All India Magazine – November 2012

Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face. – Sri Aurobindo

Section I:
Science of Living

The Real Difficulty	...	4
Nature Is Not Unconscious: The Secret of Nature	...	6
How to Use Material Things	...	9
Illness and Fear	...	11
Guidance to the Young – About Friends	...	16

Section II:
24 November 1926 – The Day of Victory

Sri Aurobindo's Explanation	...	20
Appendix: A Report by A. B. Purani	...	22
The Aim and Ideal of Sri Aurobindo Ashram	...	32

Section III:
17 November 1973 – The Mother's Mahasamadhi

The Mother on Herself	...	34
The Divine Is With You According to Your Aspiration	...	37
Appendix: Observations of Vedamurti Satwalekar	...	40

Flower on the Cover:
Victory
Will triumph over all obstacles.
(*Spiritual Significance & Explanation given by the Mother*)
Botanical Name: *Allamanda cathartica*



Sri Aurobindo

The Real Difficulty

The real difficulty is always in ourselves, not in our surroundings. There are three things necessary in order to make men invincible, Will, Disinterestedness and Faith. We may have a will to emancipate ourselves, but sufficient faith may be lacking. We may have faith in our ultimate emancipation, but the will to use the necessary means may be wanting. And even if there are will and faith, we may use them with a violent attachment to the fruit of our work or with passions of hatred, blind excitement or hasty forcefulness which may produce evil reactions. For this reason it is necessary, in a work of such magnitude, to have resort to a higher Power than that of mind and body in order to overcome unprecedented obstacles. This is the need of sadhana.

God is within us, an Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Omniscient Power; we & He are of one nature and, if we get into touch with Him and put ourselves in His hands, He

will pour into us His own force and we shall realise that we too have our share of godhead, our portion of omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience. **The path is long, but self-surrender makes it short; the way is difficult, but perfect trust makes it easy.**

Will is omnipotent, but it must be divine will, selfless, tranquil, at ease about results. "If you had faith even as a grain of mustard-seed," said Jesus, "you would say to this mountain, Come, & it would come to you." What was meant by the word Faith, was really Will accompanied with perfect sraddha. Sraddha does not reason, it knows; for it commands sight and sees what God wills, and it knows that what is God's will, must happen. Sraddha, not blind but using sight spiritual, can become omniscient.

Will is also omnipresent. It can throw itself into all in whom it comes into contact and give them temporarily or permanently a portion of its power, its thought, its enthusiasms. The thought of a solitary man can become, by exercise of selfless and undoubting Will, the thought of a nation. The will of a single hero can breathe courage into the hearts of a million cowards.

This is the sadhana that we have to accomplish. This is the condition of our emancipation. We have been using an imperfect will with imperfect faith and imperfect disinterestedness. Yet the task we have before us is not less difficult than to move a mountain.

The force that can do it, exists. But it is hidden in a secret chamber within us and of that chamber God holds the key. Let us find Him and claim it.

Sri Aurobindo

CWSA Vol. 1, pp. 536-37 & SABCL Vol. 17, pp. 178-79

Nature Is Not Unconscious: The Secret of Nature

The intention of Nature?... It is what Sri Aurobindo has said ... that, hidden in the depths, at the core of matter, there is the Divine Presence and that the whole terrestrial evolution is made to prepare the return of the creation to its origin, to this Divine Presence which is at the centre of everything — that is the intention of Nature.

The universe is an objectivisation of the Supreme, as if He had objectivised himself outside of himself in order to see himself, to live himself, to know himself, and so that there might be an existence and a consciousness capable of recognising him as their origin and uniting consciously with him to manifest him in the becoming. There is no other reason for the universe. The earth is a kind of symbolic crystallisation of universal life, a reduction, a concentration, so that the work of evolution may be easier to do and follow. And if we see the history of the earth, we can understand why the universe has been created. It is the Supreme growing aware of himself in an eternal Becoming; and the goal is the union of the created with the Creator, a union that is conscious, willing and free, in the Manifestation.

That is the secret of Nature. Nature is the executive Force, it is she who does the work.

And she takes up this creation, which appears to be totally inconscient but which contains the Supreme Consciousness and sole Reality and she works so that all this can develop, become self-aware and realise itself fully. But she does not show it from the very beginning. It develops gradually, and that is why at the start it is a secret which will be unveiled as it nears the end. And man has reached a point in the evolution high enough for this secret to be unveiled and for what was done in an apparent inconscience

to be done consciously, willingly, and therefore much more rapidly and in the joy of realisation.

In man one can already see that the spiritual reality is being developed and that it is going to express itself totally and freely. Formerly, in the animal and the plant, it was... it was necessary to be very clear-sighted to see it, but man is himself conscious of this spiritual reality, at least in the higher part of his human existence. Man is beginning to know what the Supreme Origin wants of him and is collaborating in carrying it out. Nature wants the creation to become conscious of being the Creator himself in an objectivisation, that is to say, there is no difference between the Creator and the Creation, and the goal is a conscious and realised union. That is the secret of Nature. ...

Nature is not unconscious, but she has an *appearance* of unconsciousness. It began with the inconscience, but in the depths of the inconscience there was consciousness, and this consciousness is gradually developing.* For instance, mineral nature, stones, earth, metals, water, air, all this seems to be quite unconscious, although if one observes closely... And now science is discovering that this is only an appearance, that all this is only concentrated energy, and of course it is a conscious force which has produced all this. But apparently, when we see a rock, we don't think it is conscious, it does not give the impression of being conscious, it seems to be altogether unconscious.

It is the appearance that is inconscient. It becomes more and more conscious. Even in the mineral kingdom there are phenomena which reveal a hidden consciousness, like cer-

---

* When this talk was first published, Mother made the following correction: "It is not the consciousness which develops, it is the manifestation of consciousness which develops, its expression: it expresses itself more and more."

tain crystals, for instance. If you see with what precision, what exactitude and harmony they are formed, if you are in the least open, you are bound to feel that behind there's a consciousness at work, that this cannot be the result of unconscious chance.

Have you seen rock-crystals?... You have never seen a rock crystal? It is pretty, isn't it? It is something very artistic.

And the movements of the sea, the movements of the air, of the wind, one can't help feeling that behind there is a consciousness or even many consciousnesses at work. In fact, it is like that. Only the most superficial appearance is inconscient.

(*Silence*)

Indeed, in every being, the whole process of evolution is reproduced, as if at a dizzy speed one were reviewing all that has been done, and as if it were necessary to relive all that in a flash before taking the next step.

(*Silence*)

The start, the great journey in the inconscience, in darkness, oblivion, unconsciousness, the awakening... and the return to the light.

The Mother

CWM 1st ed., Vol. 9, pp. 321-23

All Nature is simply ... the Seer-Will, the Knowledge-Force of the Conscious-Being at work to evolve in force and form all the inevitable truth of the Idea into which it has originally thrown itself.

Sri Aurobindo

CWSA Vol. 21, p. 138 & SABCL Vol. 18, p. 129

How to Use Material Things

Q: How should we use things?

