

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

OCTOBER 2015

PRICE: Rs. 30.00

SUBSCRIPTIONS

INLAND

Annual: Rs. 200.00

For 10 years: Rs. 1,800.00

Price per Single Copy: Rs. 30.00

OVERSEAS

Sea Mail:

Annual: \$35

For 10 years: \$350

Air Mail:

Annual: \$70

For 10 years: \$700

All payments to be made in favour of *Mother India*, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. DD/Cheque should be sent by speed post only. For outstation cheques kindly add Rs. 15 for annual membership and Rs. 50 for 10-year subscription.

Subscribers are requested to mention their subscription number in case of any inquiry. The correspondents should give their full address in BLOCK letters, with the correct PIN CODE.



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.



All Rights Reserved. No matter appearing in this journal or part thereof may be reproduced or translated without written permission from the publishers except for short extracts as quotations.

The views expressed by the authors are not necessarily those of the journal.

All correspondence to be addressed to:

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

Phone: (0413) 2233642

e-mail: motherindia@sriurobindoashram.org.in

Publishers: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust

Founding Editor: K. D. SETHNA (AMAL KIRAN)

Editors: RAVI, HEMANT KAPOOR, RANGANATH RAGHAVAN

Published by: MANOJ DAS GUPTA

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM TRUST

PUBLICATION DEPARTMENT, PONDICHERRY 605 002

Printed by: SWADHIN CHATTERJEE

at Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry 605 002

PRINTED IN INDIA

Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers under No. R.N. 8667/63

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. LXVIII

No. 10

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

CONTENTS

Sri Aurobindo

THE BODY (A Poem)	...	783
ON THE ILLUSIONIST POSITION	...	784
EXPERIENCES AND REALISATIONS IN THE INTEGRAL YOGA	...	790
SOME NOTES AND A LETTER	...	812

The Mother

“THE MISSION THOU HAST ENTRUSTED TO ME . . .”	...	817
AN EARLY CONVERSATION ON AUROVILLE	...	818

Amal Kiran (K. D. Sethna)

“WIND-SWOON” — CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO	...	824
--	-----	-----

Manoj Das

SRI AUROBINDO: LIFE AND TIMES OF THE MAHAYOGI		
CHAPTER XLVI: INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE PRISON (2)	...	826

Akbar Hydari

WHAT IS CULTURE?	...	837
------------------	-----	-----

Sachidananda Mohanty

SRI AUROBINDO THE EXAMPLAR	...	842
----------------------------	-----	-----

Prema Nandakumar

AMID THE LEAVES THE INMATE VOICES CALLED		
20. THE DAWN	...	847

BOOK NOTES

...	858
-----	-----

THE BODY

This body which was once my universe,
Is now a pittance carried by the soul, —
Its Titan's motion bears this scanty purse,
Pacing through vastness to a vaster goal.

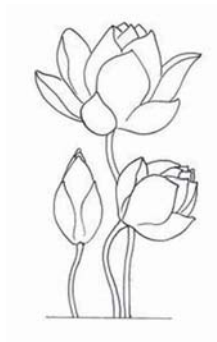
Too small was it to meet the giant need
That only infinitude can satisfy:
He keeps it still, for in the folds is hid
His secret passport to eternity.

In his front an endless Time and Space deploy
The landscape of their golden happenings;
His heart is filled with sweet and violent joy,
His mind is upon great and distant things.

How grown with all the world conterminous
Is the little dweller in this narrow house!

SRI AUROBINDO

(Collected Poems, CWSA, Vol. 2, p. 617)



ON THE ILLUSIONIST POSITION

The position taken up by the Illusionists must first be firmly stated; for often there is a great nebulosity in the minds both of its supporters and antagonists which leaves room for much confused thinking and the real issue, the vital point gets obscured. We must first give this admission to the defence for whatever it is worth, that Illusionism does not affirm the absolute non-existence of the universe but only that it is an existence which is in its beginning and its end a non-existence and in its middle it is an existence which amounts to non-existence. It is real while it lasts to the mind that creates it; but it is not really real, — it is only phenomenally existent, like a dream, like a hallucination, like the imaginations of a person in delirium. Three questions arise from this proposition. Is this hallucinatory creation of the universe a truth or is the theory itself a hallucination of the logical mind or of the experiencing consciousness? Secondly, if true, how does the illusion come about and how is it possible? Thirdly, who is the victim of the hallucination?

The whole theory arises from and turns on one original proposition of which it is the logical consequence. It is this that Brahman the one real, original and eternal existence is, firstly, self-existent, secondly, featureless and relationless, thirdly, unmodifiable, immutable, incapable therefore of developing feature and relation, fourthly, solely existent, for there is and can be nothing else but that in existence. None of these original positions about the Brahman imposes itself irrefutably upon the intellect; there are philosophies which deny them one and all and with quite as good a show of logic as any the logical apparatus of the Mayavada can furnish us. In fact, what we first see as the one experience of our consciousness is not this at all, but just the opposite. We see that every thing reduces itself not to an existence at all, but to a continuity of the action of Force, Karma as the Buddhists call it. We see that this action of Force exists only by an infinite flux of feature and relation, the stream of the Buddhist figure. Apart from that it is nothing, it is the Buddhist sunya or Nihil, and the reduction of the universe to its original starting point, the escape out of it is not a return to the self-existent, but a return to Nihil, a Nirvana or extinction. Far, then, from being immutable and incapable of modification, it is in its very nature a constant modification and mutation. Eliminate the stream of becoming and the result is not Being, but a zero. This is the difficulty which the Mayavada has to surmount, the logic which it has to refute.

For it cannot be denied that the universe, the thing from which all our conscious experience starts, is such a constant stream of becoming, a round of mutations and modifications, a mass of features and relations. The question is how is it maintained? what is [it] that gives an appearance of permanence to the impermanent, of stability to the unstable, of a sum of eternal sameness in which all the elements of the sum

are in constant instability and all capable of mutation? The Buddhist admits that it is done by an action of consciousness, by idea and association, *vijnana*, *sanskara*; but ideas and associations are themselves Karma, action of Force, themselves impermanent, only they create an appearance of permanence, by always acting in the same round, creating the same combination of forms and elements, as the flame and stream appear always the same, though that which constitutes them is always impermanent. The modern Materialist says that it is material Force or an eternal Energy which takes the form of Matter and follows always the same inherent law of action. The *Mayavadin* says on the contrary that it is Consciousness, but a consciousness which is in its reality immutable and unmodifiable self-existence, only it produces a phenomenon of constant modification and mutation. How is this possible? There lies the riddle, for it is a direct self-contradiction. To escape from it, he alleges that the phenomenon has no reality at all, but is an illusion.

To deal with this theory at all, we have first to admit that consciousness is the cause and continent of the universe and that it exists only in consciousness and not at all in itself. How does he [*the Mayavadin*] propose to prove it? It is by an appeal to reason and experience. Our reason tells us that we have no knowledge of the existence of the universe except by our conscious mentality, no possibility of knowing it; the universe can only be allowed to exist by a consciousness admitting its existence, supporting it by its assent. If by any chance, law or process our consciousness can cease finally to be aware of the universe, then so far as we are concerned, the universe no longer exists; it is annulled to us, it was an illusion from which we are released, as when a dream or hallucination ceases. Any such final upshot proves that originally also the universe was non-existent, for otherwise, if it had existed for us eternally without beginning, it would also continue for us eternally without end. But even if it ceases for us, it still continues in existence, is capable of being observed and lived in by others. How is that? We must suppose, that since it exists cosmically, its existence must be admitted and supported by the assent of a universal consciousness by which and for which it is or rather seems to be. Well, if by any chance, law or process this universal consciousness ceases finally to be aware of the universe, then the universe no longer exists for anybody or anything at all; it is proved to be an utter illusion, existent phenomenally only so long as the universal consciousness admitted it, but capable of coming to an end and therefore shown to be non-existent in its beginning and in its end non-existent. Now our ultimate experience is that there is a last and highest state of consciousness in which the universe does thus cease for the individual to be. What is that state? It is *samadhi*, a trance of consciousness in which the sole experience is thus expressed, "I am in bliss" and the sole memory brought back is "I was in bliss." In this state the universe has for the individual no existence; he is released from it. Therefore this highest state of experience is one of which only three things can be affirmed, existence, consciousness of existence, bliss of the consciousness of existence; but it is a pure existence

without other feature or any relation. But how is this proved to be the ultimate state of our conscious being? Well, it is the knowledge of the sages who have entered into it that it is the ultimate state, it is the knowledge left behind them that they have finally passed away into it not to return to consciousness of the phenomenal world, and it is confirmed by the authority of the Veda. Reason tells us that such a condition must be the ultimate condition, since it is one infinitely beyond the phenomenal and to which the phenomenal arrives by self-elimination, and being the ultimate it must be also the original: the phenomenal which disappears from it, must originally have been imposed on it. There is no rational escaping from that conclusion.

Well, the individual soul can escape from consciousness of the universe, but what of the universal consciousness? For so long as the universe goes on existing — and who shall say that it is not for all eternity? — this escape may only prove that the individual soul goes into a state of unconsciousness or absorbed self-consciousness, like a man going to sleep or falling into a trance, while the world goes on around him just as before essentially unaffected and not at all annulled by his unconsciousness of it. But in the first place this highest power of the individual consciousness cannot be peculiar to it, for it must be a power of the general and universal; the individual reflects the universal, for it is only the law of the universal that can be repeated with individual modifications in the law of the individual. Secondly, the universal soul is the same in all; for that is the experience of the highest knowledge and consciousness, that there [is] one self in all, featureless, immutable, unmodifiable, the same amidst all the changes of phenomena. As this self can draw back that which supports the individual into it, so it is and must be capable of drawing back that which supports the universal. In one case the stream of phenomena centred around its individual reflection ceases, in the other the stream of phenomena centred around its universal reflection. A theory only? But it is justified by reason acting on our total experience which sees the lower or phenomenal and the higher or eternal and sees how the phenomenal disappears, vanishes away from the face of the eternal.

We have then as a fact a supreme state of existence which is self-existent, the original I am, which is featureless bliss and consciousness of being, immutable, eternal and this seems to be common to all beings, secret in all, the real self of all. But what then of the world? It is a mass of constant modifications of consciousness and being, itself in its nature modification of consciousness or of being or of both. It cannot be a modification of nothing, it must be a modification of something. If consciousness and being are the first fact, real, eternal, is it not a modification of conscious being, of this real, this eternal something, and itself therefore real? Is it not itself eternal, an eternal continuity of modification, uninterrupted continual or else interrupted and recurringly continual? Must we not then suppose two states of the Brahman, a primary state of eternal unmodified being, a secondary state of eternal continuity of modifications of being, becomings of the Brahman? Does not

the Vedantic statement that all comes from the Brahman, exists by it, returns to it, imply that all is eternally contained in it and all are modifications of it? In that case, we cannot say that the Eternal Being is absolutely unmodifiable. No, says the Illusionist, the supreme eternal self is not only unmodified, but unmodifiable and nothing else but the eternal unmodifiable self exists really: all else is seeming. How then do all these modifications come about? What is the clue to this mystery, the cause of this magic of illusion?

Maya, answers the Illusionist. And what is Maya? It is a power of the eternal consciousness of Brahman by which there comes about an apparent modification of consciousness of which all these modifications we call the universe are the outcome. The modification is apparent, not real, yet a fact, unreal, non-existent, yet existing. Maya exists, yet does not exist; and its results too are apparent, not real, yet while Maya lasts, they are a fact we have to deal with, unreal, non-existent, yet existing. We have to escape from them, by escaping from Maya. We do not understand. How can the unmodifiable consciousness undergo at all even an apparent modification, to say nothing of such portentous results of the modification? To that there is no explanation, there can be no explanation. It takes place beyond the intellect, before the intellect can at all exist and cannot be understood by the intellect; it must be accepted as a fact; it is a fact that Maya is, it is a fact that Maya can be escaped from, and therefore not being eternal, is transient, is unreal, is not. To see this and escape is our only business. Only while it lasts, are we concerned with the modifications. But what is meant by saying while it lasts and who is it that is subject to it and escapes from it? Is it Brahman who is subject to Maya? No, Brahman the eternally unmodifiable consciousness aware only of the bliss of its self-existence cannot be subject to Maya, does not behold this phenomenal illusion. For if he did, we returning into that, should also behold it and could not by the returning escape from it. It is the individual soul only that is subject to Maya and escapes from it. But who is this individual soul? Is it the self in the individual, the Jivatman, and is the self in the individual different from the eternal Self? No, the individual self is the eternal Brahman, for there is only one self and not many. But then the Jivatman also cannot be subject to Maya or escape from it. There is then nobody subject to it, nobody who escapes. And really that is so, says the illusionist, but what seems to us now to be the individual self, is a reflection of the eternal Self in the mind, and it is that which is subject to Maya and suffers by it. But what then is Mind? It is a result of Maya, it is an illusory movement of consciousness, it is that for which and by which the universe exists. Get rid of its action, its movement, and the illusion will cease; you will be free. But then again who is this you? If I am really the eternal, then I, the individual do not exist; my real self, to use a desperately foolish language, — since that means an individual in possession of a self which cannot be, as my individuality is an illusion, — my real self is in eternal bliss and not being affected cannot care whether this false, non-existent, yet existing I is bound or escapes, suffers

or is in bliss. To whom then does it matter? Only to Maya and mind. Well, then, it is an affair between Maya and mind, and they can settle it between themselves. Precisely, the Illusionist will reply; to you, the mental being, it does matter because you are in Maya, you suffer, however phenomenally, however unreally, and the only way to get rid of it is to abolish Maya by abolishing yourself, your mental individuality, her result by which alone she exists; then you will not exist, Maya and the world will exist for other mental beings; but you will undergo extinction in the Brahman, for you Brahman only will exist. How for me, since I can only be either in Maya or out of it, either individually aware of Maya and not of my real self or else non-existent individually? How can 'I' be aware of my real self only and of nothing else? It is possible; for as the mind falsely reflects Brahman by Maya as the individual, so free from Maya, it can truly reflect Brahman and it ceases to be individual mind, although in an individual body it still seems to be individually released. Really, it is Brahman expelling Maya from the consciousness, then the mind is taken up into Samadhi, extinguished in Samadhi, and this is the [? prefatory] sign. Fix your mind upon that, look at things practically, and do not ask inconsistent questions, as to how there can be individual salvation when there is no individual self to be saved. These questions do not arise once the release is made, they arise in Maya which is a practical fact and can receive only a practical solution.

Well that is a kind of answer. But how am I to know that it is not an evasion of the difficulty? What if I say that really the unmodifiable Brahman is not the highest truth? that the Brahman is aware at once of his unmodified eternal self and of his eternally modified cosmic existence, Akshara and Kshara, but he is himself beyond both, and that my real way of escape is to be the same, to be aware of my eternal self and of all the universe as modifications of my self; that with this transcendence and universality comes perfect bliss, and that the fact that I, still existing in Maya, can be blissfully aware of one Self everywhere and of all things in the universe is a proof of my assertion? This seems to me at least as good a theory as your theory of Maya; and if you say, how is that possible, I can either allege reasons or answer like you, it is a supraintellectual fact and we have to take it as a fact and find the practical way of realising it. If you want me to reject it in favour of your theory, give me at least some help. Make me realise how the world can be nonexistently existent, how the unmodifiable can be apparently modified, how I can exist only beyond the world and yet exist in it so palpably that I must struggle to get out of it, how Brahman exists only beyond Maya and yet by me exists in Maya, how mind is the result of Maya, an instrument to see world and is yet capable of getting rid of Maya and seeing only the Brahman, how being by my individuality subject to Maya, and only able to escape by getting rid of my individuality, I am yet to become individually aware of Brahman and get an individual salvation, while all the rest of the world by which alone I am individual in my experience is still subject to it, how an unreal individual can realise Brahman.

