

# MOTHER INDIA

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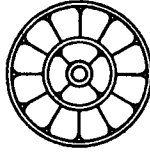
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,  
A new light breaks upon the earth,  
A new world is born.  
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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All correspondence to be addressed to

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

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Editor K D SETHNA

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# MOTHER INDIA

## MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

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*“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”*

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# SPIRITUAL LIFE

## A TALK BY THE MOTHER

*Sweet Mother, where does our true spiritual life begin?*

THE true spiritual life begins when one is in communion with the Divine in the psychic, when one is conscious of the divine Presence in the psychic and in constant communion with the psychic. Then the spiritual life begins, not before, the *true* spiritual life.

When one is united with one's psychic being and conscious of the divine Presence, and receives the impulses for one's action from this divine Presence, and when the will has become a conscious collaborator with the divine Will—that is the starting-point.

Before that, one may be an aspirant to the spiritual life, but one doesn't have a spiritual life.

*Sweet Mother, I would like to have the explanation of a sentence Sri Aurobindo has said somewhere, "Materially you are nothing, spiritually you are everything."*

That means that it is the Spirit, the spiritual consciousness and the divine Presence which give to life all its value, that without this spiritual consciousness and divine Presence life has no value.

The same holds true for the individual, whatever his material capacities and the material conditions in which he lives, his only worth is that of the divine Presence and the spiritual consciousness in him.

And so from the point of view of the truth of things, a man who has no material possessions and no remarkable capacities or possibilities, but who is conscious of his psychic being and united with the Divine in him, is infinitely greater than a ruler upon earth or a millionaire who possesses considerable material power but is unconscious of his psychic being.

From the point of view of the truth, it is like that. This is what Sri Aurobindo means. No apparent and outer things have any true value. The only thing which is valuable is the divine consciousness and union with the Spirit.

*To reach the Supermind, Sri Aurobindo says there are stages: first, the mind, then the purified mind, the illumined mind and all that. Is it necessary for everyone to go through all these stages?*

(*After a silence*) It is likely that a sequence of this kind always occurs. But the duration of the stages and their importance vary considerably according to

individuals.. For some the passage may be rapid enough to be hardly perceptible, while for others it may take a very long time, and according to the nature of the resistance in each one, the stress on one or another of these stages varies enormously

For some, it may be so rapid that it seems almost instantaneous, as though it didn't exist. For others it may take years

There is one phenomenon which obviously seems indispensable if one wants the realisation to become stable. Experiences come, touch the consciousness, sometimes bring great illuminations, then get blurred, retreat into the background and, outwardly, in your ordinary consciousness, you don't feel that there is a great change, a great difference. And this phenomenon may occur very often, may repeat itself for many years. Suddenly you get a sort of revelation, like an illumination, you are in the true consciousness and have the feeling of having got hold of the real thing. And then, slowly or suddenly, it seems to recede behind you, and you seek but do not find that there is any great change in you... These things seem to come as heralds or as promises. "See, it will happen", or to tell you, "Well, have faith, it *will be* like that."

And this may recur very often. There is progress, obviously, but it is very slow and hardly apparent.

But then, suddenly—perhaps because one is sufficiently prepared, perhaps simply because the time has come, and it has been so decreed—suddenly, when such an experience occurs, its result in the part of the being where it takes place is a complete reversal of consciousness. It is a very clear, very concrete phenomenon. The best way of describing it is this: a complete reversal. And then the relation of the consciousness with the other parts of the being and with the outer world is as if completely changed. Absolutely like an overturning. And that reversal no longer comes back to the same old place, the consciousness no longer returns to its former position—Sri Aurobindo would say "status". Once this has happened in any part of the being, this part of the being is stabilised.

And until that happens, it comes and goes, comes and goes, one advances and then has the impression of marking time, and one advances again and then marks time again, and sometimes one feels as though one were going backwards, and it is interminable—and indeed it is interminable. It may last for years and years and years. But when this reversal of consciousness takes place, whether in the mind or a part of the mind, whether in the vital or a part of the vital, or even in the physical consciousness itself and in the body-consciousness, once this is established, it is over, you no longer go back, you do not ever return to what you were before. And this is the true indication that you have taken a step forward definitively. And before this, there are only preparations.

Those who have experienced this reversal know what I am speaking about, but if one hasn't, one can't understand. One may have a kind of idea by analogy, people who have tried to describe yoga compare it with the reversal of a prism.

when you put it at a certain angle, the light is white; when you turn it over, it is broken up. Well, this is exactly what happens, that is to say, you restore the white. In the ordinary consciousness there is decomposition and you restore the white. However, this is only an image. It is not really *that*, this is an analogy. But the phenomenon is extremely concrete. It is almost as though you were to put what is inside out, and what is outside in. And it isn't that either! But if you could turn a ball inside-out, or a balloon—you can't, can you?—if you could put the inside out and the outside in, it would be something like what I mean.

And one can't say that one "experiences" this reversal—there is no "feeling", it is almost a mechanical fact—it is extraordinarily mechanical. (*Mother takes an object from the table beside her and turns it upside down...*) There would be some very interesting things to say about the difference between the moment of realisation, of *siddhi*—like this reversal of consciousness for example—and all the work of development, the *tapasya*; to say how it comes about. For the sadhana, *tapasya* is one thing and the *siddhi* another, quite a different thing. You may do *tapasya* for centuries, and you will always go as at a tangent—closer and closer to the realisation, nearer and nearer, but it is only when the *siddhi* is given to you then, everything is changed, everything is reversed. And this is inexpressible, for as soon as it is put in words it escapes. But there is a difference—a real difference, essential, total—between aspiration, the mental tension, even the tension of the highest, most luminous mind and realisation: something which has been decided above from all time, and is absolutely independent of all personal effort, of all gradation. Don't you see, it is not bit by bit that one reaches it, it is not by a small, constant, regular effort, it is not that, it is something that comes suddenly; it is established without one's knowing how or why, but all is changed.

And it will be like that for everybody, for the whole universe, it goes on and on, it moves forward very slowly, and then one moment, all of a sudden, *it will be done*, finished—not finished—it's the beginning!

(*Silence*)

It is usually the first contact with the psychic being which brings this experience, but it is only partial, only that *part* of the consciousness—or of the activity in any part of the being—that part of the consciousness which is united with the psychic has the experience. And so, at the moment of that experience, the position of that part of the consciousness, in relation to the other parts and to the world, is completely reversed, it is different. And that is never undone. And if you have the will or take care or are able to put into contact with this part all the problems of your life and all the activities of your being, all the elements of your consciousness, then they begin to be organised in such a way that your being becomes one unity—a single multiplicity, a multiple unity—complex, but



organised and centralised around a fixed point, so well that the central will or central consciousness or central truth has the power to govern *all* the parts, for they are all in order, organised around this central Presence

It seems to me impossible to escape from this necessity if one wants to be and is to be a conscious instrument of the divine Force. You may be moved, pushed into action and used as *unconscious* instruments by the divine Force, if you have a minimum of goodwill and sincerity. But to become a conscious instrument, capable of identification and conscious, willed movements, you must have this inner organisation, otherwise you will always be running into a chaos somewhere, a confusion somewhere or an obscurity, an unconsciousness somewhere. And naturally your action, even though guided exclusively by the Divine, will not have the perfection of expression it has when one has acquired a conscious organisation around this divine Centre.

It is an assiduous task, which may be done at any time and under any circumstances, for you carry within yourself all the elements of the problem. You don't need anything from outside, no outer aid to do this work. But it requires great perseverance, a sort of tenacity, for very often it happens that there are bad "creases" in the being, habits—which come from all sorts of causes, which may come from atavistic malformation or also from education or from the environment you have lived in or from many other causes. And these bad creases you try to smooth out, but they wrinkle up again. And then you must begin the work over again, often, many, many, many a time, without getting discouraged, before the final result is obtained. But nothing and nobody can prevent you from doing it, nor any circumstance. For you carry within yourself the problem and the solution.

(*Silence*)

And to tell the truth, the most common malady humanity suffers from is boredom. Most of the stupidities men commit come from an attempt to escape boredom. Well, I say for certain that no outer means are any good, and that boredom pursues you and will pursue you no matter what you try to escape from it; but that this way, that is, beginning this work of organising your being and all its movements and all its elements around the central Consciousness and Presence, this is the surest and most complete cure, and the most comforting, for all possible boredom. It gives life a tremendous interest. And an extraordinary diversity. You no longer have the time to get bored.

Only, one must persevere.

And what adds to the interest of the thing is that this kind of work, this harmonisation and organisation of the being around the divine Centre can only be done in a physical body and on earth. That is truly the essential and original reason for physical life. For, as soon as you are no longer in a physical body, you

can no longer do it *at all*

And what is still more remarkable is that only human beings can do it, for only human beings have at their centre the divine Presence in the psychic being. For example, this work of self-development and organisation and becoming aware of all the elements is not within the reach of the beings of the vital and mental planes, nor even of the beings who are usually called “gods”, and when they want to do it, when they really want to organise themselves and become completely conscious, they have to take a body.

And yet, human beings come into a physical body without knowing why, most of them go through life without knowing why, they leave their body without knowing why, and they have to begin the same thing all over again, indefinitely, until one day, someone comes along and tells them. “Be careful! you know, there is a purpose to this You are here for this work, don’t miss your opportunity!”

And how many years are wasted.

(*Collected Works of the Mother*, Vol 8, pp 136-137, 171-176 )

## SRI AUROBINDO ON SPIRITUALITY

OUR ideal is not the spirituality that withdraws from life but the conquest of life by the power of the spirit. It is to accept the world as an effort of manifestation of the Divine, but also to transform humanity by a greater effort of manifestation than has yet been accomplished, one in which the veil between man and God shall be removed, the divine manhood of which we are capable shall come to birth and our life shall be remoulded in the truth and light and power of the spirit. It is to make of all our action a sacrifice to the master of our action and an expression of the greater self in man.

(*Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol 16 p 329 )

Spirituality cannot be called upon to deal with life by a non-spiritual method or attempt to cure its ills by panaceas, the political, social or other mechanical remedies which the mind is constantly attempting and which have always failed and will continue to fail to solve anything

(*SABCL*, Vol 19 p 884 )

. the solution of the problem which spirituality offers is not a solution by external means, though these also have to be used, but by an inner change, a transformation of the consciousness and nature

(*SABCL*, Vol 19 p 884 )

Spirituality respects the freedom of the human soul, because it is itself fulfilled by freedom, and the deepest meaning of freedom is the power to expand and grow towards perfection by the law of one's own nature, *dharma*. This liberty it will give to all the fundamental parts of our being. It will give that freedom to philosophy and science which ancient Indian religion gave—freedom even to deny the spirit if they will,—as a result of which philosophy and science never felt in ancient India any necessity of divorcing themselves from religion, but grew rather into it and under its light. It will give the same freedom to man's seeking for political and social perfection and to all his other powers and aspirations. Only it will be vigilant to illuminate them so that they may grow into the light and law of the spirit, not by suppression and restriction, but by a self-searching, self-controlled expansion and a many-sided finding of their greatest, highest, and deepest potentialities. For all these are potentialities of the spirit

(*SABCL*, Vol 15 p 170 )

## THE PSYCHIC, THE SPIRITUAL AND OUR SADHANA

ORDINARILY, all the more inward and all the abnormal psychological experiences are called psychic. I use the word psychic for the soul as distinguished from the mind and the vital. All movements and experiences of the soul would in that sense be called psychic, those which rise from or directly touch the psychic being; where mind and vital predominate, the experience would be called psychological (surface or occult). "Spiritual" has not a necessary connection with the absolute. Of course the experience of the absolute is spiritual. All contacts with self, the higher consciousness, the Divine above are spiritual. There are others that could not be so sharply classified or one set off against the other.

The spiritual realisation is of primary importance and indispensable. I would consider it best to have the spiritual and psychic development first and have it with the same fullness—before entering the occult regions. Those who enter the latter first may find their spiritual realisation much delayed—others fall into the mazy traps of the occult and do not come out in this life.

(SABCL, Vol 22 pp 75-76.)

The soul, the psychic being is in direct touch with the divine Truth, but it is hidden in man by the mind, the vital being and the physical nature. One may practise yoga and get illuminations in the mind and the reason; one may conquer power and luxuriate in all kinds of experiences in the vital, one may establish even surprising physical Siddhis, but if the true soul-power behind does not manifest, if the psychic nature does not come into the front, nothing genuine has been done. In this yoga the psychic being is that which opens the rest of the nature to the true supramental light and finally to the supreme Ananda. Mind can open by itself to its own higher reaches; it can still itself and widen into the Impersonal; it may too spiritualise itself in some kind of static liberation or Nirvana; but the supramental cannot find a sufficient base in a spiritualised mind alone. If the inmost soul is awakened, if there is a new birth out of the mere mental, vital and physical into the psychic consciousness, then this yoga can be done, otherwise (by the soul-power of the mind or any other part) it is impossible. . If there is a refusal of the psychic new birth, a refusal to become a child new born from the Mother, owing to attachment to intellectual knowledge or to some vital desire, then there will be a failure in the sadhana

(SABCL, Vol 24. pp 1095-96 )

## DESHBANDHU CHITTA RANJAN DAS'S PERORATION IN DEFENCE OF SRI AUROBINDO DURING THE ALIPORE TRIAL

"MAY it please your honour, and gentlemen assessors,—It is a matter of congratulation for us all, that at last this trial has come to a close. It is especially a matter of congratulation for the prisoners at the bar because they have been in jail for the best part of a year and the time has now come, gentlemen, for you to consider the evidence which has been placed before you to find out whether the charges brought against them by the prosecution are true or not

"In a case like this, the first thing to do is to prove that a conspiracy did exist and the next thing is to connect the particular persons with the conspiracy. What has been the method followed by my friend? Whether he discussed oral evidence or documentary evidence he started with the assumption that these persons are guilty. He assumed their guilt and then tried to connect them with the evidence. He reads a letter and finds a reference to A. G. What is his argument? Does he refer to any proof to show that A. G. stands for Arabindo Ghose? No. His argument is 'I tell you that is Arabindo Ghose.' In order to try the accused persons you must start with the assumption that they are not guilty and after that look into the evidence connecting them

"Take the Chattrā Bhandar. Arabindo Ghose is a conspirator because he is connected with the Chattrā Bhandar. I submit that is entirely a wrong procedure to adopt—a procedure which has never been adopted before in any Court of Justice. He ought to have told you that you must proceed on the assumption that these persons are innocent of all the charges brought against them and if by perusing the evidence you come to the conclusion that the evidence is unmistakable proof of their guilt, then and then only can you convict them

"There is another point—that is with regard to Arabindo's domestic letters. Read those letters and you will find that they throw no light on the charges against these accused. The sanctity of his private correspondence has been wantonly and improperly violated. Was it for the purpose of proving to you that these men are guilty? I submit not. There is nothing in those letters from beginning to end which throws a light on the charges for which these men are being tried. There again my friend's argument was 'Don't read the letters as they stand but read between the lines.' That is to say although the letters don't support the conspiracy and don't suggest any offence, yet you must not be deceived by them. Don't you know Arabindo is guilty? Don't you know he is connected with bombs? Don't you know he has waged war against the King? Take that for granted and you find him guilty. His movement in Baroda is stated to be in connection with bombs. His articles in the *Bande Mataram* are referred to. There is no evidence at all reliable which is put forward to show that he is responsible for every article in the *Bande Mataram*. The articles breathe the idea

of freedom. My friend began his speech by saying that those were ideals which no Englishman would quarrel with. Those articles, I repeat, if they show anything, show that Arabindo Ghose was preaching from beginning to end that ideal of freedom which, we were told over and over again, no Englishman would quarrel with. Does not that argument involve the same fallacy to which I referred, namely that you must assume that Arabindo Ghose was in the conspiracy and after starting with that to read the articles. Here although he preaches those ideals, you must read into those articles bombs and conspiracy to wage warfare. Throughout the whole course of his argument the same fallacy was repeated over and over again.

“I have already told you that the correspondence of Arabindo has been placed before you; in fact, gentlemen, his whole life has been laid bare before you. My friend’s contention is that on that evidence which deals with his inner life you will see signs of conspiracy and waging war. I shall confidently take my stand upon that very correspondence and material. I shall show you that during the whole life of Arabindo, beginning with his first work up to the day of his arrest, he was actuated by a noble ideal. I shall take you through the correspondence dealt with while he was at Baroda, his utterances whether in the press or on the platform, and I shall show you that there is not one single suggestion of any conspiracy to wage war against the Government. He has throughout been actuated by a nobler ideal. You will find from the middle of 1904, 1905, 1906, and almost up to a few days before his arrest that he was actuated by that noble ideal. It will not be out of place here before I come to deal with the particular points in the case to give you a short sketch of that ideal. My friend throughout the whole course of his address did not hesitate to scoff at it, but that is a matter of no concern to me. So far as the nation was concerned he preached that lofty ideal of freedom. So far as the individual was concerned his ideal always was to gather himself and look for the godhead within. It is a familiar ideal of our country. It is difficult for those not familiar with it to understand it. But to you, gentlemen, it is familiar.

“The doctrine of Vedantism is that man is not dissociated from God: that is to say, if you want to realise yourself you must look for the God within you. It is within your heart and within your soul, that you will find that God dwells and, as no man can attain to his own salvation without reaching to that God that is within you, so also in the case of nations without any national question arising—no nation can attain this unless it realises the highest and noblest and the best of that nation. As in the case of individuals you cannot reach your God with extraneous aid, but you must make an effort—that supreme effort—yourself before you can realise the God within you, so also with a nation. It is by itself that a nation must grow; a nation must attain its salvation by its unaided effort. No foreigner can give you that salvation. It is in your own hands to revive that spirit of nationality. That is the doctrine of nationality which Arabindo has preached throughout and

that was to be done not by methods which are against the traditions of the country I ask your particular attention to that It was not Arabindo's philosophy that salvation was to be attained by methods inconsistent with the whole history and traditions of the writer and therefore when you find Arabindo leaving Baroda and coming to Calcutta you find that the doctrines he preaches are not doctrines of violence but doctrines of passive resistance It is not bombs, but suffering. He deprecates secret societies and violence and enjoins them to suffer If there is a law which is unjust and offensive against the development of the nation, break that law by all means and take the consequences He never asked you to apply force in a single utterance of his either in the press or on the platform. If the Government thought fit to bring in a law which hinders you from attaining that salvation, Arabindo's advice is to break that law if necessary in the sense of not obeying it You owe it to your conscience, you owe it to your God. If the law says you must go to jail go to jail That was the cardinal feature of the doctrine of passive resistance which Arabindo preached. Is not the doctrine of passive resistance preached throughout the world on the same footing? Is it peculiar to this country—this movement which has met with such abusive language from Mr Norton? Have not the people of England done it over and over again? I say that this is the same doctrine that Arabindo was preaching almost up to the very day when those handcuffs were put on his hands. He was oppressed with a feeling of disappointment, because his country was losing everything, having lost her faith. Therefore you find whenever he preached freedom he brought out that feature clearly He says, believe in yourself, no one attains salvation who does not believe in himself Similarly, he says, in the case of the nation If the nation does not feel that it has got something within it to be free to attain that salvation then there is no hope for that nation Accordingly we find Arabindo preaching 'You are not cowards, you are not a set of incapable men, because you have got divinity Have faith in you and in that faith go on towards that goal and become a self-developed nation.'

