

SPIRITUAL POWER DIRECT FROM THE SUPREME

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ABSTRACT

India is a land of spiritual light, power and knowledge and there are many names in the history of India who has worked for the spreading of this light for the betterment of Indian society and world community. Sri Aurobindo and The Mother are the names in the Indian Spirituality which secure the special place in the great tradition of Indian Spirituality. How this Spiritual power guides and chooses its instruments on earth, knowing this is the try done in this paper. Writing of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother is found Spiritual Power Direct from the Supreme.

KEYWORDS: Body, Mind, Spiritual Power, The Supreme, Vital

INTRODUCTION

Just as leading luminaries of the 19th century viz, Ram Mohan Roy, Devendranath Tagore, Raj Narayan Bose, Ravindranath Tagore, Madam Blatvastasky, Annie Besant, Ramkrishna Paramhansa, Vivekananda and Raman Maharshi are considered as representative spiritualists, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram are rightly held the representative spiritualists of the twentieth century.

As spiritualists they posit “the Reality or an awakening to the inner reality of our being, a spirit, self, soul which is other than our mind, life and body.” They recognize it, ‘as an inner aspiration to know, to feel, to be that, to enter into contact with the Greater Reality beyond, to be in communion with it and union with it. According to them, it is a turning, a conversion, a transformation of our whole being...’ In view of this they are rightly considered as “Spiritual Power Direct from the Supreme”. Sri Aurobindo was born in Kolkata on 15th August 1872. At the age of seven years he was sent to England for his studies. He lived in England for fourteen years until 1893. He joined ST. Paul’s school in 1884 where he studied Greek and Latin. With the help of his classical knowledge he secured a senior scholarship to join King’s college, Cambridge. He studied there for two years for a degree in classical literature. He also passed the ICS exam as a probationer. But he deliberately failed to appear for the riding test, success at which could enable him to be an ICS officer in India. His stay in England gave him a wide introduction to the culture of ancient, medieval and modern Europe. At this time the Maharaja of Baroda was in London. Sri Aurobindo met him and secured an appointment in the Baroda state service. He worked at Baroda from 1893 to 1906. In 1906, he left Baroda for Kolkata. Then he joined the nationalist political party and was recognized as the most hardened nationalist, advocating complete independence for India.

In 1904 he started practicing yoga and started getting spiritual experiences. In the famous Alipore bomb case he was imprisoned for a year. Continuing his practice of yoga in Alipore jail, he got Vasudev realization. Coming out of prison he left for Pondicherry, in French India in 1910. At Pondicherry, his spiritual progress got intensified. It continued until his death in 1950.

The one whom we endorse as sweet Mother was given three names at birth viz, Blanche, Rachel and Mirra. Of the three, only Mirra came to be used in everyday life. Interestingly, Mirra means 'miracle', even as Blanche means 'white', i.e. Shewta or Mahashewta. Mirra Alfassa was born in Paris, on Sunday, 21st February, 1878 at 10.00 a.m. It was Sri Aurobindo who gave her the name of the mother after she arrived and settled in Pondicherry. It was the Master, too, who further trained his disciples to call her by the name of the Mother. He also prevailed on them to look upon Mirra as their Mother as much in spiritual matters, as for all other purposes. This decision of our Master was, of course, primarily spiritual. It was based on his thorough knowledge of the ancient tradition of conferring on motherhood super most sanctity and honor. It was also in accordance with his numerous experiences as a seer and yogi at Baroda first and later at the Alipore jail in Kolkata, and in Pondicherry.