The Mayavadin answers that as it is the Maya power of the Self which creates the ignorance in each individual, so it is the Self in each individual which enables him to have the knowledge by removing from him the Maya power. How this can be, can only be explained by analogies. As a man mistakes a rope for a snake, and then discovers it is a rope and there is no snake, so the mind thinks there is a world where there is only Brahman and discovers in the end that there is only Brahman; — or as a man mistakes mother of pearl for real pearl and runs after it and is then disillusioned and leaves it to go after the reality. As a pot is only a name and form of earth and earth is the only reality, so the world and the individual are only a name and form; break the pot, it will go back to its original earth; break the name and form in the consciousness, get rid of the individual, and there will be only Brahman in the consciousness. There are many golden ornaments, but the reality of them all is the gold; it is that alone which has value. So Brahman only is worth having; the rest is name and form and mere vanity. Or if these analogies seem to be only physical images not valid for a supraphysical fact, observe how you dream. The dream has no reality, yet is real to your consciousness while it lasts. The you in the dream is an unreal you; you awake to your real self. So the world is a dream; falling asleep to the world, the dream ceases; awake to the Brahman, the dream is convinced of unreality. That is the only possible and a quite sufficient answer.

Is it a sufficient answer? Does it prove the main point that the world consciousness is an apparent and unreal modification of the ever unmodifiable Brahman and therefore to be dispelled as quickly as possible, so that I may cease to exist, except insofar as I already eternally exist, not at all as I, but as the Brahman? Above all, does it show that my one practical business is to get rid of a world consciousness which is of no value and has no purpose except self-bewilderment, and become again what I ought never to have ceased to be in my unreal consciousness, as indeed I am still that in my real consciousness, the featureless and immutable Spirit? Is the world really a valueless dream, a purposeless delirium of ignorance? Have we no other true spiritual business here except to get out of it? These are the real questions that the soul of man asks of the illusionist thinker, and we have to judge his answer.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Essays Divine and Human*, CWSA, Vol. 12, pp. 210-18)

EXPERIENCES AND REALISATIONS IN THE INTEGRAL YOGA

PART TWO THE OPENING OF THE INNER SENSES

SECTION THREE: SYMBOLS

Chapter Eight: The Animal World

Cow

The cow in the occult symbolism indicates Light or the consciousness — white indicates the purified or spiritual consciousness — the white Light.

*

It is quite clear; it is the Vedic image. In the Veda the Cow is the Divine Light — the white Cow is the pure Consciousness in which there is the Light. The milk is the Knowledge and Power descending from the divine Consciousness.

*

The Cow usually means the Higher Consciousness. Perhaps the calf indicates the truth of the higher consciousness (white) in the physical (red).

*

The white calf is the sign of a pure and clear consciousness, — the cow or calf being the symbol of Light in the consciousness, something psychic or spiritual that you felt natural and intimate to you and inseparable.

*

The vision of the cows must have taken place in the psychic world. It has also a symbolic significance. The sun is the symbol of the Divine Truth, the cows are its powers, rays of the sun, sources of true knowledge, true feeling, true experience.

The descent you felt must have been into some depth of light, probably in the psychic nature.

*

Milk is always the symbol of the flow of the higher consciousness.

Bull

The bull is an emblem of strength and force. It is also in the Veda an image of the Gods, the male powers in Nature. Again the bull is the *vāhana* of Shiva. It may in a dream or an experience be any of these symbols — but it is probably the first here.

Horse

A horse always indicates some power.

*

The Horse is the symbol in dream or vision of a Power or Energy.

*

The Horse is Power — white is pure. It is the pure Power.

*

The Horse is Power, usually Life-Power, but also it may mean Mind-Power in Tapas if it is dynamic and mobile.

*

The Horse is the symbol of Power in motion — often of the Power that makes for rapid progress in sadhana.

*

The horse is a force acting for progress.

*

The horse is always the symbol of Power; it must be then a Power which you were trying to catch and make your own while sometimes it was trying to come up with you, perhaps to use you. This is what happens in the vital where there are these uncertain and elusive movements. The high platform was evidently the level of a higher Consciousness which stilled this fluctuating movement and made control of the Power more possible, as it became still and near.

*

The ass is the symbol of the inertia and obstruction in the body. The horse is the symbol of force or power. The tunnel of water must be the vital physical and the arch is a passage out, by which, if the ass can cross it or rather be pulled across, then it becomes a horse. In other words, the inertia and obstruction in the physical will be changed into Power and Force of Progress.

Lion

The Lion is the vital force.

*

The lion means vital force, strength, courage — here full of the light, illumined by the spiritual consciousness.¹

*

The lion indicates force and courage, strength and power. The lower vital is not lionlike.

Tiger

It all depends on the attitude of the tiger. If fierce and hostile, it may be a form of an adverse force, otherwise it is simply a power of vital nature which may be friendly.

1. In the correspondent's vision, the lion's face was full of shining light and the hairs of its mane were like rays of spreading light. — Ed.

Elephant

The elephant is Strength — sometimes Strength illumined with Wisdom.

*

The elephant is Strength — sometimes Strength removing obstacles.

*

The blue elephant is the strength of the Higher Consciousness fulfilling itself and removing obstacles.

Giraffe

The Giraffe symbolises aspiration.

Camel

[*Camel manifesting violet light*] Patient progress and endurance as a gift of the Divine Grace.

Deer and Antelope

The deer = speed in the spiritual path.

*

The deer is perhaps a symbol of speed in the spiritual progress.

*

The deer is Immortality, the antelope is Rapid Movement.

Boar

It [*the boar*] is rajasic strength and vehemence. Much however depends upon the context, — these figures have also other meanings.

*

The wild boar points to attacks of the crude vital rajas.

Buffalo

A buffalo conveys the idea often of an obscure violence in the nature — here [*in the correspondent's dream*] it seems tied up — i.e. under control but not eliminated. But it is not clear to what it refers — if it is symbolic at all.

*

The buffalo is a symbol of unnecessary or blind anger — perhaps it meant that that was still somewhere in your nature.

*

[*Buffaloes:*] Rash and obscure vital forces.

Goat

The goat in vision is often symbolic of lust.

*

Goats usually indicate sex tendencies.

Monkey

The monkey is a symbol of the leaping restless mind; these monkeys are the doubts and suggestions that have been assailing you.

*

The monkey is a symbol of the restless vital consciousness or of one or other of its movements.

Dog

The dog is the symbol of devoted affection and obedience.

*

The dog generally signifies devoted obedience — so it² may indicate the action of a devoted obedience spiritualised in the higher consciousness.

*

The dog usually indicates fidelity and as it is yellow, it would be fidelity in the mind to the Divine — but the other black and white one is difficult to interpret — it is something in the vital, but the meaning of the black spots is not clear.

Black Cat

The black cat is usually the symbol of magic of an evil kind or of an evil influence of the vital world acting on the physical as magic does. It is effective so long as its nature and mode of action are not discovered, so long as it can act invisibly — when it is seen it can be dealt with. The others had not seen it and were not aware that it was taking the life of the sick person and that she was not dead and need not die if this force could be destroyed or prevented from acting; you saw it and were therefore able to fight and catch it and kill it. That it took long to kill shows that it was not representing a particular process of magic which can be annulled quickly and decisively, but a Force of evil magic from the vital plane.

Snake or Serpent

The serpent is the symbol of energy, it may be a bad or hostile energy — but it may also be a good, even a divine energy.

*

The snake indicates some kind of energy always — oftener bad, but also it can indicate some luminous or divine energy. It is [*in this case*] the ascent of some such force from the physical upwards. The other details are not clear.

*

2. In a vision the correspondent saw a dog's face bathed in blue light, with its eyes full of white light. — Ed.

About the snake you saw in your meditation — serpents indicate always energies of Nature and very often bad energies of the vital plane; but they can also indicate luminous or divine energies like the snake of Vishnu. The one you saw was evidently of this latter type — a luminous divine energy and therefore there was no cause for alarm, it was a good sign.

*

A snake is a bad symbol only when it comes from the vital or other lower plane.

*

What you saw was not what is in yourself, but a symbol of the things that are in vital Nature. Scorpions and usually snakes also are symbols of harmful energies; the vital nature of earth is full of these energies and that is why the purification of man's outer vital nature also is so difficult and there are so many wrong movements and happenings in him, — because his vital is easily open to all these earth movements. In order to get rid of them, the inner being must wake and grow and its nature replace the outer nature. Sometimes serpents indicate energies simply, not harmful ones; but more often it is the other way. On the other hand the peacocks you saw were powers of victory, the victory of the energies of light over the energies of darkness.

*

The serpent Ananta is the infinite energy in infinite Time-Space which supports the universe.

*

It is in answer to your aspiration that the Mahakali force descended — the Serpent is the Energy from above working in the vital answering to the Serpent Kundalini which rises from below.

*

The Serpent is the symbol of energy — especially of the Kundalini Shakti which is the divine Force coiled up in the lowest (physical) centre, Muladhara — and when it rises it goes up through the spine and joins the higher consciousness above. Energies are of all kinds and the snakes can also symbolise the evil powers of the unregenerate vital nature — but here it is not that.

*

The serpent symbolises an energy good or bad, divine or undivine according to its nature. Here, it looks as if it were the Kundalini trying to ascend to the Brahma-randhra, but it has not yet reached beyond the vital and is stopped — probably because the time has not yet come.

*

This [*vision*] is the symbol of the opening of the centres to the Light.

The swan is the Indian symbol of the individual soul, the central being, the divine part which is turned towards the Divine, descending from there and ascending to it.

The two serpents interlaced are the two channels in the spine, through which the Shakti moves upward and downward.

The serpent with the six hoods is the Kundalini Shakti, the divine Power asleep in the lowest physical centre which, awakened in the Yoga, ascends in light through the opening centres to meet the Divine in the highest centre and so connect the manifest and the unmanifested, joining Spirit and Matter.

*

The golden serpent in the Muladhara is a symbol of the energy of the transformed physical consciousness.

*

The cobra is a symbol of the Energy in Nature — the upraised hood and light indicate the illumination and victorious position of the emerged Energy.

*

The opening of the hood indicates the victorious or successful activity of the Energy indicated by the snake.

*

The serpent with the hood over the head generally indicates future siddhi.

*

Snakes and scorpions always indicate attacks or threats of attack of one kind or another, more often threats from the vital plane or hostile influences on the physical.

*

The serpent is a symbol of force, very often a hostile or evil force of the vital plane. The sea is a symbol of a plane of consciousness. The white light is a manifestation of pure divine force descending from one of the truth-planes leading to the supramental.

The indication is that of a hostile vital force being expelled and the purifying light from above descending to illumine and deliver the part of the plane formerly occupied by it.

Crocodile

The crocodile signifies greed, *lobha*, of some kind.

Frog

Frog = modest usefulness.

Fish

The fish is the always moving vital mind making all sorts of formations.

*

Fish might be formations in the vital consciousness — for water most often indicates the vital consciousness.

Bird

The bird is often a symbol of the being.

*

The bird is a symbol of the individual soul.

*

A bird is a very frequent symbol of the soul, and the tree is the standing image of the universe — the Tree of Life.

*

Birds often indicate either mind-powers or soul-powers.

*

The bird is usually a symbol of some soul power when it is not the soul itself — here it is a power (awakened in the soul) of the whitish blue light — Sri Aurobindo's light.

*

The Blue Bird is always a symbol of aspiration towards something Beyond.

*

The blue bird is the symbol of aspiration to the heights.

Swan or Hansa

The swan is a symbol of the soul on the higher plane.

*

The swan is the liberated soul.

*

Both [*the goose and the swan*] are symbols of the beings in a man — but the goose or ordinary Hansa usually refers to the *manomaya puruṣa*.

*

The Hansa is the symbol of the being — it regains its original purity as it rises until it becomes luminous in the Highest Truth.

*

The Hansa is a symbol of the soul or the self — the peacock is the bird of victory. The golden Hansa is the soul living in the Truth, the golden peacock is the victory of the Truth.

Duck

The duck is the symbol of the soul — silvery colour = the spiritual consciousness — golden wings = the power of the Divine Truth.

*

The duck is usually a symbol of the soul or inner being; perhaps it was the four beings — mental, psychic, vital and physical — that you saw.³

Crane

The crane is the messenger of happiness.

Peacock

The peacock is the Bird of Victory.

*

A peacock is the symbol of spiritual victory.

*

The peacock signifies victory — in Yoga the divine victory. The clear sky would indicate perhaps the mental part cleared of obscurities. Seeing the higher part of the bodies [*of the peacocks*] would mean a victory in the higher parts of the consciousness, in the mental (head and neck) and perhaps also in vital mind and in emotional.

Dove or Pigeon

The dove signifies peace. The colours indicate the vital — green would be self-giving in the vital; blue the higher consciousness in the vital. So it must be peace casting its influence from above on the vital.

*

3. *The correspondent saw four ducks with uplifted necks, illuminated with white light, advancing in a row. — Ed.*

The white pigeon must be Peace.

Crow, Eagle, Kite

The crow signifies practical cleverness, the eagle Intelligence. The kite is Krishna's *vāhana*.

Ostrich

The ostrich may mean rapidity of movement.

Spider

The image of the spider in the Upanishads is used for the Brahman creating the world out of itself, dwelling in it and withdrawing it into itself. But what matters in a symbol is what it means for you. It may mean for you success or successful formations.

White Ants

Obviously it [*white ants seen in a dream*] must have been symbolic of small but destructive forces in the lower vital or physical.

Flies

Something small in the smaller vital.

* * *

Chapter Nine: The Plant World

Aswattha or Peepul Tree

The aswattha usually symbolises the cosmic manifestation.

*

It [*the peepul tree*] is the symbol of the cosmic existence.

Jungle

The jungle must be some unregenerated part of the vital nature and the serpent a wrong force emerging from it.

Leaves

Images of leaves and plants usually indicate vital strength or energy.

*

A green leaf means vital strength or energy or vitality.

Fruits

The fruits are the results of the sadhana.

Flowers

Flowers indicate a blossoming in the consciousness, sometimes with special reference to the psychic or the psychicised vital, mental and physical consciousness.

*

The vision of flowers is a symbol usually of psychic qualities or movements whether a potentiality or promise or an actual state of development.

*

It is usually when the psychic is active that this seeing of flowers becomes abundant.

*

The flowers indicate always an opening (usually psychic) in some part of the consciousness.

*

The flowers⁴ are the symbols of psychic movements. The sun is the Divine Consciousness. It is the awakening of the psychic consciousness and its activity under the Divine Influence.

*

Red flowers would ordinarily indicate an opening of the consciousness either in the physical or some part of the vital according to the shade.

Lotus

A lotus flower indicates open consciousness.

*

A lotus signifies the opening of the (true) consciousness.

*

The lotus is always the sign of the consciousness opening somewhere — when the consciousness opened from above, you became aware of a new plane of being of which you were not aware before.

*

It [*the lotus*] means consciousness. The opening of the lotus is the opening of some part of the consciousness.

*

The opening of the lotuses⁵ means, I suppose, the opening of the true vital and physical consciousness in which the spiritual being (the Swan) can manifest with all the consequences of that opening.

*

4. *In a vision the correspondent saw a luminous sun sending forth a multitude of flowers. — Ed.*

5. *The correspondent wrote about a vision in which two lotuses blossomed in his body, one at the navel region, the other at the base of the spine. — Ed.*

The lotus must represent owing to its numerous petals the “thousand petalled” lotus above the head which is the seat of the higher consciousness above the thinking intelligence. The vision may mean the opening of the consciousness there and in it the adoration of the Divine.