Ah, this is... First, to use things with an understanding of their true utility, the knowledge of their real use, with the utmost care so that they do not get spoilt and with the least confusion.

I am going to give you an example: you have a pair of scissors. There are scissors of all kinds, there are scissors for cutting paper, and there are scissors for cutting thread... Now if you have the pair of scissors which you need, use it for the thing it is made for. But I know people who, when they have a pair of scissors, use it without any discernment to cut anything at all, to cut small silk threads, and they try to cut a wire also with it or else they use it as a tool to open tins, you see; for anything whatever, where they need an instrument they get hold of their scissors and use them. ... This is just one example. I could give many others.

People use something which gets dirty and is spoilt in becoming dirty, or they forget to clean it or neglect it, because all this takes time.

There is a kind of respect for the object one has, which must make one treat it with much consideration and try to preserve it as long as possible, not because one is attached to it and desires it, but because an object is something respectable which has sometimes cost a lot of effort and labour in the producing and so must as a result be considered with the respect due to the work and effort put into it.

There are people who have nothing, who don't even have the things which are absolutely indispensable, and who are compelled to make them in some way for their personal use. I have seen people of this kind who, with much

effort and ingenuity had managed to make for themselves certain things which are more or less indispensable from the practical point of view. But the way they treated them, because they were aware of the effort they had put in to make them, was remarkable — the care, that kind of respect for the object they had produced, because they knew how much labour it had cost them. But people who have plenty of money in their pockets, and when they need something turn the knob of a shop-door, enter and put down the money and take the thing, they treat it like that. They harm themselves and give a very bad example.

*

The Lord is everywhere, in everything, in what we throw away as in what we keep preciously, in what we trample on as in what we adore. We must learn to live with respect and never forget His constant and immutable Presence.

*

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

You have no right to use any material object whatsoever if you do not take care of it.

You must take care of it not because you are attached to it, but because it manifests something of the Divine Consciousness.

The Mother

CWM, 1st ed., Vol. 7, pp. 50-51; Vol. 16, p. 256; Vol. 14, p. 345

Illness and Fear

You must not fear. Most of your troubles come from fear. In fact, ninety per cent of illnesses are the result of the subconscient fear of the body. In the ordinary consciousness of the body there is a more or less hidden anxiety about the consequences of the slightest physical disturbance. It can be translated by these words of doubt about the future: "And what will happen?" It is this anxiety that must be checked. Indeed this anxiety is a lack of confidence in the Divine's Grace, the unmistakable sign that the consecration is not complete and perfect.

As a practical means of overcoming this subconscient fear each time that something of it comes to the surface, the more enlightened part of the being must impress on the body the necessity of an entire trust in the Divine's Grace, the certitude that this Grace is always working for the best in our self as well as in all, and the determination to submit entirely and unreservedly to the Divine's Will.

The body must know and be convinced that its essence is divine and that if no obstacle is put in the way of the Divine's working, nothing can harm us. This process must be steadily repeated until all recurrence of fear is stopped. And then even if the illness succeeds in making its appearance, its strength and duration will be considerably diminished until it is definitively conquered.

*

When physical disorder comes, one must not be afraid; one must not run away from it, must face it with courage, calmness, confidence, with the certitude that illness is a *falsehood* and that if one turns entirely, in full confidence, with a complete quietude to the divine grace, it will settle in

these cells as it establishes itself in the depths of the being, and the cells themselves will share in the eternal Truth and Delight.

*

The real disease is fear. Throw the fear away and the disease will go.

*

If you are ill, your illness is looked after with so much anxiety and fear, you are given so much care that you forget to take help from the One who can help you and you fall into a vicious circle and take a morbid interest in your illness.

*

Q: Sweet Mother, when one sees an illness coming, how can one stop it?

Ah! First of all, you must not want it and nothing in the body must want it. You must have a very strong will not to be ill. This is the first condition.

The second condition is to call the light, a light of equilibrium, a light of peace, quietude and balance, and to push it into all the cells of the body, enjoining them not to be afraid, because that again is another condition.

First, not to want to be ill, and then not to be afraid of illness. You must neither attract it nor tremble. You must not want illness at all. But you must not because of fear not want it; you must not be afraid; you must have a calm certitude and a complete trust in the power of the Grace to shelter you from everything, and then think of something else, not be concerned about this any longer. When you have done these two things, refusing the illness with all your will

and infusing a confidence which completely eliminates the fear in the cells of the body, and then busying yourself with something else, not thinking any longer about the illness, forgetting that it exists... there, if you know how to do that, you may even be in contact with people who have contagious diseases, and yet you do not catch them. But you must know how to do this.

Many people say, "Oh, yes, here I am not afraid." They don't have any fear in the mind, their mind is not afraid, it is strong, it is not afraid; but the body trembles, and one doesn't know it, because it is in the cells of the body that the trembling goes on. It trembles with a terrible anxiety and this is what attracts the illness. It is there that you must put the force and the quietude of a perfect peace and an absolute trust in the Grace. And then, sometimes you are obliged to drive away with a similar force in your thought all suggestions that after all, the physical world is full of illnesses, and these are contagious, and because one was in contact with somebody who is ill, one is sure to catch it, and then, that the inner methods are not powerful enough to act on the physical, and all kinds of stupidities of which the air is full. These are collective suggestions which are passed on from one person to another by everybody. And if by chance there are two or three doctors, then it becomes terrible.
(*Laughter*)

*

Mental, Vital and Physical Fear

From the ordinary point of view, in most cases, it is usually fear — fear, which may be mental fear, vital fear, but which is almost always physical fear, a fear in the cells — it is fear which opens the door to all contagion. Mental fear — all who have a little control over themselves or any human

dignity can eliminate it; vital fear is more subtle and asks for a greater control; as for physical fear, a veritable yoga is necessary to overcome it, for the cells of the body are afraid of everything that is unpleasant, painful, and as soon as there is any unease, even if it is insignificant, the cells of the body become anxious, they don't like to be uncomfortable. And then, to overcome that, the control of a conscious will is necessary. It is usually this kind of fear that opens the door to illnesses. And I am not speaking of the first two types of fear which, as I said, any human being who wants to be human in the noblest sense of the word, must overcome, for that is cowardice. But physical fear is more difficult to overcome; without it even the most violent attacks could be repelled. If one has a minimum of control over the body, one can lessen its effects, but that is not immunity. It is this kind of trembling of material, physical fear in the cells of the body which aggravates all illnesses.

Some people are spontaneously free from fear even in their body; they have a sufficient vital equilibrium in them not to be afraid, not to fear, and a natural harmony in the rhythm of their physical life which enables them to reduce the illness spontaneously to a minimum. There are others, on the other hand, with whom the thing always becomes as bad as it can be, sometimes to the point of catastrophe. There is the whole range and this can be seen quite easily. Well, this depends on a kind of happy rhythm of the movement of life in them, which is either harmonious enough to resist external attacks of illness or else doesn't exist or is not sufficiently powerful, and is replaced by that trembling of fear, that kind of instinctive anguish which transforms the least unpleasant contact into something painful and harmful. There is the whole range, from someone who can go through the worst contagion and epidemics without

ever catching anything to one who falls ill at the slightest chance. So naturally it always depends on the constitution of each person; and as soon as one wants to make an effort for progress, it naturally depends on the control one has acquired over oneself, until the moment when the body becomes the docile instrument of the higher Will and one can obtain from it a normal resistance to all attacks.