Has he not placed at the very core and the centre of his unique integral yoga, the integral philosophy, the Divine Mother or the World Mother representing the primordial force of the Supreme? At the head she stands of birth and toil and fate. She is the force, the inevitable word, the magnet of our difficult ascent from the present common humanity to the preordained divinity of the future. Who else knew better than Sri Aurobindo that in all well known countries, civilizations and Mystery traditions the pride of place has been assigned to the mother since time immemorial? Our sacred motherland India, leads all such countries and cultures in this respect. No man knows for how many centuries our beloved Bharat has been proclaiming that one's own mother and one's own motherland are greater far than heaven itself. Similarly one of our sacred Upanishads, viz., the Taittiriya Upanishad, confirms the truth of the same dictum or mahavakya. In the sermon or the convocational message delivered at the time of bidding farewell to the accomplished shishyas or the disciples, the Guru is quoted as saying, first and foremost 'become the one unto whom the mother is his God! Only after this the significant injunctions, other commands are pronounced. They urge upon the young graduates to 'become the one unto whom the father is his God! Become the one unto whom the Guest is his God! This is the commandment, 'the Taittiriya concludes, 'this is the advice! This is the discipline to be enforced by you unto yourself.' Indeed quite remarkable is the prime emphasis placed here on the mother. She figures in the very first sentence of the convocation commandment of the Upanishad.

Sri Aurobindo, the encyclopedic scholar, was equally aware that in many other religions and religious traditions of the world, it as the mother goddess who was adored as 'divine principle and force'. In Judaism, for instance, the mother Goddess figures as the one occult force of the whole creation. She is 'responsible for the maintenance, reproduction and devolution of the form principle. She is the creative consciousness principle'. In the equally ancient Koyi tradition of South America, coexisting with Mayan culture of today's Brazil, Chile, Argentina etc., and the Great Mother is revered as the 'birth-giver'. Likewise in the earlier mystic traditions of Egypt, Greece and Rome, the Creator Mother was worshipped as the 'Gnosis' or 'primordial Intelligence beyond thought and concept.' What however weighed most with Sri Aurobindo in this regard was his seer like visionary insight into the holistic significance of the mother principle. No doubt it stemmed out of his vast study of all kinds of traditions of the world. But the unique place Sri Aurobindo gave to motherhood was chiefly derived from his intimate study of ancient India's Vedic, upanishadic, Tantric and other storehouses of the hidden meaning of effective spirituality. Almost all of them integrally contained the significance of the mother principle as the breath and final spirit of true God knowledge. That is why he evolved and explicated the concept of the Divine Mother in all his writings ranging from the micro size booklet__ The Mother to the mega size treatise, The Life Divine. The ideal on which the attribute mother is built, is thus the foundation of the Integral yoga. All this analysis demonstrates that Sri Aurobindo's concept of mother was not of the worldly order. Far from that, the world Mother of his integral vision is the

consciousness—force, the Adya-shakti, the yoga-maya, of the sole Divine being—Satcitananda. The Divine Mother of this Omnipotent nature has assumed the role of the “Executrix” of the Divine plan of the Supreme. Therefore, it is she, who holds the truth of His intention. It is she who manifests eternally, whereas he is the One who is manifested through her. As such, without the Mother, the Divine is unmanifest. And she, on her part, does not exist without Him. This account goes to elucidate that Sri Aurobindo’s choice of the epithet ‘mother’ for Mirra Alfassa was holistically meaningful. It has all the integral weithage of his spiritual knowledge and spiritual realizations. Mirra Alfassa, too, was pre-eminently qualified to be elevated to the lofty position of the Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. Since her name, Mirra means miracle or wonder; she first proved to be a wonder child and then in course of time became the wonder Mother for all who had the good fortune of being her disciples, devotees, followers and adorers.