"My appeal to you therefore is that a man like this who is being charged with the offences imputed to him stands not only before the bar in this Court but stands before the bar of the High Court of History and my appeal to you is this: That long after this controversy is hushed in silence, long after this turmoil, this agitation ceases, long after he is dead and gone, he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and the lover of humanity Long after he is dead and gone his words will be echoed and re-echoed not only in India, but across distant seas and lands Therefore I say that the man in his position is not only standing before the bar of this Court but before the bar of the High Court of History

"The time has come for you, sir, to consider your judgment and for you, gentlemen, to consider your verdict I appeal to you, sir, in the name of all the traditions of the English Bench that forms the most glorious chapter of English

history. I appeal to you in the name of all that is noble, of all the thousand principles of law which have emanated from the English Bench, and I appeal to you in the name of the distinguished Judges who have administered the law in such a manner as to compel not only obedience, but the respect of all those in whose cases they have administered the law. I appeal to you in the name of the glorious chapter of English history and let it not be said that an English Judge forgets to vindicate justice. To you gentlemen I appeal in the name of the very ideal that Arabindo preached and in the name of all the traditions of our country, and let it not be said that two of his own countrymen were overcome by passions and prejudices and yielded to the clamour of the moment ”



# MY UNCLE CHITTA RANJAN DAS

BY SAHANA DEVI

My uncle C.R. Das died on June 16, 1925 in Darjeeling at the age of 55 years only. After the body was brought to Calcutta in a procession led by Mahatma Gandhi, we received a condolence wire from Sri Aurobindo, which served also as his public message on the occasion:

“Chitta Ranjan Das’s death is a supreme loss. Consummately endowed with political intelligence, constructive imagination, magnetism, a driving force combining a strong will and uncommon plasticity of mind for vision and tact of the hour, he was the one man after Tilak who could have led India to Swaraj.”

I will not say much about my uncle as a relative. I will say only what is connected with Sri Aurobindo.

Sri Aurobindo was arrested on May 2, 1908 as the main conspirator in the famous “Alipore Bomb Case”. My uncle acted as his lawyer and the opposite party’s counsel was Mr. Norton, an eminent English barrister in those days. The case went on for nearly a year. At that time we saw our uncle’s way of giving himself completely to the work on the case, forgetting day and night, sitting with his law-books scattered all around him and fully absorbed to find the point, the clue with which he would be able to get Sri Aurobindo released. He lived with this thought alone. We used to learn with joy that the people of the High Court were amazed to hear his arguments and his knowledge appeared such that some judge of the High Court remarked about him: “Maker of Criminal Law.” Sri Aurobindo was unconditionally acquitted.

We came to know that the main judge of this Bomb Case, Mr. Beachcroft, had been Sri Aurobindo’s College mate at Cambridge and that in the open I.C.S. examination Sri Aurobindo had beaten him to second place in Greek and Latin.

Now a word about the concluding speech of my uncle. As soon as he started, the entire hall suddenly became intensely still, and the atmosphere seemed to fill with an unknown incomprehensible something. Only a voice was heard as if coming from a different world.

This speech has become famous. I wonder how Das, being a human being, could speak of things which would be real long afterwards. At that time Sri Aurobindo was not a world-figure. But Das spoke in a tone of confident prophecy and every word has come true.

## THE MOTHER'S BLESSING-PACKETS ON MOUNT EVEREST

### A SURPRISING LETTER FROM PRADIP BHATTACHARYA

My very good friend and colleague in the I A.S , Shri Champak Chatterji. who is Special Secretary to the Govt of West Bengal in charge of Sports, has dug out a fascinating reference to the Blessing-Packets in connection with Mount Everest! I felt I must let you know as your readers might find it of interest

The reference comes in *Everest Kangshung Face* by Stephen Venables [Hodder & Stoughton, 1989, published in India by Arnold Publishers] which recounts the daring climb, forcing a new route up the Kangshung Face of the mountain across the South Col in May 1988.

The author mentions that in Bombay Nawang and Sonam, the two sons of his hosts Harish and Geeta Kapadia, each gave him “a small packet of dried flower petals The flowers came from an ashram in Pondicherry [*sic*], which they visited each winter, and were to protect me If possible I should leave them on the summit” (p. 33) Then, on page 166 we find him describing what he did after reaching the summit on the afternoon of 12th May 1988 around 3 45 P M.. “there was one small ritual for me to carry out. I reached into one of my inside pockets and pulled out a tiny polythene bag Inside it were the two miniature envelopes given to me in Bombay by Nawang and Sonam. I carefully took out the flower petals and scattered them in the snow, then placed the two envelopes beside the oxygen bottles. Then, panting with the effort of concentration, I took two pictures on the compact camera. The film in the SLR with the self-portrait was either not wound on properly or was lost on the journey home, for I was never to see the photo of myself on the summit. However, I do have a picture showing the little envelopes. Each envelope is decorated with the face of one of the teachers at Geeta’s ashram in Pondicherry, staring up from amongst the radio boxes, yellow cylinders and wisps of prayer flag on the summit of Everest ”

That photograph has been reproduced on the page facing p 166. The picture of Sri Aurobindo, seated on the sofa, can be vaguely made out on one Blessing-Packet, but the Mother cannot be made out on the other packet

## VIRGIL'S FAMOUS VISION IN HIS FOURTH ECLOGUE

SICILIAN Muses, come, let us attempt  
A somewhat grander theme—not everybody  
Has a taste for thickets and humble tamarisks.  
If we sing of woods, let them be consular

Foretold by Sibylline song, the crowning age  
Has arrived, the great cycle of the centuries  
Begins afresh. Justice, the Virgin, returns,  
The happy reign of Saturn is restored,  
And a new child is being sent down from heaven  
With him, the people of the Age of Iron  
Shall die out, and thenceforth all over the world  
A Golden Race arise Chaste Goddess of birth,  
Smile on the babe—now your brother Apollo reigns.  
And it's under you as consul, you, Pollio,  
That this radiance will dawn and the procession  
Of glorious months begin their onward march  
Under your leadership the final, lingering  
Traces of our iniquity will dissolve  
And vanish, freeing the earth from endless dread  
This child will share the life of the gods, observe  
Heroes consorting with divinities  
And be observed by them, and rule a world  
Which his father's virtues have supplied with peace  
For you, boy-child, unworked the soil will spill  
Smiling acanthus, cyclamen, rambling ivy  
And Egyptian lilies everywhere commingled—  
The earth's first modest gifts Unshepherded,  
The goats will bring full udders home, the cattle  
Have no fear of the great lion, your cradle  
Will overflow with blossoms to delight you,  
Snakes and plants that deceive with poison perish,  
And every bush bloom with Assyrian spice.  
Later, when you can read of the celebrated  
Deeds of the heroes and your ancestors,  
And understand what excellence is, then slowly  
The plains will yellow with soft, waving corn,  
Grapes redden and ripen on neglected thorns,  
And tough oaks exude, like a dew, honey  
Nevertheless, faint traces of old vice  
Will lurk still, prompting men to challenge the sea,  
Ring towns with walls, and split the earth with furrows

Another *Argo* will be launched to carry  
 A new, picked band of heroes, with at the helm  
 A second Tiphys, more wars will be waged,  
 And great Achilles sent again to Troy.  
 Still later, when the years have added strength  
 And made you a man, even the trader will leave  
 The sea unsailed, his pine-timbered ships  
 Cease trafficking; each country then will yield  
 A world of produce. Mattock and pruning-knife  
 Will spare the soil and let the vine alone,  
 And the sturdy ploughman set free his yoked oxen.  
 No more will wool be taught the trick of fooling  
 The eye with different dyes; the ram in the field  
 Will change his coat himself—now glowing purple,  
 Now saffron yellow—and the pasturing lambs  
 Spontaneously acquire vermilion fleeces.

“Let the centuries run,” the Fates have cried to their spindles,  
 “And follow the pattern of destiny’s fixed will.”  
 And so, dear child of the gods, Jove’s seed, his aide,  
 Enter on your illustrious career—  
 The hour is at hand. Look how the universe  
 Under its great dome rocks and nods in assent,  
 Land masses, oceans, seas, the unfathomable  
 Sky, all jubilant at the age to come.  
 May the last years of my life be long-drawn-out  
 And breath enough given me to record your deeds!  
 As your poet I should sing invincibly;  
 Even Thracian Orpheus, even Linus, though  
 One had his mother’s backing, one his father’s—  
 Orpheus Calliope’s, Linus bright Apollo’s—  
 Even Pan, with all Arcadia as judge,  
 Even Pan, competing, would admit defeat.

Fare forward, babe, begin to greet your mother  
 With a smile—she had ten hard months carrying you.  
 No boy who has not smiled up at a parent  
 Deserves to be invited by a god  
 To a feast, or by a goddess to her bed.

Translated by JAMES MITCHIE from the Latin

(With acknowledgments to the *Times Literary Supplement*, October 25, 1991, p 12)

## LIFE—POETRY—YOGA

### THREE PERSONAL LETTERS

My friend Mr. Baldoon Dhingra of UNESCO has sent me for comment a letter to him from you as Editors of the periodical MANAS of Los Angeles, touching upon Sri Aurobindo. I should like to clarify a few matters

While saying you “are far from qualifying as ‘experts’ on Indian philosophy”, you have submitted your “impression” that Sri Aurobindo has said nothing that is not better said in the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. Then you go on to make two points (1) “Gandhi, on the other hand, it seems to us, gave a new vitality and contemporary life to India’s ancient wisdom,” (2) “Gandhi, therefore, again it seems to us, was able to move other men in the direction of greatness—toward heroism, that is.” Finally, you declare “If Sri Aurobindo has anything of this sort to his credit, it has not come to our attention.”

I should like to start with the point about Gandhi and the ancient wisdom of India. Let me ask: “What is meant by this wisdom?” The answer is in the two scriptures mentioned by you: the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. There are various interpretations of these scriptures, but no interpretation can have any value if it denies that these scriptures put before us a life of God-realisation by means of direct concrete mystical experience of the Eternal, the Infinite, the Divine. This experience must be distinguished from the merely moral life. One can be a great mystic, a great Yogi, as well as a highly moral person. Indeed, morality in the highest sense goes hand in hand with mysticism and Yoga. But to be the practitioner of a moral life—however that may be conceived—does not necessarily make one a great mystic, a great Yogi. To be a knower of Brahman (the ultimate Reality), Atman (the Universal Self of selves, basically one with Brahman), Ishwara (the creative Personal God, the aspect of ultimate Reality which is in relationship with the persons that we are and with the universe He has emanated)—to be a knower of these supreme existences and to let that supra-intellectual knowledge issue in a life lived in the light of a more-than-human consciousness is something far greater than to be a mere moralist following *ahimsā*—non-violence—or any other rule by means of will-power and fellow-feeling. The moral life in itself is a fine thing, but it cannot be compared in greatness to the mystical life—the life of a Krishna, a Buddha, a Christ, a Teresa of Avila, a Ramakrishna, a Vivekananda, a Ramana Maharshi. Nor can we deny that nothing short of the mystical life, the Yogic spirituality, is the *beau idéal* of the Upanishads and the Gita, the vibrant luminous essence of India’s ancient wisdom.

Now I may ask “Whatever be Gandhi’s greatness—and surely he was no small creature—can we regard him as a knower of Brahman, Atman, Ishwara by

direct concrete experience and realisation such as the Upanishads and the Gita at their core urge upon us?" Nobody who has studied Gandhi's life will make the claim, nor did Gandhi himself think that he was a mystic or a Yogi. Mysticism and Yoga are never enjoined by him in any of his writings. All that he enjoins are truthfulness and non-violence. Valuable virtues, no doubt, but in themselves not at all identical with God-realisation such as India's ancient wisdom envisaged. You will perhaps say that Gandhi was not only a moral man but also a religious one. Granted. But surely you cannot put mere religion on a par with God-realisation. Religion at its best is a mental and emotional acceptance of the Eternal, the Infinite, the Divine. It can be a good preparation for the truly spiritual life, just as the practice of moral virtues can. But to be religious, no matter how highly, is not the same thing as to know the unitive life, the state of inner union with a more-than-human, a divine reality that brings a light, a bliss, a power, a love the merely mental and emotional acceptance of the Eternal and the Infinite can never compass. To talk of having faith in God or even of listening to an "inner voice" is to encourage and practise the ordinary religious temper and the ordinary moral conscience. A man of unusual calibre like Gandhi may encourage and practise these things in an unusual way, but they still remain, for all their intensification, within the domain of ordinary morality and religion and never cross the barrier between them and God-realisation.

Possibly at this point you will protest: "Don't you know that Gandhi was doing Karma Yoga, the Yoga of Work, and that the Indian scriptures speak ever so highly of the Karma Yogi?" Well, there is a lot of confusion caused by a loose employment of these scriptural terms. Popularly, Karma Yoga is supposed to be the doing of work with trust in God, a keen sense of duty and as much disinterestedness as possible. And the motive behind it is believed to be service of mankind. But one may inquire: "How does such action become Yoga?" Yoga means union—with the Divine; where is any room here for the unitive life?" What we have here is still a mixture of religion and morality. The true Karma Yogi is a-fire with aspiration to unite with the Eternal and the Infinite. Service of mankind is only a means to an end for him: it is a means towards the mystical experience by enlarging one's scope of action beyond the small individual ego and, when the mystical experience is reached, service of mankind is a means to express that experience in the world. But this service is not the only means. Literature, art, science, educational activity, law, medicine, even humble private occupation, or anything else suiting one's abilities—all these and not social service alone are the legitimate means available. And true Karma Yoga is done fundamentally by a threefold process: (1) there is a deeply devoted inner offering of one's actions to the Supreme Lord—a constant remembrance and consecration, (2) there is an inner detachment not only from the fruit of one's actions but also from the actions themselves, an ever-increasing detachment until the infinite desireless impersonal peace of the Atman, the one World-Self that is an ever-

silent witness or watcher, is attained and a spontaneous superhuman disinterestedness becomes possible, (3) there is, through this attainment and through complete surrender of one's nature-parts to the Lord, the Ishwara, the transmission of a divine dynamism, a superb World-Will from beyond the world, in all one's actions. God-realisation is the essence of Karma Yoga as of all other Yogas.

If a man does not have this God-realisation, it is anomalous to speak of his giving "a new vitality and contemporary life to India's ancient wisdom"—for he does not at all embody that wisdom at its purest and profoundest. This is not to refuse greatness to him, but it is not the greatness ancient India upheld as the top reach of the human soul. So the comparison between Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo cannot stand. Even if, as alleged, Sri Aurobindo "has said nothing that is not better said in the Upanishads and the Bhagawad Gita" he is still in the direct line of the ancient wisdom of India. If India has anything pre-eminently to give humanity at present, it would be this wisdom in a form suitable and applicable to modern needs, this wisdom with a new and contemporary vitality. But without this wisdom the greatness and heroism one may induce in others are certainly never what ancient India considered the highest achievement in life and what modern India in tune with its inmost being could charge with appropriate new values and offer as the highest achievement.

If you are after spreading India's ancient wisdom in a form vibrant with contemporary vitality, you may choose somebody else than Sri Aurobindo whom you may think better than he in the line of mystical experience and philosophy and all-round constructivism, but if you choose Gandhi you are off the track altogether and are hardly acting in consonance with your aim. Declare your aim to be Tolstoyan Christianity in a garb of Jain and Buddhist morality coloured with the nomenclature of Hindu piety, and you will be justified in referring so frequently to Gandhi. And you will be justified in extolling whatever greatness and heroism this way of thought and life may cause. But neither this way of thought and life nor such greatness and heroism are relevant to the aim you have actually declared. Please do not imagine I am trying to belittle Gandhi in your eyes or to pour cold water on the enthusiasm you have for pushing his precepts. You are welcome to your admiration and your work. But the second and third points submitted in your letter are, in my opinion, based on a misunderstanding of fundamental facts.

Once the misunderstanding is cleared, you will be more inclined to study what Sri Aurobindo has to say and what he has done. I have written a score of articles scattered over several periodicals to bring home in various ways the newness of Sri Aurobindo, the extension he has made of India's ancient wisdom and the completeness, the integrality, to which he has carried the spiritual life and made it the fount of a dynamism and creativity in the world. Others too have written on the same theme and I may refer you to the article entitled *Towards a*

*New World* by “Synergist” in the series *The World Crisis and India* in the fortnightly I am editing, MOTHER INDIA.<sup>1</sup> The article appeared in the Special Number of August 15, 1949. August 15, by the way, is not only the day of India’s Independence but also the birthday of Sri Aurobindo—a seeming coincidence which we may well take to be really symbolic of the representative character of one who was Bengal’s and afterwards all India’s acknowledged leader in the most formative years of the country’s struggle for freedom from British rule and who is a distinguished poet and an admirable prose-writer on a variety of subjects—philosophical, cultural, literary, sociological, political—and who, above all, is the Master of a Yoga which does not reject but embraces the whole field of life and seeks to transform it to the uttermost.

Apropos of India’s struggle for freedom, I may remark that in those six years which Sri Aurobindo spent in political activity and during which he was three times charged with sedition and three times acquitted, there was a play of heroism in his revolutionary programmes not only on his own part but also by way of infusing selfless courage in a host of his followers. He has himself spoken of the grave and dangerous work he had to do, work which exposed him even to losing his life along with those who had turned heroes under his inspiration. Many of his “boys” actually went to the gallows with smiling faces and the cry he had made India-wide of “Bande Mataram”—“I bow to You, O Mother”—with which Bankim Chandra Chatterji’s famous patriotic song begins. Sri Aurobindo was never an armchair theorist, a doctrinaire politician. He was a dynamic figure who charted out in embryo most of the constructive policies Gandhi later developed. Where he differed from Gandhi was in the latter’s making a fetish of *ahimsā* and on two or three crucial occasions spoiling by such a one-sided obsession the political mass-movement which he had brought about as a push towards Swaraj. Again, Sri Aurobindo could never hesitate to throw his full weight behind the effort of the Allies to check Hitler, never put any hindrance in their way as Gandhian politicians did when Cripps came with his enlightened proposals and the Cabinet Mission brought similar plans for full support by India to the Allied Cause and for a post-war declaration of India’s complete freedom either within the British Commonwealth or outside it. With a living grip always on fundamental realities both of the spiritual life and of the common world within which his brand of dynamic spirituality was to function, Sri Aurobindo stands out as an example *par excellence* of what editors of a periodical like *Manas* whose aim is to provoke vitalising thought would be expected to put forward before their readers.