But when one can eliminate fear, one is almost in safety. For example, epidemics, or so-called epidemics, like those which are raging at present — ninety-nine times out of a hundred they come from fear: a fear, then, which even becomes a mental fear in its most sordid form, promoted by newspaper articles, useless talk and so on.

*

Q: Can one get ill through fear?

Yes. I knew someone who was so full of fear that he got cholera! There was cholera in the next house and he got so frightened that he caught the illness and without any other reason, there was no other reason for his catching it: it was through sheer fright. And it is a very common thing; in an epidemic, it is so in the majority of cases. It is through fear that the door is opened and you catch the illness. Those who have no fear can go about freely and generally they catch nothing. But still as I have said there, you may have no fear in the mind, you may have no fear even in the vital, but who has no fear in the body?... Very few.

The Mother

CWM, 1st ed., Vol. 15, pp. 151, 152, 152, 155; Vol. 7, pp. 144-45; Vol. 9, pp. 121-22; Vol. 5, p. 168

Guidance to the Young — About Friends

... someone has asked me a question on something I have written — Pavitra, do you have it? Read it.

> (Pavitra reads) *"Our best friend is he who loves us in the best of ourselves, and yet does not ask us to be other than we are."*
>
> *(Words of the Mother, CWM, Vol. 14, p. 288)*

I am asked to explain what this means. I have a good mind to tell you all sorts of paradoxical things! But still...

Anyway, I wrote this with something in mind which one usually forgets: one asks one's friends and those around one to be not what they are but what one would like them to be — one can form an ideal for oneself and want to apply it to everybody, but... This reminds me of Tolstoy's son whom I met in Japan and who was going round the world in the hope of bringing about unity among men. His intentions were excellent, but his way of doing it seemed less happy! He said with an imperturbable seriousness that if everybody spoke the same language, if everybody dressed in the same way, ate in the same way and behaved in the same way, that would inevitably bring about unity! And when asked how he planned to realise this he said it would be enough to go from land to land preaching a new but universal language, a new but universal dress, and new but universal habits. That was all.... And that was what he intended to do!

(Laughing) Well, everyone in his own little field is like that. He has an ideal, a conception of what is true and beautiful and noble, and even divine, and this conception of his he wants to impose on others. There are also many people who have a conception of the Divine and who try with all

their might to impose their conception on the Divine... and usually don't lose heart until they have lost their life!

... when one has opinions about people and especially reactions to their way of life, it is because one blames them for not being what one thinks they ought to be. If we never forget that there cannot be, should not be two things exactly alike in the universe, for the second would be useless since there would already be one of the same kind, and that the universe is constituted for the harmony of an infinite multiplicity in which two movements — and even more, two consciousnesses — are never alike, then what right have we to intervene and want that somebody should conform to our own thought?... For if you think in a particular way, it is certain that the other won't be able to think in the same way. And if you are a person of a certain type, it is absolutely certain that the other cannot be of the same type. And what you ought to learn is to harmonise, synthesise, combine all the disparate things in the universe by putting each one *in its place*. Total harmony does not at all lie in an identity, but in a harmonisation which can come only by putting each thing in its place.

And this must be at the basis of the reaction that one has the right to expect from a true friend, who should wish not that his friend should be like him, but that he may be what he is.

Now, at the beginning of the sentence I said, "He loves you in the best part of yourself...." To put it a little more positively: Your friend is not one who encourages you to come down to your lowest level, encourages you to do foolish things along with him or fall into bad ways with him or one who commends you for all the nasty things you do, that's quite clear. And yet, usually, very, very often, much too often, one makes friends with somebody with whom

one doesn't feel uneasy when one has sunk lower. One considers as one's best friend somebody who encourages one in one's follies: one mixes with others to roam about instead of going to school, to go and steal fruit from gardens, to make fun of one's teachers and for all kinds of things like that. ... And perhaps this is why I said, "They are not your true friends." But still, they are the most convenient friends, for they don't make you feel that you are in the wrong; while to one who comes and tells you, "Now then, instead of roaming about and doing nothing or doing stupid things, if you came to the class, don't you think it would be better!" usually one replies, "Don't bother me! You are not my friend." ...

There are children here who were full of promise, who were at the top of their class, who used to work seriously, from whom I expected much, and who have been completely ruined by this kind of friendship. Since we are speaking of this, I shall tell them today that I regret this very much and that I do not call such people friends but mortal enemies against whom one should protect oneself as one would against a contagious disease.

We don't like the company of someone who has a contagious disease, and avoid him carefully; generally he is segregated so that it does not spread. But the contagion of vice and bad behaviour, the contagion of depravity, falsehood and what is base, is infinitely more dangerous than the contagion of any disease, and this is what must be very carefully avoided. You must consider as your best friend the one who tells you that he does not wish to participate in any bad or ugly act, the one who gives you courage to resist low temptations; he is a friend. He is the one you must associate with and not someone with whom you have fun and who strengthens your evil propensities. That's all. ...

Indeed, you should choose as friends only those who are wiser than yourself, those whose company ennobles you and helps you to master yourself, to progress, to act in a better way and see more clearly. And finally, the best friend one can have — isn't he the Divine, to whom one can say everything, reveal everything? For there indeed is the source of all compassion, of all power to efface every error when it is not repeated,* to open the road to true realisation; it is he who can understand all, heal all, and always help on the path, help you not to fail, not to falter, not to fall, but to walk straight to the goal. He is the true friend, the friend of good and bad days, the one who can understand, can heal, and who is always there when you need him. When you call him sincerely, he is always there to guide and uphold you — and to love you in the true way.

The Mother

CWM, 1st ed., Vol. 9, pp. 54-57

---

* In 1961 when this talk was first published, Mother commented on this phrase: "So long as one repeats one's mistakes, nothing can be abolished, for one recreates them every minute. When someone makes a mistake, serious or not, this mistake has consequences in his life, a 'Karma' which must be exhausted, but the Divine Grace, if one turns to It, has the power of cutting off the consequences; but for this the fault must not be repeated. One shouldn't think one can continue to commit the same stupidities indefinitely and that indefinitely the Grace will cancel all the consequences, it does not happen like that! The past may be completely purified, cleansed, to the point of having no effect on the future, but on condition that one doesn't change it again into a perpetual present; you yourself must stop the bad vibration in yourself, you must not go on reproducing the same vibration indefinitely."

Section II
24 November 1926 : The Day of Victory

Sri Aurobindo's Explanation

(On 24 November 1926 Sri Aurobindo's efforts in his Sadhana for the earth-consciousness was crowned by the descent of a higher power he called the "Godhead of the Overmind". The Mother declared this day the Day of Victory, *Siddhi Day, for the descent marked a great step in his supramental yoga. We give below Sri Aurobindo's explanation of this event.)*

24 [November 1926] was the descent of Krishna into the physical.