*

A lotus usually indicates an opening into the spiritual. The white and red are symbols of the Mother and the incarnating Divine.

*

The white lotus is the symbol of the Mother’s consciousness, — it does not indicate any part of the individual consciousness.

*

The red lotus is the flower of the Divine Presence.

*

The red lotus is the presence of the Divine on earth — the sun is the Divine Truth. It indicates the Divine manifestation on earth raising earth consciousness towards the Truth.

*

The red lotus signifies the presence of the Divine on the Earth.

*

It [*the blue lotus*] can be taken as the (Avatar) incarnation on the mental plane.

Other Flowers

The red rose is the flower of love and surrender, the white is the purity of psychic love.

*

Reddish pink rose = psychic love or surrender.

White rose = pure spiritual surrender.

*

The java [*red hibiscus*] is the flower of the Divine Power.

*

The [*flower named*] eternal smile⁶ means the self-existent joy and gladness of the Spirit.

*

I told you saffron meant purification — so if it has any significance, it can only mean that the Mother gave you a power of purification to use.⁷

* * *

Chapter Ten: Constructions

Building

The building is the symbol of a new creation — the white indicating spiritual consciousness, the coloured lights the different powers.

Workshop

The workshop is probably a symbol of the activity of the ordinary nature which is so full of formations and activities of the ordinary kind that it is difficult to pass through it to the inner or the inmost being.

The walls with the spaces between indicate the different parts of the being to which the outer mind has no access — possibly, the inner vital (the women may be the occult vital nature), emotional etc. The ceiling (yellow) may be the intellect or thinking mind which walls one in and prevents from getting into the open spaces of the higher consciousness. But through all a way lies to the open way of the higher consciousness full of peace, light and Ananda.

6. *Hibiscus micranthus*, a very small white hibiscus. — Ed.

7. The correspondent wrote that in a dream the Mother put a large packet of saffron in her hand. — Ed.

Temple

The temple means religious feeling, worship, adoration, consecration.

*

It is a temple and the temple is the symbol of spiritual aspiration. This one being complex meant a rich and many-sided aspiration.

Pyramid and Sphinx

The pyramid is usually a symbol of aspiration — reddish perhaps because it is in the physical.

*

The Sphinx is a symbol of the eternal quest that can only be answered by the secret knowledge.

* * *

Chapter Eleven: Objects

Cross and Shield

The cross is the sign of the triple being, transcendent, universal and individual.

*

The cross indicates the triple Divine (transcendent, universal, individual) — the shield means protection.

Crown

The crown is the sign of fulfilment (here in the intuitive consciousness) and the going up means an ascent to higher planes.

*

The crown indicates the higher consciousness in its static condition, the wheel its dynamic action. The red light is the Power sent down to change the physical.

Diamond

The diamond is the symbol of the Mother's light and energy — the diamond light is that of her consciousness at its most intense.

*

Diamonds may indicate the Mother's Light at its intensest, for that is diamond white light.

*

The diamond in your heart was a formation of the light of Mother's consciousness there, — for the Mother's light is of a white and at its most intense of a diamond radiance. The light is a sign of the Mother's presence in your heart and that is what you saw once and felt for a moment.

Pearl

It [*a pearl*] may be a representation of the "bindu", which is a symbol of the infinite in the exceedingly small, the individual point which is yet the Universal.

Flute

The flute is the symbol of a call — usually the spiritual call.

*

The flute is the call of the Divine.

*

The flute is the call of the Divine which descends into you from above and awakes the psychic yearning (the tears) and ends by bringing a vast peace and shows to you the clear sky of the higher consciousness in which there are the Truth-formations (golden stars) some of which begin to descend in a rain upon the physical consciousness (the earth).

Conch

The conch is often the symbol of call or aspiration.

*

The conch is the symbol of the spiritual call.

*

The conch is the call to realisation.

*

The conch is perhaps the proclamation of victory.

*

The lotus is the opened consciousness — the conchshell is the call to victory.

Bells

Bells heard are usually a sign of progress in sadhana, progress to come.

Vina

Harmony.

Wheel, Disc or Chakra

The wheel is the sign of an action of Force (whatever force may be indicated by the nature of the symbol) and as it was surging upwards it must be the fire of aspiration rising from the vital (navel centre) to the Higher Consciousness above.

*

A revolving disc means a force in action on the nature. The whitish blue light is known as Krishna's light, also as Sri Aurobindo's light. White is the Mother's. Perhaps here it is a combination.

*

The [*Sudarshan*] Chakra symbolises the action of Sri Krishna's force.

*

The chakra is the energy at work and it brings the first opening of the consciousness in the gross physical plane, i.e. of the mental physical, psychic physical, vital physical and the material.

*

Yes, the circular movement and the Chakra are always signs of energy in action, generally creative action.

Bow and Arrow

The bow is a symbol of the force sent out to reach its mark.

*

The arrow is the symbol of the Force which goes to its aim.
Gold = the Truth, Yellow = the mind, Green = the vital energy.
The arrow of the spiritual Truth using the mind and the vital energy.

Key

Is it a key you saw?⁸ If so the meaning is clear; it is the key to the divine realisation; the Mother is the key because it is her light (white is her colour) that enables us to open the gate of realisation.

Book

The book indicates some kind of knowledge.

8. *The correspondent wrote that in a vision he saw a key with the word "MOTHER" written on it in white letters, with white light around it. — Ed.*

Mirror, Square and Triangle

The mirror between the eyebrows indicates that something in the inner mind has become able to reflect the Truth from above (golden light) — a square is a symbol of the truth beyond the mind as a triangle is the symbol of mind, life, body.

Incense Stick and Tobacco

The incense stick is the symbol of self-consecration.

*

Tobacco is associated with *tamas* and incense sticks with adoration.

Gramophone

The gramophone is obviously symbolic of the mechanical mind.

* * *

Chapter Twelve: Numbers and Letters

Numbers

In one form or another all these ideas [*such as the significance of numbers*] have existed in the past. The significance of numbers was one of the chief elements in the teaching of Pythagoras 5 centuries before Christ.

*

The number 7 is the number of realisation — when there are four 7's it indicates perfect realisation.

*

7 is the figure of realisation. 3 x 3 means the descent from above and the answer from below.

*

There is no unlucky number. Numbers all have their powers and why should 13 not have its chance?

Letters (Writing)

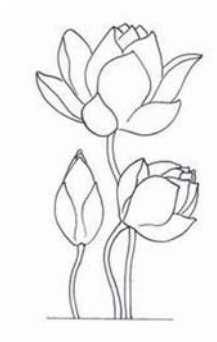
The writing [*floating before the eyes*] is often seen by sadhaks either in meditation and sleep or with the waking eyes or in both states. But if you see it only in sleep or an inward condition, it is not so easy to remember when waking unless you train yourself to remember.

OM

OM there [*above the crown of the head*] indicates the realisation of the Brahman on that level of the (higher) consciousness.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Letters on Yoga — III*, CWSA, Vol. 30, pp. 165-88)



SOME NOTES AND A LETTER

ON LOVE AND DEATH

[The notes were appended to a Bengali translation by Prithwi Singh (published as *Prem o Mrityu* in 1954) of Sri Aurobindo's narrative poem *Love and Death*.

The footnote to the Appendix stated:

These notes were written by Sri Aurobindo in answering questions put to him for elucidation of certain words and passages in the poem in course of translating the first eight pages in 1934, during a period of a little over three months. Textual references are from the current (1948) edition. The notes are arranged in the serial order of the lines in the poem, but exact dates, wherever possible, are given in brackets, at the end of explanation.

For convenience, the page numbers have been changed to the new edition of the *Collected Poems*, Volume 2 of the CWSA. — Ed.]

Page 113, lines 14-15

. . . poignant flowers
Thronged all her eager breast, . . .

EXPL.: "Poignant" means keenly moved by scent and colour so as to thrill strongly the senses. (8.9.1934)

Page 114, line 1

Sweetest of all unfathomable love,

EXPL.: "Sweetest of all" does not mean sweeter than all love — but love, sweetest of life's boundless possibilities.

Page 114, lines 9-10

Mysterious hillsides ranged and buoyant-swift
Races with our wild brothers in the meads,

EXPL.: It is the beasts of the forests and meadows. (15.9.1934)

Page 114, line 14

For neither to her honey and poignancy

EXPL.: The contrast is between the soft sweet moods and the intense vehement ones. (15.9.1934)

Page 114, lines 32-33

. . . from the bath
Among her kindred lotuses, . . .

EXPL.: “Kindred” — It simply means she is herself a lotus — the lotuses are kindred to her as of the same family.

Page 114, line 36

Meeting his absence with her sudden face,

EXPL.: That is another circumstance of the joy of love — when he has been absent, the sudden sight of her bringing an intense joy.

Page 115, lines 12-13

But Love has joys for spirits born divine
More bleeding-lovely than his thornless rose.

EXPL.: It means that the first careless and sorrowless joy of a happy sensuous love (the thornless rose) is not all or the best that Love can give to “spirits born divine”. Suffering and separation can bring out the soul’s deeper love which endures through all and is eternal and that brings in greater ecstasy in it. Here the “bleeding-lovely” = the crimson of the rose of love that is born of the wounds of love in sorrow.

Page 115, lines 29-30

. . . and felt slow beauty
And leafy secret change; . . .

EXPL.: It is the beauty which the day brings into the forest and slowly reveals, and the change of its appearance (the forest’s) — secret because hidden in its mass of foliage. All that simply expresses the slow revealing of the beauty of forest by the light coming in.

Page 115, lines 33-34

Then the whole daylight wandered in, and made
Hard tracts of splendour, . . .

EXPL.: In the forest where the sun trails in through openings among the trees, there are tracts or stretches of bright and hard brilliance of sunlight as opposed to the shades under the trees or the smaller bits of softened sunlight.

Page 118, lines 9-10

The lovely discontented spirit stole
From her warm body white. . . .

EXPL.: “Discontented” means “not satisfied with her fate,” “rebellious against the brevity of her life”.

Page 118, lines 13-15

. . . but with eyes
Emptied of glory hung above his dead,
Only, without a word, without a tear.

EXPL.: “Only” goes with “but with eyes empty”, not with what follows.

Page 118, lines 23-24

But Ruru, while the stillness of the place
Remembered her, sat without voice. . . .

EXPL.: (In answer to the question: “Does it mean that the silent woodland was vibrant with the memory of the dead girl?”)

Yes — but there is always also the idea that Nature and the things in Nature are conscious and can have memory, feelings, etc. in their own non-human way.

Page 118, lines 29-30

. . . and tossings dim
And slight unnoticeable stir of trees.

EXPL.: “Tossings” — It refers to the tossings of the trees which are felt though dimly by the consciousness of Ruru.

Page 118, lines 32-36 and
Page 119, lines 1-2

. . . And yet
No thought he had of her so lately lost.
Rather far pictures, trivial incidents
Of that old life before her delicate face
Had lived for him, dumbly distinct like thoughts
Of men that die, kept with long pomps his mind
Excluding the dead girl. . . .

EXPL.: Pictures and incidents of the life before he knew Priyumvada. The idea is that her face was always there in his destiny as an unreached thing, but became a living thing for him only when he met her. But this is mostly suggested, not expressed.

Page 119, line 15

And make my grief thy theatre, . . .

EXPL.: There is no idea of “an amusing spectacle” — but simply of a drama for Death, the creator of the drama, to enjoy.

Page 119, line 26

And prove what thou art and what man. . . .

EXPL.: The meaning of “prove” here is not the ordinary sense but rather “test by my own direct experience”. There is of course the idea of a struggle of force — but there is no assertion of future victory in “prove”.

Page 119, line 31

Reliving thoughts of her with every pace,

EXPL.: Reliving = living all over again in his thoughts his past feelings, relations with her, etc.

Page 120, line 13

Be to mere pain condemned. . . .

EXPL.: It means “sentenced (as by a judgment in a court) to unmingled pain (pain without relief or without any mingling or alteration of joy).”

**A LETTER OF SRI AUROBINDO
REGARDING PRITHWI SINGH'S BENGALI TRANSLATION OF
*LOVE AND DEATH***

Prithwi Singh,

I do not think it is the ideas that make the distinction between European and Indian tongues — it is the turn of the language. By taking over the English turn of language into Bengali one may very well fail to produce the effect of the original because this turn will seem outlandish in the new tongue; but one can always, by giving a right turn of language more easily acceptable to the Bengali mind and ear, make the idea as natural and effective as in the original; or even if the idea is strange to the Bengali mind one can by the turn of language acclimatise it, make it acceptable. The original thought in the passage you are translating¹ may be reduced to something like this: “Here is all this beautiful world, the stars, the forest, the birds — I have not yet lived long enough to know them all or for them to know me so that there shall be friendship and familiarity between us and now I am thus untimely called away to die.” That is a perfectly human feeling, quite as possible, more easily possible, to an Indian than to a European (witness Kalidasa’s *Sakuntala*) and can very well be acceptable. But the turn given it in English is abrupt and bold though quite forcible and going straight home — in Bengali it may sound strange and not go home. If so, you have to find a turn in Bengali for the idea which will be as forcible and direct; not here only, but everywhere this should be the rule. Naturally one should not go too far away from the original and say something quite different in substance but, subject to that limitation, any necessary freedom is quite admissible.

October 1934

(*Sri Aurobindo and Mother to Prithwi Singh*, 1998, pp. 31-32)

1. The passages referred to are:

“I have not numbered half the brilliant birds
In one green forest.”

and

“Nor have I seen the stars so very often
That I should die.”

This was in reply to the question whether the ideas in the passages referred to were Indian or European. Sri Aurobindo commented: “I can’t say. Neither of them are particularly European. These feelings, I should imagine, are simply human.” And then he gave this valuable note on translation given above. [Prithwi Singh’s note on a typed version of Sri Aurobindo’s letter.]

“THE MISSION THOU HAST ENTRUSTED . . .”

May 20, 1914

From the height of that summit which is the identification with Thy divine infinite Love, Thou didst turn my eyes to this complex body which has to serve Thee as Thy instrument. And Thou didst tell me, “It is myself; dost thou not see my light shining in it?” And indeed I saw Thy divine Love, clothed in intelligence, then in strength, constituting this body in its smallest cells and shining so brightly in it that it was nothing but a combination of millions of radiant sparks, all manifesting that they were Thyself.

And now all darkness has disappeared, and Thou alone livest, in different worlds, in different forms but with an identical life, immutable and eternal.

This divine world of Thy immutable domain of pure love and indivisible unity must be brought into close communion with the divine world of all the other domains, right down to the most material in which Thou art the centre and very constitution of each atom. To establish a bond of perfect consciousness between all these successive divine worlds is the only way to live constantly, invariably in Thee, accomplishing integrally the mission Thou hast entrusted to the entire being in all its states of consciousness and all its modes of activity.

O my sweet Master, Thou hast caused a new veil to be rent, another veil of my ignorance and, without leaving my blissful place in Thy eternal heart, I am at the same time in the imperceptible but infinite heart of each of the atoms constituting my body.

Strengthen this complete and perfect consciousness. Make me enter into all the details of its perfection and grant that, without leaving Thee for a single moment, I may constantly move up and down this infinite ladder, according to the necessity of the work Thou hast prescribed for me.

I am Thine, I am in Thee, Thyself, in the plenitude of eternal bliss.

THE MOTHER

(Prayers and Meditations, CWM 2nd Ed., Vol. 1, pp. 148-49)

AN EARLY CONVERSATION ON AUROVILLE

(June 1965)

Have you heard of Auroville?

