

# THE MOTHER ABIDES

Final Reflections  
1973 – 1983



Nolini Kanta Gupta

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1973-1983

Nolini Kanta Gupta

Sri Aurobindo Ashram

Pondicherry

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## Publisher's Note

These thoughts and reminiscences of Nolini Kanta Gupta were written or spoken during the final decade of his life — from the time of the Mother's passing in November 1973 until shortly before his own passing in February 1984. During that period they served as a source of guidance and consolation to the Ashram community, and they still seem relevant today.

Many of these writings and talks were first presented to the students, young and old, of Nolini-da's classes. Later they were published in *The Advent*, a quarterly journal he edited, or in his Collected Works. Details about their publication and a life-sketch of the author are given at the end of the book.

# Part 1

## Sweet Mother

She is always there in that realm of the earth atmosphere from where she used to work even when here — the same now as she was when in our midst. She is available in the same way — only we must know how to approach her, how to attune ourselves.

— Nolini Kanta Gupta

November 17, 1973

1

The Mother's body belonged to the old creation. It was meant to be the pedestal of the New Body. It served its purpose well. The New Body will come.

This is a test, how far we are faithful to her, true to her Consciousness.

The revival of the body would have meant revival of the old troubles in the body. The troubles were eliminated so far as could be done while in the body — farther was not possible. For a new mutation, a new procedure was needed. "Death" was the first stage in that process.

2

Sweet Mother,

Your physical body belonged to the old creation because you wanted to be one with your children. You wanted this body to uphold the New Body you were building upon it, and it gave you the service you asked of it. You will come with your New Body.

Your children's, the world's call and aspiration, love and consecration are laid at your feet in gratitude.

*November 1973*

# A Canadian Question

1

*It is written in A Practical Guide to Integral Yoga: "The physical nearness to the Mother is indispensable for the fullness of the sadhana on the physical plane. Transformation of the physical and external being is not possible otherwise." (Sri Aurobindo)*

*My question is: How are we to interpret these words in the light of the Mothers recent passing? Does this mean that a full transformation is no longer possible to the aspirant? Or has discipleship on the material level in the path of the Integral Yoga come to an end?*

Obviously, the immediate programme of a physical transformation is postponed — not cancelled. But what we have been given is not less of a miracle. Mother has prepared for us her new body in the inner world, in the subtle physical, which is as living and tangible as her physical body, even though not as concrete. In one of her last "Notes on the Way" she refers to this new transformed body and she describes it as presented to her vision. That body she has built up in her long arduous labours, built up in a complete form and left with us and with humanity.

This new body of hers, prepared behind the material curtain, she sought to infuse into the material form, even press or force into it this new element; but Matter and man's physical nature were not yet ready: Earth still considered it as an intrusion, as something foreign. The material casing broke down in consequence — perhaps not broke down, rather broke through; but that must be another story.

But her new body is there, living and glorious in its beauty and power, and it is still at work within us and around us in the world, incessantly, towards the final consummation of its material embodiment. What is expected of us is to see this golden Mother within us and try to become, as she always wanted, her golden children, within and without.

Sri Aurobindo speaks of an inner mind, an inner vital, an inner physical. Only the other day the passage was read out at the Playground meditation. The golden body, the new body, is formed out of an inner mind, an inner vital and an inner physical, renewed and reshaped. We can show our love for her, requite the debt that we owe to her Grace, by admitting her Presence into our physical being and allowing her to do the work she has undertaken to do.

2

For us now it is time to make amends for the lapses of the past — there were lapses, indeed, grievous lapses. So long as her physical body was our protection, we did not suffer the full consequences of our Karma because her body acted as a buffer: it broke the force of the impact

of the Karma and reduced its evil effects to a minimum. Her body bore our burden and relieved us of the misery otherwise due to us. Mankind, the world even, does not know the saving Grace that her material frame brought to it. It would have gone down to destruction and dissolution but for the presence of the Divine body.

The world has survived, mankind has an assured future — that is the work done by her body. It aimed at a little more, to show us something of the concrete form of the future, but evidently that was not to be, because something from us also, from the world and mankind, some helping hand in the labour, was needed. We remember her ringing words: "*Si seulement l'humanité consentait à être spiritualisée*" ("If only mankind consented to be spiritualized") — well, that was the minimum; that minimum was also not granted to her body. Her body was made so easily available to all without any trouble and effort on our part that we lost all sense of the precious thing brought to us, brought to our very door. We did not know how to make use of it and have the true benefit out of it. Many a time she did say something to us to that effect regretfully; we wasted a treasure like the pampered prodigal son.

It is regrettable, but she has left no cause for our regret. She has left with us the true source of her protective power, her living consciousness concretised in the earth's atmosphere, in the personal atmosphere of each one of us. We have only to open our grateful eyes and see it. The ladder has been taken away, but she has come nearer to us and a little uplift will place us again within her arms.

Since we have no longer the support of her body on which we depended almost exclusively, we are compelled to seek the true support, the support of her consciousness, her inner presence, her living Person within — the inner reality which her body represented, whose acquaintance we were not careful enough to cultivate. Now we are thrown back upon the only alternative available. The way will be arduous; we could have much more easily mounted up the ladder of consciousness with the aid of her body, almost playfully like children. Now a little bit of austerity will be needed on our part; the austerity will be needed to bring our external life and physical consciousness in line with her consciousness, to prepare them, to make them ready. Her material body offered an unconditional help and protection; now all that will be conditional — conditional upon our willing cooperation, our happy and conscious collaboration; of course the Grace will be always there. Once she asked us point-blank, for the crisis was upon us: "Are you ready?" Almost unthinkingly, in a gesture of bravado and gallantry, many answered: "Yes we are." But we were not in fact.

The task then for us and for the world is to make ourselves ready, that is to say, to make our physical being and consciousness free of the old reactions, instilling into them the consciousness that she is, and with which she still embraces us, so that when the next call comes, although the call is always there, we may answer with truth on our lips: "We are ready."

*Published April 1974*

# The Mother Abides

If it is a Pralaya, even a Mahapralaya, all is not lost, all is not washed away. Something remains, untouched, deathless, the divine part in you, the Mother's part in you, the consciousness incarnate and articulate.

Indeed it was your soul that she salvaged out of the inconscience and established in you as a living reality. That was her first and primary task and she has fulfilled it. It was there always, true; but it was a far-off, very distant, almost inactive point of light, an unknown and uncharted star not yet come into the ken of human measure and potency. She has brought it nearer home and established it in our living and dynamic consciousness. She has buoyed it up from the unconscious depths, or brought it down from vague, ethereal, nebulous regions, gradually developed it and nourished it and given it a firm dwelling in our inner regions. She has moulded it into a personality with a name and a form. If we do not recognise it often or always, it is because the outer shell of the senses has not yet been fully opened to it. But it is still there as our inner ruler and guide in spite of and through all obscurities and aberrations.

The next step, the second part of her work, was to build around this soul, this inner being, a body, a material vehicle to express it. To give a concrete divine shape to this soul-reality was her labour at this point. The soul was there, but a god has to come and inhabit it; this godhead, that is to say, a Power, a form of the Mother's own personality, has to be brought down and the soul integrated into it. Apparently the effort was left off at that point and not completed.

Since the purpose and aim is not an individual realisation or even a realisation in a few individuals, but an achievement of the human race (which means a large or significant part of it), the effort has to be directed to that end. The level of the human consciousness has to be lifted up so that it may be capable of holding and embodying the afflatus that was coming into it for the change. Otherwise an individual representing the human level and forming part of the material consciousness will not be able to do it. Not only the earth-consciousness but the material constitution of the earth has to be transfigured. For the human body to pass through and complete the stages of transformation, it must have parallel echoes in other individuals — not necessarily the whole of humanity, but, as I said, presumably a sizeable part of it. Otherwise the purpose of the change, a global collective change, will not be fulfilled. An isolated individual supramentalised body upon earth would be a freak of Nature, a forced miracle as it were, an anomalous object in Nature, and humanity even at its topmost rung would not find any relation or kinship with it.

So the earth-nature has to be prepared for that end in view — first of all the earth-consciousness in the physical substance and then the raw substance itself. This has to be done as our immediate and urgent business of life.

I said that the earth-consciousness was not quite ready yet for the final transformation of the Mother's body, that is to say, the material substance of the body. Therefore it could not accommodate the incoming transforming force, and it broke: in breaking it must have broken through, through the hard, dense outermost crust of matter — with what results, time will show.

As for us who survive, let us begin from the beginning. Let us start from scratch as it were. We remember Mother's own story, what she did for herself when she came to Sri Aurobindo. She effaced altogether her old personality, her achievements and accomplishments, made a clean slate of her consciousness and laid herself at the feet of Sri Aurobindo like a new-born babe, innocent of the past. Let us also in the same way face the day with our baby-soul in front, for that little being is the Mother's Presence in us, still aglow with her consciousness.

You know, I was very hesitant to read this to you.

In one way it is all right, but...

In fact it is a mental and intellectual presentation of a phenomenon which goes beyond all intellectual and mental measure. This phenomenon is not only extra-intellectual, supra-mental but also supra-cosmic, the sense and bearing of which will be unveiled in the course of time.

Meanwhile, I think the best thing for us to do would be to remain quiet with a serene trust, with all the aspiration of our soul, our soul which is the concrete presence of Mother herself in us, which we carry within us always.

*Published April 1974*

# Twin Prayers

1

Lord, this morning Thou hast given me the assurance that Thou wouldst stay with us until Thy work is achieved, not only as a consciousness which guides and illumines but also as a dynamic Presence in action. In unmistakable terms Thou hast promised that all of Thyself would remain here and not leave the earth-atmosphere until earth is transformed. Grant that we may be worthy of this marvellous Presence and that henceforth everything in us be concentrated on the one will to be more and more perfectly consecrated to the fulfilment of Thy sublime Work.

(December 7, 1950)

The Mother's prayer to Sri Aurobindo — so beautiful, so poignant and so true — we, her children, now turn round and re-address to her own sweet self.

The new creation that the Mother embodied is not lost, it is not wiped out with the disappearance of the material body. It has been a true creation and is indelibly implanted in the earth-atmosphere and will remain there for eternity. And it is not merely a static structure, it is a living and growing entity. It is not in the earth's atmosphere a mere image or a lifeless picture transfixed there as on a canvas strip. It is living and growing — living and growing not only in itself and for itself, but making its habitat, the atmosphere, also live and grow in new dimensions, that is to say, transforming it in accordance with its own developing truth and reality. It is growing and characteristically growing downwards, that is to say, extending itself more and more towards an earthly manifestation or incarnation. It is like the Ashwattha tree spoken of by the Rishis of old that stands upside down, the roots upward and the branches spreading out downwards; indeed it is growing downwards, drawing its life-sap from above. The physical embodiment, the materialisation of the inner formation, will happen in course of time inevitably. It will touch the ground, the very ground of the earth, and stand as its marvel-creation — through a process of calamities and catastrophes perhaps, which may indeed be minimised if circumstances permit and the Grace admits; but whatever the process, the end is decreed, for the decree is that of the Divine and it is the destiny of the earth-consciousness.

2

This is, however, the Mother's part of the work and she is doing it perfectly, on her side. But what about ourselves? What is our share of the work? For it is intended that we, her children, should be collaborators in her work, so that we too may be integrated into the Divine realisation. The Mother herself has indicated the line of service we can render to her in the communication I just read out to you:

... henceforth everything in us be concentrated on the one will to be more and more perfectly consecrated to the fulfilment of Thy sublime Work.

The situation has somewhat changed since then and has become more difficult. On the departure of Sri Aurobindo, some time after, Mother gave us a message, an admonition, pointing out to us the difficulty:

To follow Sri Aurobindo in the great adventure of his integral yoga, one needed always to be a warrior; but now that he has physically left us, one needs to be a hero.<sup>1</sup>

At present when the Mother too is no more here — apparently — and we seem to be abandoned children, what are we to do or be? It is no longer sufficient to be a warrior, nor sufficient even to be a hero. What should we be? Something greater than a hero. One must be a Yogi. The Yogi is one who has the Divine Consciousness or the Mother's consciousness. If you find that it is not so easy for one to be a Yogi, even if one tries sincerely, I suggest to you another alternative. It is to leap into another dimension: to be a child, a child of the Mother.

I give you this subject for meditation: on becoming... a child, an ideal child of the Mother.

*Published August 1974*

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<sup>1</sup> *Pour suivre Sri Aurobindo dans la grande aventure de son yoga intégral, il fallait toujours être guerrier; mais maintenant qu'il nous a quitté physiquement, il faut être un héros.* November 24, 1952

# The Soul's Freedom

The pressure from above has been withdrawn and normalcy restored to the earth-consciousness. Pressure meant a separation: something foreign acting from elsewhere, an interference. As a process, as a passage needed for a time, for a special purpose and under special circumstances, it was necessary and welcome. But circumstances have changed.

The higher consciousness has not to remain always high but to become level with the normal. Either the higher must come down and mingle totally with the lower, or the lower has to rise and merge altogether into the higher, or both meet and unite midway somewhere.

Earth or material nature does not easily tolerate anything unknown and foreign to it. Even if it is for its own well-being, a foreign touch makes it shrink and turn in on itself. It is even painful for it to bear. In the end the earth is not to be goaded or driven along: it has to go on its own. It must depend entirely on itself, bring out what it carries within itself or has acquired and stored. It has to outgrow its childhood or apprenticeship, the period when an intelligent amount of pressure or even coercion might be needed or inevitable. But that stage passed, the higher realisation has to be the natural expression of ordinary earth-life: its normal state has to be the state of the higher consciousness, its life naturally moved by its self-nature expressing its own truth.

If there is to be a Divine destiny for earth, it must be because of its free choice. There must be no pressure or even solicitude from any agent outside itself to compel it or force it that way. It must be a glad and spontaneous impulse from within to follow the line of destiny it has itself chosen.

As the original birth of Ignorance was a free choice of Ignorance, even so the return of Ignorance to consciousness has to be a matter of spontaneous self-seeking. It may be true or it is true in a deeper way that a mortal is chosen whom the Divine has already chosen, but that is another matter. Here upon earth we mortal souls are free agents, we choose or we do not choose.

In any case if one is to possess something truly, one must acquire it by one's exertion and in complete liberty. A free gift or an imposition even of a precious object is always something foreign and unnatural to it. One must learn to love a thing in order to have it wholly for oneself; it must be made part and parcel of one's being. And true love can exist only in free choice.

Latterly the Mother was saying, whenever the question of the descent of supermind was raised, that there was no question of descent any longer, for the thing has descended and it is here; it is no more a question of descent, that is to say, of something arriving from elsewhere that was not here before. At present it is simply the question of the manifestation of the thing that is with us and among us.

At one time Mother was asking for, even pleading for collaboration from the material nature. It was accorded in principle, but in act it was found wanting. Now the tables are turned. The earth-

consciousness has now to ask for, pray for collaboration from the Divine. The material consciousness has to come forward and take the lead and play the frontal role in the working out of the evolution. The collaboration of her physical body has been withdrawn in order to leave us free in our physical movements so that we may learn to labour, and to labour in full freedom for the service expected of us. We say she has withdrawn herself, that is to say, her physical body, but she is still here, and she being here, her very existence is force, a helping force, and that is collaboration enough and it is always at our disposal.