Krishna is not the supramental Light. The descent of Krishna would mean the descent of the Overmind Godhead preparing, though not itself actually bringing, the descent of Supermind and Ananda. Krishna is the Anandamaya; he supports the evolution through the Overmind leading it towards the Ananda. (29.10.1935)

*

What happened on the 24th November prepared the possibility of this descent [of supramental realisation on earth] and on that day he retired into seclusion and entered into deep and powerful meditation.

(This correction was made by Sri Aurobindo
on 20th November 1950 in a note prepared by Anillbaran)

*

Q: Datta seems to have declared on that day that you had conquered sleep, food, disease an death. On what authority did she proclaim it then?

A: I am not aware of this gorgeous proclamation. What was said that was that the Divine (Krishna or the Divine Presence or whatever you like) had come down into the material. It was also proclaimed that I was retiring — obviously to work things out. If all that was achieved on the 24th November 1926, what on earth remained to work out, if the Supramental was there, for what blazing purpose did I need to retire? Besides are these things achieved in a single day? If Datta said anything like that she must have been in a prophetic mood and seen the future in the present!

Sri Aurobindo

(An entry in the Anilbaran's diary, on 24.11.1930)

Datta [the Iris lady attending on the Mother] had declared the great victory of the 24 November 1926 thus: "He (Sri Aurobindo) has conquered life, conquered death, conquered all. Lord Krishna has come." Mother explained last night: It is not that Lord Krishna was not there; on the 24th he manifested in the most material consciousness and Sri Aurobindo said that he knew that now time had come to take up the work of the new creation.

Speaking of those days Mother said that the atmosphere was intense... The overmind, the plane of the gods, was brought in touch with the physical plane; this touch was necessary, otherwise the supramental transformation would not be possible. Now the work is going on in another field, because it is necessary.

***

1. SABCL Vol. 26, p. 136, **2**. Mother India, Dec. 1962, p. 29, **3**. Nirodbaran's Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo, 1983 ed., p. 295. **4.** Sri Aurobindo Circle, No. 33 (1977), pp. 73-74.

Appendix: A Report by A. B. Purani

24 November 1926 – the Day of Siddhi

In order to understand the importance of this day it is necessary to go back to Sri Aurobindo's experiences in jail in 1908-1909 and link them up with his experience of 24 November 1926. We must also take into consideration what Sri Aurobindo wrote about his own sadhana to Barin in 1920.

In the letter to Barin of April 1920 Sri Aurobindo described the stage of his yoga before he came to Pondicherry in 1910 as "preliminary or preparatory". That is to say it was a preliminary stage of the supramental yoga. "The Guru of the world who is within us then gave me the complete directions of my path – its complete theory, the ten limbs of the body of this Yoga. These ten years [1910-1920] He has been making me develop it in experience, and it is not yet finished. ...

"If we cannot rise above, that is, to the supramental level, it is hardly possible to know the last secret of the world and the problem it raises remains unsolved.

"This is no easy change to make. After these fifteen years I am only now rising into the lowest of the three levels of the Supermind and trying to draw up into it all the lower activities. But when this Siddhi will be complete, then I am absolutely certain that God will through me give to others the Siddhi of the Supermind with less effort. Then my real work will begin. I am not impatient for success in the work. What is to happen will happen in God's appointed time. I have no impulse to make any unbalanced haste and rush into the field of work in the strength of the little ego. Even if I did not succeed in my work I would not be shaken. This work is not mine but God's. I will listen to no other call; when God moves me then I will move.

"I do not want hundreds of thousands of disciples. It will be enough if I can get a hundred complete men, purified of petty egoism, who will be the instruments of God.

"If the unripe goes amid the unripe what can he do?"

These quotations clearly demonstrate that when Sri Aurobindo came to Pondicherry he was not groping for his path; his path was clear before him. After 1910 the charge of his yoga was taken over by the Divine and the path was revealed to him in ten limbs of the sadhana. He was all along conscious of the existence of the Supramental plane above the mind, and by 1920 he had succeeded in ascending to the lowest stratum of that consciousness and also in drawing up all the movements of his nature into it.

He was, besides, not impatient for action. He did not want to act from ignorant human instruments but from a Higher Consciousness. He had the confidence that if the Supramental descent could be established in its perfection, then other people would be able to profit by it with much less effort.

It was when the Tapasya for the Siddhi of the Supramental was going on that, fortunately, as if by a Divine dispensation, the Mother joined Sri Aurobindo intimately in the great spiritual work. From the beginning of 1926 the work of guiding the disciples already began to move towards the Mother. There were women disciples – three or four in number – staying in the Ashram who used to go to the Mother for meditation. From August 1926 the number of disciples going to the Mother increased. It was as if Sri Aurobindo was slowly withdrawing himself and the Mother was spontaneously coming out and taking up the great work of direction of the sadhaks' inner sadhana and of the organisation of the outer life of the Ashram. The meditations became more and more concentrated and intense. Sri Aurobindo's

coming out for the evening sitting began getting later and later. The wonder of it was that no one felt anything unnatural in all these changes. The part of the disciples in the tremendous task of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother was insignificant, still they were the witnesses of the changes in the inner and outer atmosphere of the Ashram.

From the trend of the evening talks just before and after 15 August 1926 it was becoming clear that the importance of a link between the highest Supermind and mind was being emphasized. Sri Aurobindo called this link the Overmind. During the six years since the letter to Barin of 1920 it is evident that he had gone much further not only in the ascent towards and into the Higher Consciousness but also in bringing about its descent into Nature. Several times in the beginning of November 1926, the evening talks turned to the possibility of the descent of the Divine Consciousness and its process. From these evening conversations, therefore, the idea came to several disciples that such a descent might be near. There was the possibility of the descent of the Gods. In *The Life Divine* Sri Aurobindo has given a clear exposition of the overmind plane, overmind consciousness and overmind Gods. I give here some quotations from this chapter which might be of help in the understanding of the descent that took place on 24 November 1926.

"If we regard the Powers of the Reality as so many Godheads, we can say that the Overmind releases a million Godheads into action, each empowered to create its own world, each world capable of relation, communication and interplay with the others. There are in the Veda different formulations of the nature of the Gods: it is said they are all one Existence to which the sages give different names; yet each God is worshipped as if he by himself is that Existence, one who is all the other Gods together or contains

them in his being; and yet again each is a separate Deity acting sometimes in unison with companion deities, sometimes separately, sometimes even in apparent opposition to other Godheads of the same Existence. In the Supermind all this would be held together as a harmonised play of the one Existence; in the Overmind each of these three conditions could be a separate action or basis of action and have its own principle of development and consequences and yet each keep the power to combine with the others in a more composite harmony. As with the One Existence, so with its Consciousness and Force. The One Consciousness is separated into many independent forms of consciousness and knowledge; each follows out its own line of truth which it has to realise. The one total and many-sided Real-Idea is split up into its many sides; each becomes an independent Idea-Force with the power to realise itself. The one Consciousness-Force is liberated into its million forces, and each of these forces has the right to fulfil itself or to assume, if needed, a hegemony and take up for its own utility the other forces. So too the Delight of Existence is loosed out into all manner of delights and each can carry in itself its independent fullness or sovereign extreme. Overmind thus gives to the One Existence-Consciousness-Bliss the character of a teeming of infinite possibilities which can be developed into a multitude of worlds or thrown together into one world in which the endlessly variable outcome of their play is the determinant of the creation, of its process, its course and its consequence."[1]

