was love, devotion or anything else.”

“Then let me express the experience I had when you looked at me,” Baudi added, “I felt that I was not I, but someone else, a thousand times greater, higher and more glorious than myself. I wondered who the boy might be, don’t remember to have seen him at any time. Your thought lingered with me most of the time. And then finally I asked and knew everything about you from your Saroj-da....” Even before she could finish Saroj-da himself steps in pushing the door open. He hastily addresses Baudi, “Smriti, quick. Our trail is no more a secret, it has been traced out.” Baudi’s face is aglow, she jerks herself up and observes, “Saroj-da, I knew that even the disguise of marriage wouldn’t work. Whatever it might be, they also won’t be able to get us. Let’s go.”

She hides something beneath her Sari and makes a move. While going they both shake my head lovingly and whisper, “Courage, we shall meet again...”

I sit on like a statue for some time not knowing what to do and then suddenly hurry outside. From the top of the almond tree I gaze at a small boat floating far, far, and still farther towards the horizon. Now it is no more a boat, only a point, finally the point also vanishes... I see the wide earth dressed in a green Sari with a multi-coloured beautiful border, the border being the innumerable sailing boats on the river with brightly coloured sails. They are moving at a tremendous speed but from a distance they appear to be quite stationary.

The blue sky leaning from above whispers to the earth below who knows what?

*(To be continued)*

CHUNILAL CHOWDHURY

## *Students' Section*

### THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

Sixty-fifth Seminar

19 February 1989

*(Continued from the issue of June 1989)*

#### THE MOTHER—CREATRIX OF THE NEW AGE

Speech by Hufreesh Dumasia

THE New Age, of which the Mother is the creatrix, is the age of the Supramental Truth which is the next step in earth-evolution. It will transform our present imperfect human life into the perfect divine life and change man into the true superman

But the new supramental world which this New Age will create is not only a world of divine Truth but equally a world of divine Ananda, the spiritual Bliss. That is why, after the supramental manifestation on 29 February 1956, the Mother said that a whole new “wonderful world of delight” was born in the wake of it in the subtle atmosphere of the earth and is waiting there “for our call, to come down upon earth” I repeat her own words which she gave as the new year message for 1961:

“This wonderful world of delight  
waiting at our gates for our call,  
to come down upon earth...”<sup>1</sup>

Since by Ananda people generally mean happiness and since they make happiness their aim of life, the Mother’s message, which I have just read, is very likely to be understood in the sense that when the new world of delight comes down upon earth everyone and everything will be happy and the aim of life will be fulfilled. It is for this reason that while dealing with the subject of this Seminar, I have chosen to deal with it briefly in relation to this important problem: Is happiness the true aim of our life and will the New Age bring its fulfilment?

Today the world at large is running wild in search of happiness. Ask any modern man, “What do you want from life?”, his answer is sure to be: happi-

<sup>1</sup> *Collected Works of the Mother* (Cent Ed), Vol 15, p 186

ness—happiness gained through the satisfaction of his vital desires and emotional and sensational cravings. So are we to understand that the New Age, which the Mother has promised us, will be a world in which all one's desires, cravings and sensations will be fully satisfied without any hindrance or frustration?

Is this idea true? Is this ideal of the modern world worth pursuing? The answer to this question depends on what we mean by happiness. At the higher end Ananda is an eternal attribute of the Divine Being and Consciousness which, as the Upanishad tells us, is the source, the sustainer and the goal of all existence. In this sense Ananda is the highest, the ultimate aim of life. And the supramental manifestation will bring the fulfilment of that aim. But that spiritual Ananda is not what men call happiness or pleasure for which our vital, emotional and sensational nature craves. In fact, the latter is a total degradation of it and, if pursued for its own sake, will make us sink into animality or lead us to our ruin, as it is doing with the modern civilisation which, because of its blind pursuit after pleasure, has come to a crisis. A good example of this is Sweden—one of the world's richest and most prosperous countries where the government looks after the needs of each and every individual and where all the material and sensual desires are given full freedom to satisfy themselves; and yet it is a country with a very high rate of suicide cases!