For a long time, I had a plan of the “ideal town”, but that was during Sri Aurobindo’s lifetime, with Sri Aurobindo living at the centre. Afterwards, I was no longer interested. Then the idea of Auroville — I gave the name Auroville — was taken up again, but from the other end: instead of the formation having to find the place, it was the place — near the lake — which gave birth to the formation, and until now I took only a very minor interest in it, for I had received nothing directly. Then our little A took it into her head to have a house there, by the lake, and to have a house for me next to hers, and to offer it to me. And she wrote me all her dreams: one or two sentences suddenly stirred an old, old memory of something which had tried to manifest — a creation — when I was very young and which had again started trying to manifest at the very beginning of the century, when I was with Théon. Then all that was forgotten. It came back with this letter; all at once, I had my plan for Auroville. Now I have my overall plan, I am waiting for B to draw the detailed plans, for I had said from the beginning: “B will be the architect”, and I wrote to B. When he came here last year, he went to see Chandigarh, the town built by Le Corbusier, up there in the Punjab, and he was not very happy. It seems quite ordinary to me — I know nothing about it, I haven’t seen it, I only saw some photographs which were horrible. And while he was speaking to me, I could see that he felt, “Oh, if only I had a town to build! . . .” So I wrote to him: “If you want, I have a town to build.” He is happy. He is coming. When he comes, I shall show him my plan and he will build the town. My plan is very simple.

The place is up there, on the Madras road, on top of the hill. (*Mother takes a paper and begins to draw.*) We have here — naturally, it is not like that in Nature, we shall have to adapt ourselves; it is like that up there on the ideal plane — here, a central point. This central point is a park which I saw when I was very young — perhaps the most beautiful thing in the world from the point of view of physical, material Nature — a park with water and trees, like all parks, and flowers, but not many; flowers in the form of creepers, palms and ferns, all varieties of palms; water, if possible running water, and possibly a small cascade. From the practical point of view, it would be very good: at the far end, outside the park, we could build reservoirs which would be used to supply water to the residents.

So in this park, I saw the “Pavilion of Love”. But I dislike this word, for man has turned it into something grotesque; I am speaking of the principle of Divine Love. But that has changed: it will be “The Pavilion of the Mother” — but not this

(*Mother points to herself*) — the Mother, the true Mother, the principle of the Mother. I say “Mother” because Sri Aurobindo used that word, otherwise I would have put something else, I would have put “creative principle” or “principle of realisation” or — I do not know. . . . It will be a small building, not a big one, with only a meditation room downstairs, but with columns and probably a circular shape. I say probably, because I am leaving that for B to decide. Upstairs, the first floor will be a room and the roof will be a covered terrace. You know the ancient Indo-Moghul miniatures, with palaces where there are terraces with small roofs supported by columns? You know those old miniatures? Hundreds of them have come into my hands. . . . But this pavilion is very, very beautiful, a small pavilion like this, with a roof on a terrace, and low walls with couches against them to sit on, to meditate in the open air in the evening, at night. And below, downstairs, at ground-level, a meditation room, simply — something quite bare. There would probably be at the far end something which would be a living light, perhaps the symbol in living light, a constant light. Otherwise, a very peaceful, very silent place.

Nearby, there would be a small dwelling, a small dwelling which would nevertheless have three floors, but not large-sized, and that would be the house of A, who would serve as a guardian. She would be the guardian of the pavilion. She wrote me a very nice letter but she did not understand all that, of course.

That is the centre.

All around, there is a circular road which separates the park from the rest of the town. There would probably be a gateway — in fact there must be one — in the park. A gateway with the guardian of the gate. The guardian of the gate is a new girl who has come from Africa, who wrote me a letter telling me that she wanted to be the guardian of Auroville in order to let only the “servants of Truth” enter (*Mother laughs*). It is a very nice plan. So I shall probably put her there as guardian of the park, with a small house on the road at the entrance.

But the interesting thing is that around this central point, there are four big sections, like four big petals (*Mother draws*), but the corners of the petals are rounded and there are small intermediate zones — four big sections and four zones. . . . Naturally that is only in the air; on the ground, it will be an approximation.

We have four big sections: the cultural section, to the North, that is to say, towards Madras; to the East, the industrial section; to the South, the international section; and to the West, that is to say, towards the lake, the residential section.

To make myself clear: the residential section, where there will be the houses of the people who have already subscribed and of all the others who are coming in large numbers to have a plot in Auroville. That will be next to the lake.

The international section: we have already approached a certain number of ambassadors and countries for each one to have its pavilion — a pavilion from every country. It was an old idea. Some have already accepted, so it is on the way. Each pavilion has its own garden with, as far as possible, a representation of the

plants and products of the country which it represents. If they have enough money and enough space, they can also have a sort of small museum or permanent exhibition of the country's achievements. The buildings should be constructed according to the architecture of each country — it should be like a document of information. Then, depending on the money they wish to spend, they could also have accommodation for students, conference-rooms, etc., a cuisine of the country, a restaurant of the country — they could have all kinds of developments.

Then the industrial section. Already many people, including the Government of Madras — the Madras Government is loaning money — want to start industries, which will be on a special basis. This industrial section is to the East and it is very big, there is plenty of space; it will go down towards the sea. In fact, to the North of Pondicherry there is quite a large area which is totally uninhabited and uncultivated; it is by the sea, going up the coast towards the North. So this industrial section would go down towards the sea, and if possible there would be a kind of wharf — not exactly a port but a place where boats could come alongside; and all these industries, with the inland transportation they need, would have a possibility to export directly. And there, there would be a big hotel — B has already made a plan for it; we wanted to build the hotel here, on the site of the “Messageries Maritimes”, but after having said yes, the owner said no; it is very good, it will be better over there — a big hotel to receive visitors from outside. Already quite a number of industries have registered for this section; I do not know if there will be enough room, but we shall manage.

Then, to the North — that is where there is the most space, of course — towards Madras, the cultural section. There, an auditorium — the auditorium which I have dreamt of building for a long time; plans had already been made — an auditorium with a concert-hall and a grand organ, the best of its kind today. It seems they are making wonderful things. I want a grand organ. There will also be a stage with wings — a rotating stage, etc., the best of its kind. So, a magnificent auditorium, there. There will be a library, there will be a museum with all sorts of exhibitions — not inside the auditorium: in addition to it there will be a film-studio, a film-school; there will be a gliding club. Already we almost have authorisation from the Government, and the promise, so it is already well on the way. Then towards Madras, where there is plenty of space, a stadium. We want this stadium to be the most modern and the most perfect possible, with the idea — it is an idea I have had for a long time — that twelve years — the Olympic Games take place every four years — twelve years from 1968 — in '68 the Olympiads are taking place in Mexico — twelve years later we would hold the Olympic Games in India, there. So we need space.

Between these sections, there are intermediate zones, four intermediate zones: one for public services, post office, etc.; one zone for transport, railway station and possibly an aerodrome; one zone for food — that one would be near the lake and

would include dairies, poultry farms, orchards, cultivated lands, etc.; it would spread and include the Lake Estate: what they wanted to do separately would be within the framework of Auroville. Then a fourth zone. I have said: public services, transport, food, and the fourth zone: shops. We do not need many shops, but a few are necessary in order to obtain what we do not produce. They are like districts, you see.

And you will be there at the centre?

A hopes so (*Mother laughs*). I did not say no, I did not say yes; I told her, “The Lord will decide.” It depends on my state of health. A removal, no — I am here because of the Samadhi, I shall stay here, that is quite sure. But I can go there on a visit; it is not so far, it takes five minutes by car. But A wants to be quiet, silent, aloof, and that is quite possible in her park, surrounded by a road, with someone to stop people from coming in; one can stay very quiet — but if I am there, that is the end of it! There would be collective meditations, etc. That is to say that if I get a sign, first the physical sign, then the inner command to go out, I shall drive there and spend an hour, in the afternoon — I can do that now and then. We still have time because, before everything is ready, it will take years.

That is to say that the disciples will stay here?

Ah! The Ashram stays here — the Ashram stays here, I stay here, that is understood. Auroville is . . .

A satellite.

Yes, it is the contact with the outside world. The centre on my drawing is a symbolic centre.

But that is what A expects: she wants a house where she would be all alone next to a house where I would be all alone. The second part is a dream, because myself all alone. . . . You only have to see what is happening! It is true, isn't it? So it does not go with the “all alone”. Solitude must be found within, it is the only way. But as far as living is concerned, I shall certainly not go and live there, because the Samadhi is here; but I could go there to visit. For example, I could go there for an inauguration or for certain ceremonies. We shall see. It will be years from now.

In short, Auroville is more for outside?

Oh yes! It is a town! Consequently, it is the whole contact with outside. An attempt to realise on earth a more ideal life.

In the old formation which I had made, there had to be a hill and a river. There had to be a hill, because Sri Aurobindo's house was on top of the hill. But Sri Aurobindo was there at the centre. It was arranged according to the plan of my symbol, that is to say, a point in the middle, with Sri Aurobindo and all that concerned Sri Aurobindo's life, and four big petals — which were not the same as on this drawing, it was something else — and twelve all around, the town itself; and around that, there were the residences of the disciples; you know my symbol: instead of lines, there are bands; well, the last circular band formed the area for the disciples' residences, and each one had his own house and garden — a small house and a garden for each one. There was some means of transport, I wasn't sure if it was individual transport or collective transport — like those small open tramcars in the mountains, you know — going in all directions to take the disciples back towards the centre of the town. And around all that, there was a wall, with a gateway and guardians at the gate, and one could not enter without authorisation. There was no money — within the walls, no money; at the various entrances, there were banks or counters of some sort, where people could deposit their money and receive tickets in exchange, with which they could obtain lodging, food, this, that. But no money — the tickets were only for visitors, who could not enter without a permit. It was a tremendous organisation. . . . No money, I did not want any money.

Look! In my plan I forgot one thing. I wanted to build a housing estate for workers, but the housing estate was to be part of the industrial section, perhaps an extension along the edge of the industrial section.

Outside the walls, in my first formation, on one side there was an industrial town, and on the other, fields, farms, etc., to supply the town. But that represented a real country — not a big country, but a country. Now it is much reduced. It is no longer my symbol; there are only four zones and there are no walls. And there will be money. You see, the other formation was truly an ideal endeavour. . . . But I counted on many years before trying to start. At that time I thought twenty-four years. But now it is much more modest, it is a transitional attempt, and it is much more realisable. The other plan was . . . I almost had the land; it was in the time of Sir Akbar, you remember, from Hyderabad. They sent me some photographs of the State of Hyderabad and there, in those photographs, I found my ideal spot: an isolated hill, quite a big hill, and below it, a large, flowing river. I told him, "I want this place", and he arranged the matter. Everything was arranged. They sent me the plans, the papers and everything, saying that they were giving it to the Ashram. But they laid down one condition — it was virgin forest, uncultivated land — the place was given on condition, naturally, that we would cultivate it — but the products must be utilised on the spot; for example, the crops, the wood, must be utilised on the spot, not transported; nothing could leave the State of Hyderabad. There was even C, who was a navigator, who said that he would obtain a sailing boat from England to go up the river to fetch the products and bring them to us here. Everything

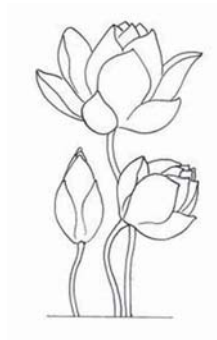
was very well planned! Then they set this condition. I asked if it was not possible to have it removed; then Sir Akbar died and that was the end of it, the matter was dropped. Afterwards, I was glad that it was not done because, now that Sri Aurobindo has departed, I cannot leave Pondicherry. I could only leave Pondicherry with him provided that he accepted to live in his ideal town. At that time, I had spoken of this project to D, the person who built Golconde; and he was enthusiastic, he told me, "As soon as you start to build, call me, I shall come." I had shown him my plan; it was based on an enlargement of my symbol; he was most enthusiastic, he thought it was magnificent.

It was dropped. But the other one, which is just a small intermediate attempt, we can try.

I have no illusions that it will keep its original purity, but we shall try something.

THE MOTHER

(*Words of the Mother – I*, CWM 2nd Ed., Vol. 13, pp. 251-58)



“WIND-SWOON” —
CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

Sri Aurobindo —

I have completed below a poem which had been lying for a long time rejected among my papers. How do you find it? Does the last stanza create a discordant change of atmosphere? [1]

The breath of night grows calm,
And darkly broods each palm
 In quiet eminence;
The branching masses lay
Upon earth's dimming day
 Shadows of time-suspense.

Around me and above
Are secrecies of love
 Whose veil was but the breeze:
A presence makes the air
Deific everywhere
 With all-embracing peace.

Moon-glimmers falling through
The branch-hush bear a new
 Transforming mystery,
As though from passing night [2]
Were strained an essence-light
 Of immortality.

One sole miraculous sound
Cores the immense profound
 Of lull: my body hears, [3]
Revealed within its breast,
The untimed unmanifest [4]
 Heart of the universe.

[*Amal's questions:*]

[2] or “As though from the brief/mutable night” to introduce a greater variety in the rhythm of the stanza.

[3] I wrote “spirit” first, then thought “body” more concrete and striking. Now I wonder if “spirit” brings out better the idea of the last two lines.

[4] Do you think the last two lines gain by changed thus?

The untimed Unmanifest,
The Heart of the universe.

Sri Aurobindo’s comment:

[1] No.

[2] It seems to me that “passing night” is best — and the alterations would spoil it.

[3] No — “body” is better.

[4] No — it is better as it is.

It is a very good poem.

23 August 1934

AMAL KIRAN
(K. D. SETHNA)

Never for an instant vacillate in the belief that the mighty work of change taken up by Sri Aurobindo is going to culminate in success. For that indeed is a fact: there is not a shadow of doubt as to the issue of the work we have in hand. . . . The transformation is going to be: nothing will ever stop it, nothing will frustrate the decree of the Omnipotent. Cast away all diffidence and weakness and resolve to endure bravely awhile before the great day arrives when the long battle turns into an everlasting victory.

The Mother

(*Words of the Mother – I*, CWM 2nd Ed., Vol. 13, p. 21)

SRI AUROBINDO: LIFE AND TIMES OF THE MAHAYOGI

(Continued from the issue of September 2015)

Chapter: XLVI

Inside and Outside the Prison (2)

On one side was the jail workshop, on the other side the cowshed. These were the two boundary lines of my independent realm. Meandering back and forth, from the workshop to the cowshed and from the cowshed to the workshop, I would either recite the profound, inspiring and inexhaustibly strength-giving hymns of the Upanishads, or observing the activities and movements of the prisoners, would try to realise the basic truth of the presence of Narayana inside all the sheaths. Reciting in my mind the hymn *sarvam khalvidam brahma*, all is verily the Brahman, I would project this realisation on all that existed — the tree, the house, the wall, the man, the animal, the bird, the metal, the earth. While doing this I would develop such a mood that the prison would no longer appear to be a prison. I felt that the high rampart, the iron grating, the white wall, the tree brightened by the sunbeams and adorned with blue leaves and all those ordinary stuff were no longer unconscious, but had come alive filled with the all-pervading consciousness and they loved me and wished to embrace me.