Now at present it all depends on how much the earth-consciousness has received, imbibed or assimilated of the Divine Presence. That will be the measure of the fulfilment human beings can achieve. As much as we earth-creatures feel and express of the higher reality, that much we shall become truly and divinely. If we continue to be the old stock with no or little change, well, we shall have to wait perhaps for another million years.

This would mean for us, naturally, a change of dress for a good many times perhaps. There seems to be no other way. But a change of dress is inevitable and should be welcome, for kept on too long it would stink. A dip in the Vaitarni or Acheron (if we happen to be in Greece) would be wholesome. There is however always the possibility of a miracle happening: to this Mother was referring very often. In that case we might learn to change, to renew ourselves in the inner way, even like the Vedic cows; as the Rishi says: *Paliknīrid yuvatayo bhavanti* — even those of them who were grey with age, became young again. (Rig Veda, V.2.4)

Naturally it does not matter at all to the Divine, the supreme consciousness — the whole of eternity is His playfield, a million years this side or that do not count for Him anything. And yet we are human beings and we can have other vistas equally divine. The Mother became a human being like us as totally as possible for that purpose, to shorten the million years.

## 2

The Mother continues to do what is necessary under the circumstances and perhaps more; she has not stopped her work.

But the most crucial thing and the most critical — turning the corner — has been done. Sri Aurobindo has spoken of it in memorable words: we know the passage in *The Mother*. I quote the lines and conclude:

The Mother not only governs all from above but she descends into this lesser triple universe. Impersonally, all things here, even the movements of the Ignorance, are herself in veiled power and her creations in diminished substance, her Nature-body and Nature-force, and they exist because, moved by the mysterious fiat of the Supreme to work out something that was there in the possibilities of the Infinite, she has consented to the great sacrifice and has put on like a mask the soul and forms of the Ignorance. But personally too she has stooped to descend here into the Darkness that she may lead it to the Light, into the

Falsehood and Error that she may convert it to the Truth, into this Death that she may turn it to godlike Life, into this world-pain and its obstinate sorrow and suffering that she may end it in the transforming ecstasy of her sublime Ananda. In her deep and great love for her children she has consented to put on herself the cloak of this obscurity, condescended to bear the attacks and torturing influences of the powers of the Darkness and the Falsehood, borne to pass through the portals of the birth that is a death, taken upon herself the pangs and sorrows and sufferings of the creation, since it seemed that thus alone could it be lifted to the Light and Joy and Truth and eternal Life. This is the great sacrifice called sometimes the sacrifice of the Purusha, but much more deeply the holocaust of Prakriti, the sacrifice of the Divine Mother.

*Published February 1975*

# One Day More

1

In her *Prayers and Meditations* Mother wrote under the date September 25, 1914:

The Lord has willed and thou dost execute:  
A new Light shall break upon the earth.  
A new world shall be born,  
And the things that were promised shall be fulfilled.

Subsequently, after a lapse of more than forty years, under the date February 29 - March 29, 1956, she introduced a change in the statement, in respect of the tense used. She rewrote it in this form:

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

The change of tense was needed because of the change in the situation. There has been a radical change in the actualities of the situation. Mother herself explains in another message communicated after about a month under the date April 24, 1956:

The manifestation of the Supramental upon earth is no more a promise but a living fact, a reality.

It is at work here, and one day will come when the most blind, the most unconscious, even the most unwilling shall be obliged to recognise it.

She speaks repeatedly of her vision and declares most emphatically that the new world is born, born, born — as it were, thrice born ("*il est né, né, né*"). It is there behind, it is moving, threading past all the obscurities that hide it, but in a manner indomitable and invincible: the outer weight of ignorance cannot hold it down eternally.

Progress continues: the Mother declares under the date February 3, 1958 — that is to say, after the lapse of about two years — a momentous declaration, the arrival of a full-fledged supramental boat at the shore of earth. Its mission was to carry within it human beings who were ready for the supramental life. The description of the whole scene was so beautiful, so graphic, so alluring that on reading it a young girl from outside wrote to the Mother that she would like to be a passenger on the boat and prayed to the Mother for admission. Mother explains that the substance of which this new world was made was the most material supramental, the supramental substance nearest to the physical world, its first manifestation.

Once again she affirms the reality of her vision in the message she gave to her children on the New Year Day of 1961:

This wonderful world of delight waiting at our gates for our call, to come down upon earth ...

Naturally, this is not the end, the culmination. One step has still to be taken — material matter too has to be touched and remoulded — and that means a hiatus, a time-lag, in the end. The process of creation always follows this line: a thing to be created or embodied upon earth is first created in a subtle world. When it is ready, ready-made in that world, then it precipitates itself upon the material world, slowly or gradually or suddenly, according to the cosmic will. An illustration to explain the point — the Mother herself gives it:

Once, asked about the liberation of India, sometime in 1915 when India was completely in bondage, she answered without the least hesitation, "India is free." She did not say, "India will be free", she said simply, "India is free" as though stating an actual fact. The physical fact however came about in the year 1947, that is to say, 32 years after the thing happened in the subtle world. Mother comments that that is the exact image of the resistance to the manifestation, the physical realisation.

Not merely creation, but destruction also happens in the same way. Destruction first occurs in the subtle world and as a consequence physical destruction inevitably takes place. Sri Krishna in the Gita tells Arjuna: All these troops ranged against you have already been killed by me, you have only to be the instrument or the excuse: *Mayaivaite nihatāḥ pūrvameva*.

2

Savitri is coming back to earth to her normal life. She has made her final conquest. And with the whole world of the new conquest, the embodied Life Divine within her, she enters the earth-life, but with a veil drawn upon herself and her achievement. The "one day more" is yet to be done, the one day made of material matter. She is not to disclose herself till that one day is done. The curtain is down now, but behind it lies the whole edifice she has built up, in its entire unflawed beauty and fulfilment. At present outwardly we see before us the arena of a grey dangerous world, as of old. The curtain will surely roll up and reveal what it hides, slowly, or perhaps the shell of the old may burst open all of a sudden and bring forth the new life full and entire. How will it happen — the Revelation, the Epiphany? The event will show. In the meantime, the New Creation, a "greater dawn", she holds within herself, "Deep guarded by her mystic folds of light."

*Published August 1975*

# The Mother, Human and Divine

In our human frailty we regard the Divine Mother as mother only, forgetting that she is also divine. We are apt to seize exclusively the last term of the great Name and ignore the other term which is equally important. We demand from her the same reactions of motherly love that we expect from a human mother. Our love for her is human, human in the ignorant way — full of passion and craving, hunger for appropriation, considering her as nothing else than food for our egoistic desires.

She is the mother indeed, but the Divine Mother. She wishes us to come to her in the divine way and not in the human way. For it is in the divine way that we rise to our highest and deepest stature, receive her fully and integrally, and enjoy the plenitude of the delight in her Grace. A human way ties us down to the littlenesses and smallnesses of the human feeling. The human approach is, more often than not, that of a spoilt child. If there is one drop of true love at the bottom of the heart, the amount of ignorance and turbidity in which that is sunk is colossal. The dirt smears us and is cast upon the object of our love too.

And yet she is the mother in being the Divine. She is divine not in the sense that she is afar and aloof, cold and indifferent like the transcendent Brahman. Indeed, the Divine Mother is more motherly than the human mother can be. The human mother is only a faint echo, a far-off shadow, at times a travesty of the true Mother in the archetypal world.

The Divine Mother even in being transcendent leans down to our human dimensions, becomes one of us, is within us as our own self and with us as our comrade and guide. She takes us by the hand and, if only we allow it, teaches us how to transcend the little humanity we are made of and grow into her own nature and substance through the miracle of her love — if our love responds to it adequately.

It is only by remembering her twofold truth, the two arms of her love with which she enfolds us and cherishes us, that we can hope to be her true children.

*Published 1974*

## The Mother and the Nature of Her Work

It seems I am to tell you something about the Mother — a bit of her life, a bit of her activities.

Well, the first part of her life, as you all know, the Mother passed in France; she was born in France, in Paris. So naturally it was very often pointed out to her that she was French, she was European. To this, however, she was always protesting, saying, "I am not European, I am not French." Her family came in fact from Egypt. Her parents, her father and mother went to France just a year before she was born, a year only. And in Egypt, her family, it seems, belonged to a very ancient Egyptian family — perhaps even to a royal family of Egypt, the Pharaohs. So she is not European or French by blood, although she was brought up as if it were so. Strictly speaking, she would belong to the Middle East, that is to say, the portion joining the east of Europe and the west of Asia. It means the union of Europe and Asia, the two harmonised, and that reflects the character of Mother's life and its destiny.

As I said, she spent the first part of her life in France. But why France? There is a meaning in the choice. We know now the meaning, the fundamental meaning of her life, her mission and her work. She came to bring a new light. She wanted a new world, not the old world with its old nature and old culture, but a new world, a new human race. She brought with her the new light that is to re-create, re-shape man and the world. What was the relation between the new man and France? For the new light to come and manifest, you have first to receive it in your mind; that is to say, you must see and recognise that it is a new light and ask for it. And mind is the first or the topmost receptacle in man. You may remember here the opening line of the *Dhammapada* containing the epitome of Buddha's teaching: "*Manopubbangama dhamma*" — Mind, is the foremost of all human functions. Mind surpasses all, embraces all. Now, as the light comes down and enters you, the first thing it touches is your head, that is, your mind: you see it, you are conscious of it. France represents today just this mind of humanity at its best, the flowering of its culture and civilisation. She was born there so that the highest mind of the human race may receive that light through her. She passed her life there in the company of the elite, the most cultured people of the time, scientists, artists, poets, all of the highest and most refined stature. She was there so that through her contact and association she could bring into them the new light. With this end in view she joined a society, rather a group, and the name given to it was *Le cosmique*. "Cosmic" means the whole world; in other words, what she was doing, what she was giving, was for the whole world, for all men, for East and West, for everybody. Also it means a cosmic or world-embracing consciousness. She was creating a new type of mental world, through the highest mental development, to reach a still wider mind — beyond the individual egoistic mind.

As I have said, the mind, the head, being the highest part in man, it is easy for him to receive the new light through his head first of all. You may remember here, in this connection, Sri Aurobindo's poem "The Golden Light": how it comes from above and first enters into the head, the brain. It illumines your thoughts, develops your understanding, widens it, deepens it and sharpens it. But understanding is not sufficient, you must love it, then only do you begin to possess

it. So the golden light enters your heart. Then it proceeds farther down towards a more concrete and active expression; it enters into the vital region as we call it. Lastly the golden light enters your feet, that is, possesses your physical limbs; it becomes concrete materially and present, as though solidified, in your very body: it builds the body beautiful. The Mother thus brings the golden light into the head of humanity, the top rung of its consciousness, and that work of initiation, *dīkṣā*, into the Life Divine she started in France.

From France she went to Japan for the next stage of her work. In Japan she came to the Far East. She spent five years, five long years in that country. Japan is the land of the Zen system of meditation, that is to say, a special way of entering into an inner consciousness, not a rational mental consciousness but a gaze inward into an occult and more sensitive region. The Japanese as a nation represent indeed a very sensitive vitality, an artistic vitality that seeks order and beauty in life, in the mode of living. For the golden light to manifest and have its play in the physical world, to possess its body, as it were, a vitality of this kind is necessary to acquire and hold it. The Japanese wrestlers are well-known for their vital strength, their self-controlled strength; usually they possess (almost all of them, you must have noticed, in pictures at least), a big tummy, and it is, they believe, the storehouse of vital strength. This does not mean that I advise you to develop a big paunch, on the contrary. However, even in physical activities, more than mere physical strength, vital strength is necessary.

Yes, the Japanese have a vital that is strong, controlled, ordered, sensitive. You may remember one or two prayers of the Mother in her *Prayers and Meditations*. She speaks of the cherry-blossom, which is the emblem of the Japanese artistic sense, the feeling for beauty, a purified sense-perception: not a rough and crude and violent (lower) vital, but a fine, a pleasant intimate feeling and an orderly happiness; that is what the cherry-blossom means. Mother described also a vision of hers, a beautiful picture it was, a Japanese mother and her child: it was an image of the new child that was born in humanity. A new world is thus ushered in in the land of the cherry-blossom, a new vital world, for all the world.

The Mother is creative consciousness; wherever she happens to be, wherever she is called upon to be, her very presence moves towards creation, creating a new world and a new dimension of being and consciousness, according to the need of the time and place. And it is a whole world she creates, and her creation endures, for it is an added achievement in the evolution of the human being. To this end, the neat, strong, orderly vital world of which we were speaking requires a competent body to support it and manifest it. The golden light must come down into the feet. And that was the work she was doing here and it is for that that she created the Ashram. You all know the special emphasis she laid on physical education in order to prepare the body and senses to receive the golden light. She always said that physical education gives us the basis for the new consciousness, the new light. We must have a strong body, a beautiful body, a body that endures: for the new light is powerful, it is not merely light, it is force; one must be able to bear it and carry out its commands. Indeed, she came here in order to give a shape, a concrete and physical form, an earthly body to this Divine Light.

Now the body beautiful is not by itself an end and fulfilment; in order to secure it one must secure a beautiful vital. Not only that: for a fulfilment in the body and in the vital one must possess a mind beautiful. The physical education that the Mother has arranged for us here is to prepare us for the body beautiful. And the school that she has organised is for the cultivation of the mind. The cultivation of the mind, however, means not only storing it with information on various subjects, the study of books; it also means a purification and clearance of the mind, the mental stuff itself, an elevation of consciousness to seek and recognise the light.

I have said that you are to receive the new light through the head at first, but through the heart also, and then dynamically through your vital energy. You must not only see the light and recognise it, but love it and be devoted to it. And here comes the Mother's central work, her special gift, her grace to us. When you love a thing, you love, as it is said, through the heart; but there is love and love, and there is a heart within the heart. True love, the love that is divine, is within this inner heart, which is your soul, the real being or person in you; and the soul coming out, coming to the front as we say, is the Mother's special Grace here, her gift to all of you, to each one of you here. She has given you your soul. I have often said that it is the special privilege for each one of us here, for each one of you, to carry this being, this inner being, this intimate person, the Divine Child who is you. It is this that is building your divine personality, it is this that will give you in the end a mind beautiful, a vital beautiful, a body beautiful — all that you need, all that is perfect and flawless in your life here in this world.

You may remember, many of you, the famous line of *Savitri*; you must have heard it from Mother's own lips:

Built is the golden tower, the flame-child born.

She has built this tower of new life and the child is here, the golden child. This golden child is in every one of you. You must find it, recognise it; this is the goal of your life, the mission and fulfilment of all that you want to do and be on earth. Some of you surely must have felt in you the presence of this child. Some may even have seen it as the Divine Child in you. These things — visitations as they are called — usually come in dreams. At least I know of some who have seen it, who came and told me of their miraculous experience. It is a possibility for everyone and if you happen to see it you must recognise it, hold it, grasp it with all love and affection. The Mother is still living and active among us and her Presence is still here, even concretely, for each one of you has the Divine Child in you.

I end with a prayer, a prayer that I made to the Mother some time ago; it was on behalf of the small children of our playground:

Sweet Mother, your Playground children are angels. They have not become divine or godly, but they are angels, earthly angels. Keep them constantly under your eye, cradle them in your loving consciousness.

That was the prayer I made on your behalf to the Mother, and I am sure Mother has responded "Yes."