As mentioned earlier the Mother was born in Paris on 21st February 1878. Her mother Matheilde Ismalun, was from Alexandria, in Egypt. Her father, Maurice Alfassa was from Adrianapole in Turkey. They met and got married at Alexandria. A few years after that they migrated to France in 1877, and lived in Paris. Without their knowledge young Mirra started developing occult and spiritual qualities and abilities from her earliest childhood itself. Especially in the matter of her yoga sadhana she started it from her very birth. As if to emphasise her uniqueness, even her mother, Mathilde, used to constantly tell her that she was born to realize the highest possible Ideal. Accordingly, Mathilde taught Mirra ‘ the discipline and the necessity of self forgetfulness through concentration on what one is doing in life. As a result, Mother Mirra was spiritually quite conscious even at the age of five. To quote our sweet Mother’s own words, ‘the beginning (of her sadhana) was made in the womb’ of Mathilde. Around the age of five years mother used to feel that a Light and Force above her head penetrated her being and gradually shaped her life. It was from that age that began to unify the divergent parts of her being as also her contradictory wills, around the psychic. This shows that mother’s psychic being was already well developed in her childhood. At seven or thereabouts, Mirra could wield that (psychic) force to correct an injustice, committed by a bully of thirteen.

Extraordinarily, Mirra joined a school to pursue her educational career at the age of nine. But her progress in learning was very fast. On account of that she received on completing her schooling a prize for honorable achievement. She was already a writer by then, and produced her first known writing in the form of a school essay called ‘ The Path of Later On’. During these school days Mirra also read through her father’s 800 volume library. She studied with ease and facility even the special mathematics taught to her brother, Matteo, for his admission to the polytechnic in Paris in those days, i.e., the last decade of the 19th century.

Mirra’s progress in the occult sciences too, was remarkable. It was also accomplished during her girlhood. As part of that knowledge she learnt how to transform physical pain into Ananda. Side by side she learnt tennis and piano, drawing and painting, during girlhood. Between the eleventh and thirteenth years of her early life, Mirra had a series of significant spiritual experiences too. They revealed to her ‘not only the existence of God but also man’s possibility of uniting with him’; man’s possibility of manifesting Him on earth’. This knowledge of a practical discipline for the fulfillment of the possibility, says sweet mother, ‘ was given to me during my body’s sleep by several teachers.’ She was led to call one of them Krishna, even though she knew nothing about India and Indian religion and spirituality at that time. What is more, Mirra became aware that, it was with Him, that the divinework has to be done by her sooner, rather than later. Accordingly as we all know now, she realized on 29th March, 1914, that the Krishna of her early teenage visions was none other than our loving Master, Sri Aurobindo.

Equally marvelous was another extraordinary experience of mother. She has herself recorded it in her prayers and meditations. Between the age of thirteen and fourteen, mother writes, “every night for a year, I went out of my body and rose straight up,” dressed “in a magnificent golden robe...then I would see man, women, children, old men, the sick, the unfortunate,” all “coming out from every side...; as soon as they had touched (the robe) they were comforted and healed.” Such extraordinary occult experiences went on pouring into mother’s teenage. Meanwhile, during the last four years of her teenage, she studied and mastered the art of painting. In keeping with this trend, she utilized the period between her 18th and 29th year (1896-1907), for cultivation of her vital being and aesthetic consciousness. This was done through the leading artists of the day. During the same period Mirra wrote three of her compositions including “A Sapphire Tale” which expresses which expresses the ideal of overmind creation. In two years between her 18th to 20th year, Mother attained a conscious and constant union with the Divine presence, in her all alone, i.e., with absolutely nobody to help her, not even books. An achievement of this order is very rare in the whole history of yogic or spiritual sadhana. It was much later that Mirra came across Swamy Vivekananda’s Raja yoga. It helped the Mother to achieve within a few months a spiritual height which would otherwise have taken years to reach. All such surprising gain was made by her before she was nineteen. At the age of twenty Mirra Alfassa got married to the artist Henri Morriquet and started assisting him in painting. Soon she gave birth to her only child, Andre Morriquet. In this way Mirra the super spiritualist, seems to have intentionally sought to go through the experiences of a woman giving birth to a child. Her purpose was to explore all important avenues of ordinary human experiences and to prove that occult and spiritual knowledge can be gainfully applied to each such experience. Note that she always used to cure her child’s illnesses without ever calling a doctor. More significantly she taught young Andre the occult process of coming out of his body when he was just eight years old. As a yogi she had a spiritual purpose in choosing and going through every aspect of human life. Such a conjecture grows more valid when we learn that she married Paul Richard later in 1910 for the purpose of converting him from his status of vibhuti—the Lord of Falsehood to a non-asuric manifestation. For the same reason she went to Algeria to acquire mastery over the occult sciences from the master occultist Theon, whom she describes as the vibhuti ---of the asuric—the Lord of Death. Adolf Hitler was yet another asuric manifestation whom the Mother successfully outwitted and destroyed. Indeed spiritually purposeful are the ways and acts of Yogic avatars!