Sri Aurobindo: *Karakahini (Tales of Prison Life)*¹

The *Sanjivani* (Calcutta) reported in its issue of 2nd July 1908 that Rupees four thousand had been collected for the Aurobindo Defence Fund, and remarked:

It is the wish of every soul that Aurobindo Ghose should lightly escape the danger he has found himself in. It would be a disgrace to the Bengalis if an able counsel cannot be engaged in his defence simply for want of funds.²

The daily *Hitavadi* (Calcutta) observed in its issue of 12th July 1908 that it was impossible to accept that Sri Aurobindo could have anything to do with the Muraripukur affair and wrote:

Still his case has grown so complex that there appears to be little chance of his escape unless defended by an able counsel. It is the duty therefore of his

countrymen to help him in his trial. But why cannot the pleaders and barristers defend a man like him without charging fees?³

On the 13th July the same paper observed,

There appears to be no likelihood of the Alipore Bomb Case coming to a close in the course of the present year. Mr. Norton will, therefore, have a merry time of it, for he will get Rs. 1000 per diem. So, pleaders and barristers will swallow all the wealth of the country and the people will have no protection against water-scarcity, famine and malaria.⁴

To form an idea of the value of a thousand rupees a day in the first decade of the 20th century we may remember that the *Dharma*, the Bengali magazine Sri Aurobindo edited after his release from jail, was priced at “two pice”. A rupee consisted of sixty-four pice. (Tiny coins for half pice and one-third pice too were in circulation.) The distinguished Bengali writer Dinendra Kumar Roy, who lived with Sri Aurobindo for two years at Baroda to help the latter master Bengali, regrets in one his books of reminiscences that while his grandfather could buy sixteen “seers” of cooking oil for a rupee, he could buy only four “seers” of oil and two and half seers of ghee for the same amount! (A “seer” was more or less equivalent to a kilogram in weight.)⁵

Who was this Norton? Born in 1852, Yeardeley John Norton was the grandson of Sir John David Norton, a judge of the Madras Supreme Court (as the High Court was then known) and the son of John Bruce Norton, who was once the Advocate-General of Madras. He was educated at Oxford and, as Barrister-at-Law, practised in London before choosing India in 1879. At his death in 1931, *The Times* of London referred to him as “undoubtedly the foremost English Advocate in India”.⁶

The government booking him to lead its team of prosecution lawyers against the Alipore Conspiracy Case accused for the entire duration of the trial that wended its way from the Magistrate’s court through the Sessions to the High Court, shows its keenness to leave no stone unturned to secure punishment for the accused. Norton was famous for winning cases and his clients, the topmost representatives of “the Crown” in India were confident that they could depend on him for removing from the political scene the one most powerful if hardly visible, the one most dreaded if enigmatically detached and quiet hero, Sri Aurobindo.

Bipin Chandra Pal had already been removed from the scene and Tilak was about to meet the same fate. And most of the younger patriots who had dynamism enough to try to organise a satisfactory defence for the accused, were behind bars. It fell on Sri Aurobindo’s father-in-law Bhupal Chandra Bose, holding an important government post and decorated as “Roy Bahadur” for his great contribution to agriculture in Bengal and Assam, and Sri Aurobindo’s uncle (Rishi Raj Narain’s

elder son-in-law) Krishna Kumar Mitra, the noted editor, educationist and patriot, to act in that direction. As advised by Bose, Mitra approached a legal luminary of the time who was also believed to be an active sympathiser of the Nationalists, Barrister Byomkesh Chakravarti. Krishna Kumar Mitra expected him to take up the work on a voluntary basis. But Chakravarty said, "I won't charge any fee; however, my assistants have to be paid." He further assured Mitra that he and his team would fight for the accused till the trial concluded in the High Court, for a package sum of Rupees eleven thousand. The team he constituted included his son-in-law B. K. Lahiri and three other juniors, all barristers.

The entire amount was paid in advance.⁷

After the recording and examination of the accused at Magistrate Birley's Court lasting 76 days the case was committed to the Sessions Court on the 20th of August. Barindra Kumar was asked by Birley if he wished to claim the privilege of being tried as a British citizen. That would mean his case being sent up to the High Court straightaway. However, he declined the privilege.

By the middle of July the Aurobindo Defence Fund had got Rupees thirteen thousand. It was of course not intended exclusively for Sri Aurobindo, but for the other accused as well. According to a report in the *Basumati* the contributors included a blind beggar and a poor schoolboy. The boy went without lunch for weeks thereby saving two pice a day and donated the accumulated amount to the fund.⁸

The trial began at the Sessions Court on the 19th of October 1908 and continued till 14th of April 1909. It is left to our imagination to visualise the face of the judge, Mr. C. P. Beachcroft, when his eyes fell on Sri Aurobindo. The pitifully attired accused standing in a corner of the cage meant for those standing the trial was his brilliant classmate at Cambridge, one who stood first in Greek while he stood second!

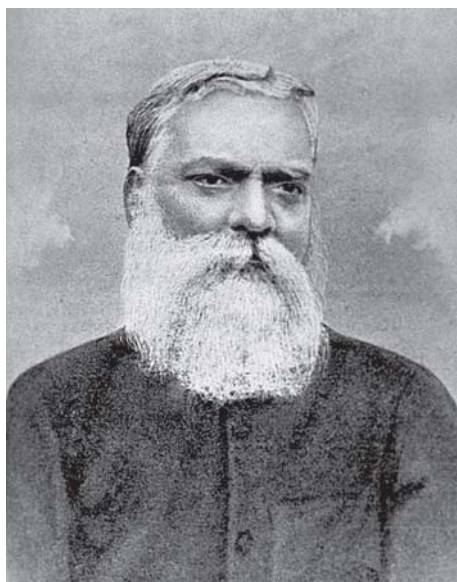
Sri Aurobindo's face was not likely to show any mark of surprise, pleasant or otherwise, for by then anything external had ceased to affect him, as his fellow-prisoners testify.

Barrister Mr. Chakravorty and one of his assistants seem to have appeared for a lamentably short period of time and then clean disappeared. Their role must have appeared so unproductive that Krishna Kumar Mitra took no cognisance of it though the official records show their clumsy intervention at the preliminary stage, maybe for about a month. However, that much transient interest of as costly a lawyer as Chakravorty must have made the police suspect some secret source of money supporting the accused. One night they raided Mitra's house and examined all his papers, files and notebooks. They took away a lot of them. They were satisfied that the Defence Fund's collection consisted of small amounts donated by the common people, apart from a sum of one hundred rupees contributed by Swarna Kumari Devi, a daughter of the Tagore family and the mother of Sarala Devi.

The police did not care to restore to Mitra his intellectual property including his manuscript of a biography of Nanak.⁹



C. R. Das



Krishna Kumar Mitra

The bulk of the amount raised had disappeared along with Chakravorty. Mitra was in a fix. Even though the daily *Hitavadi* had raised the question as to why can the pleaders and barristers not come forward to defend a man like Sri Aurobindo without charging fees, no positive response had been received. Admiration for Sri Aurobindo and the revolutionaries was spontaneous, but to publicly act in their defence, without expectation of reward but with certainty of retribution from a terribly upset alien administration, was a different matter, at least so far as the elite were concerned. Times were bitter.

Mitra ran to a dear friend as well as a gifted lawyer, Ashutosh Biswas, and sought his help. Biswas promised to take up Sri Aurobindo's defence, but only if the State did not involve him in the prosecution, for he was a Government Pleader. A few days later he reported that the State had notified the need of his service.¹⁰

Alas, he was appointed Public Prosecutor and fell to an assassin's bullet while the trial was on.

Finding it improbable to rope in any noted lawyer, a desperate Mitra requested an experienced Mukhtar, Neelkanta Babu, to defend his nephew, for a daily fee of Rupees twenty. The Mukhtar not only agreed, but did away with all his other commitments and put his heart and soul in the matter. Though Mitra did not attend the proceedings in the court, he would visit the Mukhtars' Library in the court premises every day and discuss the issues on hand with Neelkanta Babu. The only other man who used to visit them and appeared keen to follow the course of the trial was Devendra Gossain, father of Naren Gossain. He would anxiously discuss the case with Mitra. But by and by he avoided Mitra and did not even talk to him when both came face to face. It was not for long that Mitra remained mystified. Naren had turned an approver.

The situation was growing hotter. With the killing of Naren Gossain (of that, later), the police seemed to plan to arrest Sarojini Devi, the fund-raiser. But they abandoned the plan, possibly afraid of adverse reaction in the Press. Mitra realised that despite Neelkanta Babu's talent and sincerity he could not be a match for the formidable Yeardeley Norton whose theatricals were impressive. He discussed the matter with the High Court Attorney, Dhannulal Agarwal, his former student, and they decided to approach the young Barrister Chittaranjan Das — though not yet famous, a promising star and what counted more, a great admirer of Sri Aurobindo.

Chittaranjan Das (1870-1925) and Sri Aurobindo were in England at the same time and they had probably come in contact with each other there. Chittaranjan intended to qualify himself for the I.C.S., but, it was believed, was excluded from the list of successful candidates because of his nationalist speeches on several occasions. He came back to India as a barrister in 1893, the very year Sri Aurobindo returned.

According to Mitra, Attorney Agarwal submitted the proposal to Chittaranjan, frankly stating that all that the Defence Fund was left with was an amount of Rupees six thousand.

Chittaranjan was only waiting for the challenging offer. Writes his daughter, Aparna Devi:

Nobody had approached Father to take up the case. But from the very beginning he was eagerly waiting for the chance. That was a time when he often sat in a circle with friends to invoke the spirits of the departed, at night. We the curious children would peep into their room through different doors. One day Father said, "Tonight I will ask about the case of Aurobindo." The late Maharaja of Natore, Jagadindranath Roy, also used to be present in these sessions. That night they invoked the spirit of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay. The automatic writing in English read: "You must defend Aurobindo." The pencil went on moving again and again repeating the same words. Father was quite excited. When Uncle Bijay (B. C. Chatterjee, Barrister) came, Father exclaimed, "You'll see, Bijay, the case will surely come to me." . . .¹¹

Aparna Devi recollects that even though they were in a very inconvenient situation financially, Chittaranjan forgot about all his obligations and remained absorbed in the documents regarding the case as well as the law books, literally forgetting his sleep and food. He looked like a Yogi lost to the world around him and members of the family adjusted themselves to that serene situation and took care that his mood was not disturbed. His staff did not entertain any other client and the household became like a place of meditation, bereft of any festivity or entertainment.

The administration was naturally keeping track of Krishnakumar's activities despite his trying to remain inconspicuous. The very day after Chittaranjan had taken up the case, Krishnakumar was taken into custody and led to Agra Fort where he remained interned till 1910. The other distinguished Nationalist leaders rounded up under what was known as Regulation Act 3 and confined in jails in northern India or Burma (Myanmar) included Raja Subodh Mallik, Manoranjan Guha Thakurta, Aswini Kumar Dutt and Sri Aurobindo's invaluable assistant in the *Bande Mataram*, Shyamsundar Chakravarty.

The fact that the confinement in Alipore Jail meant for Sri Aurobindo the supreme boon is well known, mostly through his *Tales of Prison Life* and *Uttarpara Speech*. Some moments of perplexity, his feeling of astonishment at what was happening to him and an ardent appeal to the Supreme to reveal the answer, were amply rewarded. It was to make him conscious of the unique role he was destined to play for the future of humanity that he had been blessed with that strange solitude. What Sri Aurobindo received during the first spell of his solitary confinement continued to work within him when he was transferred into the large dormitory. The jolly hullabaloo of his youthful inmates made no scratch on the armour of silence he wore.

It is impossible to probe into the life he was living within himself or the mystic

experiences he was gaining amidst this turbulent atmosphere — sometimes marked by lively debates and agitated disputes among the inmates. But we get invaluable glimpses of his appearance, conduct and rare utterances at this bizarre stage of his life from first-hand accounts left by a few of his compatriots. What follows is from the autobiography of Upendranath Bandopadhyay. The impressions relate to Sri Aurobindo's days in their three phases — his days in the dormitory among the others and the first and the last phases of his solitary confinement:

There was but one man among us who remained supremely above all the squabbles. It was Aurobindo. We heard many strange stories about him from the warders. He was believed to be taking no food, and many thought he had gone off his head. He allowed ants and cockroaches to eat from his dish. . . . I did often strive to seek out the truth, but had never courage enough to question him. One day I found his hair shining with oil. This was extraordinary and confounding, as we were not allowed oil. So I made bold to ask him, "Do you have oil for your hair?"

He stunned me with his reply: "I don't bathe."

"But your hair looks shiny!"

"It does, but you see, I am passing through some physical changes because of my *Sadhana*. My hair draws fat from my body."

I had noticed similar things happening in the person of one or two *Sannyasis*, but I had no explanation for the phenomenon. Later I saw more of this sort of wonders in Aurobindo. Once I was sitting in the prisoners' dock when I chanced to look at him. I saw his eye-balls still as glass; he did not blink, nor was there an iota of edginess in them. I had read somewhere that the eyes show such signs when the functions of the mind are stilled. I drew the attention of a few others to his eyes, but nobody dared to make any query with him in this regard. At last Sachin slowly moved to his proximity and asked him, "What did you get out of your *Sadhana*?"

Sri Aurobindo placed his hand on that boy's shoulder and, smiling, said, "I've got what I sought!"

Then we made bold to come closer and sit around him in a circle. Not that I understood much of what I heard from him about all the wonderful mysteries of the inner life, but the fact that a completely new chapter had begun in the life of this unusual person, became a deep-rooted conviction in me. I heard something about his completing the Vedantic *Sadhana* and all the Tantric *Sadhana* too. I had never heard him speak about the Tantric lore. So I asked him where he found that occult knowledge. In answer he stated that a great soul, in his subtle body, visited him and taught him that discipline.

When asked about the outcome of the case, he said, "I will be acquitted."¹²

Indeed, in his famous speech at Uttarpara delivered soon after his release he categorically stated, "I knew I would come out." But he seems to have been sure of it even at an early stage of the trial. Recounts Nolini Kanta Gupta:

One day, as we sat in our cage in the court room, one of the more enterprising sentries — he was an Englishman — came up to him and said jokingly, "Abrindo (he could not say Aurobindo), you are caught at last, you are caught at last!" Sharp and immediate came Sri Aurobindo's retort, "And yet I will escape, and yet I will escape!"¹³

Sri Aurobindo's glistening hair must have mystified several fellow-prisoners apart from Upendranath, as is evident from the following account left by Sudhir Kumar Sarkar:

His eyes seemed far away, though they were not vacant, as if he dwelt in some far off twilit region. He used to go to the court wearing his dhoti tightly tucked up in the manner of working men. He would put on his cotton shawl drawing one end below his right arm and throwing it over his left shoulder. . . . Rather he looked like a mendicant, a fakir! . . . He would sit in a corner of the dock and sometimes laugh uncontrollably, becoming almost red in the face.¹⁴ What he saw there he alone knew. During the identification parade he failed to move aside even when he was told to do so. Was it reckless madness or some profound faith? His black hair glistened always as if oil was dripping from it. His face resembled that of a child's, without any lines of thought or anxiety, a tender face perpetually filled with a happy smile. His eyes were full of profound peace and tranquility. His smile was unlike ours; it was expressed in the glance of his eyes. His body exuded a fragrance like that of a tender baby's. His nails grew to half an inch, his hair and beard grew longer and longer. Our hair never had that oily sheen of his. I ventured to ask him: "Do the European warders bring you oil in secret?" He neither smiled nor answered, as if he had not heard me. At night the warders would come and tell us, "Arvind remains standing the whole night, his bedding folded in the corner." They did not disturb him by pressing him to lie down. They did not even call him up at night as was their practice with us; in our case they called us quite regularly to make sure that we were there and no one had escaped.¹⁵

But the glistening hair apart, there were several other signs emanating from his silent and aloof presence to surprise others, including the Governor of Bengal. The following incident took place at the dormitory phase of Sri Aurobindo's confinement:

Every morning after taking his bath Sri Aurobindo selected a corner in the hall as his living space. There, with his head on the floor and feet in the air, he spent hour after hour. One day the Governor of Bengal, Mr. Baker, came to see our ward. Sri Aurobindo was then suspended in that pose with his feet upwards. Baker remained standing there for about half an hour without uttering anything. When Sri Aurobindo did not respond in any manner, he left, thinking the posture to be another instance of the occult and unintelligible performances of Indian mystics. We were filled with apprehension: “Now,” we thought, “we are finished. The Governor surely came to speak with him. He must have felt that he was being ignored. Obviously they will shoot us now. Perhaps a little conversation would have softened him.”¹⁶

Well, we can assume that the Governor must have gone back not richer by yet another memorable experience while serving the British interest in India. Had he been lucky, he could have stolen a glimpse of Sri Aurobindo in his cell while in the following position — an experience he revealed in a casual fashion while in conversation with a few disciples:

At one time I thought that physical Siddhi, spiritual power over matter, was impossible. But in Alipore Jail I found once after my meditation that my body had taken a position which was physically impossible: it was actually raised a few inches above the ground; there was what is known as levitation.¹⁷

(To be continued)

MANOJ DAS

References and Notes

1. Sri Aurobindo: *Karakahini* written originally in Bengali, serialised in the magazine *Suprabhat* in 1909. (The English text presented here is the present author’s translation.)
2. Collected from the Old India Office Library, London.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. Dinendra Kumar Roy: *Sekaler Smriti*; Ananda Publishers, Kolkata.
6. A. G. Noorani: “Champion Lawyer”; article in the *Frontline* (Chennai), dated 21 September 2012.
7. Krishna Kumar Mitra: *Atmakahini* (Bengali); Sadharan Brahma Samaj, Kolkata.
8. *The Basumati*, 18 July 1908: reproduced in *Sri Aurobindo in the First Decade of the 20th Century* by Manoj Das; Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.