"[In the Overmind] each God knows all the Gods and their place in existence; each Idea admits all other ideas and their right to be; each Force concedes a place to all other

1. Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, Book One (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1970), pp. 280-81 .

forces and their truth and consequences; no delight of separate fulfilled existence or separate experience denies or condemns the delight of other existence or other experience. The Overmind is a principle of cosmic Truth and a vast and endless catholicity is its very spirit; its energy is an all-dynamism as well as a principle of separate dynamisms. . . ."[2]

A feeling that the descent of the Higher Consciousness was about to take place grew in the minds of the many disciples either as a result of some indicative personal experience or owing to the general atmosphere. Many felt that great changes in the outer structure of the Ashram were about to occur. Instead of coming to the evening sitting at half-past four, the usual time, Sri Aurobindo came at six or seven, or eight o'clock. One day the record was two o'clock in the morning! It was evident that all his great energies were entirely taken up by the mighty task of bringing about the descent of the Higher Consciousness and that he did not want to lose or divert even a second of his time to anything else. Even though the work of maintaining an outer contact with the disciples was found useful it was becoming more and more difficult in view of the growing demand upon his time for the inner work. Those who do not know anything about his great mission can hardly understand how concentrated and sincere was his application for attaining perfection in his Divine task. In fact, people outside had already begun to be sceptical about any "practical" result of his vast efforts. Even those who had built high hopes upon his spiritual effort and were his genuine admirers began to be disappointed. Some even cherished, in their ignorance, the foolish belief that Sri Aurobindo had lost his way in the barren regions of the Absolute, the Para Brahman, or that he was

2. Ibid., p. 283

entangled somewhere in the inscrutable coils of the Infinite! They believed that Sri Aurobindo had lost his hold on the earth, and that he had become either indifferent or deaf to the pressing and burning problems of suffering humanity. If it was not so, why did he not rush to the help of humanity that was suffering so much with the saving balm of his Divine help? When was such Divine help more needed than now?

But, in spite of the apparent contradictions, those who were fortunate enough to live in his vicinity knew very well that the Higher Power that he was bringing down was not only capable of but was actually producing practical results. His contact and identification with the Higher Power were so complete that he was able to put other people, whether near to him or far, in contact with it. There were almost daily instances of people being cured of physical illness by his help. Far from losing his way in the Absolute he was seeing his way more and more clearly every day and was feeling more and more the inevitability of the descent as a natural crown of the movement of evolution on earth. His disciples knew that there was no one on earth who had a deeper sympathy and feeling for humanity than the Master. The silent and solid help that was going out from him to humanity was glimpsed by them at times. They felt later, reading the line he wrote in *Savitri* about Aswapathy, "His spirit's stillness helped the toiling world", that it was so true of his own life. What after all is that "practicality" of which people speak so much? Claiming to solve problems, does it not really leave them either unsolved or half-solved while giving to the doer a false sense of satisfaction and self-complacence? In fact, the Supreme Master had such a firm grip over the earth that such illusionary satisfaction could never deceive him. For him *karmasu kauśalam* (skill in action) con-

sisted in acting from a higher Truth-Consciousness. He did not want to begin outer action so long as the Higher Consciousness did not descend into the physical and even into the gross material consciousness. Only so could a new life, a life that manifests integrally the Divine, be embodied. In the fulfillment of the spiritual work that he had begun lies the ultimate solution of all human problems.

Days, months and years passed; but Sri Aurobindo did not seem at all in a hurry to begin his work. He was all along preparing the possibility of the descent of the Higher Power. The resistance of the powers of Ignorance against any such attempt is naturally immense. In one evening talk he said that he was engaged in the tremendous task of opening up the physical cells to the Divine Light and the resistance of the Inconscient was formidable. When one knows that all this Herculean labour was undertaken not for himself but for humanity, for making a new departure for man in the course of his evolution then one feels that the words he later used of Savitri, "The world unknowing, for the world she stood", are so very apposite in his own case. It was therefore natural that when, by the grace of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the disciples also felt the nearness of the descent, their hearts should be full of expectant and concentrated enthusiasm.

From the beginning of November 1926 the pressure of the Higher Power began to be unbearable. Then at last the great day, the day for which the Mother had been waiting for so many long years, arrived on 24 November. The sun had almost set, and everyone was occupied with his own activity – some had gone out to the seaside for a walk – when the Mother sent round word to all the disciples to assemble as soon as possible in the verandah where the usual meditation was held. It did not take long for the message

to go round to all. By six o'clock most of the disciples had gathered. It was becoming dark. In the verandah on the wall near Sri Aurobindo's door, just behind his chair, a black silk curtain with gold lace work representing three Chinese dragons was hung. The three dragons were so represented that the tail of one reached up to the mouth of the other and the three of them covered the curtain from end to end. We came to know afterwards that there is a prophecy in China that the Truth will manifest itself on earth when the three dragons (the dragons of the earth, of the mind region and of the sky) meet. Today on 24 November the Truth was descending and the hanging of the curtain was significant.

There was a deep silence in the atmosphere after the disciples had gathered there. Many saw an oceanic flood of Light rushing down from above. Everyone present felt a kind of pressure above his head. The whole atmosphere was surcharged with some electrical energy. In that silence, in that atmosphere full of concentrated expectation and aspiration, in the electrically charged atmosphere, the usual, yet on this day quite unusual, tick was heard behind the door of the entrance. Expectation rose in a flood. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother could be seen through the half-opened door. The Mother with a gesture of her eyes requested Sri Aurobindo to step out first. Sri Aurobindo with a similar gesture suggested to her to do the same. With a slow dignified step the Mother came out first, followed by Sri Aurobindo with his majestic gait. The small table that used to be in front of Sri Aurobindo's chair was removed this day. The Mother sat on a small stool to his right.

Silence absolute, living silence – not merely living but overflowing with divinity. The meditation lasted about forty-five minutes. After that one by one the disciples bowed to the Mother.

She and Sri Aurobindo gave blessings to them. Whenever a disciple bowed to the Mother, Sri Aurobindo's right hand came forward behind the Mother's as if blessing him through the Mother. After the blessings, in the same silence there was a short meditation.

In the interval of silent meditation and blessings many had distinct experiences. When all was over they felt as if they had awakened from a divine dream. Then they felt the grandeur, the poetry and the absolute beauty of the occasion. It was not as if a handful of disciples were receiving blessings from their Supreme Master and the Mother in one little comer of the earth; the significance of the occasion was far greater than that. It was certain that a Higher Consciousness had descended on earth. In that deep silence had burgeoned forth, like the sprout of a banyan tree, the beginning of a mighty spiritual work. This momentous occasion carried its significance to all in the divine dynamism of the silence, in its unearthly dignity and grandeur and in the utter beauty of its every little act. The deep impress of divinity which everyone got was for him a priceless treasure.