(21.1.1950)

\*

You in Singapore are felt by me nearer than you in England not merely because the “Lion’s City” is geographically nearer than any English “burgh” (from the

<sup>1</sup> At the time this letter was written (1950) *Mother India* was a fortnightly



same root as the Sanskrit “pur” in the “pore” of your place) to Pondicherry (meaning “The New Town”) but also and principally because the ambience of Sri Aurobindo seems more living where you function as the President of the Sri Aurobindo Society than where you are just a stray Aurobindonian. Of course, there is another vision possible of England You have touched on it yourself by referring to No. 2, Plynlmmon Road in Hastings where Sri Aurobindo spent his sixteenth birthday with his brothers. I say “touched” because many more spots in England felt the impress of the bud-form of what traditional Indians continue to call the “lotus-feet” of the Avatar who was their Guru

Perhaps the most sacred spot is the room at King’s College, Cambridge, where young Aurobindo was unfolding his powers the most with superb proficiency in Greek and Latin side by side with mastery in English and where the founts of poetic inspiration were first unsealed to issue in lines like the opening of “Night by the Sea” in which in spite of a half-Romantic half-Victorian colour in the language we get a glimpse or rather a foreshadow of inner mysteries—

Love, a moment drop thy hands;  
 Night within my soul expands.  
 Veil thy beauties milk-rose fair  
 In that dark and showering hair.  
 Coral kisses ravish not  
 When the soul is tinged with thought;  
 Burning looks are then forbid.  
 Let each shyly parted lid  
 Hover like a settling dove  
 O’er those deep blue wells of love.

Outer mysteries making a vague counterpart to the inner secrecies, hover in the prelude speech of the dialogue named “Songs to Myrtilla”. They are also likely to have beckoned to Aurobindo in his late teens during his stay in that Cambridge-room His expression of them is surprisingly mature with a distinct originality in a *genre* that is part Wordsworth, part Shelley and part Keats.

When earth is full of whispers, when  
 No daily voice is heard of men,  
 But higher audience brings  
 The footsteps of invisible things,  
 When o’er the glimmering tree-tops bowed  
 The night is leaning on a luminous cloud  
 And always a melodious breeze  
 Sings secret in the weird and charmed trees,

Pleasant 'tis then heart-overawed to lie  
 Alone with that clear moonlight and that listening sky

Along with the sheer loveliness of the imaged idea and emotion, there is the enchanting modulation of the metrical length of the lines, the way in which, as it were, “the footsteps of invisible things” fall variously in a changing pattern of four, three and five feet and culminate in a final run of six, subtly suggesting the spreading wideness overhead of a calm luminosity and of an intent silence. Here is technical skill at its best, spontaneously striking.

By the way, in the same dialogue between Glaucus and Aethon occurs, among several felicities sometimes extending to quite a number of lines in the midst of scattered passages somewhat immature and cloying, that simple-looking pentameter—

Sweet water hurrying from reluctant rocks—

about whose “heart” and “art” I have written at some length in a letter published in *Mother India*. Here inerrant is the choice of “hurrying” for the water’s movement in the context of “reluctant rocks”—a context where along with the *r*-alliteration picking up the internal *r*-sound of “hurrying” we have an appropriate retarding effect in the cluster of consonants in “reluctant”.

King’s College has indeed a lot of Sri Aurobindo impressed on its subtle ether, *ākāsh*, but possibly the central being in him, the one that became the Master Yogi of the age, can be best tuned-in to at 6 Burlington Road, London, where in 1892 the young Aurobindo, just turned 20, was not only oriented towards India’s cause of freedom by joining the clandestine “Lotus and Dagger” Society but also had through an “empathic” study of Indian spiritual philosophy in the pages of Max Muller his first experience which may be situated on the threshold of Yoga, as it were, by an intense effort of mental concentration he had a distant imaginative sense of the Atman, the universal Self of selves.

I don’t know whether, on return to India, he had any keen nostalgia for the country where he had spent 14 formative years. His early verse takes much pleasure in English flowers and landscapes and there is an unforgettable prolonged revelling in the memory of the English countryside in an essay by him on translating Kalidasa. Throughout his life English literature—English poetry in particular—was a living presence, and a speech in Baroda evinces an appreciative recollection of the temper of “liberal education” at the great English universities. But, according to his own declaration, he had more affinity with France which he never visited, than with England where his material circumstances had been difficult and where, unlike his brother Manmohan, he had scarcely any warm friendships. But the lack of personal attachment would hardly have stood in the way of his understanding your present feelings about the

natural scenery of the land of your birth. At least I, who only spent three months as a boy of 6 in the London of hansom cabs and gas-lamps, have a tremendous attraction to your native country. It is as if life after life in the past I had spent there—or as if in any case my last birth before now had been in England and the sense of its physical features no less than of its language had persisted across the oblivion which succeeds each re-entry of the soul into earth-life. Were I to visit certain scenes in England I might repeat in myself something like Wordsworth's experience when he wrote those four lines which move me strangely:

My eyes are filled with idle tears,  
 My heart is vainly stirred,  
 For the same sounds are in my ears  
 As in my youth I heard.

Your words—"the Welsh mountains, and the 'long roads full of rain' of the seaside town where I went to school"—remind me of that stanza which has haunted me for years:

From the lone shieling<sup>1</sup> of our misty island  
 Mountains divide us and a waste of seas,  
 But still the blood is warm, the heart is highland  
 And we in dreams behold the Hebrides

Perhaps mostly the spell is due to the last line which goes repeating the long *e*-sound and culminates this characteristic with a name which has been invested with a soulfully romantic magic after that passage in "The Solitary Reaper" of Wordsworth:

A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard  
 In springtime from the Cuckoo-bird  
 Breaking the silence of the seas  
 Among the farthest Hebrides

Your recent experiences in England interest me a great deal. The appearance of Champaklal in your midst must have been indeed inspiring. How did his globe-trotting steps turn right towards your Kentish house? Your short but vivid account of Champaklal's play with the ancient sword sent my mind to an incident in Chesterton's *Ballad of the White Horse*: the feat of bow-less and sling-less Colan the Gael, swifter than the arrow-flight attempted by Earl Harold from the opposite side:

<sup>1</sup> Scottish word for grazing ground for cattle

Whirling the one sword round his head,  
 A great wheel in the sun,  
 He sent it splendid through the sky,  
 Flying before the shaft could fly—  
 It smote Earl Harold in the eye,  
 And blood began to run.

Marvelling at this feat,

. Said Alfred. “Who would see  
 Signs, must give all things. Verily  
 Man shall not taste of victory  
 Till he throws his sword away.”

Then Alfred, prince of England,  
 And all the Christian earls,  
 Unhooked their swords and held them up,  
 Each offered to Colan, like a cup  
 Of chrysolite and pearls

And the King said, “Do thou take my sword  
 Who have done this deed of fire,  
 For this is the manner of Christian men,  
 Whether of steel or priestly pen,  
 That they cast their hearts out of their ken  
 To get their hearts’ desire.”

Your sweet whisper to yourself, “Why can’t Amal come?”, got a good answer from yourself. But it is not only his “Collected Poems” that would remain unprepared for publication: his other 20 books or so, plus the 2 already in the press, will find it hard to be out. Amal also feels that in the time still left to him for the Aurobindonian yoga he can’t afford to disperse his powers. he needs all of them to cast his heart out of his ken towards the depths of the intense Unseen and the heights of the immense Unknown (31 7 1988)

\*

I also felt a little sad that the line from Sri Aurobindo we have known in the form—

All can be done if the God-touch is there—

has been found to be in the original text with a small g which has to be restored

when we publish the Critical or Revised Edition of *Savitri*. In my mind the wonderfully simple yet profound line with the capital *G* always belonged to the highly inspiring company of those other single-line masterpieces of Sri Aurobindo in a similar vein alluding to the ultimate Deity.

One who has shaped the world is still its lord.  
His failure is not failure whom God leads .  
How can his work be vain when God is guide? .  
A mighty Guidance leads us still through all...

But let me console you (and myself) that all is not really lost with the small *g*. What Sri Aurobindo means is a psychological-spiritual generalisation, pointing not directly to the one supreme Divinity but to the Godlike derived from Him. The difference from the miscopied version which has been current is that God is spoken of in a broad instead of a specific connotation, and there is the conjuration of a secret potency in the depths of all human beings to bring up into activity a divine element which laughs at the difficult and even the seeming impossible. This nuance I hint at in my expression: “psychological-spiritual.” In the passage itself where the line occurs, the reference is to the advent of the Dawn, a preparation for the account of the approach of this superhuman Presence which would break the bonds of darkness—Dawn that is called “the godhead” in the line:

An instant’s visitor the godhead shone.

A little later she is given the name: “The omniscient Goddess”. And not too further on we have in the original text a line which too has become a part of our quotation-stock with a mistaken capital:

Only a little the god-light can stay.

In between we have “the fields of God” and “the reclining body of a god” From this blend of the upper and lower cases in the same extended context I conclude that Sri Aurobindo does not draw any sharp line of significance between them but distinguishes fine shades of the Divine’s presence or power according to his sense of the appropriate in each place.

In one sense the small *g* should buck us up. In facing obstacles we have now a twofold source of sustenance. There is the Supreme outside of us to whom we can raise our cry and there is also the Supreme inside of us whom we can call up. Though both are essentially the same, now the pointer is more directly to the latter than to the former and the hope, nay, the promise, is given us that by the evocation of the divinity within, who is an image of the divinity without—by the

feeling and perception of the two as simultaneously existent for us—we have the gift of a strength capable of overcoming hurdles of the most formidable nature if only we realise unegoistically the Grace that has come with this gift

(7 7 1986)

AMAL KIRAN  
(K.D SETHNA)

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## NOW

ALL desires from me now fall  
 Like dead parasites—  
 Divine melodies call  
 I prepare for the heights.  
 Neither time-travails  
 Nor transient joys  
 Shall cloud my heart  
 of Equipoise  
 Beyond life's gilded glammers,  
 Its songs of joy and woe,  
 With doors closed to earth's clamours  
 I wake to a secret glow  
 A poise of tranquillity  
 That knows no rush,  
 Awaiting in a mood of silence  
 An Imperishable hush—  
 A repose in divinity  
 Fraught with might—  
 Repossessed eternity  
 Veiled from time's sight—  
 Nowhere the mien of misery—  
 A graced vision now reveals  
 Myriad poses of one ecstasy  
 Whose deathless beauty I embrace  
 In passing form and fading face.

ABMAB SAKIV

## “MY OPERATION AND ESHA’S ROLE IN IT”

AN ACCOUNT BY NIRODBARAN

(2)

*(Continued from the issue of July 1992)*

SRI AUROBINDO’S communication through Esha that he would concur with whatever I decided about my operation, threw me into perplexity. The only solace I could draw from his message was that whatever I did, even though wrong, he would ultimately take the responsibility for it.

As I mentioned previously, I started by trying homoeopathy, but upon finding that the treatment of even eminent homoeopaths had no effect in my case, I resorted once again to the surgical alternative.

Meanwhile, Esha became so concerned about me that she began praying fervently to Sri Aurobindo at the Samadhi to cure me. She saw two or three visions in response to her prayers in which the Samadhi became full of light. On another occasion, she saw me sitting beside the Mother, in deep meditation. These visions brought her some consolation.

Now that I had finally settled upon an operation, I was admitted to Jipmer. The two surgeons in attendance began by informing me that they could not do anything until my greatly distended bladder had been drained by catheter. The catheter was duly inserted, and I remained in the hospital for the next week, in which time my bladder did indeed regain its normal size. I was now finally ready for the operation. In the early hours of the appointed morning, a young sadhak who was attending on me saw in his dream that Sri Aurobindo had come to my room, accompanied by Champaklal who approached me and with the gesture of his hands was advising me to remain quiet. The doctors gave me a local anaesthetic as well as sleeping pills, and told me that they would decide on their course of action in the operation theatre. The problem of the prostate could be dealt with either by a conventional operation, or by the modern method of intra-urethral entry. It was the latter that they finally adopted. The operation took about one hour and a half and was disturbed by hiccoughs on my part.

When I was brought back to my room the day after, from intensive care, I was told that the operation was over. I could hardly believe it, because I had neither known nor felt anything of what had been done to me. I was just the same normal Nirod I had been two days before with the minor difference that I now had a catheter attached to my bladder. The whole process had been completely smooth and trouble-free. The prostate was found to be very big indeed, but the surgeon managed to remove it without any complication. He was highly appreciated for his skill by the other doctors. Now all that remained to be

seen was how long I would have to stay in the hospital. This would depend on how quickly my bladder regained its normal state after its long period of distension. The possible consequences of my advanced age along with my long-neglected condition would also have to be kept under observation, though fortunately my other organs were quite healthy.

I now had to learn to be patient, in addition to being a good patient. But this task was greatly lightened by a team of young friends who attended on me day and night and brought a plentiful supply of nourishing food, so that I quickly found that the time did not weigh on me at all. In addition visitors and friends began to pour in, all adding to my inner jollity, and I don’t know how, but my mind remained unusually calm throughout this period of waiting. I enjoyed my daily reading of *Savitri*. Another of my pleasures was in walking around the campus. In the early mornings and late evenings, I took promenades along the lovely avenues lined and hedged by trees, and delighted in the various songs and cries of birds, among which my favourite was the call of the koel.

The friends were surprised to see me quite fresh and smiling. The sisters and nurses seemed to have observed that I was a very good patient, always smiling and giving them no trouble. Esha when she came to visit me was much relieved and pleased to see me so cheerful. Sri Aurobindo seems to have told her that he had taken away all my pain, that I would be all right but it would take some time and I had to be very careful in every way.

*(To be continued)*



## AURA OF THE MOTHER'S MANIFESTATION

### A MEMOIR OF CHAMPAKLAL SEEN BY CHAMPAKLAL HIMSELF

It was in the afternoon of 9th December, 1986, when I had a dream in which Sri Aurobindo said: "She has brought down with Her the aura of her Manifestation." Before going to sleep my thoughts were full of Champakbhai and for the past few days my consciousness had been filled with the joy that he normally radiates. On waking up from my nap the significance of Sri Aurobindo's sentence flashed in my mind and I knew that the 'aura' which He referred to is the intimate circle of persons who have closely served Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. And, the one who is a synonym of service to the Divine is none else than Champakbhai. Indeed, he is amongst those who have been brought down by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for their own service, not only in their present incarnation, but in all their previous manifestations Champakbhai himself confirms this when he says, "Since the beginning of Creation, whenever the Mother manifested upon earth, I was there with her other children "

Once Champakbhai asked the Mother, "You say I am your child and I was so in my previous births also. But I've a strong feeling that I was the son of a Rishi " The Mother replied, "How do you know that I was not the Rishi?" Of course, Champakbhai does not remember who that Rishi was, nor did the Mother reveal his identity. Who could have been that Rishi who had an integral thrust in his higher aspirations and whose son was an incarnation of aspiration and spiritual obedience? Could they have been Rishi Shamik and his son Shrungi? For, doesn't Champakbhai mention that inspired by Shrungi he had taken in his early boyhood a vow to be truthful like Shrungi and never to ask for anything from anybody?

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have said everything that can be said of Champakbhai and it is not possible for any human being to add to what they have already said. However, what they have said about him is beyond the comprehension of most and only a few who have had to an extent the same experience as that of Champakbhai can hope to elucidate what they have written. In fact, Champakbhai himself says that he was not very conscious about all the changes that were taking place in his own inner being Inwardly, he was steadily advancing towards the goal—"keeping pace with me," as says the Mother. In his outer life, he says, he was conscious of only one thing, as was told by the Mother:

“Be simple,  
Be happy,  
Remain quiet,  
Do your work as well as you can,

Keep yourself always open towards me.  
This is all that is asked from you ”

It is only during a decade or so that the Mother has been creating circumstances which bring Champakbhai experiences of his already realised heights of consciousness, or of new heights that are yet to be scaled by him. He is now constantly asking for the Love and Grace of the Lord and the Mother and his union with Them is as complete as is possible in a human frame.

It was long back, in the 1930's, that Champakbhai was concretely conscious of his unity with the Mother. He told the Mother about this deep-seated experience and She wrote it down on his behalf: "I am also aware of all my being and all its parts, all the cells of my body as made out of the Mother's substance and consciousness and it gives me a feeling of complete unity with the Mother." By writing this down, the Mother has, as says Champakbhai, taken on his own experience; She has put Her seal on his state of consciousness and union. Had the experience been untrue even to the least degree, She would not have written it out in the first place, notes Champakbhai.

Later, in 1965, the Mother gave him the birthday message, as though to confirm from Her side, what he had experienced earlier: "This year, I feel clearly that you have become a *part of myself*." On being asked what the difference is between the experiences of the early 1930s and those of now, Champakbhai commented, "It wasn't constant then, now it is more so." He explained further by saying that the experience of complete union can become permanent only when the body is fully transformed. Until then there's bound to be a gap in the union. The realisations and experiences of the early years of the 1930s and afterwards are "nothing compared with those of now," emphasises Champakbhai. He feels a greater intensity in the closeness of his entire being with the Mother. His psychic being is completely merged with Her, his mind has been widened to grow one with Hers; his vital being has undergone the purest of purification and, of course, his body radiates a glow as though every cell of his body were chanting constantly, *Ma, Ma, Ma*. . . One feels that he has become an extension of the Mother's body and wherever he goes he radiates the Mother's own Love and Consciousness.

Champakbhai is so much a part of the Mother's own body that once She wrote to him, "Your development depends upon our sadhana." At another time in 1936, She wrote, "Surely, we know you are depending upon us. But only when our bodies will change, you will realize what you want." Clarifying these points Champakbhai writes, "Of course, every child who is doing sadhana depends on Her—but this, what she said, was told in a different way. Now by Her abundant Grace she has brought to me experiences to show in what way it is different. . . All that, is Her Glory. . . I am writing this not to show Champakbhai's speciality but it is difficult to say." And he did not proceed further.

But in order to get more light on the subject, I put forth an interpretation of the Mother's comments: "It is true, as you say, that Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's mastery on certain things and levels will make things easier for all Their disciples. But, you being a part of Her body, your development depends upon the transformation of Her own body. Your true development is that of the transformation of the body and on that level you cannot advance as long as She does not transform Her own physical body. The rest of the other developments and achievements on the psychic, mental and vital levels can be achieved by Her Grace and by Her working in you, but, as regards your body-transformation, you are an inseparable part of Her body. As a part develops with the whole, you'll develop into what you want only when She transforms Her body. And your body too will change to the extent that She has changed her body..."