9. Krishna Kumar Mitra: *Atmacharita* (Bengali); Sadharan Brahma Samaj, Kolkata.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Aparna Devi: *Manush Chittaranjan* (Bengali); Indian Associated Publishers, Kolkata.
12. Upendranath Bandopadhyay: *Memoirs of a Revolutionary*, read with *Nirbasiter Atmakatha* (Bengali) by the same author; National Publishers, Kolkata.
13. *Collected Works of Nolini Kanta Gupta*, Vol. 7; Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry.
14. Many of us may wonder if Sri Aurobindo did laugh like that. Writes Dinendra Kumar Roy in the book referred to earlier: Sri Aurobindo had very few friends at Baroda. One who could be called his intimate friend was Lt. Madhav Rao Yadav. The two would burst into loud laughs while talking. One day Roy told them, "I am surprised that men of extremely serious nature like you two could laugh with such abandon!" Said Sri Aurobindo, "You should have witnessed my grandfather (Rishi Rajnarain) and his friend Dwijen Babu (elder brother of Rabindranath) laughing while they talked; as if the roof would fly away!"
15. *A Spirit Indomitable: Lights on the Life of Sudhir Kumar Sarkar*; Edited by Mona Sarkar; Sudhir Kumar Sarkar Birth Centenary Committee, Pondicherry.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Nirodbaran: *Talks with Sri Aurobindo*, Vol. 1; Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.

Concentration is necessary, first, to turn the whole will and mind from the discursive divagation natural to them, following a dispersed movement of the thoughts, running after many-branching desires, led away in the track of the senses and the outward mental response to phenomena: we have to fix the will and the thought on the eternal and real behind all, and this demands an immense effort, a one-pointed concentration. Secondly, it is necessary in order to break down the veil which is erected by our ordinary mentality between ourselves and the truth; for outer knowledge can be picked up by the way, by ordinary attention and reception, but the inner, hidden and higher truth can only be seized by an absolute concentration of the mind on its object, an absolute concentration of the will to attain it and, once attained, to hold it habitually and securely unite oneself with it. For identification is the condition of complete knowledge and possession; it is the intense result of a habitual purified reflecting of the reality and an entire concentration on it; and it is necessary in order to break down entirely that division and separation of ourselves from the divine being and the eternal reality which is the normal condition of our unregenerated ignorant mentality.

Sri Aurobindo

(*The Synthesis of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 23, p. 515)

WHAT IS CULTURE?

*A Broadcast Talk by The Rt. Hon'ble Sir Akbar Hydari, Kt., P.C., LL.D., D.C.L.
President, Executive Council H.E.H. THE NIZAM'S GOVERNMENT
30th November, 1940*

At the present moment, the soul of the world is at stake; all the cultural and spiritual values, for which humanity has stood, are being weighed in the balance. Matthew Arnold had hoped that Culture would triumph over Anarchy; five centuries before him Ibn-e-Khaldun, pronounced by competent European authorities as the father of Philosophy of History, had predicted the triumph of the inherent vitalism and cohesive rationalism of Islamic culture; but in the present state of anarchy is there any chance of the survival of Culture?

I shall try briefly to explain my own conception of what real culture is and what it means for humanity, so that we may be able to judge the extent of the danger, which faces mankind at this hour of its destiny. A nation may develop knowledge, science and art, but if, in its general outlook, its habits of life and thought, it is governed not by knowledge and truth and beauty and high ideals of living, but by the gross vital, commercial, economic view of existence, that nation may be called civilised in a sense, but is not the realisation of a cultured humanity. In the words of Sri Aurobindo Ghosh "not to live principally in the activities of the sense-mind, but in the activities of knowledge and reason and a wide intellectual curiosity, the activities of the enlightened will which make for character and ethical ideas and a large human action, not to be governed by our lower or our average mentality but by truth and beauty and the self-ruling will is the ideal of a true culture and the beginning of an accomplished humanity." I shall have occasion to quote very often in the course of this talk Sri Aurobindo, to whose writings and to those of the great mystics of Islam taught by Hazrat Ali, I owe a great deal, and to whom it may be recalled Tagore said "You have the Word and we are waiting to hear it from you; India will speak through your voice to the world, 'Hearken to me'."

True culture then consists in the pursuit of mental ideals of Truth, Good and Beauty for their own sake. Judged from this standard, we can say that in so far as modern civilisation has turned all its intellectual and scientific achievements to commercialism, soulless materialism and to gross uses of vitalistic success, it is definitely inferior in culture to ancient Athens, to Italy of the Renaissance, to ancient India of Asoka or Vikramaditya, or mediaeval India of Akbar or Shahjehan. In modern Europe, the satisfaction of the life-power in man, of the vitalistic, the dynamic being, is considered to be the chief concern of a large section of mankind. Modernism means to many a crude sort of lifeless scientific existence, which Imam Ghazali

aptly described as the most retrograde step ostensibly towards “planned evolution.” “The ancients regarded this life as an occasion for the development of the rational, the ethical, the aesthetic, the religious being. Greece and Rome laid stress on the three first, Asia went further and made these also subordinate, looked upon them as stepping-stones to a religious consummation.”

This spiritual turn is well illustrated in Art, which is identical in its spiritual aim and principle with the rest of Asiatic culture in one of its most resplendent forms in India — the frescoes of Ajanta. The European artist uses his eye and hand to produce a colourable “imitation” of Life and Nature, and through it gives artistic expression to life, action, passion, emotion, idea, nature, seen for their own sake, and for an aesthetic delight in them. The Eastern artist knows something more that is behind these things. The highest business of his art “is to disclose something of the Self, the Infinite, the Divine to the regard of the soul, the Self through its expression, the Infinite through its living finite symbols, the Divine through his power.” He has not for instance “to create for us the human face and body of the Buddha, or some one passion or incident of his life, but to reveal the calm of Nirvana through a figure of the Buddha, and every detail and accessory must be turned into a means or an aid of his purpose.” Take Architecture in which form also India possesses some of its highest expressions. “The Taj”, as Sri Aurobindo observes in his “Defence of Indian Culture”, “is not merely a sensuous reminiscence of an imperial amour or a faery enchantment hewn from the moon’s lucent quarries, but the eternal dream of a love that survives death. The great mosques embody often a religious aspiration lifted in a noble austerity, which supports and is not lessened by the subordinated ornament and grace. The tombs reach beyond death to the beauty and joy of Paradise.”

It is often asserted that the spiritual preoccupation of the Indian people was the cause of their failure in life and ultimate subjection to foreign rule. But the greatness of India in philosophy and literature, her long tradition of architecture, sculpture, painting, her history of making of empires and breaking of empires, all go to show that the people of India were not deficient in will and vital force. India could not bring about her political unification on account of the vastness of the country and the primitive means of communication, and that was why she was conquered, though not without a long and obstinate struggle. Now, with modern means of communication, India is rapidly becoming one in political life. An India, politically free and re-established in her spiritual culture, synthesised as I conceive it on new and larger lines, is destined to be a great power in the general uplift of humanity.

But across this fall the grim shadows of Nazism, which represent the very antithesis of our spiritual civilisation and culture. Nazism does everything to undermine and destroy the spiritual possibilities of mankind. To understand the Nazi view of life and its menace to culture, we have to bear in mind two psychological truths. First, the ego, in which we feel ourselves as an independent entity fundamentally different from others is not our real Self; in our true Self, we are one with

God and all humanity; “The fulfilment of the individual is not the utmost development of his egoistic intellect, vital force, physical well-being and the utmost satisfaction of his mental, emotional, physical cravings, but the flowering of the Divine in him to its utmost capacity of wisdom, power, love and universality and through this flowering his utmost realisation of all the possible beauty and delight of existence.” The German demand for *lebensraum* or life-space would have been legitimate if it had been made in the right way, with due observance of the golden rule “live and let live”; but she is seeking it in an egoistic, brutal way, and the ego can never be satisfied. No expansion of the borders of Germany will satisfy the German demand for life-space. A German General has recently said: “We must think in terms of planets, and the entire space is our home.” The attempt to satisfy the ego always leads to an eternal struggle with other egoisms, a mutual wounding and hampering, even a mutual destruction, in which if we are conquerors to-day, we are the conquered or the slain to-morrow.

The second truth which the individual has to grasp is that he is not only himself, but is one with all his kind. “Every time the society crushes or effaces the individual, it is inflicting a wound on itself and depriving its own life of priceless sources of stimulation and growth. The individual too cannot flourish by himself; for the collectivity is his source and stock and its depression strikes eventually at his own source.”

These two truths apply not only to the individual but to the nation, and the Nazi view of life can be summed up thus: (1) Since the individual is only a cell of the collectivity, his life must be entirely subservient to the efficient life of the nation. This German cult of the State and the annihilation of the individual has been adopted by the Totalitarians. (2) The service of the State and the community is the only absolute rule of morality. In relation to other States the effective law is that of brute force. (3) Since survival of the best is the highest good of mankind and the survival of the best is secured by the elimination of the unfit and the assimilation of the less fit, the conquest of the world by German culture is the straight path of human progress.

The above view about the German conception of life appeared in Sri Aurobindo’s *Arya* during the last European war, and it has been amply corroborated by recent events, and by Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*, the Bible of the Nazi movement. It asserts that some races are Aryan or Nordic (the use of the latter word excludes the Aryan ancestors of Indian races); of these the chief is the German, and the advance of mankind can only be achieved by the domination of Germans over all inferior races, and the increase of their numbers by every means possible. Hitler says in that book that he has no use for “Oriental Mountebanks”. He further states “It is a crime against the Creator to train the dark races for intellectual careers.”

What I have said before is sufficient to show the fate, which awaits humanity and human culture, if the Nazis can dominate the world. If Culture signifies sweetness and light, Nazi *Kultur* signifies bitterness and darkness. To protect humanity against

the aggression of this sort of barbarism and secure peace and order in a world, in which cultural and spiritual values can flourish, and man can have the utmost realisation of the full beauty and delight of existence, it is necessary to evolve an international authority or World-Union, which will prevent anarchy and war, just as peace and order is maintained within the borders of a country by its government. The article in the *Arya*, more than twenty years ago, suggested a system of free and natural groupings under a World-State, which would leave no room for internal discords, incompatibilities, repression and revolt as between race and race or people and people. "In principle then", the article added, "the ideal unification of mankind would be a system in which, as a first rule of common harmonious life, the human peoples would be allowed to form their own groupings, according to their natural divisions of locality, race, culture, economic convenience, and not according to the more violent accidents of history or the egoistic will of powerful nations, whose policy it must always be to compel the smaller or less timely organised, to serve their interests as dependents, or obey their commands as subjects."

We seem at the present moment to be very far away from such a rational solution, and indeed at the opposite pole of human potentialities; we have swung back to international disorder, and to the vital and animal principle of the struggle for survival, not of the humanly fittest, but of the strongest. But the very intensity of this struggle and disorder may be the path Nature has chosen towards the true escape from it; for it is becoming more and more evident, that a long continuance of the present international state of humanity will lead, not to any survival, but to the destruction of civilisation, and the relapse of the race towards barbarism, decadence, an evolutionary failure. The antipathy or hostility or distrust of nations, races, cultures, religions, towards each other is due to the past habit of egoistic self-assertion, desire for domination, for encroachment upon the *lebensraum* of another, and the consequent sense of unfriendly pressure, the fear of subjugation or elimination and oppression of the individuality of one by the other. A state of things must be brought about, in which mutual toleration is the law, an order in which many elements, racial, national, cultural, spiritual, can exist side by side and form a multiple unity; in such an order all these antipathies, hostilities, distrusts would die from lack of nourishment. That would be a true state of perfectly developed human civilisation, a true basis for the higher progress of the race. In this new order, India, with her spiritual culture turned towards the highest aims of humanity, would find her rightful place, and would become one of the leaders of the human evolution, by the greatness of her ideals and the capacity of her peoples for the spiritualisation of life.

Note:

Hydari was born on 8 November 1869 in Bombay to a Muslim family. He served in the Indian Audit and Accountancy Service before moving to Hyderabad State where he became the finance minister and later the prime minister. He founded the Osmania University and was largely responsible for the restoration of the Ajanta caves. He also represented Hyderabad at the First Round Table Conference during November 1930 – January 1931.

In January 1936, he was appointed a member of the Privy Council of the United Kingdom. He was appointed in 1941 as a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. He was the father of Muhammad Saleh Akbar Hydari. — Sourced from the Web

There are forces, and subliminal experience seems to show that there are supraphysical beings embodying those forces, that are attached in their root-nature to ignorance, to darkness of consciousness, to misuse of force, to perversity of delight, to all the causes and consequences of the things that we call evil. These powers, beings or forces are active to impose their adverse constructions upon terrestrial creatures; eager to maintain their reign in the manifestation, they oppose the increase of light and truth and good and, still more, are antagonistic to the progress of the soul towards a divine consciousness and divine existence. It is this feature of existence that we see figured in the tradition of the conflict between the Powers of Light and Darkness, Good and Evil, cosmic Harmony and cosmic Anarchy, a tradition universal in ancient myth and in religion and common to all systems of occult knowledge.

Sri Aurobindo

(The Life Divine, CWSA Vol. 22, pp. 624-25)

SRI AUROBINDO THE EXEMPLAR¹

Shortly after his release from the penal colony of the Andamans where he was deported for life imprisonment for waging war against His Majesty, the King, following a royal amnesty after the coronation of George V, the legendary revolutionary Barindra Kumar Ghose, popularly known as Barin Ghose, wrote to his elder brother Sri Aurobindo for spiritual guidance. Surveying the contemporary Indian political scene that he concluded might lead at best to ‘a sort of Indian Bolshevism’, Sri Aurobindo wrote:

I believe that the main cause of India’s weakness is not subjection, nor poverty, nor lack of spirituality or Dharma, but a diminution of thought-power, the spread of ignorance in the motherland of Knowledge. Everywhere, I see an inability or unwillingness to think — incapacity of thought or ‘thought-phobia’. Whatever may have been in the medieval period, now this attitude is the sign of a great decline. The medieval period was a night, a time of victory for the man of ignorance; the modern world is a time of victory for the man of knowledge.