*Published November 1973*

# She Is Always There

Grace is the Divine made earthly and human. And that is our Mother.

\*

She is always there in that realm of the earth atmosphere from where she used to work even when here — the same now as she was when in our midst. She is available in the same way — only we must know how to approach her, how to attune ourselves.

\*

She is accessible to our prayer in the same way, even to our most puerile and foolish prayer — if it is genuine, spontaneous, simple and candid, spoken with a child's innocence. She has an ear even to our nonsense.

\*

Mother's response to a prayer:

"I am always with you. I shall never fail you in prosperity or in adversity. Even when you sink I am with you — I sink with you. I do not stand on the shore and merely look at you from a distance. I sink with you, I am in you: for I am you."

*Published 1977*

# A Vision

The Mother says:

"Just see. Look at me. I am here, come back in my new body — divine, transformed and glorious. And I am the same mother, still human. Do not worry. Do not be concerned about your own self, your progress and realisation, nor about others. I am here, look at me, gaze into me, enter into me wholly, merge into my being, lose yourself into my love, with your love. You will see all problems solved, everything done. Forget all else, forget the world. Remember me alone, be one with me, with my love..."<sup>2</sup>

*Published February 1978*

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<sup>2</sup> One is reminded of Rabindranath Tagore's lines:

Lo, from within our heart. O Mother, thou hast come forth  
in this wonder-form of thine.

I gaze and gaze and my eyes turn not aside.

Lo! The door of thy golden temple is flung wide open, O Mother!

What a wonder-form I behold before me!

I gaze and gaze and my eyes turn not aside.

## Part 2

# The Ashram

A Power, a Presence has come down near to us upon earth and is moulding infallibly the earth-substance into something which it has been always aspiring for, but has never attained till now in an appreciable degree. Today the possibility is an actuality before us.

We have assembled here so that with each individual contributing his mite of sincerity and efficiency, a combined endeavour may create a wide and secure opening for the new Power and Presence to come into its own and possess a home in the material life here below.

— Nolini Kanta Gupta

## A Review of Our Ashram Life

In its early days, quite at the beginning, we may now say long, long ago, for it is now almost half a century ago, the Ashram from its very start quite spontaneously and inevitably grew into a community life. In the first place, the individuals ceased to have any personal possessions. Whatever they had belonged not to themselves but to the group, or rather to the Master of the group, the Guru, to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Whatever they had, they considered as having received from the Mother for use only. They were not the proprietors or possessors of anything: whatever they needed or thought they needed, they had to ask for it and the Mother decided whether they should have it or not. It was a joyous surrender of possessions and a grateful acceptance of gifts. One may yet remember the beautiful movement that impelled each one of those who were fortunate to be there at that time. One is reminded of a parallel movement, although on a different field, described by Tagore in his well-known lines:

There was a scuffle and scramble,  
A great hurry as to who would be the first  
To throw away his life.

Well, it was a picture worth contemplating. Here is one carrying his trunk or valise or wallet, and placing it before the Mother, displaying all his possessions and receiving them back from her as her gift. She did not take away anything as superfluous or not necessary! It was for us to judge and decide what was really necessary and what was a luxury. We had to be sincere. She was generosity itself.

The life of each one was directly linked with the Mother. The relation between individuals was founded on the relations each one had with the Mother. It did not depend on one's liking or disliking, one's attraction or repulsion, but was necessitated by the need of the common life as arranged by the Mother.

Such a life was possible for two reasons: a physical reason and a psychological reason. The physical reason was that the number of people forming the Ashram was very small: instead of the two thousand and more that we are today, there were at that time (the time I am speaking of) barely fifty. And there were no children. And of men and women, only those were allowed who had a real call for the spiritual life; those alone were chosen by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo and permitted to live here. And here is the natural psychological reason: it was a select group who already had an inner life and spiritual aspiration, so they were ready for a life of surrender and self-giving, of obedience and allegiance to the guru. They did not come ignorant and innocent of the rudimentary elements of spiritual life.

The work that Mother could do then and was doing, she herself has described and explained to us. It was the creation of a world — a region at least — of the higher consciousness in which every one who participated had his own place, every one with his soul-being sufficiently in front, and this being she could connect or link up with a being of the higher sphere — a counterpart,

an over-soul, as it were, for each soul. It was a kind of descent, a subtle incarnation of Gods which the Mother's Grace occasioned or brought about, into the elevated and sublimated human level.

The ground had already been prepared, we may note, by the descent of November 24, 1926, the descent of the Overmind or Krishna-consciousness into Sri Aurobindo's body-consciousness and thence generally into the earth-atmosphere and becoming its natural and permanent possession.

But at one point Sri Aurobindo happened to make an observation which meant halt! The Mother narrates the story to us in an amusing way. One day Sri Aurobindo was telling the Mother: "What you are doing is very fine and very grand. It will bring you name and fame, you will become a world-figure and your work will be a marvel. It will be a grand success." Well, that was sufficient. The whole thing dropped from the Mother's hands. The new creation vanished in a moment, as it were, there was a Pralaya. The Gods withdrew, we came down with a thud upon earth — down to earth, earth to earth. We are still there, crawling, forward I hope, as best as we can.

This creation of a luminous world in a higher sphere of the mind which Mother attempted could not be fully achieved because the foundations were not properly laid, the basic ground was not prepared. Any higher structure of the mind and Overmind must be built upon man's vital being and physical life. The new creation left out of account these realities of basement, so we had to come down, forgetting for the moment the higher realisation, into these darker regions and make a thorough cleaning of them. The regions of the vital consciousness and physical consciousness are, as we all know, full of human failings and dangerous complications. One had to leave the heavens and come down to these lower levels and tackle the problems that beset them, the crucial problems whose solution alone could lay a strong foundation for the final consummation, the supreme transformation. One had to face the stark realities here and master them before one could think of a heavenly ascent. So we all became once more ordinary human beings with human weaknesses and a modicum of aspiration perhaps. This was the task given to all of us — to battle through and conquer here below. The scene changed completely. A mid-summer-night's dream turned almost into a sombre Hamlet tragedy.

The first sign of this return, this resumption of life as it is, was the reassertion of the individual, the freedom of the personal unit. Because of the increased number of people and because of the incursion of children, the earlier frame could no longer hold good. The willing surrender of individuality is a lesson that has to be acquired and achieved: it is not just God's gift for the many. The many have to grow, grow by degrees, through toil and trouble, and slowly be led into the mysteries of the higher realisation of surrender and self-giving. And towards that consummation independence, freedom, is the first step. But once the climb down begins, it does not admit of an arrest; it becomes a slide down, a continuous descent until you reach the very rock-bottom of the vale of tears. The Roman poet spoke of the easy descent down the cliffs to the river: *Facilis descensus Avernil*. Easy is the descent to Avernus (Virgil: Aeneid, II.126)

The realisation aimed at demands a wholesale change, an integral transformation; it does not rest content with a partial success, an attainment on one level, in one portion of the being. There

is therefore a global shake-up; nothing is allowed to remain in its old status unnoticed, all must come out and declare themselves to the Light. Hence the darkness of it all. All the impurities, imperfections and vilenesses show themselves — the grass-roots, as they say, that have to be extirpated and the ground ploughed, furrowed and prepared for the new seed. It is a difficult time. The heroic soul must bear and stand, know what is happening and move bravely on.

I spoke of the community ideal that obtained among us at the outset of our life here; that broke to pieces. Individualism reared its gruesome head with all its inevitable consequences: egoism had uncontrolled sway; instead of submission and surrender and obedience, freedom attained complete freedom, liberty pushed to licence.

Like individuals, collective bodies (in the matter of work and enterprises) were allowed the freedom to grow, or perhaps not to grow, independently. Each group or section, each undertaking sought to depend upon itself, to secure its own personal equipment and resources: its gains were its own, and naturally the losses were bound to be more than the gains. The real gain was perhaps the experience. The experience was meant to develop the consciousness and it is hoped that the consciousness did make a gain.

The freedom, the devolution or departure from control of the centre, went so far as to bring about almost a real separation between the groups and the centre; the same tendency, by the way, we may notice in the play of world politics today.

The limbs declared their independence and sought and fought for this independence, but that could only be at the cost of the Heart. The calvary of the Divine lay precisely here: it is due to this sense of separation, an individual, exclusive self-existence prevailing in His children, issues of His own body. The units in the cosmic body of the Divine in the Ignorance are indeed ignorant, and the force that compels them to be together apparently is the forced bond of ignorance; they seem outwardly to press towards inevitable disintegration and chaos.

In reality however, this movement of dispersion out of bounds, a flight away from the centre, harbours a reverse movement in it, a self-conscious advance towards a reawakening to the one central consciousness that is in all, that is all. This is an intermediate stage when the faults and imperfections in the creation, the wrong forces that issued from and were inherent in the original Ignorance and first separation, had to be tracked and met; they could not be allowed to lie dormant eternally. Therefore they rose up and declared themselves so that the Light can deal with them and swallow them.

One remembers the legend of the Vedic Rishi Agastya and his consort who once attempted a new and renovated creation. They were engaged in a tremendous superhuman labour to discover the roots of evil upon earth: they dug it up, opened out its very bowels: they went deeper and deeper, through layer after layer of obstructive darkness till they arrived at the very source of the Night. Then they brought in there with them a Light that could produce a reversal of consciousness, changing darkness into radiance.

The lower sphere of the vital and the physical is a mass of ignorant Nature (Prakriti), all moving together helplessly, mechanically, bound together indissolubly to one inexorable fate, and it

stands on the rock of utter unconsciousness — the Inconscient which is the very basis and stuff of that sphere. Consciousness, the conscient Being, has to come down and penetrate there, break the hard block of inert matter, striking and scattering and throwing up, as it were, its myriad disparate bits, turning them into particles of Light and Consciousness. These free sparks, the first-born of Consciousness, at the outset become erratic, errant conscious units, free but fighting against each other, each exclusive in its unitary consciousness; but that is the way towards a purer, higher, wider, integrating consciousness. As the Consciousness works and moves forward, the dross, the grit is blown away and it works towards a clearer light and a harmonic weaving of all component units.

We are thus in a transition period; it is an interregnum, beset with great difficulties, but they are also great opportunities. The Calvary is not merely a passage of pain and suffering; it is a Purgatory, that is to say, a zone, a process where the being and consciousness is cleaning itself, throwing off its own scales, sloughing off its old skin and in course of time it will come out in a rejuvenated body and in a harmonious setting. The Paradise lost will one day be thus regained. Paradise Lost will have one day inevitably, as its sequel and consummation, Paradise Regained.

*Published November 1973*

## The Ashram: Inner and Outer

I will tell you a story today, but of another kind. I will tell you of a dream or a vision that I had some time ago. It was an ashram — I say an ashram but it was not quite like our ashram, although there was a great similarity between the two. In some respects it was like our ashram and in other respects somewhat unlike it. First of all, the whole ashram was in one place, a consolidated organisation, not houses here and there scattered about: there were no buildings or houses belonging to other people or other organisations; also the buildings were beautiful to look at and the general layout artistic. But all the activities we have here were there: the school was there, the playground was there, the library also, but all in an orderly arrangement. The Mother was also there; she was going from place to place, observing all and speaking to people. Among the people, curiously, some I seemed to recognise, some of those even who are here now; there were also many strangers from other countries, a good many of them. Regarding those who are here now and who I seemed to recognise there, the impression is rather vague and I cannot name them. But some of those who were here and have passed away I recognised very well; they had almost the same face and features — but in a new, fresh and younger form. They were active and handsome young men and young women.

I remember Sri Aurobindo quoting from the Rig Veda. The Vedic Rishi speaks of a happy herd of cows grazing in green fields; the Rishi adds: even those among them that were old have become young now. The cow represented for the Rishi the light, the sun's ray, the purity of consciousness. Perhaps the image came from the actual life of the Rishi of that time: the cattle they reared, the domestic animals about them, the natural scenery around them, and all that was an important part of their ordinary daily life. A whole herd of cattle, all white, is a beautiful picture. Even so, there was something in the atmosphere of the ashram which gave it a special quality; it was clear, pure, limpid and transparent, there was a strange luminosity in it, and it was a very happy atmosphere. While you were there, you felt free and at ease and there were no petty feelings that we have here in the normal life of the world, no anger, no jealousy, no selfishness, no ugliness: there was a happy coordination of all persons and things.

My feeling is that this ashram that I saw was in fact the inner reality of our ashram here, the inner ashram which is within us all; what we see at present is the outer form, the material form, which is a good deal deformed and even falsified in many ways. Indeed, that inner ashram had an other-worldly atmosphere of its own, an atmosphere of rarefied heights. I have told you very often that those who are here are fortunate; they breathe this atmosphere and in spite of their faults and foibles, and no matter what they do, they are in contact with something of its inner beauty and fragrance. I do not know whether you have heard what Mother said more than once, that all the children here, when they live here for some time, imbibe and carry a new atmosphere. And she could recognise a person from a distance, even from a great distance, not by his face or physical features but by the atmosphere he carried, very different from the atmosphere an outsider normally carries. It is an atmosphere or aura made of happiness and purity and

luminosity. All the ashram children are surrounded by it because it is the Mother's own atmosphere.

Therefore in those days, she used to say that the children should not go out into the outside world even during their holidays, because when they go out (she said she had seen it) they lose this ashram atmosphere, and when they come back they are coated with a thick layer of the mud of the ordinary world, and it took her a lot of time and trouble to rub and scrub and clean the dross upon the body, to make it shine as before. You may remember here in this connection the Ramakrishna story about the sinners who go to the Ganges for a bath to purify themselves; they leave their sins on the shore or their sins leave them as they get into the Ganges water, but the sins wait for them there on the bank and as soon as they come out purified of their sins, the sins lying in wait jump on them again and the sinners remain always sinners. Here naturally you are not destined to remain sinners always.

However, that atmosphere, the inner atmosphere, still exists here. With the Mother's withdrawal of the physical body, that too might have withdrawn a little perhaps, a little only, just a few inches perhaps! But it is still here, for the Mother is here as concretely as before although not as materially. As I said, there are some who have passed away from here and some new faces also that I found in this other inner ashram; they are already there wholly in that ashram. But we who are here, we lead a double life as it were: part of us is here and part is there in that other inner ashram, as though one leg were on this side and the other leg on that side of the fence. In your better moments when you feel nice and free, when you are happy, when you are noble in spirit, you come in contact with that inner ashram, you breathe that atmosphere. In dreams also, while asleep, apparently asleep, many of you must have seen the Mother, many must have had Sri Aurobindo's darshan. That is because you came in contact with that inner atmosphere and entered into it.

Now our task is to come more and more in contact with that reality even in our waking moments, to be conscious of that which is nothing but the Mother's Presence. Half of you, your inner life, is already there, bathing there in that luminous happy air. Only try to be conscious of that: if you are conscious of it even a little, you will feel immensely happy, feel that you are beautiful, that you are wise when you feel the touch of that inner ashram life. And instead of living entirely or mainly the outer life of the ashram as at present, you can turn this life into that inner life and gradually reshape the present life in the mould of the inner life. That is your duty, your task, particularly you who are students, boys and girls, that is your central work; study and learning and all else is secondary. What you should do and what you can do is to breathe a new air, live in a better, more beautiful way. You can have this inner life; it is already there, this inner life, without much difficulty; it is already there, a collective inner life, which is so beautiful as I say, filled with the fragrance of the Mother's Presence. It is a collective life in which you all are not only brothers and sisters but one body and soul unified in the Mother's loving and living substance.