Champakbhai was all happiness to hear my interpretation. And he added his own comment "But I don't think it will be in this life. I am sure of that at least at present—the question of my body-transformation."

In spite of this fantastic state of oneness with the Mother's body and consciousness, "Still at times the old ghost comes and She shows me my defects. In fact, She creates circumstances which show to all those who want to know where they are in their sadhana and not only for me. I don't say this out of humility, but it is a fact. She shows me. Sri Aurobindo has told me to be vigilant always. Sometimes the Hostile Forces attack me, even my body. I become angry or lose control of myself and my body. But, instantly, She puts me back to normalcy. It is generally some person's behaviour that sometimes makes me angry. The attacks of the Hostiles are much less now." A few years back Champakbhai told me that he had still a little bit of the ego left and that is what he calls, perhaps, 'the old ghost'. "It is as tiny as a dot, still, it is there," Champakbhai stressed.

Speaking of his anger, I remember, I used to be afraid of Champakbhai in my childhood. Whenever I went to the Mother, he used to be there and his appearance like that of a lion coupled with his sharp tongue used to frighten me. Now, looking back, I understand the reason for his anger. It was perhaps his concern and anxiety for the Mother's comfort that made him irritable. Champakbhai adds, "not only for Her comfort, but it was affecting Her body very seriously. Because of immense pressure of work and the never-ending queue of people waiting to see Her, the Mother had often to forgo even Her meals." A note from *Champaklal Speaks*, dated 1950, testifies to this.

"When the Mother came to Sri Aurobindo's room today it was 9.54 a.m. As soon as She came She sat on his cot on one side. She looked extremely tired. Looking at me, She asked, 'How long?'"

"I understood what She meant and replied, '2 hours 10 minutes (7.25 to 9.35) (She had to stand and receive people that long.)'"

"The Mother then looked at Sri Aurobindo and said just one word but with

full expression. 'Killing '

"It was painful to hear that

"Sri Aurobindo became very serious."

Another report of Champakbhai tells about the Mother's hard work:

"Today Mother was not well and a notice had been put on the Board to the effect. And yet she went down, gave pranam, and then returned. She was so tired that I could not bear to see Her Tears welled out of my eyes."

If that was the condition of the Mother's engagements in the 1950s, I can very well imagine the pressure of work on Her in the '60s and no wonder Champakbhai had to be very strict with visitors, even to the extent of being rude or angry at times

Nirod-da looks at this problem of Champakbhai's anger from a different angle. Referring to Champakbhai he writes in his book, *Twelve Years with Sri Aurobindo*: "He is outspoken, does not tell lies—the Mother has vouched for it—he cannot bear any kind of insincerity, he cannot make or even see any compromise made with falsehood, his nature is alien to the ways of the world. Much of his apparent rudeness and ill-temper stems from this uncompromising spirit "

Of course, Sri Aurobindo's remark about Champakbhai's defects puts everything in its place: "All have their defects, but Champaklal has great qualities to atone for them "

If Champakbhai had not been a part of the aura of the Mother's manifestation, surely She would not have chosen him for taking personal care of Sri Aurobindo. Because Champakbhai is a part of Her own body he alone could be delegated with the task of looking after the body of the Avatar, Sri Aurobindo.

Perhaps, it was because of this identity with the Mother's body that Champakbhai could easily identify himself with the smallest material requirement of Sri Aurobindo. If he saw "that Sri Aurobindo needed some side pillows, he got them made, if his footstool was a bit high or low, he adjusted it to the required height A table clock had to be kept by his side, for he knew that Sri Aurobindo was in the habit of frequently referring to the time. Such small things that would pass unnoticed because our imaginative perception was perhaps dull, were caught by his sensitive insight and he tried to make happy and comfortable the life of the impersonal Brahman." This was the intimate relation of the worshipper and the worshipped.

"For worship lifts the worshipper's bowed strength  
Close to the god's pride and bliss his soul adores "

In fact, right from his childhood Champakbhai was a servant of God·

“Surrendered to the service for the soul  
And the control of spiritual will ”

Even as a young boy of fifteen years he performed *pūjā* at the Shiva temple in his town for one full month in the place of his demised maternal uncle. As a child he loved to take care of the idols of gods and goddesses in the *pūjā* room of his father's house. He used to give them a bath, decorate them with flowers, place them in their positions—all with an identification and love that was quite unusual in children of that age. What he did as a child and as a teenager, he later did for fifty long years to the Supreme's twin Incarnations: Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. In 1928 Sri Aurobindo even remarked once: “Champaklal looks magnificent, he looks like a priest.” Right from his birth he was cut out to be the servitor of the Divine and no wonder Sri Aurobindo called him back from Patan, his native town in Gujarat, after his very first visit to the Ashram in 1922. And, of course, it is interesting to note that the Mother too told Sri Aurobindo in 1923, “This boy will help me in my work; he will be very useful.” Indeed he has been ‘useful’ to the utmost for fifty long years and none else but Champakbhai could have withstood the constant demands of Divine Perfection in work, purity in body and selfless surrender of the being. As he himself remarks: “You know I came here with the object of God-realisation. Here I found the stress on *Transformation*. Very soon, however, both receded and *Service* took hold of my being entirely.” It reminds us of the lines from *Savitri*:

“Even the smallest meanest work became  
A sweet or glad and glorious sacrament,  
An offering to the Self of the great world  
Or a service to the One in each and all.”

It seems the Mother once asked Dyumanbhai. “Which year were you born?” He replied, “1903.” “Then you are meant for my service,” said the Mother. And Champakbhai too was born on 2nd February 1903—on the *Vasant-panchami* day.

It is perhaps because of Champakbhai's link with Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in his previous lives that he could in this life recognise them immediately and address them as Divine Father and Divine Mother right from the beginning. At that time, in the late 'twenties, only a few amongst the disciples had accepted Mirra Alfassa as the Mother although Sri Aurobindo had by then written the book *The Mother* and had clearly indicated in his letters to the sadhaks that the Divine Mother referred to in the book was none other than Mirra Alfassa.

Perhaps, it is for the same reason of the inseparable oneness with Them that Champakbhai's first reaction on seeing Sri Aurobindo was, “I felt that I had nothing more to do in my life. There was an evident sense of having arrived.” He

felt that he had returned home and that there was nothing else to do but to serve dutifully his divine parents Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had become for Champakbhai the be-all and end-all of his life. And characteristically enough when Sri Aurobindo asked him, "What is the practice you are doing?" Champakbhai replied, "Whatever work I do I offer to the Lord and I offer through you." From the first acceptance of Father and Mother, They had become Champakbhai's Gurus and ultimately the Lord and Aditi.

As though to confirm his growing faith in Themselves, the Mother once wrote to Champakbhai, "Take advantage of the circumstances to get rid of all attachments to the members of your family. You must learn that you have no more brothers, sisters, father, mother except Sri Aurobindo and myself and you must feel free and unconcerned about whatever happens to them. We are your whole family, your protection, your all in all."

Those were the months when Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were experimenting with occult forces to see if man could receive the Overmental gods and goddesses. Success of the experiment would pave the way for the descent of the Supramental. It is said that God Varuna descended into Nolini-da while other Gods descended into others turning them overnight into poets and artists. Into Champakbhai came down the Being who represents the Principle of Aspiration, one of the four pillars to bring down Immortality. The other pillars are. Purity, Faith and Devotion.

It was indeed a great privilege for Champakbhai to serve Sri Aurobindo and the Mother but I feel that the greatest Grace he received from Them was Their embrace and a sight which even the Gods would have envied. In early 1926, Champakbhai had been given the opportunity to embrace the Mother. "She took me in her arms and held me for a long time. I surrendered myself completely to her. She held me pressed like a child and made me a divine child," reports Champakbhai. And the embrace of the Divine Mother transformed him into, as Sri Aurobindo said later, "a demi-god". On being asked what he understood by 'demi-god', Champakbhai replied, "I don't understand all these things. My way was different. These things can be known only by experience." Indeed his way was different; he never bothered himself with the advancement of his sadhana. Year after year Sri Aurobindo and the Mother graded him in his spiritual achievements. His aim was to be conscious of a perfect service with a total surrender. The rest he left to their Grace, they would do for him whatever was necessary.

Again, Sri Aurobindo, shortly before he passed away in 1950, embraced and kissed Champakbhai several times on one occasion as if to shower His grace on him for all the service rendered. And the Lord's open expression of love must have irradiated Champakbhai totally, bringing a sense of the immortal presence into his very physical consciousness.

The news of the Master's embrace spread amongst the disciples and one of

them, an artist, Premod Kumar Chatterjee, inspired by the Lord's act of supreme Grace painted a beautiful picture of Sri Aurobindo embracing Champakbhai. The expression on Sri Aurobindo's face is one of supreme compassion, love and grace. None of Sri Aurobindo's photos have captured that aspect of Sri Aurobindo, I feel. The posture and lines of the body of Sri Aurobindo are so lyrical and fluid that it seems that His body is melting into Champakbhai's. And the position of Champakbhai, with his hands surrendered and the face turned to his right, while leaning on Sri Aurobindo's chest, gives the impression of total surrender imbued with peace and joy. The colour scheme of both the bodies being the same, one feels as if Champakbhai's body is a part and parcel of Sri Aurobindo's body. Much later, in 1965, the Mother said that Champakbhai is a part of Her body. Perhaps in 1950, Champakbhai had already become a part of Sri Aurobindo's body. And the physical consciousness of both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother being one, Champakbhai truly belongs to the bodies of both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Since the Divine's embrace it seems that all of Champakbhai's "soul-postures donned divinity."

An interesting anecdote is recounted by Champakbhai in connection with Premod Kumar Chatterjee's painting. It seems that the artist had presented the painting to Kiran Mehra, herself an artist. Champakbhai was not even aware of the existence of this painting. One day, in the early 1980's Kiran Mehra brought out the painting to show it to Champakbhai. He was so moved by it that he asked her if it could be photographed. It was photographed accordingly. In January 1987, when Champakbhai went to Orissa, a devotee of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother arranged for the distribution of this picture through Champakbhai in Orissa. The Lord's Compassion and Grace were spread amongst others too, thanks to the loving act of Champakbhai.

"I was always at my best with Sri Aurobindo," writes Champakbhai. "With Mother it was different, my behaviour with her was exactly as it was with my physical mother." The Mother too wanted that people around Her should accept Her as their physical Mother. It seems that once Lumière, popularly known as Light-di in the Ashram, had a severe toothache and she went to the Mother for treatment. She was given some tablet to be kept in her mouth and she was asked to sit down quietly in a corner. As the pain was frightful, Lumière sat down on a chair, closed her eyes and waited for the pain to subside. After a while, the Mother returned and quietly stood a little away from Lumière, watching her. When Lumière opened her eyes, she was surprised to see the Mother standing in front of her. She jumped up and stood erect, in respect and reverence. The Mother told her to sit down, asking "Would you have stood up if I had been your physical mother?" Similarly, on 13-9-1926 the Mother told Champakbhai, "One day you came running and weeping to me and fell on my lap. 'Be my mother, be my mother,' you told me, I answered 'I am your

mother.' " That is why perhaps She used often to make Champakbhai sleep on Her lap and then gently put his head on a cushion and leave for Her work, as any physical mother would have done.

*(To be continued)*

V. ANAND REDDY

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## SEARCH

I SOUGHT Him, oh, I sought Him night and day;  
I prayed and prayed; I knelt and cried aloud;  
I whipped myself for sins that kept away  
The Lord I loved; I praised Him and I vowed  
Alms to the poor and tithes to Him, I kept  
Long silences and played the deaf-and-dumb;  
I counted beads of blessings and I wept  
Beads of despair—and still He did not come.

Yet all the time He filled the earth and sky;  
Through every truth I learned He spoke His thought;  
In every man I met He passed me by;  
With my mind thought His thoughts, with my hands wrought  
His works—but I was blind and could not see  
Him who was my own heart in search of Me.

JOHN DILETT FREEMAN



# REMEMBRANCE OF CHAMPAKLAL

## A LETTER FROM ENGLAND

9.5.92

My dear Amal,

Yesterday I was sorting out some papers prior to my return to Singapore (Tuesday) when I came across a photograph of Champaklal taken when he visited me here during his last trip to England—1986, I believe. I had gone into the garden to greet him, so the picture shows us holding hands and smiling at each other. In the background a white rose tree is in full bloom. I thought, “How fortunate I am to have this picture!” A few hours later a friend telephoned me from London to say that Champaklal had left his body that day.

Last night I awoke remembering him again with an impression of a solemn music like a processional march, and as always I tried to fit words—without great success, I fear—to “keep” the music. Those chords have become mere repetitions, but I send this little tribute anyway, in memory of his wonderful life.

### CHAMPAKLAL

Dim down the light,  
O good and faithful one  
Peace, peace, he sleeps—  
His work, it was well done.

His soul with open eyes  
Now meets delightedly  
The long-remembered gaze  
Of veiled divinity.

Heart now speaks to heart,  
The joyful tears flow,  
He hears the much-loved voice,  
The words of long ago—

“Come home, come home to us,  
O good and faithful son  
Rejoice, rejoice with us—  
Your work, it was well done.”

With love always,  
SONIA DYNE

# MORE LIGHT ON THE MOTHER'S PAINTINGS AND DRAWINGS AND HER OTHER NEW CREATIONS

BY HUTA

## I

IT was a pleasure for me to go through the book *The Mother. Paintings and Drawings*

The Mother showed me almost all these paintings in September 1956 before she taught me painting from scratch. She introduced to me each of her paintings with great enthusiasm. I have given a full account of all this in *The Story of a Soul in Mother India* from August 1981 onwards.

During that time Krishnalal asked from me the offprint of the record I had made of the Mother's sketches. For, he said he had no such record.

Much later Vasudev asked me for another copy to give it to Jayantilal for this book.

I see here the image of the Buddha—Plate 108 on page 132. If I had been consulted I could have informed the compiler about a number of things.

On 11th April 1957 the Mother sent me the statue which was a combination of Buddha and Shiva. She asked me to do a sketch of it. I did so and showed it to her in the evening in her Playground room. She found it inaccurate. She said

“Bring the statue tomorrow evening. I will sketch it in front of you to make you understand how it can be done correctly.

“You see, the statue has come from Tibet.”

Many years passed. The original sketch which is with me became brown; so I got a photostat copy made of it in the All India Press.

In 1977 I was requested by Prakash Patel and Basabjit Deshmukh, who were at that time cultivating the garden in Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, to give a copy of the sketch so that they might get a bronze statue made by a sculptor, B. Vitthal of Bombay who had come to Pondicherry for the purpose.

Since the Mother's sketch was only a profile the sculptor assured us that he would make the full face by copying the other side of the profile. So he made several specimens from clay. We chose what was closest to the original sketch.

Finally the sculptor made a bronze statue of Buddha. He returned the copy of the sketch. Prakash and Basabjit asked me to keep the statue for some time in my meditation room before it was placed in one of the corners of the School garden. Before they installed it on the occasion of the Mother's birth centenary I got photographs taken of the statue.

I was happy to see this concrete representation put in the right place

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It was interesting and amusing to find my name in the book, page 174.

“The Mother encouraged Huta to illustrate Sri Aurobindo’s epic poem, *Savitri*, and herself made sketches for the paintings. Her sketches are not reproduced in the present volume, but some paintings based on them and done according to instructions have been published elsewhere. Naturally, the actual execution of paintings represents Huta’s style and ability and cannot be considered identical to what the Mother would have done with her own hand. Yet these *Meditations on Savitri* gave a hint of the kind of mystical imagery and symbolic expression she might have employed if she had taken up painting again in her later years. Their purpose is, in the Mother’s own words, to make us ‘see some of the realities which are still invisible for the physical eyes.’ The work with Huta in the 1960s on the illustration of *Savitri* was the Mother’s last substantial involvement with art.”

This account is incomplete and at places incorrect.

The book reports:

“The Mother encouraged Huta to illustrate Sri Aurobindo’s epic poem, *Savitri* and herself made sketches for the paintings. Her sketches are not reproduced in the present volume . . .”

As a matter of fact, the Mother never wanted her sketches for *Savitri* and other sketches to be published anywhere except where she would want. She had written her comment on each of them as well as her instructions. The Mother told me that when all the books of *Meditations on Savitri*—name given by her—would be published, her sketches would take the form of a separate book which would correspond to the *Savitri* paintings. Similarly the rest of her earlier sketches would be published along with my earlier paintings as planned by the Mother.

There are hundreds of sketches. Some are coloured ones which she had done with crayons. Regarding all of them the Mother said jokingly.

“Ah! you see, when good food is served, we must not tell how it was cooked—similarly we must not show my sketches nor my teaching of how the paintings were done. People must know by themselves how everything is done!”

\*

Further the book narrates

“ but some paintings based on them and done according to instructions have been published elsewhere. . ”

The Mother's sketches were published in the books *Meditations on Savitri*

The four volumes of *Meditations on Savitri* consist of *Savitri Book One Cantos One to Five* We took Cantos Two and Three in one volume.

The Mother told me when I offered her the last—fourth—volume of *Meditations on Savitri* on 18th February 1965.

“Child, the volumes of *Meditations on Savitri* we have published so far are only experiments. I did not let you retouch and redo the paintings in the volumes, because I wanted to show to the world how the consciousness is developed ”

For the publication of these four volumes the Mother got sold my gold ornaments which I had offered to her.

The Mother and I completed the whole *Savitri—Twelve Books—*through paintings in 1965, which—except for one book—are not yet brought out.

In 1966 the Mother wished me to retouch and redo quite a number of paintings before they went to the Exhibition Hall. She looked at them more than once in order to fill them with her Force and Consciousness.

This message was given by the Mother for the exhibition of *Savitri* paintings:

“The importance of *Savitri* is immense

Its subject is universal

Its revelation is prophetic

The time spent in its atmosphere is not wasted.

It will be a happy compensation for the feverish haste men put now in all they do

10 2 67

THE MOTHER

Later in one of the Newspapers it was reported:

“NEWS IN BRIEF

1-3-67

PONDICHERRY Exhibition of Paintings

An exhibition of paintings, illustrating the whole epic of Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*, is being held by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram here, in connection with the celebration of the birthday of the Mother of the Ashram on February 21 ”

The Mother wrote to me on 13 2 67:

“My very dear little child Huta  
Yes, everything is going on well with the exhibition But you are right; the  
only thing that truly matters is to realise the Divine—and that is sure to be  
With all my love ”

\*

Once again the book expresses:

“. Naturally, the actual execution of paintings represents Huta’s style and  
ability and cannot be considered identical to what the Mother would have  
done with her own hand ”

When I came to stay near the Mother on 10th February 1955 I did not  
know how to draw even a straight line, never had any colour-sense—leave  
aside how to hold brushes! I was quite “an unshaped consciousness”

The Mother taught me everything right from the very first principles  
In one of her letters she assured me:

“Yes, I shall teach you all I know about painting and feel sure you will learn  
well.”