(India’s Rebirth, 151)

‘Thought Phobia: diminution of thought Power’

What Sri Aurobindo observed about the lack of original thinking in 1920 seems to hold true in contemporary India as well. We continue to look at individuals and issues in binary, Manichean and derivative terms; our debates continue to be polarised leading to greater hostilities than understanding. Our public space critically lacks what the American multiculturalist Patrick J. Hills calls ‘conversation of respect with diverse others’.

Nowhere is this attitude more pronounced than in our assessment of the intellectual history of ideas. Here again, dogma or partisanship, sweeping generalisations and swift dismissals have come to substitute genuine intellectual enquiry with nuanced opinion and viewpoints. Nor can intellectual enquiry by itself give us lasting answers. In a letter dated 18 August 1935, Sri Aurobindo wrote to a disciple, explaining his position:

I regard the spiritual history of mankind and especially of India as a constant development of divine purpose, not a book that is closed and the lines of

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study International Conference on ‘Saptarishis of Modern India: Tradition, Change, and Svaraj’ at Bikaner, 4-6 January 2015.

which have to be constantly repeated. Even the Upanishads and the Gita were not final, though everything may be there in seed . . . I may say that it is far from my purpose to propagate any religion, new or old, for humanity in the future. A way to be opened that is still blocked, not a religion to be founded, is my conception of the matter. (*India's Rebirth*, 200)

II

Countermodernity and alternative spirituality

In this paper, I shall suggest that Sri Aurobindo's approach to thought, experience and realisation were constantly evolving and exploratory. Chronology and historicity therefore play an important role in our understanding of his thought and vision. Four concepts were integral to his entire corpus, namely Rishi, Tradition, Change and Svaraj. A product of the modern West, he surmounted the limits of modernity as fashioned by the European Enlightenment, anchored to the primacy of individuality, rationality, universality and progress; he enunciated a countermodernity in the form of an alternative spirituality. He linked the idea of the Vedic Seers to the concept of the Gnostic Being expounded in *The Life Divine*.

Svaraj in Ideas and Action: Simultaneity and not exclusivity

In the social domain, Sri Aurobindo upheld the simultaneity of Tradition and Change. The key to negotiating between the two, he explained, would be by the principle of Svaraj, central to both spiritual and secular living. The Rishi, the Seer is the Exemplar, for he is the embodiment of his quest; he is the guide and path-finder who too must work on his flaws and limitations and work out his own destiny. He is not the realised soul from the time of his birth, the impeccable being free from the pitfalls of human sorrows and infirmities. Indeed a candid self-appraisal marks the spirit of all entries that constitute the volume *On Himself*.

Intellectual enquiry is important, he argued in *The Human Cycle*, but by itself, the obscure mind cannot take us far. Reason and logic, the gift of the European Enlightenment has taken the West and the colonised 'other' to the edge of a scientific dystopia and the ultimate pleasure principle of late Capitalism. Our approach to the individual and group living continues to be marked by the duality of the Cartesian principle. The fundamental failure to meet the challenges of the future, has led to atavistic return to our barbaric past and forms of savagery unparalleled in the history of mankind. A basic reason for the worldwide upsurge is the inability to comprehend the necessity of change in progressive and futuristic directions. The primary drives are meant to be our ultimate ones. Sri Aurobindo describes these in *The Life Divine* as the perennial search for God, Light, Freedom and Immortality. Four books of

Sri Aurobindo are extremely rewarding in this context: *Essays on the Gita, The Foundations of Indian Culture, The Ideal of Human Unity and War and Self-Determination*.

III

The Centrality of Inner Life

The emphasis that Sri Aurobindo lays on the importance of quest and realisation needs to be sufficiently understood and appreciated in informed circles. The steadfast refusal to lend himself to an iconic cult status in the public domain marks all his writings on the subject. For instance, dissuading an admirer to write his biography, he declared:

But why write my biography at all? Is it really necessary? In my view, a man's value does not depend on what he learns, or his position or fame, or what he does, but what he is and inwardly becomes. [*On Himself*, prelim.]

If Sri Aurobindo disfavoured a celebratory status, he was equally against fixed and rigid views regarding his work and life. Two quotations would firmly bear out the truth of my statement. Speaking of a set of articles in the *Karmayogin*, a journal he edited in the pre-Pondicherry days that were later published in 1937, as representative of his position, he maintained that by doing so, it would mean that 'there had been no change in my views in 27 years (which would purely be proof of a rather unprogressive mind) [. . .] My spiritual consciousness and knowledge at that time was nothing to what is now.' ['Publisher's Note' On Nationalism, 1996.] He had similar views regarding *The Foundations of Indian Culture* and *The Ideal of Human Unity*. Speaking of a new possible publication of 'The Defence of Indian Culture' (part of which is known as *The Foundations of Indian Culture*) Sri Aurobindo wrote:

'The Defence of Indian Culture' is an unfinished book and also I had intended to alter much of it and to omit all but brief references to William Archer's criticism. That is why its publication has long been delayed. Even if it is represented as it is, considerable alterations will have to be made and there must be some completion and an end to the book which does not at present exist. [See Publisher's Note, *The Foundations of Indian Culture*, 1998]

IV

Right Action

The dictum that Darshan and Sadhana — must precede thought and action in the world is central to Sri Aurobindo. Indeed this approach, he suggests, could give the seeker after truth, in the spiritual and the secular domains, his/her true legitimacy. When Subhash Chandra Bose in the Mandalay Central Jail in Burma wrote disapprovingly of the Sabarmati and the Pondicherry schools of thought to Dilip Kumar Roy, an intermediary between him and Sri Aurobindo, and upheld the importance of dynamism, ‘a double dose of the activist serum rajas’ (*Pilgrims of the Stars*, p. 80), Sri Aurobindo said of Dilip’s ‘despairing friend Subhas’: “all this insistence upon action is absurd if one has not the right by which to act”. (Dey, 2005)

Not only Sri Aurobindo’s words but his entire Yoga Sadhana, including his inner life in the ‘cave of Tapasya’ in Pondicherry amply bears this out. The two volume *Record of Yoga* (2001) represents the diary of Sri Aurobindo’s yoga between 1909 and 1927. He gave the diary different names and the editors of the volume have used it as the general title of the work. Crucial to understanding the Records which often come in cryptic forms is what Sri Aurobindo calls *Sapta Chatusthaya*.

Here is the list of the Chatusthayas as presented in The Record:

Yoganga —

Sapta Chatusthaya —

1. Siddhichatusthaya —

Shuddhi, Mukti, Bhukti, Siddhi.

2. Brahma Chatusthaya —

Sarvam Anantam Jnanam Anandam Brahma.

3. Karma Chatusthaya —

Krishna, Kali, Karma, Kama

4. Shanti Chatusthaya

Samata, Shanti, Sukha, Hasya (Atmaprasada)

5. Shakti Chatusthaya

Virya, Shakti, Chandibhava, Sraddha.

6. Vijnana Chatusthaya —

Jnana, Trikaladrishti, Ashtasiddhi, Samadhi

7. Sharira Chatusthaya —

Arogya, Utthapana, Saundarya, Vividhananda

(*Record of Yoga – I*, CWSA, Vol. 10, p. 24)

The *Record of Yoga* is a day-to-day notation of the process of the sadhana outlined above. It could be seen as a documentation of the process of self-preparation to become a centre of the action of the Divine on earth.

Conclusion

It would thus be seen that Sri Aurobindo bridged the gap between an earlier life of agnosticism that he began with in England to one of experience and realisation through rigorous and systematic Yogic efforts. He did not give up intellectuality for spirituality as traditionally mandated, but attempts to discover the role of an illumined reason in a life of the spirit. Embracing an approach that is catholic, integral and eclectic, he synthesises the wisdom of the East and that of the West. As *Record of Yoga* shows, Yoga for him becomes the science of the inner life; it is integral in approach and has the power of transforming human nature into what he describes in *The Life Divine* as the Gnostic consciousness. In so doing, Sri Aurobindo becomes both an archetypical visionary as well as an exemplar par excellence.

SACHIDANANDA MOHANTY

Works Cited

- Dey, Amelendu. Ed. *Sri Aurobindo, Max Mueller, Subhas Chandra*. Kolkata: Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, 2005.
- Roy, Dilip Kumar and Indira Devi, *Pilgrims of the Stars: Autobiography of Two Yogis*, USA: Timeless Books, 1985. First published in 1973 by Macmillan Publishing Co.
- India's Rebirth*, Mysore: Mira Aditi Centre, 1998.
- Autobiographical Notes and Other Writings of Historical Interest*. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 2006.
- On Himself*, Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1972; rpt. 2000.
- Record of Yoga*, Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 2001.
- Essays on the Gita*, Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1949; rpt. 1997.
- The Foundations of Indian Culture*, Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1953; rpt. 1975.
- The Human Cycle, The Ideal of Human Unity and War and Self-Determination*. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram. 1919; rpt. 1962; 1998.
- On Nationalism*, Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1996 (first edition, 1965).

AMID THE LEAVES THE INMATE VOICES CALLED

(Continued from the issue of September 2015)

20. The Dawn

So the stream of English poetry flowed on, taking within its ambit epic creations (Milton), satire (Dryden, Pope), dramatic poesy (Nathaniel Lee, Thomas Otway) and sentiment (William Collins, Thomas Gray). The poetic spirit was never lost, and even Collins and Gray have left behind memorable poesy. Collins reached the hall of fame with his 'Ode to the Evening', a veritable Ritu-samhara:

While Spring shall pour his showers, as oft he wont,
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest Eve;
 While Summer loves to sport
 Beneath thy lingering light;
While sallow Autumn fills thy lap with leaves;
Or Winter, yelling through the troublous air,
 Affrights thy shrinking train
 And rudely rends thy robes;
So long, sure-found beneath the sylvan shed,
Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, rose-lipped Health,
 Thy gentlest influence own,
 And hymn thy favourite name!

Can we forget even for a moment the ever-quotable lines of Gray?

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Then it happened. The French Revolution. And Romanticism was born. Better still, Romanticism was re-born. It was never absent from English poetry, and the Elizabethan "nest of singing birds" were Romantics too. Now the sensitive mind was electrified by the French Revolution and German transcendentalism. Sri Aurobindo finds Burns to be the forerunner of Romanticism though the latter does have limitations like using an intellectualised language:

Nevertheless, Burns has in him the things which are most native to the poetry of our modern times; he brings in the new naturalness, the nearness of the fuller poetic mind, intellectualised, informed with the power of clear reflective thought awake to life and nature, the closely observing eye, the stirring force of great general ideas, the spirit of revolt and self-assertion, the power of personality and the free play of individuality, the poignant sentiment, sometimes even a touch of the psychological subtlety. These things are in him fresh, strong, initial as in a forerunner impelled by the first breath of the coming air, but not in that finished possession of the new motives which is to be the greatness of the future master-singers. That we begin to get first in Wordsworth. His was the privilege of the earliest initiation.¹

Robert Burns (1759-1796) from Scotland has been acknowledged as the one who inaugurated the spirit of Romanticism in the 18th century. We did go happily to the Honours class when the subject was the Romantic Movement but felt a little wobbly in the beginning as we could not easily follow the poetry of Burns because many of his poems were written in a Scottish dialect. One of his last poems, said the Professor, and began reading, 'O Wert Thou In The Cauld Blast':

Or were I in the wildest waste,
 Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
 The desert were a Paradise,
 If thou wert there, if thou wert there;
 Or were I Monarch o' the globe,
 With thee to reign, with thee to reign,
 The brightest jewel in my Crown
 Wad be my Queen, wad be my Queen.

We suppressed giggles but grew sombre when the Professor went on to explain the circumstances in which the poem was written. It was no ordinary love poem but a blessing for a dear friend who had helped his family when he fell seriously ill. In fact, after his death this friend took charge of his wife Jean and children for quite some time. The Professor also directed us to the library to know about the poet's life, which we found quite unconventional with many a romantic escapade. But his poems did charm the class and as he wrote most of his poems to be set to music, some are readily recognised even today. 'Auld Lang Syne', for instance:

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
 And never brought to mind?

1. *The Future Poetry*, CWSA, Vol. 26, p. 105.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne!

Chorus:

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne.
We'll tak a cup of kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

Set to an old ballad tune, it has become a tradition to use it as a farewell poem for the year before ringing in the new. It became easy for us when the Professor helped us with an English version, and we certainly fell in love with the poem:

Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and never brought to mind?
Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and days of long ago?

Chorus:

For days of long ago, my dear,
for days of long ago,
we'll take a cup of kindness yet,
for days of long ago.

Sri Aurobindo puts it rightly:

In Burns these new-born imprisoned spirits break out from their bounds and get into a free air of natural, direct and living reality, find a straight-forward speech and a varied running or bounding movement of freedom. This is the importance of this solitary voice from the north in the evolution, apart from the intrinsic merits of his poetry.²

All the same it was a great relief to open a book of poetry and read words that we could understand straightaway, and we entered the charming world of romantic poetry with Wordsworth and Coleridge. I am so very, very happy that I went through the rigorous exercise of reading these poets and answering question papers in those far-off days. It helped me to sail smoothly into the poetic world of Sri Aurobindo.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 104-05.

He speaks of the “six great voices” of romantic poetry as three natural pairs, and introduces their work as leading us to the spiritual spaces of poetic creation, not so far attempted by English poets. Wordsworth and Byron: Byron has “even one foot across the borders of the spiritual”, Wordsworth “forces his way into this new realm” for a while. Blake and Coleridge “open magical gates, pass by flowering side lanes with hedges laden with supernatural blooms”. In Shelley “the idealism and spiritual impulse rise to almost giddy heights in a luminous ether”, again, for a short while. Keats does enter “the secret temple of ideal Beauty, but has not time to find his way into the deepest mystic sanctuary”. According to Sri Aurobindo it is just a dawn for future poetry, no more.

But what a wonderful dawn! A dawn that opened the petals of Nature with such pleasing, memorable words, and from the riches of Nature drew us to the realms beyond, inexpressible and hence folding us into meditative moods! The seasons come and go, one grows old, sight becomes dim, one cannot walk anymore with a spring in the step, but as long as one can remember Wordsworth’s poem, there is no loneliness, no loveless day, no death:

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o’er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

So we sway along with the poem to the end that assures us our heart, all Ananda, “dances with the daffodils”. When the heart begins to dance at the very memory of the poem, how can death be proud? Poetry is the winner, proved Wordsworth.

Nature’s multifoliate splendour ignites the Romantics. There were also deeper causes for the emergence of the Romantics. The French Revolution lit the lamp of democracy in the poetic heart. When William Wordsworth and Samuel Coleridge published *Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems* (1798), a new era in English poetry began. The book became famous not for its poetic content but for the Preface. According to Legouis and Cazamian, “the doctrine of the *Lyrical Ballads* is an aesthetic application of sentimental democracy.” The Preface said that it was time to

bid good bye for the kind of poetic sculpture indulged in by their immediate predecessors. It was almost a call for the ancient folk songs which were closest to the common man. Back to nature, back to simplicity, back to uncomplicated personal lives! The poets put it all down with crystal clarity:

The majority of the following poems are to be considered as experiments. They were written chiefly with a view to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure. Readers accustomed to the gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers, if they persist in reading this book to its conclusion, will perhaps frequently have to struggle with feelings of strangeness and awkwardness: they will look round for poetry, and will be induced to enquire by what species of courtesy these attempts can be permitted to assume that title. It is desirable that such readers, for their own sakes, should not suffer the solitary word Poetry, a word of very disputed meaning, to stand in the way of their gratification; but that, while they are perusing this book, they should ask themselves if it contains a natural delineation of human passions, human characters, and human incidents; and if the answer be favourable to the author's wishes, that they should consent to be pleased in spite of that most dreadful enemy to our pleasures, our own pre-established codes of decision.