That inner life you have to bring out in your body and all the external activities. It is the very nature of that inner organisation to express itself outwardly; its spontaneous drive is towards expression and embodiment; even if you do not know or perceive it, it is slowly coming forward.

Only, if you are conscious, if you help, if you collaborate, you will be benefitted: you will grow in consciousness and attain a new stature; you will enjoy the supreme happiness of a miraculous achievement.

At present, as I say, there is a separation between the two ashrams, these two worlds or lives. They run parallel to each other, or oftener they are intertwined, intermixed, badly dovetailed. They must be made one single existence: the inner must take up and assimilate into itself the outer; the outer must allow itself to be cleansed and emptied of its dross and be possessed altogether by the inner. They are to form one streamlined entity: one being, one life, one body.

I said that your work is to try to be conscious and take part more and more in the inner life. Naturally you ask how to do it. Actually there is no precise process, no hard-and-fast rule for learning or acquiring it. It is not like learning a mathematical problem or even a particular exercise which you learn by habit and culture. It is nothing mechanical; it is a natural growth. It comes automatically and spontaneously, it shows itself to you and in you. You have simply to ask for it sincerely, to go on asking for it as intensely as possible, repeating like a mantra: "I want to be there, I want to be there, I want to be there." That is quite sufficient. That will evoke in you the new light, the new impulse that will lead you on. That is the child's call to the Mother and the Mother always responds — with her Light and Life and Love.

You have been told, and I have also often told you, that although the Mother's physical body is not here, she has left her consciousness with us: her consciousness is still living, it is still working. She herself said, even while she was in her body, that if ever she left her body, her consciousness would be always here with us. But I will add something more here. Apart from her consciousness what she has left with us, what remains with us, is her love; her love for her children is still here undiminished as before in its fullness. I spoke of the inner ashram life; that life is built out of her love for her children, and it should be easy for you to enter and enjoy that life through your love for the Mother, your answering love for the Mother's love for you. And through the glow of that love, you will gradually develop into what she wanted you to become.

*Published April 1975*

## The Ashram, the World and the Individual

Mother told us long ago that our Ashram is an epitome of India. It represents all that is good in India and also all that is bad — all the bad qualities, the weaknesses, all that is crooked and false, dark and obscure. And the Ashram, being a concentrated centre of all that, represents it in an especially intense form.

Now the pressure from above has come to change things and for that purpose all the dark points, all that has to be changed and rejected, have been exposed. They have been exposed everywhere — in the Ashram and also outside the Ashram, in the country in general — the same defects and weaknesses, the same wrong movements.

In India, the government is trying to check and control these movements by external means; to some extent it is necessary and so the central authority has been given that much strength and capacity. But the Ashram was made to be a conscious collective centre where these things must change from within, not under external compulsion, and that is why the Ashram was not given an authority strong enough to dominate or control its members. Here, the change should be conscious and, as I said, from within.

And each one of us who is here in the Ashram is an epitome of the Ashram and all the good and bad elements and movements are in one way or another represented in us — even in the best ones the wrong movements can cast a shadow. So it is a task for each one, especially the so-called "best" ones, that is, those who are more conscious, to detect and reject and change all that is wrong and false in them and develop all that is true and good, and thereby help to change those very elements in the Ashram atmosphere as well as outside it. That is the only solution and the only remedy — to cure the ills individually, personally in one's own consciousness. Then only a conscious collective consciousness can grow and develop in the Ashram with all these living and conscious units or cells and thereby change its own condition as well as the condition of India and also the condition of the world.

I say all this in view of the hard core, the strong seed that has to be formed, and out of which will sprout the future new creation. A centre must become such a seed, at least at its own centre, its own inmost centre; it must develop this inmost centre, its kernel, its living soul.

Mother also said that as India is a representative or an epitome of the world — just as the Ashram is the epitome of India and each individual in his turn is an epitome of the Ashram — so the world-problems will have to be solved in India. For India has the capacity and is destined to do so. When India solves her problems, the world also will find its problems practically solved. And the Ashram is expected to show the way to the solution of India's problems. Can the Ashram rise up to play its role? At least that was the Mother's intention. It all depends upon its individual members.

Of course, we must remember, Mother's help is always there.

*Talk of September 9, 1976*

## Part 3

# A New Creation

The destiny of man is governed and worked out by a Power beyond human calculation. That Power is dynamic today to a degree unknown heretofore. We have only to give ourselves up in the hands of that Power, allow it to act in us and around us, recognise its action and be grateful to the Divine Providence. That is the only way to deliverance out of this present turmoil. In that way lies our utmost happiness and the supreme achievement.

— Nolini Kanta Gupta

# On the Brink

1

One of its legs the Swan does not lift  
as it soars upward out of the waters;  
if perchance it lifted that also,  
there would be then neither today nor tomorrow,  
nor would there be day or night  
nor would there be dawning any more.

Atharva Veda 11.4.21

Thus said the Vedic Rishi.

Even so, when the Mother withdrew physically from this earth we presumed that she did so with one foot only; the other foot she left planted here below for us to worship. Well, was that only a presumption or have things changed since then?

Here on this earth, we know, a battle was raging and is still raging between the Gods and the Asuras: men are their agents and instruments. The battle is to decide the destiny of earth and humanity. Mother was the leader of the divine army here. Now, human beings are a very uncertain quantity. They themselves do not know on which side they are ranging. Some perhaps may know to some extent, but that does not seem to count much in the actual reckoning of things.

Yes, the pity is that man does not know and yet so much, if not the whole thing, depends on him. For man as he is now is so far removed from godliness and so close to the Asuras that the battle upon earth between the Gods and the Asuras seems to be an unequal game. Man by actual nature is asuric: it is through aspiration that he is trying to be godly, but it seems he is now out of breath with his aspiration and has fallen back on his normal nature of the Asura.

Man enshrines in himself the individualised Godhead, the personal Divine: the possibility of the incarnation of the Divine lies in him alone. Hence the struggle between the Gods and the Asuras for the possession of the human vessel.

It was the intention of the Mother to implant the Divine upon the turbid soil of normal humanity, purifying it of its dross and suffusing it with the heavenly breath. If that is not done, then she will have no other choice but to leave the field altogether to the Asuras, in whatever camp or form they are, to fight it out among themselves and finally destroy themselves in the act even like the Yadavas of old after Krishna's retirement. Some Asuras may pretend to be divine precisely to catch the voting strength, so to say, of the human being, who may still seem to have a prejudice or predilection for the divine things; but the truth will be out and the pretenders will be compelled to disclose themselves exactly as they are.

Then only, consequent on the self-annihilation of the Asuras, can this earth be free and open for the incoming of the new race of beings born divine, not made divine after birth. Whether any remnants of the human race will be left and in what condition, if any part of it can be incorporated or integrated into the new dispensation, is a mystery that will remain till the actuality reveals it.

But I must not leave it at that, for there is always hope and cheer, vistas of escape; the tunnel ends at last and at the end there is always the light. The Lord says indeed: I am Time, the Destroyer of the worlds — *kālo'smi lokakṣayakṛt* — but he also declares in no uncertain terms his voice of assurance, the resounding bugle-call of his *pāñcajanya*, the Divine conch:

Thou who hast come to this ephemeral and unhappy world,  
love me and turn to Me... Take refuge in Me alone.  
I will deliver thee from all sin and evil.

*anityam asukham lokam imaṃ prāpya bhajasva mām.  
... māmekaṃ śaranaṃ vraja  
ahaṃ tvā sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ.*

Gita 9.33; 18.66

2

A god is a single undivided being, even as an Asura is a single undivided being. But man is a divided dual being; on one side he is a soul, on the other he is predominantly a body complex. By his soul he is akin to the Gods, by his external being he is neighbour to the Asuras. Man is thus the link between Heaven and Earth. He is the twice-born, *dvija*: he is planted in the mud of earth — he has the proverbial feet of clay — and his head soars high, it bathes in the sun's light. He is an "emergence" out of earth, a being of evolution; he is also an "immergence", a descent into earth from heaven: one part in him is godly, the other asuric. As the Divine he is Brahman, as the Asura, Aham.

So man occupies a central place in the scheme of the universe. Above him are stationed the Gods in the region of the higher mind and the heart; below him upon the earth rule the Asuras, the powers of the lower mind and the vital. In between is man, the intermediary being.

The Gods and the Asuras are in eternal struggle for the mastery of the three worlds and it is curious to note that they both seek the help and aid of man. We know of legends in which human beings, kings and warriors, are invited by the Gods to come over to their side in the struggle. We have heard of the Raghus whose war chariots drove right up to heaven from the earth to come to the help of the Gods — *ānākam ratham vartmanām* (Kalidasa). The Asuras however have a greater sway over man in a natural manner because of man's earthly constitution. For the natural man is moved and controlled mostly by his external mind and vital; over him the earth's gravitational pull holds almost complete sway. The world and men in their external life and action

are the fief and domain of the Asura. They have to be reclaimed and remoulded. The possibility of it lies in the fact that along with the forces of gravitation there are forces of regeneration and elevation; only they seem to be slow in their action and not efficient enough under the present circumstances.

But man's destiny is not to be confined to this sphere of the triple world. He has a higher destiny transcending these lower worlds and that is being worked out elsewhere deep within him. He has a destiny which even the Gods envy; for he has the Divine's own home in him. It is God himself who is implanted in him, in the cavern of his heart — it is his soul.

I may leave you here. We have come to the door of the mystery of mysteries: there is the cavern where the great Being is installed — *guhāhitam gahvareṣṭham* — the supreme key to the solution and resolution of all problems, the attainment of divine perfection. It is for you to enter and find for yourselves the final consolation. Even so I am reminded of the great poet and seer Dante who was led by Virgil to the formidable door on which was inscribed in flaming letters the terrible heartrending line:

Give up all hope, you who enter here.

It is the door to eternal hell. But I bring you to the luminous door on which is inscribed in golden and gleaming letters the blissful line:

Keep up all hope, you who enter here.

### 3

There are two realms — the physical realm of action and the subtle realm of feeling (*bhāva*). It is not that the physical is the only real realm and the subtle is unreal or less real; the subtle may be equally real, even more real and concrete, even more physical, as it were. A physical blow is painful, but King Lear went mad because of a subtle blow, the blow of ingratitude which hit him more than the lashes of howling wild winds. One may forget the joy of physical embrace but there is a delight of sheer love, pure unshared love, an exquisite experience that remains indelibly puissant in the memory. The love of Dante for Beatrice is made of pure concentrated consciousness and has nothing physical in it, but it carried Dante in his peregrinations through all the worlds even to the very presence of God in heaven, to the presence of his divinised Beloved (in and with his very physical body, it is said).

You have to create the subtle world of feeling: it may be dwelling within you or enclosing you, surrounding you; it may be immanent or circumambient — both are the same in that sphere of existence or consciousness. The outer world is more or less independent of you, you have not much control over it, but the subtler ground is more pliant and plastic and obedient to your will and purpose. In the midst of all trouble and tribulation, even the greatest misery, this other realm you can build up to a great extent after your heart and make it the source of your life and delight.

It can be your home of happiness and your celestial refuge. This realm will have as its basis love for the Mother and, at its apex, aspiration for her consciousness, and it will be from base to apex entirely composed of the Mother's peace and quiet.

You can do it yourself, the capacity has been given to you — for the capacity is nothing else but the Mother's Presence.

*Published November 1976*

# The Great Holocaust — Chhinnamasta

Throughout the ages whenever there has been a new creation on earth or the manifestation of a new consciousness in the earthly atmosphere, it was always preceded by a stage of destruction and dissolution of the old. The dance of Shiva has two aspects — the bliss of creation and the joy of destruction (*lāsya and tāṇḍava*). Both have been equally necessary up till now, complementary to each other.

Destruction means destruction of the unnecessary, the unfit, all that refuses to accept the new advent, obstructs it, tries to deny it — all that is out of harmony with the inevitable new future. Earthly evolution is a march of progression; if you fail to keep up with its speed you have to move out of the way, or rather you are removed to make room for the next coming stage.

If you are in the older creation or at least are in love with it, attached to it, the destruction becomes painful, even fearful and repulsive to you. But if you aspire for the new, if you are willing to participate in the dawning future and already belong to it, you feel the necessity of this destruction and welcome it to hasten the work, and you even rejoice in it. You enjoy the joy of destruction — at least Shiva does, the Divine Force does, it seems.

Something like that, in fact the same thing, is happening now. Mahakali has started her work of preparation, of elimination, of destruction and dissolution, to clear the path for Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati; the infinite love and compassion of Maheshwari sanctions and supports it. The new creation, the new world that Mother built and is still building with so much love and care is ready, ready to manifest, to reveal itself in the material field, waiting to materialise itself on earth. But the earth is not yet ready, or rather man is not yet ready: he still refuses it, he clings to the old dead world, clings fast to it — he loves this game of falsehood and crookedness. Perhaps the truth is too bright, too compelling for his egoistic nature and obscure make-up, so he denies, obstructs as much as he can the new consciousness, the new reality. Mother, out of her infinite love, tried to take this denial on her own self, tried to convince and change as many elements of it as possible; then, when nothing more could be done she withdrew, leaving the field to her other aspect to do what was unavoidable — the breaking up of the old rigid world. It is a necessity for the ultimate good of earth and even of man.

The work has started — call it the dance of Shiva, the *tāṇḍava*, or the dance of Kali the fierce Mother — it has started and it is proceeding faster and faster on its way. Destruction, dissolution, decomposition — yes, that is the first result and we are already witnessing and participating in it, whether we like it or not. It is the Supreme Lord's decree — it is bound to happen. Those who cling to Truth survive, those who make alliance with Falsehood perish; man has no other way than to make a choice, consciously or unconsciously. It is an inevitable stage; there is nothing to lament or grieve about if you are an aspirant of Truth.

The next stage naturally will be the clearance of the debris — a thorough cleaning, the elimination of all that was against the truth, the ruin of the dead world. The field will be cleared

of all that is filthy and obscure, for then only the new reality will be able to come forward and the Mother's mission will be fulfilled.

The new creation is already here, forming itself; whatever is happening now in the Ashram and outside is happening so that it may come forward all the sooner. She is breaking the outer scaffolding within which the new reality has been established, or you may call it a dead shell which is being broken so that the new reality may come out. It is Mother's action with her own Self. She has taken her Chhinnamasta form. All the things she is destroying are her own selves; she is getting rid, as it were, of the old unutilisable limbs of her own body.

We may remember Sri Aurobindo's lines:

"...the hour is often terrible, a fire and a whirlwind and a tempest, a treading of the winepress of the wrath of God; but he who can stand up in it on the truth of his purpose is he who shall stand; even though he fall, he shall rise again; even though he seem to pass on the wings of the wind, he shall return. Nor let worldly prudence whisper too closely in thy ear; for it is the hour of the unexpected."

*Published November 1977*

# What Is to Be Done?

Creation follows its cycles of evolution and it is said that at the end of each cycle there takes place a Pralaya — an annihilation of the existent grade of consciousness or of the species of beings incarnating that consciousness, and all the past is washed out, wiped away from the surface of creation and the next new phase starts.