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother went inside. Immediately Datta was inspired. In that silence she spoke: "The Lord has descended into the physical today."

That 24 November should be given an importance equal to that of the birthdays of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is quite proper because on that day the descent of the Higher Power symbolic of the victory of their mission took place. The Delight consciousness in the Overmind which Sri Krishna incarnated – as Avatar – descended on this day into the physical rendering possible the descent of the Supermind in Matter.

Of this descent Sri Aurobindo wrote on several occasions afterwards. In October 1935 he wrote as follows: "It

[the 24th November 1926] was the descent of Krishna into the physical.

"Krishna is not the supramental Light. The descent of Krishna would mean the descent of the Overmind Godhead preparing, though not itself actually bringing, the descent of Supermind and Ananda. Krishna is the Anandamaya; he supports the evolution through the Overmind leading it towards his Ananda."

The names of those disciples who were present on 24 November 1926:

(1) Bijoy Kumar Nag, (2) Nolini Kanta Gupta, (3) K. Amrita, (4) Moni (Suresh Chakravarty), (5) Pavitra (Phillippe Barbier Saint-Hilaire), (6) Barindra Kumar Ghose, (7) Datta (Miss Hodgson), (8) K. Rajangam, (9) Satyen, (10) A. B. Purani, (11) Lilavati (Purani's wife), (12) Punamchand, (13) Champa Ben (Punamchand's wife), (14) Rajani Kanta Palit, (15) Dr. Upendra Nath Banerjee, (16) Champaklal, (17) Kanailal Gangulee, (18) Khitish Chandra Dutt, (19) V. Chandra Sekharam, (20) Pujalal, (21) Purushottam Patel, (22) Rati Palit, (23) Rambhai Patel, (24) Nani Bala (Jaya Devi).

The Life of Sri Aurobindo by A. B. Purani, 4th ed., pp. 210-17.

***

Earth-life is one self-chosen habitation of a great Divinity and his aeonic will is to change it from a blind prison into his splendid mansion and high heaven-reaching temple.

Sri Aurobindo

CWSA Vol. 12, p. 161

The Aim and Ideal of Sri Aurobindo Ashram

This Ashram has been created with another object than that ordinarily common to such institutions, not for the renunciation of the world but as a centre and a field of practice for the evolution of another kind and form of life which would in the final end be moved by a higher spiritual consciousness and embody a greater life of the spirit.

*

My aim is to create a center of spiritual life which shall serve as a means of bringing down the higher consciousness and making it a power not merely for 'salvation' but for a divine life upon earth. It is with this object that I have withdrawn from public life and founded this Ashram in Pondicherry (so called for want of a better word, for it is not an Ashram of Sannyasins, but of those who want to leave all else and prepare for this rule).

Sri Aurobindo

Sri Aurobindo has told us and we are convinced by experience that above the mind there is a consciousness much wiser than the mental wisdom, and in the depths of things there is a will much more powerful that the human will.

All our endevour is to make this consciousness and this will govern our lives and action and organise all our activities.

*

There is an ascending evolution in nature which goes from the stone to the plant, from the plant to the animal, from the animal to man. Because man is, for the moment, the last rung at the summit of the ascending evolution, he considers

himself as the final stage in this ascension and believes there can be nothing on earth superior to him. In that he is mistaken. In his physical nature he is yet almost wholly an animal, a thinking and speaking animal, but still an animal in his material habits and instincts. Undoubtedly, nature cannot be satisfied with such an imperfect result; she endeavours to bring out a being who will be to man what man is to the animal, a being who will remain a man in its external form, and yet whose consciousness will rise far above the mental and its slavery to ignorance.

Sri Aurobindo came upon earth to teach this truth to men. He told them that man is only a transitional being living in a mental consciousness, but with the possibility of acquiring a new consciousness, the Truth-consciousness, and capable of living a life perfectly harmonious, good and beautiful, happy and fully conscious. During the whole of his life upon earth, Sri Aurobindo gave all his time to establish in himself this consciousness he called supramental, and to help those gathered around him to realise it.

*

Q: Sweet Mother, When a stranger asks us what the Sri Aurobindo Ashram is, how can we give him a reply that is both short and correct?

The Ashram is the cradle of a new world, of the creation of tomorrow.

And if other questions are put to you, the only reply to be made is: you must read the books and study the teaching.

The Mother

1. SABCL Vol. 23, p. 847, **2.** SABCL Vol. 27, p. 416, **3**. *Bulletin,* August 1964, p. 96, **4.** CWM 1st ed., Vol. 12, p. 116, **5**. CWM Vol. 16, pp. 301-02.

Section III

17 November 1973: The Mother's Mahasamadhi

The Mother on Herself

(The Mother left Her body on 17 November 1973. However She is everywhere, she being the consciousness and force of the Supreme. We give below some passages from Her writings and talks. —Ed.)

Since the beginning of the earth, wherever and whenever there was the possibility of manifesting a ray of the Consciousness, I was there.

*

That which is speaking to you now, is a faithful servant of the Divine. From all time, since the beginning of the earth, as a faithful servant of the Divine, it has spoken in the name of its Master. And as long as earth and men exist, it will be there in a body to preach the divine word.

*

O my God, Thou hast told me: "Plunge into Matter and identify thyself with it: it is there that I would manifest."

And Thy will has been done — but Matter has ignored the gift and persists in wanting to seek in obscure and false activities and relations, a satisfaction which it cannot find there.

And yet Thou hast promised me the Victory...

*

To believe or not to believe in the possibility of avatarhood can make no difference to the bare fact. If God chooses to manifest in a human body I do not see how any human thought, approval or disapproval can affect in the least His decision; and if He takes birth in a body, the denial of men

cannot prevent the fact from being a fact. So what is there to get excited about. It is only in perfect quietness and silence, free from all prejudices and preferences, that the consciousness can perceive the truth.

*

Q: I would very much like to see you in your new body. Till then grant that I may be able to receive and assimilate what you give me.

I suppose you mean my new appearance or my transformed body. Because for a new body, I do not know of anybody who could make a complete living body into which I could step without losing, at least partly, my present consciousness. This of course could be a relatively quicker process, but not quite fair for the cells of this body so full of enthusiasm, and lending themselves so willingly to the somewhat exacting process of transformation.

In any case, as I told you already, you must be prepared to wait a long time for it.

The Mother

CWM, 1st ed., Vol. 13, pp. 37, 37, 40-41, 50, 59

One is reminded of the following Message given by Nolini Kanta Gupta under the title "A vision". – Ed.)

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.... "

(Collected Works of Nolini Kanta Gupta, Vol. 6, p. 259)



I am the inviolable Ecstasy;
They who have looked on me, shall grieve no more.

(Savitri, p. 684)

The Divine Is With You According to Your Aspiration

Q: ...When we pray or struggle with a problem within ourselves, are we really heard, always, in spite of our clumsiness and imperfection, in spite even of our bad will and our error? And who hears? You who are with us?

...Can you tell us how, in what way you are present with us?