And yet, many of the poems in this volume were not dull at all. Coleridge's 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' leads the poetry section and it is now a classic. An entire drama of the soul's struggle to overcome guilt and the coming of Grace to redeem the sinner is packed here, with the sharp opening where an ancient mariner stops one of the three wedding guests on their way to a church. The mariner's eyes and words compel the wedding guest to go with him and we sail all the time on the seas, watching, listening, murmuring to ourselves:

The Sun came up upon the right,
 Out of the Sea came he;
 And broad as a weft upon the left
 Went down into the Sea.

A simple description. A kindergarten child could give this picture in no time. However, as we proceed, the mind gets churned, the soul is caught in anguish. What is crime? What is punishment? Where lies redemption? Those immortal lines which bring a calm to our mind, all the passions buffeting it laid to sleep:

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
 To thee, thou wedding-guest!
 He prayeth well who loveth well
 Both man and bird and beast.
 He prayeth best who loveth best,
 All things both great and small:
 For the dear God, who loveth us,
 He made and loveth all.

This is how the Romantics entered the domains of mystic poesy by taking an uncomplicated linguistic road. Often this has led them to prolonged dullness. I have to confess that in spite of my father gifting me the complete poetical works of William Wordsworth in 1956, it remains one of the very few volumes which has pages that have not been re-visited! There are poems here which I have opened with excitement but set aside as they read like pages from a diary written in long hand. But it was Wordsworth who has laid the pathway to enter spiritual poetry. Reading his “Prelude” can be a great introduction to long philosophical poems like *The Testament of Beauty* by Robert Bridges and *Savitri* by Sri Aurobindo. There is enough intellectuality here, but not at the expense of the spirit’s soaring into freer regions beyond the intellect:

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe!
 Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought
 That givest to forms and images a breath
 And everlasting motion, not in vain
 By day or star-light thus from my first dawn
 Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
 The passions that build up our human soul;
 Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
 But with high objects, with enduring things —
 With life and nature — purifying thus
 The elements of feeling and of thought,
 And sanctifying, by such discipline,
 Both pain and fear, until we recognise
 A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

But this is only for a brief while and “there are terrible stretches of flattest prose in verse”, says Sri Aurobindo, though redeemed occasionally by a flash like “Voyaging in strange seas of thought alone.” As for Coleridge, he has left to us “three or four scattered jewels of a strange and singular beauty.” Sri Aurobindo has not named them but apparently ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’ was one of

them. And surely, 'Kubla Khan' and 'Christabel'. The touch of mystery and lines of mystic correlation in 'Christabel' are inviting to a lover of poetry in search of para-normal experiences. Nature becomes a co-author with its varied shades of night's inscrutability:

Is the night chilly and dark?
 The night is chilly, but not dark.
 The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
 It covers but not hides the sky.
 The moon is behind, and at the full;
 And yet she looks both small and dull.
 The night is chill, the cloud is gray:
 'Tis a month before the month of May,
 And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

Indeed Night can be a mystic force of great power. The Vedas do have a Ratri Suktam. And *Savitri* opening at night, getting us out of ourselves to see how the world looks like in total darkness:

Athwart the vain enormous trance of Space,
 Its formless stupor without mind or life,
 A shadow spinning through a soulless Void,
 Thrown back once more into unthinking dreams,
 Earth wheeled abandoned in the hollow gulfs
 Forgetful of her spirit and her fate.
 The impassive skies were neutral, empty, still.³

Half a century ago, our introduction to the Romantics was sumptuous and complete. And we liked it far better than the modern poets for we had a final paper on modern English literature. A dash of T. S. Eliot but it was not easy to understand him, and we took down our notes sagely when the lecturer spoke of broken images and the like. Like Eliot, Christopher Fry wrote his dramas in verse. *The Lady's Not For Burning* was prescribed but the suggestive lines were not brought to life by the lecturer and the impressions formed then have continued with me. In effect, I can say I bid good-bye to my collegiate education with a musical, memorable bang: the Romantics.

We welcomed Blake with joy. I may not understand him, but here is a poet who lifts you up into a more beautiful world, in whose hands terror gets transformed into inquisitive meditation.

3. CWSA, Vol. 33, p. 1.

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright,
 In the forests of the night,
 What immortal hand or eye
 Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
 Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
 On what wings dare he aspire?
 What the hand dare seize the fire?

Years and years later, I would read and review with joy *Blake's Tyger* by Amal Kiran. Maybe Blake was "unable to translate his experience to our comprehension" as Sri Aurobindo said, but the Mahayogi has called him the "seer" and the *Songs of Innocence* as unique, "a voice of things which had not been heard before nor has it been heard since." There is indeed simplicity and beauty in Blake without any banal scratches. Here is welcome to a rural night:

Farewell green fields and happy groves,
 Where flocks have took delight;
 Where lambs have nibbled, silent moves
 The feet of angels bright;
 Unseen they pour blessing,
 And joy without ceasing . . .

In Percy Bysshe Shelley also Nature becomes a revelatory window to the beyond. A life of less than thirty years, but a *kavita tapasvi*! Poems, dramas, prose works. The very titles can charm and intrigue us: 'The Revolt of Islam', 'Queen Mab: A Philosophical poem', 'Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude', *The Cenci*, a five-act tragedy, to name a few. Since Shelley led an unconventional life, his enormous literary output signifies a mind which thought furiously and a hand that kept pace with it. The Romantic poets were also fine essayists on the art they had chosen. Shelley's *A Defence of Poetry* is a classic. Arguing that the fine arts are all expressions of the order in human life, poetic, it is the poets who by the manner of their expression impose this order on the society:

But poets, or those who imagine and express this indestructible order, are not only the authors of language and of music, of the dance, and architecture, and statuary, and painting: they are the institutors of laws, and the founders of civil society, and the inventors of the arts of life, and the teachers, who draw into a certain propinquity with the beautiful and the true that partial apprehension of the agencies of the invisible world which is called religion. Hence all original

religions are allegorical, or susceptible of allegory, and, like Janus, have a double face of false and true. Poets, according to the circumstances of the age and nation in which they appeared, were called, in the earlier epochs of the world, legislators, or prophets: a poet essentially comprises and unites both these characters.

And, of the Romantics, Lord Byron held a magnetic attraction for me. Probably because I continue to read his complete works for the variety in themes, his audacious phrase-making, his control over prosody and of course, memorable passages. The length of his *Don Juan* and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* has never deterred me. May be, when I was young, I saw him also as a real hero who took to arms for liberating Greece from the Ottoman Empire. Though he died suddenly before the intended attack on the fortress of Leponto to free it from the Turks, he came to be regarded as a Greek hero. They have even named a town near Athens after him to commemorate his affection for the land. It is also exciting to know that his daughter Augusta is now known as the world's first computer programmer!

The Professor who taught us the Romantics was an adept at quoting from memory and no wonder the syllables are unforgettable as in the poem, 'She walks in beauty':

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
 So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
 The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
 But tell of days in goodness spent,
 A mind at peace with all below,
 A heart whose love is innocent!

The Romantics were no mutual admiration society but their faith in one another ran very deep indeed. When Keats, so full of promise, died at an absurdly young age, Shelley wrote *Adonais* which deftly weaves the anguish with the presence of Nature:

He is a portion of the loveliness
 Which once he made more lovely: he doth bear
 His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
 Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there
 All new successions to the forms they wear . . .

Shelley links Keats to *Adonais* when indicating the general perception that the young poet died of a broken heart because of negative reviews. The Greek demi-god Adonis had been killed by a wild boar sent by an angry Apollo. Byron is more direct.

Who killed John Keats?
 'I,' says the Quarterly,
 So savage and Tartarly;
 'Twas one of my feats.'

Who shot the arrow?
 'The poet-priest Milman
 (So ready to kill man),
 Or Southey or Barrow.'

Probably this togetherness in appreciation among the poets is what has kept me close to the Romantics, for there is a touch of the spiritual in it, a going beyond one's own 'self'. Again, among the Romantics, for me Keats is forever. A sensitive soul, he was just twenty-six when he died, but his poetic legacy is immortal. For instance aesthetic appreciation and the nature of Existence are explained through a gentle weave of words in his poems. Is there a favourite poem for me in this favourite poet? 'Ode to a Grecian Urn', of course! What a clutch of memorable lines that have led me on and on in life!

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
 Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time . . .

What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
 What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
 What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
 Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on . . .

When old age shall this generation waste,
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty, — that is all
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.'

Such was my early initiation into English poetry that became a life-long honeymoon. American literature had not yet been introduced to our Honours Course and of course Indian poetry in English was a distant dream. But the years since graduation remained a blaze as far as poetry was concerned because I had chosen *Savitri* for my doctoral research. World poetry written in English or in translation became my favourite reading material. Today it could be *The Genius of the German*

Lyric edited by August Closs; tomorrow Edward Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat*. Not a day has passed me by in these six decades without my taking up a book of English poems and reading a verse or two, if not a whole poem like 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' by Gerard Manley Hopkins. That love for English poetry that I gained in my early years was made a permanent way of life when I came into the charmed world of Sri Aurobindo's writings. I began this series recording how I feel like Satyavan in the forest when I am in my library and the inmate voices in my shelves call out to me, to educate me, to wrap me up in sylvan peace. I would like to conclude by going back to those words, so apt, so true.

Hidden in the forest's bosom of loneliness
 Amid the leaves the inmate voices called,
 Sweet like desires enamoured and unseen,
 Cry answering to low insistent cry.
 Behind slept emerald dumb remotenesses,
 Haunt of a Nature passionate, veiled, denied
 To all but her own vision lost and wild.
 Earth in this beautiful refuge free from cares
 Murmured to the soul a song of strength and peace.⁴

(Concluded)

PREMA NANDAKUMAR

4. *Savitri*, CWSA, Vo. 34, p. 392.

When I say that the inner Mind can get the tinge or reflection of the higher experience I am not speaking here of the "descent" in Yoga by which the higher realisation can come down into the inferior planes and enlighten or transform them. I mean that the Higher Mind is itself a spiritual plane and one who lives in it has naturally and normally the realisation of the Self, the unity and harmony everywhere, and a vision and activity of knowledge that proceeds from this consciousness but the inner Mind has not that naturally and in its own right, yet can open to its influence more easily than the outer intelligence. All the same between the reflected realisation in the mind and the automatic and authentic realisation in the spiritual mental planes there is a wide difference.

Sri Aurobindo

(*Letters on Poetry and Art*, CWSA, Vol. 27, p. 21)

BOOK NOTES

THE ENGLISH OF SAVITRI —

COMMENTS ON THE LANGUAGE OF SRI AUROBINDO'S EPIC

Savitri Bhavan, Auroville, has brought out in a single volume of about 500 pages the transcripts of the classes given by Shraddhavan from August 2009 to October 2010. It covers Book One, The Book of Beginnings of the epic. Edited for conciseness and clarity, it retains the informal atmosphere of the classes started to teach English through a close reading of *Savitri*.

“The aim of this course, which is still ongoing, is to assist people who wish to improve their understanding of Sri Aurobindo’s revelatory epic, to enter more deeply into its atmosphere and as a side-effect, to improve their knowledge of the English language. The Mother has mentioned [in a conversation with Norman Dowsett]:

For the opening of the psychic, for the growth of consciousness and even for the improvement of English, it is good to read one or two pages of *Savitri* each day.

“In the ‘English of *Savitri*’ classes our aim is to try and read as correctly as we can, and to gain at least a surface understanding of what the words mean and the structure of each sentence. Then each one can do their homework, read and re-read until a deeper understanding comes. However, we find that even without much understanding, the mantric vibration of the words and lines touch us deeply and sometimes wake up an inner knowledge or experience in a quite unexpected way: this is the action of *Savitri*’s atmosphere, Savitri’s grace.”

A helpful introduction.

MEDITATIONS ON SAVITRI —

PAINTINGS BY HUTA UNDER THE MOTHER'S GUIDANCE

From 1961 to 1966, the Mother guided Huta with detailed sketches and instructions in the creation of a series of 472 oil paintings illustrating passages from *Savitri*. The Mother gave the name *Meditations on Savitri* to this work. The paintings for Book One were published in separate volumes from 1962 onwards. The Havyavāhana Trust has now brought out in a single book, all five cantos of the First Book. It is the first volume in the series.

In her introduction, Huta writes:

Savitri is Sri Aurobindo's great epic poem. He says in one of his letters: "*Savitri* is the record of a seeing, of an experience which is not of the common kind and it is often very far from what the general human mind sees and experiences."

She then shares with us what the Mother wrote to her:

We shall collaborate to do nice things and express in painting a higher world and consciousness.

And also:

We are going towards a painting that will be able to express the supramental truth of things.

This series is one of the keys to that seeing and that expression.

ABOUT SAVITRI WITH SOME PAINTINGS

This is another book re-issued by the Havyavāhana Trust.

In her Introduction, Huta explains the genesis of this book. After the completion of the work of *Meditations on Savitri*, she asked the Mother:

"Mother, will you please explain these passages to me and allow me to take down your explanation of them on my tape-recorder as I have done with your recitations of these passages? Then surely people will understand *Savitri* paintings more easily."

The Mother meditated for a moment or two and said enthusiastically:

"If I have to explain these passages, I would prefer to start from the very beginning and give a full explanation of the whole of *Savitri*."

It was quite some time later that the Mother told Huta:

"Now I have caught the exact thing regarding the work — now I know what Sri Aurobindo wants me to do."

During a later session of the *Savitri* work, the Mother revealed to Huta:

“The work is really very good. I like it. When I concentrate and go back to the Origin of the Creation, I see things as a whole in their reality and then I speak.

You see, each time when I speak, Sri Aurobindo comes here. And I speak exactly what he wants me to speak. It is the inner hidden truth of *Savitri* that he wants me to reveal.

Each time he comes, a wonderful atmosphere is created. I have read *Savitri* before but it was nothing compared to this reading.”

When Huta offered to the Mother in 1972 twelve copies of *About Savitri Part One*, bringing together the Mother’s explanations along with the paintings Huta had made inspired and approved by the Mother, the message She gave for the book was:

Savitri
The supreme revelation of
Sri Aurobindo’s
vision

A veritable treasure.



an honest business for honest people

With Best Compliments from:

S. N. Sunderson & Co.

1, Deshbandhu Gupta Road
Post Box No. 5713
New Delhi - 110 055

Telephone: 23612728, 23612776 Fax: 011-23620632
e-mail: snsdl@vsnl.net snsunderson@gmail.com

Our Lines of Business:

- ***Limestone and Dolomite***
- ***Coal Handling Agents***

Branches at:

**Kolkata, Dhanbad, Katni, Jukehi, Niwar, Varanasi, Asansol, Ranchi,
Bilaspur, Nagpur, Ramgarh, Khelari, Manindergarh,
Mumbai, Guwahati and Puducherry**

Completed 89 years on Basant 2015



Karnataka Plascom engineers private limited

**Injection Moulding of Industrial Components
from Engineering Plastics**

Works: #235 T, Bommasandra Indl. Area
3rd Phase, Hosur Road
Bangalore - 560 099

Phone: 91-80-7831289, 7832567