We all know the story of one such cycle, rather we have witnessed it; I mean the present cycle, still present though past and dead in a way. We know that matter evolved out of ether, life emerged from dead matter, and mind evolved out of life. We know that — although we do not know exactly how life sprang forth from lifeless matter or how mind managed to get into mindless life, that is, into animal life. There are so many hows and many more possible and impossible answers.

We may say, rather Sri Aurobindo and the Mother said to us, that there were two processes: on one side, a seed of the next state of consciousness was involved in the existing one from the very beginning; it was dormant, as it were; and on the other side, from above or around or from somewhere, a flash or force of the same emerging consciousness descended into the atmosphere, and under its pressure the dormant seed woke up and rose above to meet its other self above — and both together produced a new line of growth.

So thus from matter came life, from life came mind — and man was born. Yes, man is the highest peak of evolution on earth up to now. In him the mind or mental consciousness seems to have reached its highest possible height. But still, man is not fully a mental being, he is rather a mental animal.

The mind is not yet the master in his Adhara; the true master who rules and handles the mental faculty is the life principle, the animal in him, his vital being, which again in its turn is a slave of the obscure brute matter in him. So man, in spite of all his mental splendour, is a dangerous creature — dangerous, for the vital in him is leading him towards the destruction of his own self as well as of all that is around him. Man is a queer experiment of Nature.

So up to now, the growth or progress in evolution has been from greater obscurity to lesser obscurity, from greater ignorance to lesser ignorance, from greater pain to lesser pain, although something else from behind — something whose very essence is joy and consciousness and sense of existence — supported and sustained the movement all the while. There were flashes of glorious illumination, outbursts, however momentary, of the splendour of joy and harmony, great overflowings of magnificent force and creativity; but on the whole, it was far from a perfect perfection as a creation or form of existence. Even man will never dream that he is the last pinnacle on the way of development. So then, what next?

The next step logically should be something beyond mind — a creation based on something better and greater. Sri Aurobindo announced to us that it will be a new cycle, a new cycle of

evolution based on truth — a growth in truth, a progress from truth to greater truth, from light to greater light, from joy to greater joy.

To start with, the new Truth-Consciousness — Sri Aurobindo named it the Supermind — had to be brought down into this terrestrial atmosphere so that it might awaken the inmost truth lying hidden in the depth of creation. And to accomplish this work Sri Aurobindo and the Mother came down on earth in human form, as a bridge between the two hemispheres. They represented in their human moulds not only humanity — all the elements of human consciousness — but also all that was represented in a human form, the entire terrestrial nature. They held their bodies as vessels to receive, on behalf of earth and man, what was to come down; they called it down, established it in this atmosphere and withdrew — for the mission for which they took up material form was done.

Yes, the mission was fulfilled. Now the new consciousness will spread and make its own place. It is the Truth-Consciousness; by the very fact of its presence it is bound to disturb the rhythm of ignorance and falsehood, to break and demolish the formations contrary to Truth, to destroy all that defies and contradicts it. It is the inevitable result.

Mother and Sri Aurobindo in their infinite compassion, of which only the Divine is capable, did something more: they knew the ultimate inevitable effect of Truth on untruth, so they stretched out their arms of love to lift the children of ignorance from this fate of destruction and tried to secure for them a position of safety under the very wings of Truth, if only they consented to accept the shelter. And to help them, to serve them in this divine service to man, some — not very many — souls came along with them.

Mother and Sri Aurobindo offered their physical forms and presence as a ladder for them to climb — no, to be carried up. They arranged so that human beings could grow into superhuman spiritual beings, shaking off their ignorant human consciousness, as the caterpillar grows into a butterfly shaking off its cocoon — but alas, man failed. Perhaps the new destiny was too new for him, the light too dazzling for his eyes so long accustomed to darkness; perhaps there were deeper necessities of fate and secret reasons. But man failed, man refused the help and rebelled against it; like the Asuras of ancient folklore, man wanted to use the new consciousness to serve his human ends; his human self refused to obey the Divine truth. So man rejected the offer.

The time was over. Sri Aurobindo and Mother left their bodies; but they did not leave the earth. Their presence is still here, supporting and sustaining all of us, but supporting us so that we may still cling to Truth, may still serve the Truth. Their love and presence still surround us and support us. And all they do, they do for our true well-being, for saving our souls. Those who live for the soul, Mother's arms carry them forward as always.

But still there is a difference.

We spoke of the Pralaya; if you look around, you will be sure that it has started. The new consciousness is at work and, as predicted, the first phase of its effect has turned out to be a thorough destruction of all that stands in the way of its advent. The whole world seems to be in trouble — all the established norms of life are crumbling down, governments are rising and falling,

falsehood and corruption are eating up the very base of our existence, man is possessed and led by demoniac motives and desires, driving the whole earth towards total annihilation.

What happens to man's soul? What is this soul? It is a spark of the Divine Sun; it comes down not for its own gain but to illumine and deliver the darkness below into the original light. Souls descend, they take up this ignorance and unconsciousness here as a habitation or a robe, they cleanse and illuminate it as far as possible, and then they retire for a while to take up the work again later. When Pralaya occurs, they go back to their original home in the Mother's Consciousness. It is a wonderful mystery of the adventure of love.

Today also, souls retire; they are not lost. Even if the present earth is demolished, souls will be safely lodged in the Mother's Consciousness, and perhaps with them will be lodged those parts of the earthly consciousness which have been transfigured and made conscious, rendered pure and fit. So the work is not totally over; one may still save something.

Once the Pralaya or destruction is over — it has to be done, it is a necessity — all the debris will have to be cleared, so to say. The two works go together. Once the stage is cleared, the new creation, the new cycle will commence. In the course of this preparation, naturally much will be lost in the human sense to man and earth, and the Ashram, being the epitome of earth, also cannot escape. Rather, the action may be most intense and acute here. So we have to accept the inevitable and wait for the beyond.

But should we wait idly, in dejected gloom? No, those who aspire for something better can still cooperate with the movement, offer themselves for helping and serving the new advent. Man can still do it. For each individual man is a point of concentration of the entire earth-consciousness; if he makes a progress in his own consciousness, lifts himself a little more, grows into a higher degree of consciousness, it is a gain. But he will have to do it with much greater difficulty than before; it will need far greater Tapasya now. For as long as Mother was in her body, she made things easy for us. But it is no more so.

For those who really want a spiritual consciousness, a spiritual mode of life, those who truly want to prepare themselves for greater ends, well, they have to take a serious look at things. For them it is a sadhana, a true endeavour, a conscious preparation. For them it will be better to forget all the big words — the big words like Supermind, Overmind, Higher Mind, etc. We no longer have the right to discuss them, to chat over them. They are dreams, beautiful dreams, but out of our reach. They belong to Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo has himself said:

I have gathered my dreams in a silver air  
Between the gold and the blue  
And wrapped them softly and left them there,  
My jewelled dreams of you.

"A God's Labour"

Sri Aurobindo has woven those dreams with Mother, and they have kept them carefully and safely in themselves. It is in the Overmind they are kept; it is their work, their affair, we have nothing to

do with that. Those dreams Mother has gathered in her own bosom; they will materialise in their own time according to their own rhythm.

Yes, we need not bother about them. Better let us look at ourselves, admit honestly that we are in our nature and consciousness, in our mode of life, animals, nay beasts; we are at the lowest rung of the ladder of consciousness. And we must start our work from there, from the bottom. It is the utmost physical consciousness; in the absence of Mother's physical body we have plunged straight into the bog, into the mire of crude physical existence. So we have to start the work of purification from that level, from the consciousness identified with the body; we must try to do the cleansing of the body and the vital. Mind? Oh, mind too, the higher levels of mind, the mental proper, that is too high for us. We may think of it much later.

As for the way of purification, we should start from the very beginning. The very first lessons, as advised by Rajayoga, are to begin straight from the body, to train and educate, to modify and remould the physical part of us; we have to learn as a child does: "Do not fight", "Do not utter bad words", "Do not steal", "Do not lie", etc. In the ancient methods of spiritual discipline those methods formed the elementary and basic part — in Rajayoga they are called Yama and Niyama (*ahimsā, asteya, etc.*). The Buddhists also started their spiritual training with the same lessons; they named them the Panchashilas: good conduct (*vinaya*), etc. Withdrawal (*pratyāhāra*), meditation, concentration — all these came much later, when one had risen much higher. Samadhi, that was still above. That is why in ancient ages it was insisted upon that if you want to take up spiritual life, even if you simply want to study the scriptures, you must first acquire the right to do so — you must do *citta-śuddhi* and accomplish the purification of your consciousness.

When Mother was in her body, she used to say: "This elementary Tapasya you need not go through; with the support of my body, you can simply take a leap and rise above." Mother offered us her body as a springboard so that we might leap up. But we did not take the benefit of it; we simply went on jumping on it. Mother received only blows, and we reached nowhere, at least not anywhere higher.

But the hate of hell and human spite  
Are my meed since the world began.  
"A God's Labour"

This time also she was not spared. We hardly went up — our falls far outnumbered our rises. We have lost that golden chance. So we who want, who truly want inner progress and inner growth, must begin from the beginning.

Of course, there are many who want to live and stay on the mental level; they are not ready or fit for more. For them the highest possible development is in intellectual speculation or philosophical occupation — that is their ideal and aim, the highest reach for them; for them it may be a help to be occupied with mental discussions. In this way, with the help of the intellect, they may create a sort of terrestrial mental atmosphere, a spiritual reflection in the mind: that too is good. In the outer world, especially in Europe and America where the modern life and

consciousness are centred in the intellect, where intellectual light is the only light, the unrivalled master of life, well, let them discuss and speculate; they will acquire at least some mental knowledge, a bit of purification and clarity of intellect.

But for those who aspire not only to educate and polish their mind but also to heighten and transform their consciousness, for them today is needed a Tapasya, a concentration, an intense concentration of all their force and will on that one aspiration, on that one arduous effort. For them the only thing to do is self-purification — purification of the body, purification of the vital, the reorientation and reorganisation of the entire lower base of consciousness, its physical and especially its lower vital parts. Those who want spirituality in practical life must go down to the bottom and accomplish this purification.

And the future? The future of what? The future of the individual soul is in Mother's arms. And the future of the creation is a new divine dawn; it is ready, absolutely ready for manifesting in the material; it is waiting, its advent is inevitable, no force can bar it. It is waiting in the subtle physical for the clearance of the earth stage. The age-long dream of the eternal dawn of which the ancients sang will be realised:

Oh, the Supreme Light of lights is come.

Rig Veda 1.113.1

But will there be any man to sing the invocation at that moment? Let us hope so. Nothing is impossible.

*12 January 1982*

## Part 4

# Talks to the Students

One day someone went to see the Mother on his birthday; it was our Prithwi Singh. Now Prithwi Singh, who was blind, plaintively said to the Mother, "Mother, here I am, so near to you; it's my birthday, a day so nice and precious to me, but I cannot see you, for I am blind in both of my eyes." Then the Mother answered, "What does that matter? You cannot see me but I am seeing you."

And this is always so. You cannot see it with your physical eyes, but the Mother's look is always upon you, her look of love and protection: be sure and certain of that. You carry that within you for all time and wherever you go, wherever in the entire world. You carry in you a portion, a spark of her Love; and that will save you from many difficulties, from much danger. If you can keep that in your active memory, it will be still more beneficial.

— Nolini Kanta Gupta

## Words, Words, Words

While coming to you, I saw your beautiful display of excerpts and quotations from the writings of Mother and Sri Aurobindo on the walls all around. Yes, it was a beautiful picture, and the sayings and mottoes and lines of poetry were, needless to say, precious treasures dear to us. But left at that, to see, admire and pass on, well, they are dead things — words, words, words, lifeless skeletons. They have a meaning and they serve their purpose only when you come in contact with the life and consciousness in them, when you live them with your own life and feel the consciousness that is there.

You know the well-known phrase: "The letter kills, the spirit saves." Without the spirit, the word is only a dead shell; even a mantra is a dead thing, a mere jumble of sounds if it is not enkindled, enlivened with the spirit. Now I say that you have to breathe your own spirit into the apparently dead or lifeless forms. For you children are nothing but spirit: spirit means new consciousness, living light. It is not a tall claim I make on your behalf. I will explain.

You children who are here, who have been here for some time, are a privileged class of human beings. You do not know it, but you will know one day. You must have seen the Mother, many have had her physical touch, while there are others who continue to breathe in the atmosphere where her body still endures. You have within you the rare thing hardly found elsewhere, the spark of the spirit of which I was speaking — it is a particle of the Mother's own consciousness, her own life and her own subtle body-consciousness. You have imbibed it in you with your breath and are still imbibing it.

It is there; you have to be conscious of it and realise the full benefit of it. You have to be living embodiments, not merely echoes and imprints but embodiments of the word of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Each of you is now only an embryo, a rudimentary particle of the new life, but it is there — you have in you the thing essentially needed. I only remind you to make you conscious of it. In the same way, you have budding gymnasts and athletes among you, and the Playground makes you conscious of it and offers you the opportunity to cultivate your capacities and bring them to fruition.

Now in a general way children all over the world are a privileged class. They possess what old age, even mature age, does not possess or has lost. I mention two essential qualities pre-eminently belonging to the green age or the "salad days". Happiness — a child is ever happy in spite of occasional weepings and wailings, and happiness means a radiant smile. To the old people I have often said, "Always smile. Mother has taught us how to smile in all circumstances." Well, that is the natural gift of the young. A smile makes your life's journey smooth. In no other way can you remove so successfully the obstacles that beset you. And also it is the lever to lift up your consciousness; it has a mysterious power that automatically relieves you of much of the burden of life, lightens you and leads you into a higher sphere. For a smile is a divine quality. Next to happiness, the natural virtue of a child-consciousness is freedom. It does not find any barrier anywhere, it can do anything.

These two characteristic virtues of childhood themselves spring from another fundamental quality of young nature — simplicity, a spontaneous outflow of energy without any thinking about before or after: none of the mind's complexities and hesitations.

In this sphere too, we have here for the play of these natural youthful qualities opportunities and advantages that are not easily available elsewhere. The atmosphere of freedom that we enjoy is *incomparable* — Mother herself told us once.

As you grow, you must carry with you these fundamental qualities and you will remain ever young. Now, to carry them with you — that is the trouble. And that problem Mother has solved for us here. This is what I was telling you just now. The special privilege that we enjoy here, granted to those who are here, is this: added to the fundamental natural virtues of youthfulness, we have been given a supplementary boon, that of consciousness, Mother's own consciousness. It is this additional element that has given a special turn and temper to the atmosphere here and has brought about a change not only in the degree but in the kind of the ordinary youthful qualities. I am speaking of your soul-consciousness. I say that you may not know it or recognise it by your mind and intellect, but it is there. And I say also that you will never lose it, whatever happens in your outer life. It will lead you ultimately to the supreme realisation, to an immortal life on earth. It may be clouded for the outer mind, but it is always there behind.

I come back now to the point from which I started. The mottoes, the writings displayed on the wall are also to be displayed as living entities in your being — in your consciousness, in your life, even in your body. That is the better part of your work, indeed, the essential part.