Yet another wonderful thing was done by Mirra, the miracle at the age of 20 or so. An Indian mystic met her and gave her a translation of the BhagwadGita. He said to Mother on that occasion, ‘read this and take and take Krishna as the symbol of the immanent Divine, the Divine within you.’ Mirra followed his advice. As a result, in a month the whole work of mastering the Yoga of the Gita was done by her.

It was at the age of 22 that Mirra heard about the Polish occultist Max Theon and his wife. He was the founder of LE MOVEMENT COSMIQUE and editor of its organ LE REVUE COSMIQUE (the cosmic review). She met Theon in 1905 and found him to be ‘a vibhuti of the Lord of Death’. He was as the Mother says, ‘one of the four original Divine emanations who became Asuras. In October 1906 Mother went to Algeria to study occultism from him and from Madam Theon. when Theon tried to overpower her, our Mother told him on the very first day, that her psychic being governs her and that she is not afraid of anything. Madam Theon who was a greater occultist saw the occult crown of twelve pearls over Mother’s head at the very first sight. The occult crown signified that Mirra belonged to a higher region of consciousness, more luminous than the overmind. Madam Theon recognized it and helped Mirra to become totally conscious of the Light. It was absolutely pure, so dazzlingly white that eyes could not look at it. The occult crown had been always with Mother Mirra.

It was in 1906 –07 that Mother also met Paul Richard. He was a theologian and a socialist. He had become a member of Theon's group. Mother cultivated acquaintance with him because she was required to transform him for the sake of evolution.

Mother, after paying a visit to Algeria in 1907, stopped her association with Theons altogether. She got separation from Henri Mriset in 1908. The six years from 1908 to 1914 were a period of Mother's intensive development. In the company of Paul Richard, she read a large number of books on philosophy, religion and spirituality. Such extensive reading equipped her with encyclopedic knowledge. The exercise also led her to the realization of something luminous and true beyond the synthesis of all mental knowledge.

In April-May 1910, Paul Richard showed Mother a photograph of Sri Aurobindo. On May 5th she married Paul Richard to accomplish the occult work she had to do on him. Another spiritually important activity Mother initiated was the commencement of her spiritual diary, Prayers and Meditations, on 2nd Nov. 1912. It was started soon after she had clearly identified the various items of spiritual work needed in the future. The first of the things as Mother noted was to become conscious of the Divine presence and unite with it. Second, realize the higher plane of consciousness; third, put the earth in connection with the various fountains of universal force still sealed to it; fourth, speak to the world the eternal word and collectively establish an ideal society for the flowering of the new race.

From the very beginning of her worldly life Mother used to give evidence of her supersensitivity to things occult, mystical and extrasensory. One example of this kind, not yet noticed here, is her ability to recollect one or the other of her numerous past lives. She used to regain the memory of previous births even as a little girl. Another instance of her occult sensitivity is of her ability to read and feel the coming events of the future. In keeping with this faculty Mother Mirra decided in January- February 1914 that within a certain number of months she would achieve union with her psychic presence, the inner Divine. She no longer had any other thought, with any other concern. Of course, within the next few days the destined meeting of the Mother and the Master on the physical plane was to take place on the 29th March. Accordingly she left France for Pondichery on 8th March 1914. On her way she visited a museum at Cairo, Egypt. As she was looking at a mummy there she got distinct memories of a past life as an ancient Egyptian Queen.