In another letter she wrote

“Indeed I shall show you how to paint and I shall be glad if you learn well ”

The Mother sent me a list of the painting materials required I received  
them from London through my people’s agent

On 14th December 1956 she did in front of me an oil painting of the  
flower—Hibiscus—“Grace,” to show me how the colours should be mixed and  
used on a canvas board by giving different strokes with different brushes

Later she gave me this very painting

In 1956 onwards she did numerous sketches of the objects she sent me from  
her rare collections I also received many various flowers She made me paint all  
these so that my consciousness, hands and eyes might be trained before we  
launched into the huge sea of *Savitri* paintings.

In August 1957 the Mother got my paintings exhibited along with the  
paintings of other artists and students

She also taught me how to draw with crayons on tinted papers Mostly I  
drew her visions which the Mother related to me She gave significance to all of

them along with her comments. Here too she did some sketches.

During our work on *Meditations on Savitri* I could not follow in one particular painting the colours she had meant. So in one of her *Savitri* sketches she pasted coloured pieces of lustrous nylon in order to make me understand the colour scheme.

Even if it was "Huta's style", there was a divine touch in the whole new creation. For, the Mother often concentrated on my hands while holding them.

She said in one of her talks to me, my report of which as of all her other talks, she has seen:

"Here in the Ashram I encouraged several people before you were born but without avail. Now you will fulfil my wish.

Since physically I have no time, I will use only your hands. Substantially the whole creation will be mine . "

Here I may recall that Krishnalal and Jayantilal used to come to my studio to see how I mixed various colours to make pictures according to the Mother's guidance.

Much later Krishnalal remarked:

"Huta, it took me long to adopt your style and technique."

I marvelled at his modesty.

\*

Once again the book *The Mother Paintings and Drawings* says:

" *Meditations on Savitri* give a hint of the kind of mystical imagery and symbolic expression she might have employed if she had taken up painting again in her later years. Their purpose is, in the Mother's own words, to make us 'see some of the realities which are still invisible for the physical eyes ' "

These are the four messages the Mother gave for the four volumes—*Meditations on Savitri*.

(1)

"Savitri, this prophetic vision of the world's history, including the announcement of the earth's future.—Who can ever dare to put it in pictures?

Yet the Mother and Huta have tried this way.

We simply meditate together on the lines chosen, and when the image becomes clear, I describe it with the help of a few strokes, then Huta goes to her studio and brushes the painting

It is in a meditative mood that these 'meditations' must be looked at to find the feeling they contain behind their appearance "

(2)

"Here is again a humble attempt to make you see some of the realities which are still invisible for the physical eyes."

When I offered the second volume in August 1963 to the Mother she said:

"Occultists will surely benefit by this book "

(3)

"If you want to enjoy these 'meditations', you must put aside all conventional notions about art and painting

Concentrate silently your vision behind the apparent form of the picture and you will reach the meaning.

Huta is the painter "

(4)

"Behind the appearances there is a subtle reality much closer to Truth, it is that one we are trying to show you "

\*

Once again, it is stated in the book—*The Mother Paintings and Drawings*

"The work with Huta in the 1960s on illustration of *Savitri* was the Mother's last substantial involvement with art "

No, it is not true. Her last involvement with art was up to 1972 Here are the outlines:

The Mother and I completed the whole of *Savitri* in paintings in 1965 In 1966 under her direction I retouched and redid many paintings of *Savitri*

In 1967 we took up the new work of expressing through painting Sri Aurobindo's Poems.

During this work the Mother wanted me to paint the vision she had seen many years back

This picture, which is to be a mural, shows the following as related by the Mother.

Here the Universal Deity—one of the Mother's aspects—is sitting on a boulder, in the midst of a beautiful scenery, giving the Spiritual Wealth to people of all Nations.

The picture was meant to be a vast conception and not restrict itself to a narrow representation.

This aspect also stands for Mother India whom the Mother, looking into the future, calls 'The Guru of the world.'

When the Mother saw this painting she suggested one or two alterations which I have made

On seeing the final picture she expressed her satisfaction and pleasure

Originally the Mother wished this vision to be painted on the right-side wall at the entrance of Golconde Her plan was:

Under the brook in the painting a concealed pipe has to be arranged so that water may trickle through the grooves which are in Golconde between the slabs. People will have the illusion that the water is flowing from the brook in the picture.

In this water people have to wash their feet and, after wiping them on a big mat near the steps, go to their rooms.

This very painting the Mother chose for the poem *Bandemataram*.

\*

In January 1968 the Mother and I started yet another new work, *About Savitri*, as named by the Mother

The first volume of *About Savitri* was printed on 29th March 1972 at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram press. She gave this message to the book:

“*Savitri*

The supreme revelation of Sri Aurobindo's vision.”

On the first page she inscribed.

“About Savitri with some paintings ”

I did the paintings according to the Mother's comments which I had recorded on a tape-recorder.

There are still three volumes to be published

The Mother has disclosed through her comments Sri Aurobindo's and her vision of the New World—expressing the Supramental Light, Force, and Consciousness accompanied by Delight—and their effect on the cells of the body.



The Mother chose the size and colour of hand-made paper and asked me to paint by using the pigment *Gouache*

In the first volume of *About Savitri* the Mother related to me two of her visions which she had seen during our work. I recorded her words on the tape-recorder

Then she did the sketches in blue ink to make me understand. I painted them. But she told me that these visions were not to be included in the first volume of *About Savitri*. I respected her wish

\*

I also recorded on the tape-recorder the passages of *Meditations on Savitri* which the Mother recited. We gave copies of them to Sunil Bhattacharya to compose the *Savitri* music which was meant to be played during the general meditation in the Playground.

\*

Slides of *Savitri* paintings were taken by Richard Eggenburger of America. I sent all the films to Bombay for developing.

These slides were shown in the Ashram Theatre in 1972 on Sri Aurobindo's birth centenary year as arranged by the Mother.

The Mother also expressed her wish to make a movie of the *Savitri* paintings. She gave in my presence her special blessings to Michel Klostermann of Germany, and instructed him how she wanted the movie to be made: no feature of any kind except *Savitri* paintings, her recitations and her own organ music serving as background music.

Now the movie is being made in Germany.

On 30th September 1972 the Mother gave me copyrights for my work

\*

In 1970 the Mother revealed to me yet another of her visions by doing sketches and explaining to me their colour schemes.

In 1972 she instructed me to do her last vision of the "physical mind". I painted it. The description of her vision has appeared in the *Bulletin* August issue 1972.

Here I may report that the photographs of my earlier paintings which were exhibited in August 1957 are published in the *Bulletin* November issue 1957.

Also the photographs of *Savitri* paintings which were exhibited in 1967 are printed in the *Bulletin* April issue 1967

\*

When my books were published in Bombay at Tata Press in 1980s, the Trustees of Sri Aurobindo Ashram gave me not only their consent but also their permission in writing—December 25, 1979—to print photographs of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo and take the relevant passages from their books

The following letter dated 18th August 1977 of the late Managing Trustee—Mr Counouma of Sri Aurobindo Ashram was full of assurance:

Dear Huta,

Thanks for your yesterday's note regarding your matters related to *Savitri* and also your other books—there is no question of anybody taking any decision without your permission—Rather, the decision will be entirely yours. Our help will be always there

I understand your feelings and aspirations and such an attitude is a great help to the Ashram.

Yours, with warm regards,

Counouma

I am grateful to the Mother to have given me an opportunity to make the most of my money right from the very beginning for her cause—for her work. The money was given to me by my parents.

\*

I feel as if my work is never ending. Once the Mother remarked.

“Child, *Savitri* is your life-long work.”

Now I have been preparing quite a number of albums of the photographs of all the *Savitri* paintings as well as other paintings whose prints were made in Bombay at India Photographic Company Limited, along with the Mother's sketches, her letters on the matter and her comments. I am doing this in order to keep a record for the future which may serve many purposes.

To maintain one thousand five hundred paintings at Golconde (where the Mother has given two rooms to preserve the paintings), the Mother's thousands of letters and other sacred materials at my place is no joke. Twenty-four hours fall short for this purpose

It seems my apartment, arranged by the Mother herself, has become “*Savitri* Research Centre”!

Often the Mother expressed her feelings to me:

“We are preparing Truth here. We want young people who are the builders of the New World ”

Whatever I have stated in this article is not even a bird's-eye view or a putting in a nutshell. The Mother has given me so much during my work with her for eighteen years, for the whole of humanity, that the projected sixteen volumes of *The Story of a Soul* on which I have been working are not enough.

She disclosed to me the unknown worlds—both higher and nether worlds. She also taught me how to go out of my body to sojourn in the subtle spheres. She explained to me the mystery of the twelve bodies, their colours and the twelve realms of Consciousness—the twelve dimensions of being.

Time and again I relished her sense of humour which I intend to write about in the succeeding instalments of "The Story of a Soul."

"My hidden Presence led thee unknowing on "

SRI AUROBINDO

Copyright © Huta D Hindocha

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## FLOWER OF A DAY

It is only your lonely heart that desires me,  
 Only your dazzled mind that admires me,  
 O pledge me not with an immortal love,  
 Fidelity on earth is a wing-clipped dove  
 However ardent and high-gazed our tone,  
 Surely one day our wonder-words will have flown.  
 In this moment that is ours and come so close,  
 Beguile me not with the beauty of an unopened rose.  
 Vainly you bring these offerings to my eyes,  
 Wanting from me my secret soul as a prize  
 How can I ignore the call of the Eternal's chime,  
 For this flower of a day on the tree of Time?

SHYAM KUMARI

# ONE OF THE LAST LETTERS OF RAJIV GANDHI

ADDRESSED TO SHRI JAGANNATH KHANNA OF KANPUR,  
A DISCIPLE OF SRI AUROBINDO

~ RAJIV GANDHI  
10 Janpath New Delhi 110011

April 15, 1991

Dear Shri Khanna,

In the past you have sent me your good wishes and greetings.


Elections have come sooner than expected and the "political experiments" which have taken place in the last fifteen months have brought the country to the brink of disaster.

Our country is troubled by problems on every front and unfortunately new ones are being created leading to uncertainty in the minds of our people.

For any country to progress there has to be a stable Government with clear-cut policies. The Congress has in the past displayed such stability whereas other Governments have failed to do so.

I am confident that with your support and the support of your friends and colleagues, we can form a stable Government at the Centre and can work hard together to build a strong and progressive India - the India of our dreams.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,  


## INDIA AND THE CHANGING WORLD

*(A Talk by Akash Deshpande at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education on 15 February 1992)*

THE grip of the Cold War upon the world has loosened. A raging flux of events is sweeping everywhere. The flow of powerful forces has tipped the balance, strong nations are trying to breathe easier and weak ones suffocate as the jigsaw pieces move. The Soviet gambit of relinquishing superpowership and backing off from a stagnant stalemate may sow the seeds of a productive change in Russian society. The European Community is trying to make the whole larger than its European parts. Japan is industriously gnawing away at every niche and has drawn blood through anaesthetised wounds. The United States has leapt like a mighty submerged whale trying to shake off weighty barnacles, with the United Kingdom riding its fin. China has lashed its dragon-tail. The Gulf potentates long for quiet opiation. Uneasiness and chill have given India pause from its self-indulgent pettiness. These changes have been comprehensively anticipated in the social and political thought of Sri Aurobindo. In that sense, this talk will be in the nature of a footnote to Sri Aurobindo's wonderful body of work.

In the press of all these events certain fundamental changes stand out as characteristics of the world today. For one, we have witnessed the collapse of communism such as we knew it. Quite interestingly, capitalism as a principle increasingly opposed communism, and along with the collapse of its antagonist we will witness the downturn of capitalism itself. Due to the decompression of these two major forces, we have scope for freedom of smaller nations. And in the midst of all this, in however left-handed a manner, we are seeing the prominence of the United Nations as an emerging world-body.

There are many factors which bring about these changes. On the surface are the tactical ones, and as such the most obvious. The age being deeply steeped in commercialism and industry, the economic factor is the most immediate. The collapse of communism, especially in the USSR, was engineered through economic competition with capitalism. In China too the spirit of communism is dwindling through economic liberalisation. Apart from economics, there are social and individual factors as well. Access to information, technology, education and mainly access to a freer vision of the world played on the society. Finally, individuals themselves do not want to be regimented by the state, but would rather breathe a freer air.

But beneath these tactical surface factors run deeper reasons. Both communism and capitalism as implemented display extremes of somewhat exclusive principles—in communism the principle of equality and in capitalism the principle of liberty. In the USSR and China everyone was first made equal in however negative a manner, and in that whatever individual freedom could exist

was given. On the other hand, in the US and originally in the UK liberty was the main principle and each individual was free to develop as needed or possible. But since this would soon lead to chaos, some equality of law and order needed to be brought in to support a viable liberty of individuals. The origin of both liberty and equality is in the objective scientific press of the 18th and 19th centuries. Emerging from theocracy and feudalism, Europe discovered science as a liberating force, since its truths were universal, available to everyone, neither interpreted by some theocracy nor controlled by any feudal lord. Liberty found its genesis in science's throwing off the social yokes of theocracy and feudalism. So also the universality and objective nature of science removed the difference between one person and the next. This engendered equality. The objective material principle worked in another way as well. Capitalism was organised as a means of bringing out and exploiting properties of matter directly by the individual, and communism was organised as a principle of interaction in collective matter.

The fundamental principle of science progresses by discovering objective truths in physical nature based on previously discovered objective truths and new objective perceptions of matter. Yet two utilitarian processes hijacked the progress of science. One was the capitalist-imperialist impetus to science, and the other the economist-consumerist impetus to science. The former came about because in capitalism one needs to preserve markets and suppliers outside the capitalist system. For that one needs a prominent military and state infrastructure based on advanced technology. We see this development in colonial Europe and the US. In the latter, each individual is a consumer of tools and conveniences required for personal development, and technology is used to make these conveniences available—thereby giving science another impetus for growth. We can see this as the predominant factor in the resurgence of Japan and to some extent of the European Community. In capitalist systems, factors of production are privately owned, and they continue to shift to where they are the cheapest. In particular, production from the US has shifted outside it to places where it is more economical. At the same time, it needs to sustain its consumer base. Alongside that, it needs to develop strong military techniques to maintain markets and suppliers abroad. Hence it is in general quite susceptible to the economic interdependence promoted by consumerist systems. Similarly, the economic interdependence model does not fare well against the capitalist one, since it can be militarily muzzled. In addition, in this model while freedom of individuals as consumers is assumed in the rest of the world, internally that freedom is denied, as can be seen in Japan. Further, Japanese economy has been organised on a military footing to meet the consumerist paradigm. Thus there is a contradiction planted in both these models which are the root causes of their eventual downturn. The exclusivity of both will not suffice for the emerging world.

However, science itself has come to a threshold where the objective principle has to be abandoned, and we have to look for an intuitive-subjective impetus to science. This has come about through the methodologies of science itself. In spheres of atomic physics it is quite apparent that the observer cannot be independent of the observed system, but rather is within it. This also happens in other organisations of matter such as economic and social systems. In that sense, there are no more any objective perceptions of matter. Science will be led through subjective means. But this is only the very objective way by which subjectivism is entering science. There is an even deeper way of intuitive inspiration in science. We can take a clue from the Kena Upanishad:

यच्चक्षुषा न पश्यति येन चक्षुषि पश्यति

“That which sees not with the eye, that by which one sees the eye’s seings.”

This is the essence of the intuitive-subjective approach. Consider two men, one of normal sight and another born blind. There is the objective reality of day and night—the diurnal cycle of nature. One sees it but the other cannot. Is it that since the blind man cannot distinguish night from day there is no distinction? And how would the man with sight communicate his physical perception to the externally blind man? Based on the Upanishad we see that in fact there is a faculty even in the blind to perceive light and it is this faculty that needs to be invoked in communicating objective truths for subjective perception. Language also enters this equation as the objective vocable for subjective perceptions, though the development of language itself proceeds through inner subjective means.

Proceeding merely from this scientific viewpoint, we cannot see the exclusiveness of liberty and equality surviving. We need also to bring forward the third principle of the French revolution, that of fraternity, amidst a balance of liberty and equality. But even beyond these scientific reasons, there are yet deeper spiritual reasons. As Sri Aurobindo has said, “there is a spiritual possibility of the race,” and a basis is being created for that to work out. In this possibility, we shall see the development and fulfilment of the individual soul and the collective soul simultaneously and harmoniously. The nexus between the individual and the collective shall shape the character of the emerging world. Externally we shall see internationalism in individuals and heterogeneity in nations, a diverse expression of the innate spiritual unity. Liberty, equality and fraternity are outer reflections of deeper soul-principles—freedom, unity and godhood: freedom of the soul behind from the bond of existence and action; unity of the inner soul throughout manifestation; godhood of the soul’s identification with the Supreme in and above manifestation. The soul’s freedom could open the path of escape from manifestation into some individual liberation. But more concrete and true is the World-soul’s fulfilment in realising the Supreme here on earth. Events on earth ever press towards this realisation, and the

current changes prepare a superhuman step in the unfolding evolution. We shall see not just a tactical balance between liberty, equality and fraternity, but a living harmony of freedom, unity and godhood. Harmony is the ineluctable principle of any permanent vision for the world.

But what precisely will be the character of the emerging world? As we have seen, we need integral development of the individual's personality. This would mean certainly that individuals should have access to education, information, technology, work and culture. But more than that, in participation in the collective, individuals will have to bring forth several faculties, not just a single prominent one, in a well-rounded manner, and press the individual soul on the collective soul, just as the collective soul would press on the individual soul to become more and more well-rounded. In the collective character we should see resolution of national and international issues not through imposition—right now we see imposition through theocracy, monarchy, even democracy as imposition by the majority—but through multilateral discussions, shall we say multilogues, in international fora. This character we see even today in most democracies. Almost everywhere there are either hung parliaments or thin and threatened majorities. This situation will continue until there is a political restructuring to accommodate complex and multilateral considerations. And, finally, we should see a rich diversity of culture in the midst of a world-union. Suppression of any culture would disappear and even classical forms of culture would give way to new expressions and their commingling.

For such a novel character of the world to emerge we need novel world institutions. For the individual's fulfilment we need educational, cultural, technological and commercial institutions which give scope for individual development. In the collective we should see local government with organic legislative and executive aspects close to the community. There would be a shallow layering and hierarchy between local, national and international organisations. The national body will emerge in a very multifaceted manner—there will simultaneously press on one another a nation based on language, a nation based on culture, a nation based on education, geography, history, tradition, a nation based on spirituality—press until they congeal into one national unit. For example, India is one such nation, not some bland homogeneity but a rich diversity pressing on itself to create a nation-state. The state apparatus of such a nation needs to be decentralised into local and organic forms of government. In particular, the local bodies would form a layer of laterally interacting networks throughout the world. At the same time, the national umbrella organisation is required to participate in international fora. And for resolution of complex issues in a multilateral manner, we would see development of channels for specific and general communication laterally and vertically.