Sri Aurobindo and you, it is said, form one and the same consciousness, but is there a personal presence of Sri Aurobindo and your personal presence, two things distinct, each playing its own particular role?

I am with you because I am you or you are me.

I am with you, that signifies a world of things, because I am with you on all levels, on all planes, from the supreme consciousness down to my most physical consciousness. ...

It is now long since Sri Aurobindo has put up everywhere in the Ashram this reminder that you all know: "Always behave as if the Mother was looking at you, because she is, indeed, always present."

This is not a mere phrase, not simply words, it is a fact. I am with you in a very concrete manner and they who have a subtle vision can see me.

In a general way my Force is there constantly at work, constantly shifting the psychological elements of your being to put them in new relations and defining to yourself the different facets of your nature so that you may see what should be changed, developed, rejected.

But that apart, there is a special personal tie between you and me, between all who have turned to the teaching of Sri Aurobindo and myself,—and, it is well understood,

distance does not count here, you may be in France, you may be at the other end of the world or in Pondicherry, this tie is always true and living. And each time there comes a call, each time there is a need for me to know so that I may send out a force, an inspiration, a protection or any other thing, a sort of message comes to me all of a sudden and I do the needful. ...

Now remember one thing. Sri Aurobindo and myself are one and the same consciousness, one and the same person. Only, when this force or this presence, which is the same, passes through your individual consciousness, it puts on a form, an appearance which differs according to your temperament, your aspiration, your need, the particular turn of your being. Your individual consciousness is like a filter, a pointer, if I may say so; it makes a choice and fixes one possibility out of the infinity of divine possibilities. In reality, the Divine gives to each individual exactly what he expects of Him. If you believe that the Divine is far away and cruel, He will be far away and cruel, because it will be necessary for your ultimate good that you feel the wrath of God; He will be Kali for the worshippers of Kali and Beatitude for the Bhakta. And He will be the All-knowledge of the seeker of Knowledge, the transcendent Impersonal of the illusionist; He will be atheist with the atheist and the love of the lover. He will be brotherly and close, a friend always faithful, always ready to succour, for those who feel Him as the inner guide of each movement, at every moment. And if you believe that He can wipe away everything, He will wipe away all your faults, all your errors, tirelessly, and at every moment you can feel His infinite Grace. The Divine is indeed what you expect of Him in your deepest aspiration.

And when you enter into this consciousness where you see all things in a single look, the infinite multitude of rela-

tions between the Divine and men, you see how wonderful all that is, in all details. You can look at the history of mankind and see how much the Divine has evolved according to what men have understood, desired, hoped, dreamed and how He was materialist with the materialist and how He grows every day and becomes nearer, more luminous according as human consciousness widens itself. Each one is free to choose. The perfection of this endless variety of relations of man with God throughout the history of the world is an ineffable marvel. And all that together is only one second of the total manifestation of the Divine.

The Divine is with you according to your aspiration. Naturally that does not mean that He bends to the caprices of your outer nature, — I speak here of the truth of your being. And yet, sometimes he does fashion himself according to your outer aspirations, and if, like the devotees, you live alternately in separation and union, ecstasy and despair, the Divine also will separate from you and unite with you, according as you believe. The attitude is thus very important, even the outer attitude. People do not know how important is faith, how faith is miracle, creator of miracles. If you expect at every moment to be lifted up and pulled towards the Divine, He will come to lift you and He will be there, quite close, closer, ever closer.

The Mother

CWM 1st ed., Vol. 13, pp. 75-78

* * *

Appendix:

Observations of Vedamurti Pandit Satwalekar

As reported by Narayan Prasad

Let us close this chapter with the interview and impression of a notable figure, Vedamurti Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Sripad Damodar Satwalekar, Sahitya Vachaspati, Gitalankar, author of two volumes of commentary on the Gita in English and 30 volumes on the Veda. He has made a life-long study of the Veda, and its interpretation. He visited the Ashram on 29th July 1960 and remained here up to 17th August as an honoured guest. He had an interview with the Mother on July 30, just a day after his arrival.

His eyes lit up as he recounted his reminiscences. From the very day of his decision to come he had been, he said, feeling the Mother's Presence within him and undertook the journey from Surat to Madras all alone,* having no difficulty on the way. As he was alighting from the train at Madras, he was met by a gentleman waiting to receive him and he drove him in his car to the Ashram.

The interview was mostly in silence and meditation. In meditation he saw six to seven gates of different hues opening in his heart one after another. He also saw his own being steeped in white light.

As long as he remained, he experienced the Presence of the Mother more and more. In the activities of the Ashram, he was moved to his depths to see the Mother's power at work everywhere. He said, "The thing for which I was praying for the last fifty or sixty years, the dream I cherished all these years I see in living forms here. Perhaps after the Vedic age for the first time this kind of thing is being attempted. The whole process of sadhana is based here on

* At the age of 93. – ed.

Vedic principles. My heart overflows with joy to see that all that is hinted at in the Vedas is trying to find its fulfilment here in one way or another."

Ravindra, who had been asked by the Mother to show him round the Ashram and to whom Panditji has given his personal impressions, reports:

"We all know that once Gandhiji lamented that he had put in so much effort to do away with casteism but saw no sign of the evil giving way. Pandit Satwalekar said: 'Here I see not a trace of casteism anywhere. What a change the Mother has brought about here! However, this is a thing which one can understand and appreciate with the mind. But it is simply a miracle that young boys and girls are allowed to meet without the least bit of scruple in the Ashram, in the school, in the playground and anywhere else. Here co-education, academic and physical, has raised no problem.'

Panditji said further: 'The Mother makes no distinction between men and women. It is a great experiment indeed. It seems to me the Mother is trying to found a purely spiritual society. The Veda recognises no sex-distinction. It looks as if the Mother wants to create a Society where relations would be as between soul and soul. Bodily difference does not count. Fault-finding minds may detect defects here and there, I also do not say that it is all perfect but the attempt is definitely in the direction envisaged by the Veda, and I am sure that the Mother's efforts will one day meet with success.'

"One department of the Ashram has been named Prosperity by the Mother. When Satwalekarji was told that the inmates could have soap, oil, clothes, etc. from this department, he broke out in ecstasy: 'Here we can see spirituality taking a true form. Nowhere in the Veda is there the gospel of *sannyās*. Everywhere we come across prayers



Physical education activities at the Ashram's Sports ground, 1951





51



for prosperity, fire and force, *tejas* and *ojas*, even material things. Nowhere one sees the scene of poverty, nobody living the life of a destitute, passing his days at the foot of a tree, clad in rags with total renunciation of material things. Escape from the world and its concerns and passing one's days in inert contemplation of the All-High — these things are far from the Vedic way of life. In the Vedic age kings like Janak ruled kingdoms; Rishis like Vasishtha stood behind kings to give them counsel. The Rishis never betook themselves to the forest, renouncing the world. These things belonged to the dark period of India. I see, to-day, that the Mother *insists on prosperity, not austerity. She does not want to leave the world to its fate but to endow it with opulence governed by spirituality.* The world itself has to be changed. Here one finds the Vedic age being re-born. No material thing has to be shunned or scorned. Everything is trying to find its own legitimate place.' "

These truths uttered by him are as striking as the wide open receptivity of his scholarly mind.