Today a new consciousness is abroad. The earth-atmosphere is filled with a new spirit. And here the Mother has left with us not merely her consciousness but a conscious being, a part of her living personality in us; that is the divine legacy we enjoy. We must not simply be proud of it but try to prove ourselves worthy of it. The Divine Personality will grow everywhere but the pathfinders, the forerunners are among you. Naturally there will be formations of the new life in all climes and countries, but the patterns, the norms will have been set by you, for the Mother was here in her physical material body

So the mantras you declare as divine words, you must make living powers, gods themselves embodied in you. The basis is here: the Mother has laid the foundations here for her creation — the roots from which shoots and branches are to emerge and spread out abroad and everywhere. In any case, here or elsewhere, as the Mother has announced in her own voice:

Built is the golden tower, the flame-child born.

*August 12, 1974*

# The Golden Chain

You have been here for many years, for many, many years. From childhood you are here, most of you, perhaps all of you. Some of you are going out, some are likely to stay, some are still undecided. If you are asked, "What have you gained by your long stay here?", I can tell you what you have gained. It is not any outward thing nor any of the things that you have learned at school, the knowledge that you have gained here; it is not that, but something else. Be sure of that. You yourselves don't know perhaps, but that thing is there within you. You have not passed your time in vain here — you have the Mother's touch.

Mother said many many times, "Whoever gets my touch, whoever has a second of true aspiration, of true love for me, he is finished for this life, for all lives — he is bound to me. I have put a golden chain round his neck; his heart is bound eternally to me."

It is a thing nobody can see; you yourselves don't see it, but it is a fact, it is there. The golden chain is there within your heart. Wherever you go, you drag that chain; it is a lengthening chain. However far you may go, it is an elastic chain, it goes on lengthening but never snaps. In hours of difficulty, in hours of doubt and confusion in your life, you have that within you to support you. If you are conscious of it, so much the better; if you are not conscious, believe that it is there. The Mother's love, her presence is there *always*.

That is the thing I wanted to tell you.

In the Upanishads there is a story. Once Narada — I suppose it is Narada — went to a Rishi to get initiation. The Rishi asked him, "What have you learned? What have you learned in your life as a student now that you come to me?" Narada began to narrate all the Vidyas that he had learned during his education as a Brahmachari — all the Shastras, even Dhanurvedya, all kinds of learnings. Then the Rishi said, "All that is Aparā Vidya, the inferior knowledge. Do you know Brahman?" "No sir, I do not know." "*That* is the thing to be known. Once that one thing is known, everything else is known."

So I tell you, that one thing needful you have acquired; you have not to attempt to get it. You are fortunate, you are lucky. We are all very lucky; Mother called us here and she has given it out of her own love, her infinite love, unasked, unconditionally. Whatever you are in your outward character and activities, *that* is not affected at all by the outer nature; it remains as it is, pure, unsullied.

Some of you were present at my talk on Dante. I spoke of Dante's vision; it is a wonderful vision — the vision of the mission of the Divine Mother.

Dante saw a globe of light in front of him. As he was standing before the Divine Trinity in the Empyrean, suddenly he saw revealed to him a luminous globe and, within that luminous globe, he saw a light circling, moving. And as he gazed into that circling light, as if its reflection, its reflected image, he saw himself. He saw himself in that circling light — himself not as he saw

himself, but as the circling divine light saw him — its own image. "I was there in the image as conceived by Him, not as conceived by me."

In our language we can say that the luminous globe was the supreme Divine, and then within it was the whirling circling light — that was the Creative Power, the Divine Mother in Her creative mood. And within that, "I was there as Her child, in my true reality, not as I see myself but as She sees me; in that image I saw myself."

Dante says that it was an experience as if he was looking into an Eye, a big ball of Eye; and in that Eye he saw reflected his image as the Divine sees him, not "as I see myself, but my true self". I say that this is the Image the Mother has left to you, within you. However much you may try, you cannot lose it; it will be there, till its fruition. Whenever you feel discouraged — naturally when you look at the world and its happenings, you feel very much distressed, disgusted — remember that there is another reality behind: it is the Mother's Presence that redeems all that. In any mood of depression, dejection, difficulty, always know that it is there in you to support you, to bring you peace and strength, and it is never failing. So many times she has said: "Everything else fails in this world; I will never fail you."

*October 26, 1976*

# Mother's Playground

Today I am going to speak to you about the Playground itself as a great phenomenon created by the Mother. You may remember, we once saw a play in our Theatre staged by our students. It was about the adventure of a few young people leaving their home and going out wandering. In the end they came to a house. One of them casually opened a side door in the building and all entered and they found themselves in a fairyland. They were surprised, astonished: they found they had left the old world and come to a new, unfamiliar, enchanting fairyland.

The same experience one has when one opens the gate of the Playground and enters it. At least we used to experience it in that way in the early days. As soon as we stepped into the Playground, a new atmosphere enveloped us, a new life full of joy, happiness, delight and freedom. When we used to put on our group uniform, we felt quite different from what we were normally. Old people with their blue shorts in our group, really old people, felt very young, youthful, and trotted about as if they had left their age behind with all their cares. And the younger people, the youngest ones, were so eager to join the group, to put on the green uniform. Many among them, after putting on their green shorts, rushed to me and said enthusiastically, "Today I have got my uniform and I will join the group" — so happy, so free, so full of delight they were.

Now a word about the organisation of the groups in the Playground. Naturally some attention had to be paid in view of the difference of age and sex and capacity; but the principle, the general principle that lay behind the organisation and on which the Mother insisted, was: no difference of age, especially no difference of sex; all human beings are fundamentally of the same nature. Particularly in the competitions of physical education that were arranged from time to time, the groups were more or less all mixed up; the green and the red and the blue and all the other colours made a blend, as it were. Nowadays it is somewhat different, but in those early days it was otherwise; capacity alone was the chief consideration for distinction and difference, and that too in a general and very superficial way. I also, an aged person (I do not say *old*), I ran and did exercises with young people, girls also — not for fun and as a joke but very seriously. It was to show by example that in your mind, in your consciousness there should be no feeling of difference, no sense of inferiority or superiority from the point of view of age and sex — and even capacity, to an extent.

In the very early days when we were rather few in number, somewhere about fifty, we used to address each other by our names, mere names; there was no *dada* or *didi* tagged on: Nolini, Pavitra, Sahana, Lalita, that was all, pure and simple. So when people from outside came, they found it a little queer: "They have no respect here for age, no respect for elderly people, no consideration for the women; they call each other merely by the name." But in reality, whatever it seemed like from outside, the consciousness, the attitude behind was different, and there were some people who felt it and appreciated it. Thus when someone in the Ashram called me by my name or an elderly woman by hers, evidently the feeling behind was full of respect and consideration, even love; only the form of address was like that, bare and without qualification.

Even someone from outside saw the thing and judged it correctly. He wrote an article on the Ashram and mentioned this custom: it is very strange that youngsters call old people by their mere names, but it sounds nice and appropriate when the thing comes from their lips.

These were the principles that guided the organisation of the physical education groups. There was to be, first, no difference between boys and girls; all should undergo the same exercises and the same programme. This was and is even now, I think, compulsory for the younger groups — the green group and the red and even a little beyond. But it has been often asked, "Since the bodies of boys and girls are different, especially with regard to sex, is it not natural to provide different programmes?" But in reality the bodies have become different because of the consciousness that insisted on the difference during millenniums of growth and evolution. It is only now, in this age, that things have begun to change a little. Some of you, the elderly ones, may remember how difficult it was for the Mother to make the girls put on shorts and shirts for the Playground exercises. She had to begin gently and gradually. In the beginning the girls learned to put on trousers; they used to do marching and exercises in trousers. Even today in the outside world, in many places in India especially, we see women, girls marching and doing the parade in saris. Our police women even today go on duty in saris. The tradition is very strong, and in this respect we here claim to be the pioneers of this new development in which the physical freedom of women is equal to that of men. This was the lesson taught by the Mother.

Long ago, some twenty-five years ago, a well-known leader of India, a great educationist came and saw our Playground activities and made the remark: "I have travelled all over India, visited various educational institutions, seen women doing gymnastics, but this is the first time that I see here in the Ashram girls doing vaulting and movements on the parallel bars; I have never seen it anywhere else." Of course, it goes without saying, circus girls are different. But people used to consider vaulting as a specially masculine virtue, along with many other physical games and exercises. Today it is being gradually found that this is a superstition and the judgment is wrong: the Wimbledon women champions bear witness to this. The most important thing is that you have to change your attitude, you have to change your consciousness. Of course, there are difficulties on the way, the force of habit, the force of atavism; all that demands an extra dose of your consciousness or a new consciousness.

There is a difference in what is done here and what is done elsewhere, in respect to the freedom being given to women and to the younger generation. Mother repeated so often: the freedom, the liberty you enjoy here is extraordinary, exceptional; there is almost no limit to your freedom. Indeed, it is dangerous, because the unlimited use of freedom means also the risk of the misuse of freedom. But the Mother took the risk, for that is the only way towards a radical solution, not merely a half-way compromise. Only when you are free, when you are completely, absolutely free, and you must choose between the good and the bad, and you choose the good of your own will, then the good has a real importance for you, for your consciousness and for your development. Otherwise, when you follow the good through compulsion or through fear or through social decency or through vanity — that is to say, when in order to be good you observe certain rules and you feel you are virtuous, you are dutiful — then it is not the true way, not the

true attitude and the true consciousness. The true consciousness is that you do the right thing not because it is your duty to do it, not because it is worth doing and it is expected of you to do it, but because your nature impels you towards it. The flower blooms spontaneously without any sense of duty. It possesses no sense of duty because its nature is to blossom and be beautiful.

Human beings also should be like that, spontaneous and natural in their action and behaviour. Then when you do a great thing, you do not feel that you are doing something marvellous or that you are exercising your power. You do not do a thing because it is your duty but because it is your nature to do it; you cannot but do it. I give an example here. You are students of English and English grammar. Now tell me, what is the difference between these two statements: "I have to do the thing" and "I am to do the thing"? "I have to do the thing" means "I am obliged to, I am compelled to, I cannot do otherwise." "I am to do it" means "It is for me to do it. I will do it; that is to say, it is my nature to do it." Something of that kind is taught in the Gita — the ideal of *kartavyam karma* and *nişkāma karma* or following one's own Swadharma. *Kartavya* is usually translated as duty but it is not correct. *Kartavya* is one's Dharma or the spontaneous expression of one's nature — what one is to do, not what one has to do.

Mother gave this infinite freedom to her children because that was the only way of creating a new nature. She showed also the difference between the right use of freedom and the wrong use. The wrong use is often found in the movements of freedom outside in normal life, for example in the student movement or the women's emancipation movement. Now when women are fighting for freedom for themselves, they consider themselves as women fighting for freedom against men. "We are women, you are men; you enjoy privileges and rights, we are denied them; we want them, we claim them." In the youth movement also, the young people say: "All the powers the old people enjoy, the positions and emoluments, all that will not do; we want to share these things also along with the old." Mother said, "No, this is not the right attitude." You must change your position, your point of view. Going out for a quarrel, for a fight means that you consider yourselves different beings, with different powers, capacities, constitutions. First of all, you must consider yourselves, both parties, as human beings, not as two different species.

This point of view is being acknowledged to some extent nowadays, but it is not sufficient, Mother says. If you are content to be human beings, just human beings, differences will arise again and again, and not only differences but serious differences. Human nature is composed of these differences, and culture and civilisation mean nothing more than a reconciliation, a compromise among these differences. And the result has been that we have not gone very far towards a solution. A deeper truth has to be found, a higher truth and a more powerful truth. We must rise to a new state. Mother spoke always of finding the truth, the truth of your soul. In the truth of your soul you are neither man nor woman, neither young nor old — *tvam kumāra uta vā kumārī, tvam jīrṇa*. You are all that only in appearance, for you are something more, something else.

You have to take your stand on your soul — that is the lesson that the Mother was trying to impart in the Playground education. So long as you are in the normal consciousness, embedded in your body-consciousness, and view things from there, your life will be built in the pattern

created by the body-consciousness. Life in that pattern can proceed only through difference and distinction, contrast and contradiction, conflict and battle. So long as you stick to your habitual position, it will be like that. The remedy is a radical remedy: it is to reverse your position. You have to stand not on your legs but on your head; then you will find the way to march forward — not through confrontation but cooperation, not through separation but union, not through difference but identity. So long as you are mere human beings, this supreme soul-identity cannot come. You have to forget the differences. Someone asked the Mother in one of the Playground talks, "How is it possible for one to forget this fundamental difference that one is a man and another a woman?" Mother answered, "How can you say that? Look here, when I talk to Tara, do you think I am considering her as a woman and talking accordingly." And she could have added, "And when I answer you, do you think I am speaking to a masculine person?"

I may narrate here a little incident concerning me personally. It was with regard to the question of age. When someone informed Mother that they wanted to celebrate my birthday, perhaps it was my eightieth birthday, in a magnificent manner, a gala celebration, Mother roared out, "No, no, you are spoiling my work. All the while I have been trying to make him forget his age and now you are trying to insist on it." Age also is a thing to be forgotten. The birthday celebration is not for recording the progress in our age — how we are progressing year by year in our age, that is, how we are getting old — no, it is for noting the progress made in the inner being and consciousness. Each birthday is meant to be a landmark of the forward march of your consciousness, not the greyness of your head. The touch of your soul will inspire you not merely to do the right inner movement, the enlightening of your consciousness, but it will inspire you to do the right physical movement, even lead you to choose the right kind of physical exercises and do them in the right manner. The lesson to learn, then, is to get back to your soul inside you; you will find there everything that is worth having: freedom, joy, harmony and even untold capacity.

People coming from outside asked very often and ask even now, "What is the Ashram doing for the country, for the world? Its work is confined to a few people only. Is it worth doing?" Mother answered simply, "I am doing something which is not done anywhere else in the world — I am awakening the soul in my children, the soul that alone can save and nothing else." To the outsiders we say: "If you come here, come with eyes to see, eyes to look at or rather to look into the soul of the people who are here. Do not look at what they learn or what they do or what they say, but look inside them, look at what is there deep within." Even now I say: "She is there within you, her work is not arrested. The tempo of her work is as vigorous and as living as it could be and its impact will become more and more clear and manifest."

So I repeat, the soul is neither boy nor girl nor young nor old; it has not the characteristics of the body natural to man or rather to the animal. But this does not mean that it has no body, that it is something airy, nebulous, smoky. Not at all: the soul has a body, its own body as concrete and definite as the physical body; it even has a material body, although its matter is of a different kind. Have not the Western sages begun to speak of immaterial matter, of anti-matter? That soul-body you are carrying even now within this material body of yours. You can sense it as definite and living as the external body. The Mother is holding it in you; you come in contact with it

through your contact with the Mother. Love the Mother, be one with her; then you will find and be this living soul of yours.

*Published August 1978*

## The Iron Chain

How many of you have been here since the beginning, I mean from the kindergarten classes — any? One, two, three, four — oh, a good many! Very creditable, very creditable indeed, that so many have continued so long and passed through. This is really something creditable.