Before seeing how we could cast such a future world, let us examine the existing landscape. In the capitalist model as exhibited in the US and the UK the principle of liberty alone is exclusive and needs to incorporate into itself the



principle of equality to which it was set up in opposition. ironically, if a certain principle is opposed by a certain other, then the higher truth is in the harmony of both. In Europe the economic interdependence is rather limited since it is by nature commercial alone. In particular, it is an obvious prey to the capitalist model. We should also consider the resurgence of a reunited Germany. There are fears especially in Europe that Germany might go again the fascist route. But we have hope that she would settle instead into leadership of the European community and also be checked by it. We may characterise the resurgence of Japan as imitative. She has weakened her own cultural and religious tradition and hence may not be able to dig deep enough to chart an independent path, though of course she has amassed a great amount of money power. Russia right now we see is passing through a transitional phase. She seems to be going the imitative route, though she is invested with past mystical experimentation. In any case, whatever be the resurgence of Russia, we have no doubt that it will happen in time. In China, communism still seems to linger on, but it must go. It has led to complete suppression of individual freedom. Seeds of its end have already been sown in the economic liberalisation on market principles by the Chinese leaders. We did see the beginning of a pro-democracy movement in the intellectual circles of Chinese polity. However, it was not unmixed with arrogance. From speeches we have heard of student leaders we find that this arrogance cannot tolerate the peasants of China as voting members of the democracy. Even though the Chinese cultural tradition, with its mysticism and spirituality, has been weakened by communism, it is so cast and is so long-living that it may revive and grow from the current trickle to a mighty stream. The main difficulty with the Chinese resurgence and influence in world events may lie in that seeds of her break-up might already have been sown as well. The economic liberalisation of China has happened through development of pockets of market structures which have grown independently, evolved different mechanisms of dealing with customers, government and foreign countries. Again, China needs to incorporate into herself Hong Kong and Taiwan. Also, international pressure on account of Tibet and human rights' violations may mount against China, pushing her into habitual isolation or even break-up. And finally there is Islamic fundamentalism vying for some sort of audience. With the freedom of nations in Central Asia and East Europe there is an Islamic belt right through East Europe, the Middle East, West China, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Of course, this is an anachronistic development. Theocratic attempts have been made but they are now done for, their time in this world is over. They are centralising and arbitrary. In essence they have the principle of fraternity but complete suppression of liberty and equality, and hence cannot survive. Their sole use may be to serve as opposition to the capitalist principle which is spoiling for antagonists.

Through all this we see that India is indeed in a unique position to come up

with a model that the world could hark to. We see in India a concentration of all the ills in the world. We see teeming diversity, lopsided prosperity, factional militarism, resurgent right-wing appeal and we also see frustration of vision. There is no direction in which people know that they are going. But more than all this, India has managed to maintain a very long and continuous tradition of the deepest spiritual seeking. At this time in the world we need to delve into our roots and come up with a vision for the future, and India has preserved that knowledge for which we should search. The path to individual liberation has already been shown by India and extensive collective experimentation as well has been conducted by her. These have lapsed due to an inertia in the Indian milieu, but need to be revived in this new age in a new way. And, finally, also quite importantly, India has a test-bed in which to try out whatever models she develops. The Indian subcontinent is the natural domain of India and if any paradigm can harmonise it, then surely it will inspire the world.

At the same time, there are a lot of problems facing India. There are problems at the individual level and problems for the collective. The basic problems of the individual in India are pettiness in personal dealings, lack of pride in work, poor professionalism, no dynamism and aggressiveness. Drive for the superlative is a 'must'—wanting to be the best, highest, fastest, smallest, and so on. Another problem of the individual is fatalistic and emasculating intellectualism. This intellectualism has very weak receptivity to India's cultural and spiritual heritage. This is all the more prominent in Indians abroad, who would rather make a clean break with it, or an embarrassed admission of it. In contrast, the Chinese outside China have maintained robust cultural ties much to their advantage. What we need is a full-blooded expression and embassy of Indian culture and spirituality. Finally, for the Indian individual, there is the pseudo-spiritual, sentimental religious piety, the other-worldly attitude. Indians do not seem to be fully engaged in existence in the physical. This is exhibited in our divergent trichotomy between what we learn—our education, what we do—our work, and how we live—our homes. There are problems for the collective as well. Every concept that needs implementation has been corrupted. Democracy has been interfered with through poll-rigging, booth-capturing and gerrymandering and, as seen in Punjab, Kashmir and Assam, its results are obvious. Socialism has spawned a massive bureaucracy which has become the double bond of India—double because first it cannot implement what it is set to and second it smothers any organic effort which could change India's character. Another problem which is the outgrowth of the first is its growing factionalism. The solution to this lies in the solution to the first. But what may in the international context be India's nemesis is that there is too much slack in the system. We are not on the frontier of our possibilities and capabilities. Nations cannot respond to social, political or international pressures by becoming smaller, but have to steer themselves always on this frontier. Otherwise they are

threatened with trivialisation. This is precisely what has happened to India. In this commercial age the main lines of commerce are skirting our shore rather than going through it.

What course of action then should we take as individuals, as citizens of India, and certainly as citizens of the world? First of all, we have to fulfil ourselves in the fullness of the spirit by whatever path we choose. Next, in the collective we have to participate in the various institutions, local, national and international while being imbued with the spirit of the emerging world, and not on terms of these institutions. Our every act of participation in them must to some extent chip away at their rock of inertia and sculpt for them bodies of the future. We have to lead, cajole, maybe threaten, and sometimes even flog India and her institutions towards world-citizenship. But, of course, this has to be done with a deep sympathy. Finally, as individuals we have to act with the deeper motive of preparing ourselves and humanity for its next evolutionary step towards which the world is being moulded.

Certainly we need some signs, some telling touchstones that show us we are on the right path. The one thing we should look for is a solution to a deep problem in the world today—a complete absence of personalities that can lead the world forward. As a natural outcome of the subjective-intuitive age we should see the emergence of personalities that can house the world-afflatus. We should also look for efflorescence of cultures, not just classical ones but also new creations, and their harmonious commingling. Lastly, we should look more and more for multilateral solutions to international issues and problems through multilateral fora for their development, discussion, communication and implementation, rather than through imposition. Through all this shall emerge a new world-order starting from the very external liberty, equality and fraternity but growing ever towards an expression of inner freedom, unity and godhood—already charted by Sri Aurobindo.

## SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA

*(Continued from the issue of July 1992)*

SRI AUROBINDO launched himself on a spiritual career in order to gain the power of the Spirit and utilise that power for the redemption of the country. There was quite another side of Sri Aurobindo which is revealed in a long letter he wrote to his wife Mrinalini in August 1905. At that period he had taken on his shoulders more than a man's job, there was the organisational work of the secret revolutionary party; there was the work at the Baroda College as usual, plus the calls on his time for the personal work of the Maharaja and, not the least, there was an increasing pull towards Yogic discipline. In order to get a glimpse of his inner life, we can do no better than reproduce a few letters he wrote to his young wife, Mrinalini. These letters reveal the depth of his love and solicitude for her, his burning patriotism for the country, his growing aspiration for spiritual progress and realisation of the soul and his total surrender of himself to the Divine Will. These letters show how keenly he was aware of his wife's disappointment and the neglect the young wife had been feeling, he described some compelling factors that had made his life what it was. These letters were originally written in Bengali. They had been seized and taken away by the police at the time of Sri Aurobindo's arrest and the house-search in connection with the Alipore Bomb Case. They were produced in the court. That is how they came to see the light of day and became famous in history later.

30th Aug 1905

“Dearest Mrinalini

I have received your letter of the 24th August. I am sorry to learn that the same affliction has fallen once more upon your parents. You have not written which of the boys has passed away from here. But then what can be done if the affliction comes? This is a world in which when you seek happiness, you find grief in its heart, sorrow always clinging to joy. That rule touches not only the desire of children, but all worldly desires. To offer, with a quiet heart, all happiness and grief at the feet of God is the only remedy ...

“Now I will write the other thing of which I spoke before. I think you have understood by now that the man with whose fate yours has been linked is a man of a very unusual character. Mine is not the same field of action, the same purpose in life, the same mental attitude as that of the people of today in this country. I am in every respect different from them and out of the ordinary. Perhaps you know what ordinary men say of an extraordinary view, an extraordinary endeavour, an extraordinary ambition. To them it is madness; only, if the madman is successful in his work then he is called no longer a madman, but a great genius. But how many are successful in their life's

endeavour? Among a thousand men, there are five or six who are out of the ordinary and out of the five or six one perhaps successful. Not to speak of success, I have not yet even entirely entered my field of work. There is nothing then for you but to consider me mad. And it is an evil thing for a woman to fall into the hands of a mad fellow. For woman's expectations are all bound up in worldly happiness and sorrow. A madman will not make his wife happy, he can only make her miserable.

"The founders of the Hindu religion understood this very well. They loved extraordinary characters, extraordinary endeavours, extraordinary ambitions. Madman or genius, they respected the extraordinary man. But all this means a terrible plight for the wife, and how could the difficulty be solved? The sages fixed upon this solution, they told the woman, "Know that the only mantra for womankind is this: 'The husband is the supreme guru.' The wife shares the dharma [law of conduct] of her husband. She must help him, counsel him, encourage him in whatever work he accepts as his dharma. She should regard him as her god, take joy in his joy, and feel sorrow in his unhappiness. It is for a man to choose his work, the woman's part is to give help and encouragement.

"Now, the point is this. Are you going to choose the path of the Hindu religion or follow the ideal of the new culture? Your marriage to a madman is the result of bad *karma* in your previous lives. It is good to come to terms with one's fate, but what sort of terms will they be? Will you also dismiss your husband as a madman on the strength of what other people think? A madman is bound to run after his mad ways. You cannot hold him back, his nature is stronger than yours. Will you then do nothing but sit in a corner and weep? Or, will you run along with him; try to be the mad wife of this madman, like the queen of the blind king who played the part of a blind woman by putting a bandage across her eyes? For all your education in a Brahmo school, you are still a woman from a Hindu home. The blood of Hindu ancestors flows in your veins. I have no doubt you will choose the latter course.

"I have three madnesses. The first one is this. I firmly believe that the accomplishments, genius, higher education and learning and wealth that God has given me are His. I have a right to spend for my own purposes only what is needed for the maintenance of the family and is otherwise absolutely essential. The rest must be returned to God. If I spend everything for myself, for my pleasure and luxury, I am a thief. The Hindu scriptures say that one who receives wealth from God and does not give it back to Him is a thief. So far, I have given two annas to God and used the other fourteen annas for my own pleasure, this is the way I have settled the account, remaining engrossed in worldly pleasures. Half my life has been wasted—even the beast finds fulfilment in stuffing his own belly and his family's and catering to their happiness.

"I have realised that I have been acting all this time as an animal and a thief. Now I realise this and am filled with remorse and disgusted with myself. No more

of all this I renounce this sin once and for all. What does giving to God mean? It means to spend on good works. The money I gave to Usha or to Sarojini causes me no regret. To help others is a sacred duty; to give protection to those who seek refuge is a yet greater sacred duty. But the account is not settled by giving only to one's brothers and sisters. In these dark days the whole country is seeking refuge at my door. I have three hundred million brothers and sisters in this country. Many of them are dying of starvation and the majority just manage to live, racked by sorrow and suffering. They too must be helped.

"What do you say, will you come along with me and share my ideal in this respect? We will eat and dress like ordinary men, buying only what is truly needed and offering the rest to God: this is what I propose to do. My purpose can be fulfilled, once you give your approval, once you are able to accept the sacrifice. You have been saying, 'I have made no progress.' Here I have shown you a path towards progress. Will you take this path?"

"My second madness has only recently seized me. It is this, by whatever means I must have the direct vision of God. Religion these days means repeating the name of God at any odd hour, praying in public, showing off how pious one is. I want nothing of this. If God exists, there must be some way to experience His existence, to meet Him face to face. However arduous this path is, I have made up my mind to follow it. The Hindu religion declares that the way lies in one's own body, in one's own mind. It has laid down the rules for following the way, and I have begun to observe them. Within a month I have realised that what the Hindu religion says is not false. I am experiencing in myself the signs of which it speaks. Now I want to take you along this way. You will not be able to keep step with me, for you do not have the requisite knowledge. But there is nothing to prevent you from following behind me. All can attain perfection on this path, but to enter it depends on one's own will. Nobody can drag you into it. If you consent to this, I shall write more about it.

"My third madness is that while others look upon their country as an inert piece of matter—a few meadows and fields, forests and hills and rivers—I look upon my country as the Mother. I adore Her, I worship Her as the Mother. What would a son do if a demon sat on his mother's breast and started sucking her blood? Would he quietly sit down to his dinner, amuse himself with his wife and children, or would he rush out to deliver his mother? I know I have the strength to deliver this fallen race. It is not physical strength,—I am not going to fight with sword or gun,—but the strength of knowledge. The power of the Kshatriya is not the only one, there is also the power of the Brahmin, the power that is founded on knowledge. This feeling is not new in me, it is not of today. I was born with it, it is in my very marrow. God sent me to earth to accomplish this great mission. The seed began to sprout when I was fourteen; by the time I was eighteen the roots of the resolution had grown firm and unshakable. After listening to what my aunt said, you formed the idea that some wicked people had

dragged your simple and innocent husband into the bad path. But it was this innocent husband of yours who brought those people and hundreds of others into that path—be it bad or good—and will yet bring thousands and thousands of others into that same path. I do not say that the work will be accomplished during my lifetime, but it certainly will be done.

“Now I ask you, what are you going to do in this connection? The wife is the *shakti*, the strength of her husband. Will you be Usha’s disciple and go on repeating the mantras of Sahib-worship? Will you diminish the strength of your husband by indifference or redouble it by your sympathy and encouragement? You will say, ‘What can an ordinary woman like me do in these great matters? I have no strength of mind, no intelligence, I am afraid to think about these things.’ But there is an easy way out. Take refuge in God. Enter once the path of God-realisation; He will soon make good your deficiencies. Fear gradually leaves one who takes refuge in God. And if you can put your trust in me, if you can listen to me alone and not to all and sundry, I can give you my own strength; that will not diminish my strength but increase it. We say that the wife is the husband’s *shakti*, his strength. This means that the husband’s strength is redoubled when he sees his own image in his wife and hears an echo of his own high aspirations in her.

“Will you remain like this for ever: ‘I shall put on fine clothes, have nice things to eat, laugh and dance and enjoy all the pleasures’? Such an attitude cannot be called progress. At the present time the life of women in this country has taken this narrow and contemptible form. Give up all this and follow after me. We have come to this world to do God’s work; let us begin it.

“You have one defect in your nature. You are much too simple. You listen to anything anyone might say. Thus your mind is for ever restless, your intelligence cannot develop, you cannot concentrate on any work. This has to be corrected. You must acquire knowledge by listening to one person only. You must have a single aim and accomplish your work with a resolute mind. You must ignore the calumny and the ridicule of others and hold fast to your devotion.

“There is another defect, not so much of your personal nature, as of the times. The times are such in Bengal that people are incapable of listening to serious things in a serious manner. Religion, philanthropy, noble aspirations, high endeavour, the deliverance of the country, all that is serious, all that is high and noble is turned to ridicule. People want to laugh everything away. At your Brahma school, you picked up a little of this fault. Bari also had it; all of us are tainted by this defect to some extent. It has grown in surprising measure among the people of Deoghar. This attitude must be rejected with a firm mind. You will be able to do it easily. And once you get into the habit of thinking, your true nature will blossom forth. You have a natural turn towards doing good for others and towards self-sacrifice. The one thing you lack is strength of mind. You will

get that through worship of God.

“This is the secret of mine I wanted to tell you. Do not divulge it to anybody. Ponder calmly over these matters. There is nothing to be frightened of, but there is much to think about. To start with, you need do nothing but meditate on the Divine each day for half an hour, expressing to Him an ardent desire in the form of a prayer. The mind will get prepared gradually. This is the prayer you are to make to Him: ‘May I not be an obstacle in the path of my husband’s life, his aim, his endeavour to realise God. May I always be his helper and his instrument.’ Will you do this?

Yours”<sup>2</sup>

From Sri Aurobindo’s letter of 30th August it is revealed that he was engaged in sadhana at the time and was making progress in it. Though he was not entirely engaged in political activities, he had one foot in Baroda and the other in Calcutta. Certainly his mind was associated with the Bengal agitation.

*(To be continued)*

NILIMA DAS

#### REFERENCES

- 1 Up to this point the translation follows an early version by Barindra Kumar Ghose which was seen and revised lightly by Sri Aurobindo. The rest of the translation is new.
- 2 *The Life of Sri Aurobindo* By A B Purani, pp 79-84



# QUANTUM AND THE ENORMOUS CHANGE

(Continued from the issue of July 1992)

## PART II

### Introduction

CHANGE as a fact is what we have driven at in Part I and change in its *modus operandi* is what we shall be driving at in part II.

Before we proceed further with our study in this Part, let us very briefly recapitulate our earlier findings. At first we sketched the historical developments pertaining to the black-body radiation and how, by a fortuitous mad-seeming but inspired reasoning Planck arrived at his celebrated theory of the quantum of radiation. Next, in an identical manner, we presented the history of the photoelectric effect and the coming of photons with Einstein. A general survey of reactions of the scientific world to these ideas then followed. A brief ideative presentation of the theoretical work of Louis de Broglie—matter-waves—and the way it was received formed part of the subsequent discussion. Finally, we touched upon the moods of the scientific community that dominated the two different eras, making an enormous change in the entire “intellectual climate”.

In this Part, putting it very broadly, we shall be studying two changes in the thought pattern and psychology of the scientific society. The first of the two was the duel between the existing theological thinking and the empirico-rational approach of the method of science. Though this duel climaxed in the middle of the 16th century, with the famous Inquisition of Galileo, its seeds were sown two millennia earlier. Thus, in order to appreciate better this most dramatic event in the history of science and to grasp the “change”, we shall once again have to prepare ourselves with some relevant background material.

The opening section in part II will present some world-views of antiquity and how these, and the explanations, changed in the course of time. After this we shall try to see how the Church adopted the “geocentric” view of the universe and how theology replaced the age of speculative science. The revolutionary contribution of Copernicus—the heliocentric system—will follow. An “enormous change” indeed! and we shall witness how difficult it was to be accepted.

Only after we have presented the work of Galileo and described the Inquisition shall we venture to assess and analyse the change that was taking place in approach to secular issues. We shall notice—as earlier mentioned—that the changes in human psychology during these long periods were painfully slow and at the same time were indicative of the waning of man’s creative faculty.