The utter futility and calamitous danger of pursuing this “gospel of pleasure” which has so powerfully gripped not only the modern European civilisation but, under its irresistible influence, the rest of the world, is revealed by Sri Aurobindo in a passage which I would like to read to you in his own words so that you can catch directly its profound significance:

“As for the gospel of pleasure, it has been tried before and always failed—Life and Nature after a time weary of it, as if after a surfeit of cheap sweets. Man has to rush from his pursuit of pleasure, with all its accompaniments of petrifying shallowness, cynicism, hardness, frayed nerves, *ennui*, dissatisfaction and fatigue, to a new idealism or else sink towards a dull or catastrophic decadence.”<sup>1</sup>

In the Mother's view, happiness is not the true aim of life but its consequence. To the question, “Is the aim of life to be happy?” She replied:

“This is just putting things topsy-turvy. The aim of life is to discover the Divine and to manifest it. Naturally, this discovery leads to happiness, but this happiness is a consequence, not an aim in itself. And it is the mistake of taking a mere consequence for aim of life that has been the cause of most of the miseries which are afflicting human life.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Letters on Poetry, Literature and Art* (1988 Edition), p. 266

<sup>2</sup> *The New Age*, edited by Kishor Gandhi (1977), p. 377

In rejecting happiness as the aim of life, the Mother is not preaching puritanism or advocating asceticism which seek to suppress or kill all joy of life. What She means is that joy or happiness should not be pursued for its own sake or as an aim of life. The true aim must always be to discover and manifest the Divine. If one follows the aim of discovering the Divine, then on realising it, true happiness or Ananda will be the natural consequence because Ananda is the inherent eternal attribute of the Divine. The experience of this Ananda or delight is most beautifully described in one of Sri Aurobindo's sonnets, "The Bliss of Brahman" I will read it here:

"I have become a foam-white sea of bliss,  
I am a curling wave of God's delight,  
A shapeless flow of happy passionate light,  
A whirlpool of the streams of Paradise.

I am a cup of His felicities,  
A thunderblast of His golden ecstasy's might,  
A fire of joy upon creation's height,  
I am His rapture's wonderful abyss.

I am drunken with the glory of the Lord,  
I am vanquished by the beauty of the Unborn;  
I have looked, alive, upon the Eternal's face.  
My mind is cloven by His radiant sword,  
My heart by His beatific touch is torn;  
My life is a meteor-dust of His flaming Grace."<sup>1</sup>

In the New Age all life will be Anandamaya; bliss and ecstasy will permeate life. Ananda, the Mahalakshmi power of the Divine, will no longer be sought after, for it will be eternally present in its infinite fullness. This is because in the New Age each soul will be in conscious union with the divine Presence within him as well as in the universe around him and will experience His Bliss and Love and Beauty everywhere. This reminds me of another lovely sonnet of Sri Aurobindo, "Because Thou art", which I would like to read out to you before I conclude my speech:

"Because Thou art All-beauty and All-bliss,  
My soul blind and enamoured yearns for Thee;  
It bears Thy mystic touch in all that is  
And thrills with the burden of that ecstasy.

<sup>1</sup> *Collected Poems* (Cent Ed , Vol 5), p 148



Behind all eyes I meet Thy secret gaze  
And in each voice I hear Thy magic tune:  
Thy sweetness haunts my heart through Nature's ways;  
Nowhere it beats now from Thy snare immune.

It loves Thy body in all living things;  
Thy joy is there in every leaf and stone:  
The moments bring Thee on their fiery wings;  
Sight's endless artistry is Thou alone.

Time voyages with Thee upon its prow—  
And all the future's passionate hope is Thou.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid* , p 154