I will tell you a story in this connection. A young man who was an aspirant, a seeker of spiritual or religious life, once upon a time went to Gandhiji. He wanted to remain there. He said, "I am a seeker of spiritual life. I want to remain with you." Gandhiji saw the person and accepted him. "It is all right, you may try," he said. The young man remained there some time, a pretty long time, perhaps even a year. But at the end of the year he approached Gandhiji and said, "Please permit to go away from here. Somehow I feel I cannot remain any longer." Then he went away and came here to the Ashram. The Ashram he liked very much and remained here. After some years Gandhiji thought of the young man. "Where is he? He was a nice man. Where has he gone?" Then he learned that the young man was here in Sri Aurobindo Ashram. How many years? "Seven years!" Gandhiji was astounded. "How is it? I know the young man. I know he was a restless person, so uncertain about himself, about his movements — he could not stick to one place or one occupation for long. And he has been in Sri Aurobindo Ashram for seven years! It is a great credit to Sri Aurobindo Ashram for being able to keep him so long!" And I may add: he is still here! So I may say that those of you who have continued to remain here may claim some credit for your performance, or does the credit go to the Ashram?

I have an idea. You have heard very much of the golden chain that the Mother puts on whoever comes near her and touches her — an unbreakable eternal chain we all have known and experienced, the golden chain with which she ties everyone who comes in her embrace. Now I feel she has another chain also in her wallet — a chain with handcuffs and fetters — with which she binds some people physically to her, to her material presence. She also takes up the physical destiny of the person. The golden chain belongs of course to the soul, which is eternal, beautiful and glorious; this is another matter. But even the very body, this material carcass, can belong equally to the Mother. With the golden chain you are the beloved of the Mother, or her lover, but with the iron chain you become her physical slave.

Yes, I am trying to hint that those who have been here for long, many from their infancy, have earned a particular merit: from the spiritual point of view this continuance, this continuity, is itself something significant; it is an achievement. Even if you do not pass any examination — that is, move up, promoted from class to class after a hard test — even if you simply glide through, pass along ambling and at ease, that is sufficient. There is something that remains; something very valuable sticks to the consciousness. You may not be aware of it now, but one day you are sure to know and recognise it. So I congratulate you all for your happy achievement which is indeed the sign of her signal Grace.

*29 October 1977*

## The Two Chains of the Mother

Well, I have talked a lot in my rather long life, have I not? I have talked a good deal, and written much more. All that forms now my Collected Works: eight volumes in English and as many volumes in Bengali.

All of you are leaving our Centre of Education, a Centre where you have been for so many years. To complete your course and come out of the Centre, it's all right; but to go where? It seems you have already come to a decision; there are many amongst you who have made their choice. That's good, for it means choosing one's life.

I want to tell you only one thing: you are going out, but wherever you go, you carry something within you, something that is permanent and eternal since the beginning of the world. I have sometimes spoken of the golden chain of the Mother; I have said too that Mother has two chains, one of gold and the other of iron. These two chains are your eternal companions; wherever you may go, you will carry these two with you. You are bound to the Mother for ever — for ever, be sure of that. It's the prop of your life, it's your aspiration. These are not chains of bondage but chains of freedom and entire satisfaction. You may ask: "What are these chains of gold and of iron?" The golden chain is in your soul and the iron one is in your body. The body, your body, is also bound to the Mother, to her Presence and Influence. "Body" means not only the material body, but the subtle physical body, the inner body. Now, the imprint of the Mother's Presence you carry in this subtle physical body. You may not always be aware of it, but this makes no difference, none at all.

Here I may refer to something pertinent. One day someone went to see the Mother on his birthday; it was our Prithwi Singh. Now Prithwi Singh, who was blind, plaintively said to the Mother, "Mother, here I am, so near to you; it's my birthday, a day so nice and precious to me, but I cannot see you, for I am blind in both of my eyes." Then the Mother answered, "What does that matter? You cannot see me but I am seeing you."

And this is always so. You cannot see it with your physical eyes, but the Mother's look is always upon you, her look of love and protection: be sure and certain of that. You carry that within you for all time and wherever you go, wherever in the entire world. You carry in you a portion, a spark of her Love; and that will save you from many difficulties, from much danger. If you can keep that in your active memory, it will be still more beneficial. That's all.

*25 October 1978*

# Your Soul

I congratulate you all on your success, your success in having passed the Higher Course, which is all to your credit. But this is not the important thing. What is important is that you have passed your youth here and have acquired something in the process, something that one does not gain by dint of merit but absorbs and imbibes with the atmosphere, in the same way that one sucks one's mother's milk. You may hide it or veil it, but this thing is very singular. For it is above all contradiction, all smirch and stain. It remains always shining and pure.

At times you will remember it in your outer material life. You will be entering now another order of material life. Perhaps you will forget this precious thing, but it will not forget you: it remains for ever vigilant, watchful, resplendent. And at any critical moment of your life, when you will be facing a danger, if there surges up from your depths the cry and call of the heart, then and there this vision will visit you and you will have the darshan of your soul.

This is all that I wanted to tell you. And it is enough, I think, isn't it?

*15 October 1981*

# Part 5

## The Integral Yoga

At a point one must go beyond strivings.

Do not strive or struggle, there must be no tension or tautness, it should be all relaxation.

Tranquillise yourself. Allow the Other to take your own place. Leave it all to That.

This too is not achieved but simply happens — through the Grace.

"Wherever you see hope, faith, courage, trust and tranquility, there you will see Me."

— Nolini Kanta Gupta

# Not to Destroy but to Transform

Up till now, spiritual life or discipline usually meant a division — a division between spiritual and unspiritual, between what is a help and forms a base for the higher life and what hinders and takes one away from it. This naturally led one to develop the first and kill the other.

But for us there is no such radical division. For us everything in its truth is spiritual. Indeed there are deformations, disfigurements, wrong knowledge of things, but there is nothing unspiritual. All that we have to do is to purify, correct, reform, transform and fulfil — not to destroy and annihilate.

We do not uproot the past but replace it. There is here no *nirodha*, suppression with a view to abolish. That is not our way. Ignorance does not imply absence of the Divine. One can find the Divine even in the Ignorance; in the very depths of the Inconscience the touch of the Divine can be felt. For not only is the Divine there but the Divine is that. There can be no real cutting apart of the Divine from the non-Divine. Only we must find him out, discover him in his true form shorn of the disguise. The disguise grows transparent and he emerges resplendent in his light. Not to reject or discard but to replace the wrong appearance with the right is our way. We merge our human volition into the Divine Will, turn all the obscure movements of our ignorance into true movements of the Divine Consciousness. We adore and worship and approach the Divine in all things and everywhere, in his true light and form. We strive to see him established and revealed in all existence.

All is divine and all is in the Divine. This truth is to be realised in life. To let him reveal himself in his own truth is our sadhana, our way. That is why for us "All life is Yoga."

Even Ravana is destroyed not simply to be destroyed but to become an adorer of Rama.

To sacrifice does not merely mean to slay but to dedicate.

*Published August 1981*

# Love the Divine

"Love the Divine alone and the Divine will always be with you." Mother wrote this to one of her children. It is the key to solve problems, the magic mantra to cure the ills of human life and consciousness, the one remedy for all inner and outer ailments.

Take ego, for example. It epitomises, in a way, the problem of man, and all spiritual disciplines urge the need to get rid of it, to surmount or uproot or suppress or annihilate it. Ego is a dangerous and perilous pitfall and must go. As to the methods by which this is to be done, well, the teachings vary: be disinterested, grow detached, serve others, forget yourself and your self-assumed importance, etc., etc., and all these methods are good: they help to control the ego, to tame it, to keep it under check, and even to master it. Yet the ego remains, it is there all the time; it is not uprooted, dissolved, annulled.

The method suggested here is simpler. Dissolve the ego through divine love. First you love the Divine — but you can love the Divine only when he has already entered into your heart, when he is already there; it is his Love that radiates through you and you love him. The fact that you love the Divine shows that the Grace has touched you, has come down upon you; and it is this Grace that cures you of your ego to the extent that you let it work. Grace alone can do it.

The Vedantin imagines he is rid of the ego when he merges into Sachchidananda. It is not wholly true — for man is a complex being, an entity made of different parts and of different levels of consciousness — and even when one has attained the Divine in one part of his being, the other parts, however dormant, keep the stamp of ignorance and ego. If you want the Divine in his fullness, you must plunge in, whole and entire — or rather, you must let the supreme Consciousness come down and inundate your being, possess it and mould it into its own being — and what else is Grace if not this delivering approach and touch of the Divine.

To love the Divine means to open wide the gates of your house to this Grace, and after that there is nothing that is impossible, be it the effacement of the ego or a new birth of the entire being.

*Published November 1981*

## How to Understand Savitri

To understand *Savitri*, the best way, paradoxical though it may seem, is not to try to understand it — to refrain from effort, all mental effort to understand it, and instead to let it enter into your consciousness and illumine it.

*Savitri* is not dead matter, a dictionary of ideas and images. It is a living scripture, a concentrated block of consciousness. All writings, in truth, contain the consciousness of the writer, and on the strength and quality of the consciousness of the writer depends the worth and force of the writing. That is the meaning of the *grantha-pūjā* of the Sikhs. Even without reading a scripture, by an intense concentration and aspiration you can establish an inner contact with the consciousness of the writer, with the consciousness concentrated in the book, and get the benefit. This is true especially of spiritual writings.

*Savitri* is a living and concentrated embodiment of Sri Aurobindo's consciousness. His light and knowledge are there, always present and active. To read *Savitri* you need to establish a contact with that, with the consciousness behind the words; you need to develop a sort of inner sense. The images described in the poem are not mere images — Sri Aurobindo saw them; in his vision they were living things, living realities, and you should also see and feel them as such.

And that is possible only if you fulfil two conditions: first, the outer mind must be calm and still, and second, when you read you must be in a state of consciousness which is the highest and best in you. Fulfil these conditions and then you will truly understand and know.

The Indian system of learning, or initiation in learning, means this awakening of consciousness, the awakening to a new inner contact with the object of knowledge.

*Published February 1982*

# Man and the Other Beings

Man is a complex being, an entity made of many personalities, holding together a variety of aspects around some centre. He contains a whole lot of different elements. He is a world in itself, or rather — why a world? — he is a universe or at least he represents it.

It is not so with the other beings of other worlds, on other levels of creation. Each type there represents one aspect of infinity only and is in a way static; the beings there do not change or progress as man does on earth. They remain always what they are, they do what they do; it is rather fixed or at least the possibility of change is very limited.

Earth is a concentrated form, a complete replica of the entire universe or entire creation. Man, in his turn, represents all that is on earth, that is, in the universe, all aspects of it, all the levels of consciousness and, it may be added, all the urge for progress and change. He is Nature's laboratory. If a point in man's consciousness changes, the change will be carried over in the whole of the universe. Inevitably, because man is the point of concentration on the earth as the earth is a concentrated form of the universe.

That is why in *Savitri* we find that the human soul has to cross all the levels of being, the whole universe as it were.

This is the speciality of man, his unique feature, his unique function.

*Published February 1982*

# To Live Within

Live within, do not be upset by outer circumstances. Yes, that is the motto: live within.

But how? And what does it exactly mean? Usually the dynamic being, the active part of the consciousness, is centred on the surface, in superficial external movements. One of the ways to live within is therefore to withdraw from outer activities and live detached or sort of retired, in the inner consciousness. But this withdrawal is not very easy nor is it very spontaneous; it needs a long and arduous discipline.

And one must also make a distinction between the dynamic consciousness and the thought-movements; the two are not the same. Thought-movements are only one of the movements of consciousness, not the consciousness itself. There is an inner consciousness behind the surface in which one has to learn to live.

There is yet another state, the consciousness of the Purusha, the witness consciousness which stands behind the dynamic being, and another way to live within is to withdraw into the Purusha consciousness, to live there, to identify oneself with it. This helps one to remain unaffected by the activities of the outer life and consciousness, which are then felt and experienced merely as movements of general Prakriti. But for us this too is not enough.

For us living within means establishing the centre of dynamism in the psychic, the inmost soul in the very depths of our being. It is this which must influence, control, embrace the whole of our being and also be the source and determinant of all our outward activities. All must be illumined by it and changed and transmuted into its very substance. Then the entire way of living, the very texture of experience will change, and instead of being affected by outer circumstances or by life's events, we shall be, so to say, lifted above; we shall even live in a state of communion with the Divine, for the soul is a spark of the Divine, it is truly the Divine Presence itself. And then we shall also understand why things are as they are and not otherwise.

To live within means to live in a state of constant aspiration for the Divine, and if we do so, we can look at life with a smile and live in peace, whatever may be the outer circumstances.

*Published April 1982*

# Falsehood

Falsehood is the agony of the Supreme — so said the Mother.

And to cure and dissolve this falsehood, the supreme Lord and His conscious-force, the supreme Mother, descended into the very depths of the abyss of creation. The radiating sparks of that supreme divine Presence are the souls on earth.

Man, the human being, is nothing but that divine spark, the emanated spark of the Supreme, robed and lodged in the outer mould of an ignorant terrestrial consciousness. The soul, we might say, is a magic lantern put down here on earth to illumine and annihilate the surrounding obscurity of the material world. In its individual form each soul is unique: it has a unique role to play, a small corner to clean and render transparent, and it is unique also in its relation to the Supreme.

This is the truth, but only one side of it. There is another truth, complementary to it. Man is not an individual wholly separated or isolated from other beings. In spite of his own unique personality and formation he is yet one with all and represents the whole of the terrestrial consciousness; in truth he contains it in himself, in his consciousness. Each element in the earth-consciousness has a corresponding point in the individual consciousness; man is an amalgam of both the good and the evil of the whole of terrestrial nature, a miniature world, a representation of the entire earth-consciousness in a concentrated form, on a mini-scale. The more the consciousness is developed, the more the individual being grows, and the more this parallelism becomes evident. All that is good in the world you have within you; all that is bad on earth, that too you possess in your consciousness. No human being is a pure saint or angel, nor is he a complete devil.

In other paths of yoga one tried to cut off the unnecessary links with the world — unnecessary for the goal of personal liberation — and tried to concentrate on the single or few links which would connect one more easily to one's source. It was a very practical approach, perhaps even the correct one, for those who aimed at a liberation of their own individual selves from the obscurity of the material world and the earth-consciousness.

But for us who aspire for the deliverance of the entire terrestrial consciousness from falsehood and ignorance, this will not do: we have to accept our burden; we must take part in the collective effort. If one of us makes a progress, he does it for the earth; if one bit of evil is annihilated in one individual consciousness, it produces a corresponding effect in the terrestrial consciousness; if one individual cures a single ill in his nature, the whole world gets the benefit. In fact, unless all is cured, nothing is perfectly cured. This is the secret of collective sadhana. And this is why on our way it is difficult to measure one's own progress or to mark where one stands as one does on other ways of yoga. We all stand together, we are one in our endeavour.

The earth is full of ills, full of maladies. Maladies of the body there may be, but at bottom they are all maladies of consciousness. In all fields of life and at all levels, one has to face them and to struggle at each step. Take the political field for instance; it is the same story. It is a political

sickness, a sickness of the group consciousness in each group or nation, and as in the individual so also in the collectivity the consciousness is centred in the ego and tries only to serve and fulfil its own limited interest at the cost of others. The problem is how to govern one's own self and at the same time help others to do the same.

To tackle this or any other problem with the right attitude and the right point of view, one has to enlarge one's ego, to outgrow it, to widen one's consciousness and feel oneness with others. That is the solution, the only radical one: to grow in your consciousness, make your consciousness large enough to be one with the earth, and look at the problem from there. One has to grow from within, from the true source of one's being.