The second of the two radical changes, after the battle against medievalism

was won, is related to Newton. More specifically, we shall be concerned with his famous statement "I frame no hypotheses" he had made to defend himself, not against the Church, but against his own scientific colleagues.

We shall begin with the astronomical views of the universe held in antiquity.

### The World-views of Antiquity

Let us examine in brief how man viewed his universe in antiquity and how this view changed—over centuries—up to the coming of Ptolemy. This might seem a bit of a digression but the following study will help us to bear a few considerations in mind. Firstly, it will prepare us to understand, and answer, the question: how and why did the geocentric system get so deeply rooted in the human consciousness? Secondly, it will enable us to appreciate better the work of Copernicus and the revolution he set in motion. And, lastly, it shall provide an important groundwork for the section in which we shall discuss Galileo and the Inquisition.

Our study will largely be restricted to developments in Greek astronomy during the period 600 BC to 200 AD, it is these ideas that were inherited by Copernicus, Galileo and others of the Middle Ages. To complete the picture we shall also briefly look at certain sketches of the view of the universe that were developed in ancient Egypt and India.

It is not known how far in antiquity man first systematically began to observe the sky with a cosmological interest. But as far back as the oldest records of the ancient Egyptian, Mesopotamian and the Indus Valley civilizations can be traced, we do find the existence of a rather developed form of cosmology and astronomy. The pattern of life of these societies, we must remember, was essentially dependent on certain natural occurrences like floods and monsoons. In other words, these phenomena played an all-important role in their lives, and in the very survival of their civilization, they had to lean on some natural clock for their activities. Thus we can suggest that they had a kind of insight into these rhythms of nature and that they were able to predict most of the regular occurrences of nature pretty well.

But what has this got to do with cosmology? Nature, we must note, exhibits cycles of behaviour, in various lengths of time, of which the annual flooding of the Nile (in reference to the ancient Egyptian civilization) is just one of the events. Some of the other recurring phenomena with different periods are: the daily motion of the sun across the sky; the 28-day cycle of the waxing and waning of the moon, the tides and seasons, etc. Having observed these phenomena and having thoroughly monitored the motions of the sun, the moon and the stars the Egyptians, with the kind of insight they had, built an advanced cosmological system. With the astronomical data on hand they established a yearly calendar. Not only that: they associated terrestrial phenomena with celestial occurrences;

in this manner they provided a more total picture of the surroundings and of the universe. The cosmological view they constructed was as follows: the earth is of the shape of a flat rectangular platter and is bordered by high mountains, four of these, that are gigantic, uphold the dome-shaped heaven. The Egyptians viewed the air as a god supporting the skies, water is another god whose function is to support the earth and who is contained in a large basin; this basin and the dome-shaped heaven symmetrically bounded the universe. They further believed that the sun (their principal God, called Ra) had two boats for his daily journey, one of which he used to travel across the air in the day-time and the other through the water at night. The stars studded the huge dome and were considered to be minor gods.

This kind of "primitive" cosmology was a part not only of the ancient Egyptian culture but of all other contemporary societies. The Greece of antiquity too had its version of the universe run by gods and goddesses and supernatural powers. Briefly, what they saw was the earth as a flat disk surrounded by the river Okeanos and the whole covered by a huge bell-shaped heaven.

Today we would not accept such explanations; but we must not forget two important points. The first is well made by Kuhn. "All such sketches of the structure of the universe fulfil a basic psychological need: they provide a stage for man's daily activities and the activities of his gods. By explaining the physical relation between man's habitat and the rest of nature, they integrate the universe for man and make him feel at home in it...a cosmology can provide [man] with a world view which permeates and gives meaning to his every action, practical and spiritual."

Apart from such a psychological need it is equally important to recognise that the ancient civilizations were predominantly symbol-minded. They viewed all natural phenomena directly ensuing from God or some supernatural Power and as such we cannot have any control over them.

Some time round the 6th century BC there began to appear a change in the understanding of astronomical observations. A number of Greek philosophers and astronomers began to replace gods and goddesses by what may be called mechanistic explanations in terms of familiar earthly objects. An example would perhaps bring some clarity to the mind: "The stars are compressed portions of air, in the shape of [rotating] wheels filled with fire, and they emit flames at some point from small openings.. The sun is a circle 28 times the size of the earth; it is like a chariot wheel, the rim of which is hollow and full of fire, and lets the fire shine out at a certain point in it, through an opening like the nozzle of a pair of bellows...."

We immediately notice that the views are extremely rudimentary and that the attempt to project the true picture of the universe was not successful. There was a gain, however: these writings and teachings were successful, for the first

time, in blending together astronomy and cosmology. This marks an important turning point in the astronomer's approach to explain the structure of the universe—the new approach instead of being mythological is “mechanical” Not that there were no differences amongst astronomers and philosophers, but the importance actually lay in the change in their essential attitude: the speculative-rational overcoming the symbolic-mythological

Soon this new approach of tackling the observed phenomena became a part of astronomy; but the understanding still remained hazy and there were several conflicting world-views. Crystallisation of these world-views began to emerge some two centuries later. Most Greek philosophers and astronomers from this time onwards, we may say the 4th century BC, structured the universe in the following manner: the universe is a vast sphere outside which exists nothing at all, no space, no matter; this sphere is supposed to be rotating on an axis and has stars fixed on its interior; at its centre is suspended a much tiny and stationary sphere which incidentally is the earth, between the earth and the sphere of the stars moves the sun. This is referred to as the “two-sphere universe”.

It is immediately clear that this world-view is extremely general in nature and that it does not explain the various astronomical observations such as the day-to-day shift in the position of the sun-rise, the motion of the moon, the stars and the planets. These are absent not because they had remained unobserved; on the contrary, each astronomer and philosopher postulated his own cosmological devices in order to explain all the celestial motions. Thus, in a certain sense, it can be said that the two-sphere universe is not a cosmology but a structural framework that housed a number of cosmological theories. This structural framework dominated the imagination of astronomers and philosophers for about 2 millennia, in the entire period from 400 BC to 1500 AD; the validity of its truth “was almost never questioned”, though the cosmologies that it housed were very often conflicting and controversial. And yet, at times, they acquired a theological sanctity.

The proposition of the two-sphere universe is an extremely important event in man's advance of knowledge of the physical world. We do consider it important, in particular, to underline the fact that this basic structure of the universe remained accepted until Copernicus. The essential geocentric system was refined again and again with the coming of each new detail of observation; even Ptolemy, as we shall shortly see, based his study and presentation of the world-view on it. The most striking feature of this view is the sphericity of the universe. It is therefore interesting to look, however briefly, into the question: how and where did the universe receive its sphericity?

It is very probable that this view of the spherical universe emerged sometime around 550 BC when the philosophical culture of the Greek society was flourishing. Renowned thinkers of the age (Pythagoras, for example) believed that nature was totally harmonious and showed no imperfections; they

were also possessed by a powerful sense of aestheticity

In his explanation, Plato considers the universe to be an organism, a creature, and assigns its sphericity in the following manner:

“[The creator’s] intention was in the first place that the [creature] should be as far as possible a perfect whole and of perfect parts: secondly, that it should be one, leaving no remnants out of which another such world might be created: and also that it should be free from old age [eternal] and unaffected by disease [incorruptible]... Wherefore he made the world in the form of a globe, having its extremes in every direction equidistant from the centre, the most perfect of all figures. This he finished off, making the surface smooth all round for many reasons; in the first place the living being had no need of eyes, when there was nothing remaining outside him to be seen, nor of ears when there was nothing to be heard; and there was no surrounding atmosphere to be breathed...”

Plato’s universe was thus of the shape of a sphere.

T. Kuhn advances the following “aesthetic argument” in favour of the spherical universe. Since the stars appear to be the farthest objects to our eyes and since they all move together, it is natural to suppose that they are objects on the outer surface of the universe. Moreover, since the stars move with perfect regularity, the surface on which they move ought to be perfectly regular. And the figure that best fulfils these conditions is none other than the sphere.

We have already mentioned that the two-sphere model became a part of astronomical thinking and remained so for 2000 years. Indeed, 20 centuries is a very long period of time and it is natural to try to look for an explanation of the following two questions: 1) initially, how did the two-sphere universe at all capture the imagination of human mind? 2) in the later stages, what prevented philosophers and astronomers from conceptualising a different structural framework? While in this section we shall tackle only the first question, the other being essentially of the nature of theology will be dealt with afterwards.

The Greek astronomers had observed the universe so much so that a careful selection and systematic presentation of the large data-bank could have appeared impossible. Just witness the details they had gathered after long meticulous observations: (1) Daily motion of the stellar sphere in the westward direction had an eastward drift of about 4 minutes a day. (2) As the relative positions of the stars with respect to each other never changed, they mapped the sky in terms of constellations. (3) A group of 12 prominent constellations—the signs of the zodiac—appeared in a band formation that completed a ring on the sphere of the stars. (4) This band was of special interest since it was related to the motions of the 7 wanderers of the sky. (5) All the 5 “planets”, including the sun and the moon, always appeared to travel on an imaginary line that passed through the zodiacal constellations. This line was named the ecliptic. (6) By carefully monitoring the motion of the sun it was found that its rise position shifted back and forth on the horizon in a cyclic manner. (7) The new moon to

new moon period varied from  $27\frac{1}{2}$  days to 30 days (8) The planets deviated from the ecliptic but never more than 8 deg. (9) The solstice and equinox days were predicted with a great accuracy This, we must remember, is just a summarized general view of the painstaking data jotted down by them night after night for centuries. But for a mind like the Grecian, it was imperative to see an underlying order in these observations The suggestion of the two-sphere universe thus proved very rewarding indeed.

The most striking characteristic of the two-sphere universe is the remarkable "conceptual economy" it has brought in The model provides a powerful aid to the astronomer as he has no longer to retain pages of apparently unrelated data in his memory. Rather, if he observes the heavens with the two-sphere universe firmly fixed in his mind, he will find that unrelated observations begin to disclose certain patterns and that the individual sets of information are more meaningfully and easily remembered

There is more to this than just the "conceptual economy". These astronomers never invoked mythological factors but relied mainly on observation, reason and sense perception And, be it noted, none of these produced the evidence for the motion of the earth or for the non-sphericity of the universe. The view of the two-sphere universe worked convincingly for the physical senses; on the logical level it was an extremely successful and coherent theory; and on the philosophical level it provided man with a world-view that defined his place in the Creation and gave physical meaning to his relation with the gods

It is thus quite clear how the two-sphere universe captivated the mind of man, made its deep home in his consciousness. That also became a stumbling block when new knowledge was pouring in. While moving into the more complex domains of cosmological studies, we find that man was satisfied with this world-view and, it seemed, the structure of the two-sphere universe need not have ever changed; but it did. Precise measurements and observations have no respect for beliefs and ideas Observed irregularities in the motion of the planets brought great disparity between theory and observation, this had to be reconciled. The method employed to solve the "problem of the planets" and the Ptolemaic system is the topic of the section to follow. We shall also see its implications in theology

*(To be continued)*

VIKAS DHANDHANIA

## NEW AGE NEWS

COMPILED AND PRESENTED BY WILFRIED

[Not] Alone Against Hitler

WHO would expect a passage as the following in a biography of Winston Spencer Churchill. .

Daybreak brings movement to Chartwell's grounds ( . ) Winston's pet cat, a marmalade named Tango, stretches himself, so does Mickey, a tabby cat. A fox trots up from the studio, horsès begin to snort, a small black goat strides across the orchard, a goose wanders about aimlessly

Here we are still in the year 1932, some eight years away from blood, sweat and toil. William Manchester, Churchill's knowledgeable American biographer, begins the second volume of his trilogy\* with a very idyllic scene at Churchill's countryside estate Chartwell where he stayed with his wife and children as well as eighteen servants who looked after his numberless needs

Manchester in superb prose takes us through a whole day in Churchill's life as he typically spent it in the period before the Second World War, as an ordinary member of the House of Commons and extraordinary author of books and commentator in dozens of newspapers or journals. Two misjudgments had spoilt his career at a time when he had already held several top cabinet positions in Tory governments The first mishap was the "Dardanelles strategy" which he had developed during the Great War and which failed due to the incompetence of some military leaders But the defeat was ascribed to him The second misjudgment was entirely his own. It occurred some time in 1930/31 when as a member of a Tory shadow cabinet he argued against making concessions to India which would allow her more freedom and independence. As a man of the old world he "regarded the British Raj as the brightest jewel in England's imperial crown." Churchill faced "a stone wall of hostile Tories" and was forced to resign from the shadow cabinet which came to power seven months later—with Neville Chamberlain holding the post of Exchequer instead of Churchill

But we return to Chartwell now, the politician's estate in Kent, half an hour from London. Manchester discloses all the details of the proceedings that unfolded there day by day. We learn how many cigars Winston was smoking or rather chewing in 24 hours or what concoction of alcohol rushed through his

\* The title of the first volume is *The Last Lion Winston Spencer Churchill Visions of Glory*  
The second volume, presented here, carries the title *The Last Lion Winston Spencer Churchill Alone—1932-1940* Little, Brown & Company, Boston 1988 Pp 756 \$ 24 95

The third volume was not yet published at the time when this article was written

blood from morning to evening. It is important to note that he was almost never seen drunk in spite of his enormous intake. He enjoys two daily full baths in the tub, "reciting Kipling, rehearsing speeches or lectures he will soon deliver, or singing.. " His valet-cum-butler is all the time there to assist him We note with astonishment that a man so dynamic and active spends the whole morning in his bed—working. All visitors arriving at this time, "except the King", are received in his bedchamber. But at 1.15 p.m. we find him at last downstairs for lunch where eminent guests are frequently present.

We shall skip the rest of the day now. It is 11 p.m. Churchill takes his guests to their rooms and "as they retire, begins his working day". A two-hour siesta in the afternoon makes sure he is fit for this night work, the writing of books and articles, his main source of income which was barely sufficient to cover the enormous expenses caused by his extravagant life style. As his daughter Mary later put it, the family "literally lived from book to book, and from one article to the next." In 1938 he faced bankruptcy, although he had published two books and 59 articles In the very last minute one of his wealthy well-wishers bailed him out with a large loan.

On a typical weekend, Churchill would dictate some ten thousand words to his two secretaries. For major book projects such as *Marlborough* or *History of the English-speaking Peoples* he takes help from several researchers, mostly young Oxford graduates who have to do readings and investigations for him. Sometimes, dictation continues up to 3 or 4 in the morning. Those who worked with him observed the extraordinary degree of concentration with which he focussed on his subjects, even at times of extreme political excitement and turmoil. His secretaries had a very difficult job. He was easily impatient, intolerant in case of incompetence, mercilessly shouting and raging if there was evident failure ("you haven't got one word in fifty right!...")

Then finally it is time to sleep and he takes rest in a masterful way. A look into the mirror, some brushing of the hair, the sleep mask slipped in place, and off he goes within seconds, after having spoken a few words to his valet. The latter reported that often by the time he had reached the door his master was already asleep

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In these years Churchill is no more than a backbencher, in the eyes of many political leaders a *pariah*. Although he is a very prominent and well-known public personality, few people listen to his speeches at parliament or give importance to what he has to say. "Had he yielded on India," says Manchester, "he could have looked to broader, brighter horizons. But he believes in his star And if he can be spectacularly wrong he can also be terrifically right " He had been wrong on India and the majority of his party had regarded his attitude as



“reactionary and unrealistic” and questioned “the soundness of his judgment”, as Harold Macmillan later recalled. The tragic consequence was that Churchill’s warnings about the Nazi threat were ignored. But this was precisely the issue on which he was terrifically right.

As early as March 1931 he had warned in an article published in the Hearst papers that the Germans might seek to annex Austria and then develop designs on Czechoslovakia. Furthermore, he foresaw a shadow falling on France, which would not be able to keep the pace of the German military build-up. In 1935 he characterized the Germans as “the most industrious, tractable, fierce and martial race in the world.” Hitler had risen “by violence and passion” and was “surrounded by men as ruthless as he.” When a year earlier he had spoken at a meeting arranged by Oxford’s Tories and declared that British rearmament was “essential for us to be safe in our island home,” he was mocked by the audience which burst into laughter. He repeated the phrase and found that the laughter grew so prolonged that he could not continue his speech.

Winston Churchill was *alone* in his perception and battle. We find this word in the subtitle of Manchester’s book. The publishers of the German edition have expanded it to *Allein gegen Hitler* [Alone Against Hitler]. In parliament, he had just a handful of well-wishers on his side, his real support he got from many prominent visitors at Chartwell. The rest of England was sleeping, favouring pacifism. The Great War had exhausted the nation. It was time for appeasement. The British ambassador in Berlin was on the best terms with Hitler and Goring, the governments under Baldwin and Chamberlain were ideal partners perfectly modelled for the game of the Asura. France too was not in a mood to consider war.

Hitler knew of Churchill, he was aware of him and sensed that this man alone had sufficient backbone to face him. Neither the dictator nor his opponent knew of Sri Aurobindo who played his own role behind the scene, making sure that the intrepid Englishman (born of an American mother) was *not alone* in his battle against the Asura. Nirodbaran has related the story of Sri Aurobindo’s intervention in the chapter titled “War and Politics” of his book *Twelve Years with Sri Aurobindo*.

(To be continued)

## SUDDEN TALES THE FOLKS TOLD

*(Continued from the issue of July 1992)*

### 24. All for a Drop of Honey

ONCE when a village physician was busily engaged in the preparation of a herbal cough-mixture, he ran short of honey. Hence he asked one of his assistants to hurry to a nearby grocery shop and fetch honey for half-a-rupee.

The assistant took a small bottle and the coin from his master, and ran towards the shop, a couple of furlongs away. His pet dog followed him.

The shop-keeper took the money. He then baled out honey with the smallest measuring-glass from a tin-container and transferred its content into the buyer's bottle. While doing so, a drop of honey trickled out of the bottle.

"Watch out! Watch out!" cried the buyer. "The honey is meant for a cough-mixture. Every drop is precious."

"Don't worry," pacified the shop-keeper. "I'll pour two or three drops more into your bottle."

"Who wants your free drops? It's enough if you pour my money's worth properly."

As they were engaged in a heated argument, a house-fly came winging from somewhere and settled on the fallen drop of honey. No sooner did the lizard on the wall sight the house-fly than it came rushing and gobbled it up. The grocer's cat pounced on the lizard and got it between its teeth. The buyer's pet dog that was so far keeping quiet let out a bark. In a trice, it bit the neck of the cat and killed it on the spot.

Unable to bear the death of the cat that had kept all mice at bay, the shop-keeper in a fury pulled out his sharp knife used for breaking coconuts. Raising it above his head, he brought it down heavily on the dog, thereby making its head roll away from its neck.