It would naturally be too much to expect of a man of 93 to interest himself in the activities of the Playground. But we learn from Ravindra that Panditji is above the common run. He could not contain himself when he saw men and women, boys and girls marching together and taking an equal part in games, sports, even athletics. He spoke out:

"Do you know the real cause of the fall of India? I attribute it to two things: We despised the material world in order to turn to the spiritual, gave more importance to luck than to labour and reduced our women, that is to say, half the Society, into a benumbed mass.

"What a pity! The country which gave birth to the idea of women as Shakti, the country which gave to gods four to eight hands in the pages of the Puranas but visioned the



Prize distribution by the Mother, 1951

goddesses as having a hundred and eight hands, that very country relegated women to a lower level than that of men and deprived them of the right to read the Veda and, worst of all, shut them up within the four walls of the family, lowering their status in society to being cooks and child-bearing machines.

"I have been praying for years: Oh Lord! Grant that our women may rise again to their rightful place as in the days of yore.

"What we see being done in the country to-day for the advancement of women is far from advancement in its true sense. It is here that I see happy signs of true progress. It is here that the Mother seems to have taken upon herself to raise the status of women. It is here, I repeat, that I sense the Vedic ideal taking form."

We hear the echo of the Mother's voice in Satwalekerji's statement : "Men cannot be reckoned young or old by the length of his years. He who marches on and on is, despite his years, young. He who cannot is old. According to the Veda old age begins after 116. Until one was 80 one could not pass for a full-blown youth; only after 116-120 old age could dare set in. Before that, even if death appeared, a true sadhak could defy it and say that his whole life was a ceaseless *yajña* and he must not be stopped from his offering."

He further added: "At the time of the Mahabharata Arjuna was 72 and was reckoned as a full-bloomed youth. The oldest among them all was Bhishma and he was about 170. Leave aside olden days, even 1,400 years ago, the Chinese pilgrims to India left on record the fact of their meeting men of 140 even in lanes and by-lanes of Indian towns. What the Mother has said is wholly true."

In his final interview on the eve of his departure the Mother told him: "When you come to the Ashram, take it to be your home. "

Back in his own place, he wrote: "I feel here like a *prabāsī*; one far away from home, a sojourner. Every morning I have balcony *Darśan* and not a day passes without my feeling the Mother's Presence. "

(*Life in Sri Aurobindo's Ashram* by Narayan Prasad, Edition 2010, pp. 207-12)

Sri Aurobindo Society
Creating the Next Future

Re-design and launch of SAS online presence

Greetings!

It is that time of the much-awaited birth! After months and years, in our case, of labour, love, and learning, on September 19, 2012, the 52nd anniversary of Sri Aurobindo Society, we are happy to share with you our newly redesigned website. The new redesign has a lot of new content as well as old content presented in a new format.

First launched in August 1998, the redesigned website is available at www.aurosociety.org Over the past 14 years, the website has made a huge impact in taking the work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother forward, connecting devotees, seekers, volunteers, and donors from all over the world.

Do take a look at the website and send us your feedback.

We aspire to continue the work of creating a new and more beautiful tomorrow!

Sri Aurobindo Society Web Team

Spandana: Feeling the Pulsation of a Divine Language

One Week Intensive Course on Sanskrit

27th January to 2nd February 2013

Sri Aurobindo Foundation for Indian Culture (SAFIC), Sri Aurobindo Society, Puducherry is going to conduct a weeklong intensive course on Sanskrit from 27th January to 2nd of February 2013. Interested participants may visit our Website www.aurosociety.org for details or contact Dr. Sampadananda Mishra, Director, SAFIC, in the following address. The last date for registration is 15th of December.

Sri Aurobindo Society, Society House,
No. 11, St. Martin Street, Puducherry – 605001, India
Tel : 0413-4209612, 2336396 M : 91-9952888350
Email: sampadanandamishra@gmail.com

Senses and Sensitivity

Workshop on Sensory Writing and Self Awareness

on 28, 29, 30 December 2012

at Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry

(Open to all adults who want to write and discover...)

An exploration in writing creatively from sensory experience, where each step leads us to deeper self awareness. We will experiment and explore the relation between words and senses, silence and expression, sharing and aloneness. Through exercises, walks, activities, readings, sharing and silence, we will go on a creative journey, together and alone. A journey both outward and inward...

The venue will be overlooking Pondicherry beach, with walks in green belts, gardens and peopled markets… all woven in the fabric of our experience.

Contact: Ram Mohan, Mobile: +91 9840541549;
Office: +91 413 2336396/97/98;
Email: workshopsicie@aurosociety.org
contactnow0000@gmail.com

For registration, application and more details
about the workshop, please visit:
http://www.aurosociety.org/WhatsNew.aspx#

Seminar on 'Care'

The annual seminar of the Women's Council will be held as usual on **21, 22, 23 November**, this year, at the Society House, Puducherry. The subject chosen is 'Care'. Interested person may write to: The Secretary, Women's Council, Sri Aurobindo Society, 11, Saint Martin Street, Puducherry-605001.

E-mail: sushila@aurosociety.org • phone: (0413) 2334668

For accommodation: E-mail: accommodation@aurosociety.org
phone: (0413) 2336398

Subject : Advt. about Savitri in AIM – August 2012

Reproduced below is a **gist** of the letter dated 05.09.2012/24.09.2012 received from Sri Aurobindo Ashram pertaining to the advt. about 'Savitri' published by Helios Books on page 40 of the August 2012 edition of All India Magazine for the **information of the readers :**

This letter is with regard to an advertisement which appeared on page 40 of the All India Magazine August 2012 issue pertaining to a publication by Helios Books claiming to be a "republication" of the "priceless original edition of Savitri (1950-51)".

To begin with, a publication of this kind can never be described as a "republication" as that is a complete misnomer. It can either be a "reprint" or a "new edition". There have been 4 earlier editions of Savitri: the 1950-51 edition, the 1954 edition, the 1970 edition also known as SABCL edition, and the 1993 edition. It would be pertinent to note that 99.75 % of the text in all the editions has remained the same.

Based on the instances quoted in letter dt. 28.08.2012, we can say that:

a. There are numerous instances where the text of the "republication" of the "priceless original edition of Savitri (1950-51) differs from all the existing editions of Savitri, including the text of the 1950-51 edition.

b. The so-called "republication" of Savitri contains some text which differs from the 1950-51 edition, but is in agreement with all the three subsequent editions of Savitri, although the advertisement specifically induces the reader to believe that the text is entirely in agreement with the 1950-51 edition.

c. There are other instances in which the text in the "republication" agrees only with the 1993 edition of Savitri, and not with that of any other edition prior to the 1993 edition.

Thus, the "republication" of the "original edition" of Savitri advertised on page 40 of the August 2012 issue of AIM fails to measure up to its advertised claim.

It really does not really matter if someone buys this expensive book as long as the purchase is based on an informed choice and not induced by any misleading advertisement.

Chairman
Sri Aurobindo Society