As with the individual, so each nation has a soul. One has to grow conscious of it, identify with it and obey it. Then the problem changes its face and a real cure is found, the true solution.

It is the same with all problems of life.

*Published August 1982*

# The Secret of Life

How to remain young and strong in spite of age and unhappy circumstances?

Ah! For that you must remain happy, always happy, truly happy under all circumstances of your life.

It sounds impossible. The world is full of misery and suffering, life around us is full of pain and evil, the entire humanity around us seems to groan with agony; and in the midst of all this unhappiness, to remain happy? Even if by a rare piece of luck you have a peaceful, contented life for yourself, what of others? And unless you are wholly self-centred, how can you help being unhappy?

The arguments seem rational, but nevertheless they are not true. How?

Well, true happiness does not depend on outer circumstances. It belongs really to your soul; the soul radiates it, it is the illumining warmth of the divine spark in you. You are happy when you are in contact with it. That is the truth, and that is why some are happy by nature, by temperament, and some are unhappy. You are happy because happiness is a part of your own self, a quality of your consciousness, a radiation from your inmost soul.

And just as you cannot dissolve darkness by putting out your own light — you only increase it — even so, the best way to heal others' unhappiness is to radiate your own happiness, to kindle your own lamp and let it shine forth. This is not the method of the philanthropists: they try to chase away misery or dispel it by giving alms; but they never succeed. You know the story of the film *Monsieur Vincent*: the more he gave alms, the more the number of miserable people increased.

You must go to the root. The real source of the ills in human life is man's loss of contact with his soul. Re-establish that contact, and problems are seen and experienced in a different perspective, and solved too in the way they should be. Misery and pain and sorrow change their faces and become circumstances and occasions for progress and development. You experience them but are not overwhelmed, and in spite of them you are happy and even in joy. The Buddha tried this in his own way. Christ also wanted to do the same thing; it is said that he came to India, and this is typically an oriental method — to awaken your soul, to rediscover and establish it as the governor of your life. And that is the supreme secret.

*Published February 1983*

# Our Yoga

There is much expectation all around of a big change. But what is this change? What is its nature?

This great change is the appearance on earth of a new race, a race which will be for man what man is for the animal. Perhaps the difference between the new race and the present man will be even greater. In fact, this race is ready to appear on earth: it is preparing the ground for itself; it is there on the subtle physical plane and is acting upon the earth to prepare for its own materialisation. It is acting at the same time on man, and all those who are fit and open to its influence are being illumined by it. Anyway, the advent of this new race is inevitable. It is decreed by the Supreme.

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The first requisite on the spiritual path is aspiration. One knocks at the gate of spiritual life because one aspires for it. It is the aspiration, the will in the seeker, the yearning of his soul for the Divine that pushes him forward and carries him on the difficult path of yoga.

To aspire means to yearn for something, to yearn for something higher or for the highest something, the Divine. But the nature of this aspiration depends on its source, on the level of consciousness from which it comes. It may be a mental aspiration, a seeking of the mind. Or it may be a vital aspiration, a yearning of the emotional part of the being for something truer and more permanent. It may even be a physical aspiration — an aspiration for beauty and perfection, for permanence and immortality. And it may be a psychic aspiration, the will of the inmost soul trying to express itself.

In fact the other aspirations are only reflections of this inmost psychic yearning. It is this which can carry one through, up to the end, and it is this which can harmonise the other aspirations and unite them in a synthesis. In the synthesis also there may be different degrees. But on the whole it is the psychic that is the leader of the path, the true force and guide on the Way.

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In our Yoga, work is an indispensable means of sadhana. In truth life means action; one cannot do without it. But when you consciously offer your work to the Divine, when you do it as a service to the Divine, the work changes its character: it becomes an offering. Then the work in itself, the nature of the work matters no more: it is your attitude, the spirit behind your work, the state of your consciousness, the way you do it, the effort you put in to perfect it, that becomes important.

And there may be two types of work. In the beginning, whatever work comes to you, you do it for the Divine; you do not make any distinction between this work or that work: you do it in the way of the Gita, without ego, with a disinterested attitude, with a spirit of dedication.

But then there is another type of work, a work that is the expression of your being, a work for which you are destined, which is the mission of your life. The work that comes out of the demand

of your soul is the real expression of your inmost life, and it may not be like anything you are doing at present. A mathematician may blossom into a poet; a dreaming poet may suddenly become a severe man of action. These are not rare phenomena. One starts from the first type and arrives at the second.

*Published April 1983*

## Intensity without Impatience

One of the cardinal requirements for success in yoga sadhana is *utsāha*, zeal. The seeker has to give top priority to the demands of the sadhana — he cannot simply treat it as one of his interests. The spiritual life becomes the foremost concern, with all else playing subsidiary, if not contributory, roles. It is understood that the central aspiration is gradually communicated to all the parts of the being, and the whole complex of the body, vital and mind is made to participate in the effort.

The effort must be intense, indeed, but not exhausting. There should be no impatience of any kind. Intensity in application and spirit relates to the personal side of the individual. Impatience relates to the results, the fruit, which is not in the hands of the individual; it is a straining after something that has its own hour. Restlessness, tension, despair — the usual consequences of impatience — do not in the least help the situation; on the contrary they vitiate it by making the *ādhāra*, the base, unsteady.

This is not to say that things must be taken easily and allowed to develop at their own sweet pace. A degree of concentration in one's effort, of one-pointedness in one's outlook and inlook is indispensable. Only there should not be a feverish straining for response, a kind of claim for the fruit of the effort put in. There should be a trustful attitude of waiting upon the Divine Will. There should be, says the Mother, an equilibrium in the being between intensity of effort and restful reliance on the Divine.

The Self, says the Upanishad, cannot be won by effort alone; it is the choice of the Self that decides. Only to him whom it chooses, the Self bares its body. One has to patiently await the hour and the sanction of the Will.

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And there is more to it. Impatience is unyogic. The very first requirement of a sadhak, as enunciated by the Gita, is equanimity, a composure that is unhurried, unagitated. It has been an exaggeration in some of the traditions of the Vaishnava cult to glorify impatience as *āturatā*, eagerness, for the Darshan of the Lord; it is considered to be a positive sign of progress to be seized with such impatience. A natural consequence of this attitude has been a culture of *abhimāna*, offended spirit, a sense of unrequited claim on the Divine. Needless to say, such developments lead the sadhak into blind emotional alleys with no relevance to the central purpose of yoga.

Further, as the Mother points out, impatience leads to imitation. This is especially so when we seek an experience; it may be a vision of the Divine, a seeking for the illumination of knowledge or the descent of Power or whatever. When there is this impatience in the being for the experience, there is a subtle pressure of the vital on the mental faculties (for example, the faculty of imagination) to anticipate what is wanted. This urge of anticipation, semi-conscious or subconscious, tends to reproduce in ourselves a simulacrum of the desired experience. Things

project themselves from the subconscious under the drive of the force of impatience and the gates are opened for all kinds of pseudo-experiences. And in our zeal, our enthusiasm for quick achievement, we seize on the seeming experience and shut ourselves up in its enchantment. Such a misprision becomes possible because the restlessness caused by impatience covers up the discriminative sense of the psychic within. And that is not the end of it. The error tends to multiply itself and a positive falsehood enters into the situation. We begin to live in a wholly subjective world which has no touch with the reality. We get so attached to our falsehood that we become angry with anyone pointing out our possible mistake. One thing leads to another and we get caught up.

From a spiritual angle impatience is childish, immature. It betokens a want of trust in the Divine, a lack of harmony between the inner being of peace and faith and the outer person tossed from keen expectation to quick disappointment.

*Published November 1983*

# Freedom

If there is one value that the Mother cherished most, it is undoubtedly freedom. Right from her childhood she fought for freedom: freedom from tradition, freedom from convention, freedom from habit, freedom from Nature, in fact freedom from everything that constrains the evolution of the soul. Even in spiritual matters which are organised ostensibly for the development of the individual in terms of truth, love, harmony, she was most particular that nothing should be done that could interfere with the freedom of the person to grow as he liked.

She was all compassion, all love in responding to calls for help, but she always acted on one unique principle: as she put it, she intervened without interfering. She would not do anything that could in any way interfere with a person's free exercise of his will. If that meant some avoidable suffering for him, well, that is the way he had to learn. She refused to frame a tight set of rules and regulations for the sadhaks, to impose any kind of stifling external discipline on them. Not that she could not do it, overtly or occultly, but she said that she saw no value in such "good behaviour". She wanted each one to feel the need for an inner discipline and to act on that basis out of one's own free will.

This feature may be observed in everything that she wrote, everything that she created. Freedom from fear, freedom from the compulsion of authority, freedom from any type of imposition are what she aimed at, among other things. How far we are true to that spirit, to what extent we reflect the Mother's consciousness — in our individual lives and in our collective existence — depends upon the measure of this freedom we have realised.

It is from this standpoint that we have to judge the quality of our achievement or failure. Where there is no freedom to function, there we have failed the Mother. Freedom to think, to speak, to feel, to act in a way natural to ourselves, of course keeping in view the truth of a similar freedom for others, should be the hallmark of Mother's kingdom. My freedom cannot clash with yours when it proceeds from the level of the soul and not from the ego. To arrive at that point, an enabling sadhana is indispensable. And that is why the Mother has created an environment where things are favourable for a natural evolution of the spiritual being in each one. Spiritual growth and freedom are interacting factors; each promotes the other. Where freedom is curtailed or suppressed in the supposed interests of an organisation, the soul cannot blossom. An enforced discipline can only lead to a soulless, mechanical, stultifying order foreign to the innate character of the evolving spirit.

The Mother respected the freedom not only of humans but equally of animals and birds. She never approved of caging birds or enclosing tigers and lions. She had a look of sorrow when such specimens were flaunted before her, though she was too considerate to say so to their proud human captors. For each one his cup of tea.

*Published November 1983*

# Yesterday

Yesterday should not be turned into today. It is a sane counsel for everybody, whatever one's avocation, not to live in the past. To live in the future may yield some dividends to a rare few, but dwelling in the past never. Yet we continually revive bygone movements and in the process give force to those vibrations to form again and again and interfere with the present. This is especially so in the case of a spiritual seeker.

The most common problem is the memory of some past wrong done against us. Each time this recurs, we relive the whole situation and re-experience all the emotional turmoil we went through at that moment. All the resentment, anger, grief rush in in their full intensity and we are thrown off balance. A part of the mind is aware that it is all a thing of the past and it is no use thinking of it in the present. But we are irresistibly carried away by the old movement which, if unchecked, develops into a habit. Very often such a movement repeats itself because somewhere something in us indulges in it. Apart from its psychological damage to ourselves, there is another bad consequence. By perpetuating the old vibration we prevent its replacement by another, happier movement. The Mother asks us not to carry yesterday's vibration when we meet the offending party today. By remembering it when we meet the person who has hurt us yesterday, we induce in him the same set of vibrations that emanated from him earlier. We are asked to keep the mind blank and meet him afresh. Such an approach is likely to disarm him and initiate a conciliatory movement. Even if it fails, we are the gainers spiritually — for to rise above hurt and offence is a positive victory over our mechanical nature.

This movement is not very difficult if we are earnest about our sadhana. What is more difficult is the memories of the wrongs we have done to others in the past. This difficulty is acute when our effort to purify ourselves is intense and our sensitivity increases. Every little incident in which our less flattering side came to the fore — we lost our temper, hurt others, ill-treated them and did a host of other wrong things — rises up and comes to devour us. This is most poignant when the victims of our indignities happen to be those who loved us, who sacrificed for us, who bore us patiently and, maybe, helplessly. It is an unnerving experience when this happens.

How do we meet these searing returns of the past? By repentance. By a sincere regret for the past, a resolute determination not to repeat the past, and an inner praying for forgiveness from those whom we have hurt. Such a movement in our being puts the past behind and clears the way for a new future, provided we take care not to repeat the old mistakes under any circumstances. Repentance is less a confession of sins than a determination to turn a new leaf. But this too must not be overdone. Confessions and regrets, made too often, turn into indulgences that revive the old memories of our failures and hold us back even when the road is clear. They have the subtle effect of prolonging vibrations which are better left behind and forgotten; and they interfere with the purifying action of the Divine Grace which always responds to sincere appeals for help to start anew.

*Published November 1983*

# Life-Sketch of Nolini Kanta Gupta

Nolini Kanta Gupta was born on January 13, 1889, in Faridpur, East Bengal (now Bangladesh). Raised in Rangpur, he went for higher studies to Presidency College, Kolkata. When the province of Bengal was partitioned in 1906, Nolini became increasingly involved in the movement to free India from British rule. In his fourth year of college, he joined the Maniktola secret society, a revolutionary group, and in May 1908 was arrested for conspiracy. Along with Sri Aurobindo and others he spent one year in jail as an undertrial prisoner. After his acquittal he joined the staffs of *Dharma* and *Karmayogin*, two newspapers founded and edited by Sri Aurobindo.

In November 1910, six months after Sri Aurobindo left Kolkata for Pondicherry in South India, Nolini went to join him. From time to time he returned to Kolkata, but from 1926, when the Sri Aurobindo Ashram was formed, he settled permanently in Pondicherry. For more than sixty years he served as the general secretary of the Ashram. In 1955 he was appointed as a trustee of the newly-formed Ashram Trust. For many years he also taught in the Ashram's school, Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education. An eminent writer and poet, his works have been published in an eight-volume set of *Collected Works* in both English and Bengali. He was the editor or editorial advisor of a number of English and Bengali journals. On February 7, 1984, he passed away at the age of ninety-five.

# Note on the Texts

The texts in this book were written or spoken between 1973 and 1983. The first piece was written in November 1973 on the day after the Mother's passing; the last piece was written at the end of 1983, shortly before the author's own passing in February 1984.

Almost all these pieces were first published in *The Advent*, a quarterly journal in English edited by Nolini Kanta Gupta and published by P. Counouma, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. Most of them were subsequently published in the eight-volume Collected Works of Nolini Kanta Gupta (English edition), published by the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry. A few pieces in the present book were published only in the Collected Works. One piece, "What Is to Be Done?", is being published here for the first time. In *The Advent*, the pieces appeared in the quarterly issues between 1973 and 1984. In the Collected Works, they appeared between 1974 and 1979 in one of the final four volumes of the series:

Volume 5. *Light of Lights*, 1974

Volume 6. *Sweet Mother*, 1977

Volume 7. *Sweet Mother (New Talks)*, 1978

Volume 8. *Vedic Hymns*, 1979

With one exception (the first piece), the pieces in Part 5, "The Integral Yoga", were published in *The Advent* but not in the Collected Works, because they came out after the last volume of that collection had been issued. In Part 4, "Talks to the Students", almost all the talks were given to the students of the Higher Course of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education; they were intended especially for the final-year students who were leaving the school. The passages introducing the five parts of this book are taken from Nolini's "Observations", published in volume 6 of his Collected Works.

## THE MOTHER ABIDES

This book is a collection of thoughts and reminiscences related by Nolini Kanta Gupta during the last ten years of his life. Many of them deal with the Mother's life and work. The main themes are: the significance of the Mother's presence on earth and her departure from it; the development of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and its school; the practice of Yoga in the present conditions of life; the breakdown in the world today and the choice facing humanity. Taken as a whole, these writings and talks are the final reflections of one of the most luminous exponents of the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

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