The physician's assistant went mad at the sight of the wriggling body of his pet dog. He then plucked the knife from the shop-keeper and hacked him to death.

Hearing of the shop-keeper's last cry, the people nearby came rushing to the scene. One of them, an intimate friend of the shop-keeper, strangled the murderer to death.

A riot broke out. A section of the villagers sided with the dead shop-keeper and the other with the physician's dead assistant. Here and there people fell dead bleeding profusely.

Panic gripped the village. Many people took to their heels, not sure of their destination.

A passer-by stopped a panic-stricken villager and asked: "What is all this about?"

"Oh! All for a drop of honey, a source of sweetness." came the reply with a sigh.

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## 25. Two Voices

Once a group of young travellers and a hermit were crossing a river by boat

Matted long hair crowned the hermit's head His beard, long and grey, flowed down to his navel hiding his bare chest A garland of *rudraksha* beads adorned his neck He had smeared his body with holy ash.

The river was in spate and one could not see the other shore

"What are you hiding in your matted hair, holy man?" asked a young fellow.

The other members of his party looked amused.

The hermit smiled, but didn't utter a word

"Food for all?" asked the young fellow again The other travellers giggled.

"Must be the egg of a horse!" observed another young man, inspiring his friends to roaring laughter

The hermit smiled and remained silent His silence provoked the other travellers to contribute to the mischief

"Can you swallow swords, holy man?" asked one. "Can you eat fire?" asked another.

"No! No! No! Had he such powers, he would have conjured up at least a shirt for himself," replied a young chap showing all his teeth.

The travellers roared with laughter. The hermit continued to smile.

"This beggar must be dumb Or is he deaf too?... We must find out," suggested the leading member of the gang

Meanwhile the sun was about to set The hermit closed his eyes in meditation.

One of the young men pinched the hermit's back, expecting a yell from him. But the hermit showed no sign of pain. Another traveller tickled the hermit expecting to see him twist and turn. But, undisturbed, the hermit continued to meditate.

"Has he turned himself into a stone?" The chief mischief-maker began showering blows on the hermit's back.

All of a sudden the sky turned murky Clouds gathered rapidly. Flashes of lightning split the clouds and thunders rumbled

"O hermit! Nod your consent and we will sink the boat These evil ones deserve to be drowned. You'll be safe."

The hermit opened his eyes The travellers stood dumb, trembling with fright

The voice from the sky continued “Endless endurance is cowardice, O holy man! Say ‘yes’ and we will teach your tormentors a lesson ”

The travellers huddled close to one another. They looked at the hermit with fear and prayer

The hermit smiled and looked at them with perfect peace in his eyes. “Do not be afraid, boys. The voice you heard is not the voice of God It must be that of the evil elements in Nature. As long as I am with you no harm can befall you. Continue with your mirth and I will continue with my meditation ”

The clouds disappeared The sun had already set, but the twilight was bright enough to reveal the shore.

“Well done, my son,” came another voice from the bright sky

The hermit stood up, his face glowing with joy “Listen! Listen!” he said to the travellers, “It’s God who is speaking now ”

The travellers blinked at the sky and at the hermit.

“They can’t hear me and don’t you bother on that account,” the voice said once again

The boat reached the shore The travellers fell at the hermit’s feet, weeping and praying for his pardon.

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## 26. Pestle Pooja

Once upon a time lived a Chettyyar who had no children. He was kind and generous-hearted. As a devotee of Lord Shiva he was considerate towards the Sadhus who sang hymns in praise of the Lord. Much of his earnings through trade went to the Sadhus He found delight in feeding them and not a day passed without two or three Sadhus taking their lunch in his house But the Chettyyar’s wife was not very co-operative She always murmured against feeding the Sadhus, who in her opinion were useless fellows But she did not dare to speak out for fear of being misunderstood by her husband So she thought of a plan to put an end to the free feedings

One day when the Chettyyar was in his shop, he saw a Sadhu begging. He called him and said, “I shall be happy if you lunch with me today Kindly go to my house and wait there. I’ll come the moment I finish business ”

Overjoyed, the Sadhu ran towards the Chettyyar’s house The Chettyyar’s wife saw the stranger and understood that he had never before dined at their residence She invented a device to drive the man away and teach a lesson to all other Sadhus She brought out a mat and spread it on the pyol and requested the Sadhu to take rest

She then went into the house, swept clean the pooja-room, garlanded the statuettes of the gods and then took a long pestle, smeared holy ash on it, placed it before the gods, prostrated herself before the pestle and recited some mantras

The Sadhu who was witnessing the scene from the pyol wondered at the performance and asked the lady: "What type of pooja is that? I have never seen such a one before "

"This is a special pooja performed to our household gods," shouted the lady from the room and then, just pretending to make herself inaudible to the Sadhu, she gabbled. "You will soon know better about the significance of this pooja. It will ultimately end up on your head".

The sharp-eared Sadhu heard her words, understood the meaning and took to his heels

Soon the Chettiyar entered his house and asked his wife about the Sadhu he had sent

"What a fellow he is!" she sneered "As soon as he entered the house, he asked for a pestle I refused him, saying that nothing could be given to anyone without the permission of my husband I requested him to wait for your arrival. But he left our house dissatisfied."

"What a foolish thing you have done!" shouted the angry husband. "You should have fulfilled the Sadhu's wish Remember! Hereafter give whatever the Sadhus demand of us "

The Chettiyar took the pestle and went in search of the Sadhu. The sadhu who was at that time begging for alms in another corner of the street saw the Chettiyar approaching him with a pestle The sight reminded him of the lady and her words

"Oh! This Chettiyar is coming to finish the puja on my head Thank God, I am saved," so crying he ran for his life.

The Chettiyar saw the Sadhu running With the good intention of bringing him back to feed him, he chased the Sadhu shouting "Stop, Oh! Sadhu. Do not run It's time to eat "

But the frightened Sadhu flew like a bird freed from its cage. The aged Chettiyar, finding it very difficult to run further with his paunch, returned home.

*(More Tales to follow)*

P. RAJA

## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**Sri Aurobindo Circle**, 48th Number, Sri Aurobindo Society Annual 1992  
Published by Sri Aurobindo Society, pp 124, price not mentioned

This beautiful number has, as usual, three sections—selections from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's writings and conversations form the first major half, then is the section of poems—four by Sri Aurobindo and twelve by Sadhaks. The last section is of five articles, two continuations—K D Sethna's and Prema Nandakumar's—from the previous 1991 Number and three others, one each by Srinivasa Iyengar, A.S. Dalal and Jugal Kishore from whose forthcoming book a chapter is published.

The selections from Sri Aurobindo mainly relate to attitudes and approaches a Sadhak must have and develop. There are some beautiful excerpts on the why and what of immortality and the immortality of what.

The writings of the Mother consist of three of her seven visions published in 1906, then there are selections from "Notes on the Way" pertaining to suffering, transformation and progress.

Let me share with the readers what appealed to me most, bringing a flood of light and interesting questions, in my first reading of this volume.

On page V is a letter by Sri Aurobindo, the last two sentences being: "Do not be caught by the desire to 'help' others—do and speak yourself the right thing from the inner poise and leave the help to come to them from the Divine. Nobody can really help—only the Divine Grace." At every step in Sadhana I have had to repeat this sentence to myself. In the beginning, when I used to get this urge to help, I would think that, having worked for years in a missionary institution, some of that missionary zeal had rubbed off on myself. Later I found such an urge to be very common amongst all aspirants, spiritual or otherwise. Further I discovered that the urge to help and its translation into action were not only irritating but also harmful for Sadhana, since its origin is from the ego. I am tempted to write this sentence in bold big letters on a huge poster as a warning to all, but then realise that this is itself a form of the same urge!

There is another passage on page 26 titled "A Great Secret of Sadhana". It starts: "That is a great secret of sadhana, to know how to get things done by the Power behind or above instead of doing all by the mind's effort." What follows tells the 'why', but only gently and hints, in the last sentence, at the 'how' to apply this secret. The sentence is: "Strength is all right for the strong—but aspiration and the Grace answering to it are not altogether myths, they are great realities of the spiritual life." For me this was inadequate and I wished someone had asked the Mother to explain these words. How in heaven does one aspire, and that too intensely enough to ensure not only that the answering Grace floods one's being but that somehow one also gets adequate receptivity?

Possibly each Sadhak has to find out for himself or herself, and maybe this is like a key one loses and finds again and again. Then on page 34 I found one solution in the following sentence from Sri Aurobindo. "God is equally in joy and in suffering, in victory and in defeat. And the warrior in His cause shrinketh not before the suffering, nor is afraid of the defeat; for he seeth the Divine strategy which sometimes retires into ignominy and ridicule to exhaust the Satanic force of its exulting opponents, then rushes forward with immense vehemence and conquers." Yes, the secret is to become Her warrior, Her soldier, Her instrument acting and thinking and progressing along Her path, led by Her, prodded and persuaded by Her, giving one's hand in Her firm gentle clasp with unconditional love and faith.

I read aloud to myself the passage from "Notes on the Way" by the Mother titled "The Cause and the Cure of Suffering" on pages 42-44 and seemed to understand how any readings from "Notes on the Way" or Sri Aurobindo's "Record of Yoga", unlike letters or conversations, can be misunderstood unless the mind is more or less silent, non-intervening with its questions and doubts and interpretations. Even the expression of an experience can stand in the way. Let me quote Her words: "The necessity of using words to express oneself brings this mental intervention, but in the experience it does not exist. And it is very interesting, because the pure experience has a content of truth, of reality, which disappears as soon as the mind intervenes. There is a savour of true reality which altogether escapes expression because of that." The whole passage is very illuminating and answered many of my questions regarding the physical suffering of all of us and especially what appeared to be Her own physical suffering. But let me not cloud the illumination by expressing it in inadequate words, let me invite the reader to read aloud this passage with a mind that would easily allow the sense to pass deep within and illuminate subtly and gradually.

A few words now on my favourite three poems from this selection. On page 54 "In the Silence of Midnight" Sri Aurobindo tells how "I have heard the flutings of the Infinite. I have seen the sun-wings of the seraphs" and one starts seeing anew the beauty in the ordinary, in a steel railing, in a common face and a wayside flower; everything becomes a source of joy, a sign of Her Presence. In the next poem titled "A Metrical Experiment", Sri Aurobindo admonishes Life and asks: "But never yet hast thou the goal of thy race / Attained, nor thrilled to the ineffable Face / And clasp"; maybe that should provoke our life-force to work for the only thrill worth having, the thrill to look on the Face of the Most Beautiful, the Indescribable. And finally on p 55 there is the exceedingly beautiful "Frontispiece" by Arjava (John Chadwick).

In the last section are five articles by authors well known to the readers of Ashram publications. K.D. Sethna's article on "Sri Aurobindo and Greece", even though a continuation from the last year's number, is complete in itself, dealing with, as he says in the first paragraph, some of Sri Aurobindo's political

comments on Greece and salient juxtapositions by him of ancient Hellas with later Europe, modern life and Indian themes. Similarly Prema Nandakumar's "Sri Aurobindo's Interpretation of Indian Religion and Spirituality" continued from the previous number is a complete piece in itself, this time elucidating "The Four Instruments of Indian Religion", concluding with a very significant sentence from Sri Aurobindo's *The Foundations of Indian Culture* I quote this sentence since its message needs to be reiterated again and yet again Sri Aurobindo says of Hinduism: "Although strikingly distinguished from other creeds by its traditional scriptures, cults and symbols, it is not in its essential character a credal religion at all but a vast and many-sided, an always unifying and always progressive and self-enlarging system of spiritual culture."

Srinivasa Iyengar's article this time, in his usual scholarly style, is on Krishna and Radha in the light of Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's writings, also bringing in some other lights. It is an interesting piece though at times demanding persistent effort on the part of the reader to get the full import of his exposition of the theme

The psychologist-Sadhak A.S. Dalal writes on "The Scientific Study of Consciousness" and why and, to an extent, how it should be done.

Finally there is the first chapter from Jugal Kishore's forthcoming book "Sri Aurobindo and Humour", a delightful piece indeed, especially for those who have not read Nirodbaran's book *Sri Aurobindo's Humour*.

All in all, this 48th Number of *Sri Aurobindo Circle* is a 'must' at least to read if not buy, for a Sadhak and an aspirant. I do wish that, just for a change, the editor would next time have selections from other poets and other writers apart from the "regulars" I especially plead for selections from the least known but wonderful poetess Joyce Chadwick (no relation of Arjava) in the next issue.

DINKAR D. PALANDE



## *Students' Section*

### THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

Seventy-first Seminar

23 February 1992

*(Continued from the issue of July 1992)*

#### HOW TO PREPARE OURSELVES TO BECOME THE TRUE INSTRUMENTS OF THE MOTHER'S GREAT WORK FOR EARTH AND HUMANITY?

Speech by Debashish Sheel

CONSIDERED in its most general sense, The Mother's Great Work for earth and humanity is to carry the terrestrial evolution to a stage beyond its present attained level, and to create a new race of beings. Man at present represents the mental stage which some consider to be the final product of evolution but, according to Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, man is a transitional being and mind is not the culminating point of evolution. Beyond mind is the Supermind which is now pressing to manifest upon earth, and when it is established here, it will create a new race of gnostic beings who will exceed man as man has exceeded the animal.

This is The Mother's Great Work in its widest significance. But more specifically, the accomplishment of this work will imply a number of other achievements also. The Mother Herself has listed twelve such achievements in a short writing entitled "What I want to bring about in the material world, upon the earth." It is most heartening and I read it here in Her own words:

- 1 Perfect Consciousness
- 2 Integral Knowledge; omniscience
3. Power invincible, irresistible, ineluctable, omnipotence
4. Health, perfect, constant, unshakable, perpetually renewed energy.
5. Eternal youth, constant growth, uninterrupted progress.
6. Perfect beauty, complex and total harmony
7. Inexhaustible, unparalleled riches, control over all the wealth of the world
- 8 The gift of healing and giving happiness.
- 9 Immunity from all accidents, invulnerability against all adverse attacks
- 10 Perfect power of expression in all fields and all activities

11. The gift of tongues, the power of making oneself understood perfectly by all.
- 12 And all else necessary for the accomplishment of Thy work.<sup>1</sup>

23.10.1937

The next question to be answered is: “How to prepare ourselves to become the true instruments of The Mother’s Great Work?”

I will try to answer this question by stating and explaining the three main conditions which seem to me most essential and indispensable in order to collaborate in The Mother’s great mission. These three conditions are: Sincerity, Faith and Surrender.

In a sense sincerity is the most essential condition, because all the others depend on it for their effectivity. The Mother Herself has said. “Sincerity is the key of the divine doors.”<sup>2</sup>

But what does sincerity imply? In the Mother’s own words “Sincerity exacts the unification and harmonisation of the whole being in all its parts and movements around the central Divine Will.”<sup>3</sup>

“To be sincere, all the parts of the being must be united in their aspiration for the Divine—not that one part wants and others refuse or revolt. To be sincere in the aspiration—to want the Divine for the Divine’s sake, not for fame or name or prestige or power or any satisfaction of vanity.”<sup>4</sup>

The Mother has also stated the great importance of sincerity in the following passage:

“Sincerity is the basis of all true realisation, it is the means, the path—and it is also the goal. Without it you are sure to make innumerable blunders and you have constantly to redress the harm you have done to yourself and to others.

“There is, besides, a marvellous joy in being sincere. Every act of sincerity carries in itself its own reward: the feeling of purification, of soaring upwards, of liberation one gets when one has rejected even one tiny particle of falsehood.

“Sincerity is the safeguard, the protection, the guide, and finally the transforming power.”<sup>5</sup>

Equally important as Sincerity is Faith. What is the true meaning of faith? In The Mother’s words:

“Faith is spontaneous knowledge in the psychic”,<sup>6</sup> and She adds, “Faith is a

<sup>1</sup> *Collected Works of the Mother* (Cent Ed ), Vol 13, p 41

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* , Vol 14, p 67

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* , Vol 8, pp 399-400

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid* , Vol 14, p 82

certitude which is not necessarily based on experience and knowledge ”<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo also says: “Faith is a thing that precedes knowledge, not comes after knowledge. It is a glimpse of a truth which the mind has not yet seized as knowledge.”<sup>2</sup> Explaining the fundamental importance of soul-faith, Sri Aurobindo remarks: “It is so central and essential a thing that the Gita can justly say of it that whatever is a man’s *śraddhā*, that he is, *yo yacchraddhah sa eva sah*, and it may be added, whatever he has the faith to see as possible in himself and strive for, that he can create and become ”<sup>3</sup>

It is easy to keep faith when things go well and the path is smooth. But the trial of one’s faith comes when difficulties and obstacles mount up and the darkness becomes thick and prevails for long periods. It is at such times that the need of sustaining one’s faith unflinchingly becomes of paramount importance, for if one loses one’s faith in these difficult periods, one is bound to fall from the path. It is for this reason that the Mother says “Faith is the surest guide in the darkest days ”<sup>4</sup>

Along with Faith and Sincerity, Surrender is also indispensable for being the Mother’s true instrument. But total surrender is not possible at the beginning of sadhana, because the mind, the vital and the physical parts have their resistances and reservations which persist for a long time. It is only when the psychic comes forward that complete surrender becomes possible. Till then personal effort is very necessary. For it is very easy to yield to inertia and wrong movements under the pretext of surrender. In Sri Aurobindo’s words “Surrender is giving oneself to the Divine—to give everything one is or has to the Divine and regard nothing as one’s own, to obey only the Divine Will and no other, to live for the Divine and not for the ego ”<sup>5</sup>

Faith, Sincerity and Surrender are thus the fundamental conditions for collaborating in The Mother’s Great Work. I will conclude my speech by reading a passage from Sri Aurobindo’s small book, *The Mother*, in which He has stressed their essential importance:

“The more complete your faith, sincerity and surrender, the more will grace and protection be with you. And when the grace and protection of the Divine Mother are with you, what is there that can touch you or whom need you fear? A little of it will carry you through all difficulties, obstacles and dangers, surrounded by its full presence you can go securely on your way because it is hers, careless of all menace, unaffected by any possibility however powerful, whether from this world or from worlds invisible. Its touch can turn difficulties into

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>2</sup> *Letters on Yoga* (Cent Ed , Vol 23), p 576

<sup>3</sup> *The Synthesis of Yoga* (Cent Ed , Vol 21), p 743

<sup>4</sup> *Collected Works of the Mother* (Cent Ed ), Vol 14, p 83

<sup>5</sup> *Letters on Yoga* (Cent Ed , Vol 23), p 585

opportunities, failures into success and weakness into unfaltering strength. For the Grace of the Divine Mother is the sanction of the Supreme and now or tomorrow its effect is sure, a thing decreed, inevitable and irresistible.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Mother* (Cent Ed , Vol 25), p 10