When Mother first met Sri Aurobindo, she could recognize in him the well-known being, whom she used to call Krishna. With reference to her spiritual experiences Mother described it as a 'massive silence' where she did not have a thought in her mind, where she was absolutely in a complete blank. On the part of the Mother, her self-surrender was absolute and unreserved. On touching the feet of Sri Aurobindo, on the same occasion, she underwent the experience of a descent of supramental power into her. It led Mother to realize that the descent of power was the true significance of 'pranam' or touching of feet so common in our country here. More significantly still Mother had the Kundalini experience on 21st July, 1914. With a rich plethora of such out of the world spiritual experiences garnered for about 11 months, Mirra departed from Pondicherry on 22nd Feb. 1915, due to French govt. regulations during war period. She left behind her psychic being with Sri Aurobindo. So absolute was her surrender to him that she was able to recover from a very serious illness by simply writing a letter to him on 30th March, 1915.

Mother returned to India on 24th April, 1920 to settle in the country permanently. The first important achievement of the Mother after her second coming was Paul Richard's decision to go away. By this time Sri Aurobindo had brought down the supramental light into the mental world and was trying to transform the mind. But he found it an endless work.

Nothing seemed to get done. Then Mother gave him her personal impression of how to go about it. Adopting her method, both of them descended almost immediately from the Mind to the Vital, and so on quite rapidly, leaving the Mind as it was fully in the light but not permanently transformed. Actually, it was mother who went through the experience practically, objectively, whereas Sri Aurobindo experienced it only in his consciousness, not in the body. But her body always participated. When she descended into the inconscient in this manner, she found the Divine presence there, in the midst of Darkness. Thus the non-alienative collaboration of the two supreme spiritualists continued from the time of Mother's return in 1920. From that point of their ascent onwards, higher and higher levels of consciousness had to be fixed in matter. By 1926, the overmind was brought down into Matter and an overmental creation came into view. When Mother brought the overmind down into matter, here on earth, miracles and all kinds of things were beginning to happen, for e.g., she asked all the gods to incarnate. In this regard, she saw Krishna who had always been in rapport with Sri Aurobindo and asked him to come down in his body. It was Nov.24th 1926. Thus the realization of 1920 made possible the descent of Krishna into Sri Aurobindo's body. Krishna consented to descend and be fixed there as a permanent presence. As a realization of utmost significance, it marked a turning point in Sri Aurobindo's sadhana. For it was important FOR THE CREATION as a whole, not alone for himself. Then onwards the descent of the supermind into the inconscient, and manifestation of the supermind in material life became the clear object on which Sri Aurobindo and the Mother worked together. A major portion of this work, in its external aspect was the development and organization of their research laboratory that was Sri Aurobindo ashram. It was created for a dynamic sadhana which would accelerate the evolution of the supermind in the life of the earth. The entire organization embodied the dynamic principles of the supramental yoga. All activities were under minute observation of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, everything was under test. In this task the Mother began as Shakti in action. After all she was the Divine Mother though in an appearance of humanity which she had assumed in order to bring down the supramental. Her contribution in what can be termed as the "collaborational" objective was in the form of supramental sadhana. It was unique since it was along a path never trod by anyone. No doubt Sri Aurobindo did it in principle. But he gave the charge of doing it in the body to the Mother. But when they were together engaged in the stupendous task 'all...hostile forces were fighting.' They tried to kill the Mother. But Sri Aurobindo always saved her. All this seemed to create very great BODILY difficulties for him. Consequently he concluded that one of them must leave the body. They discussed this a great deal and Mother told Sri Aurobindo that she would like to leave her body. But the Master intervened and stopped Mother from doing so because; she 'alone could do the material things.' After this decision, Sri Aurobindo gradually let himself fall ill and left his body. He however knew that Mother's body was indispensable for the work. 'Without your body the work cannot be done', he said.

After Sri Aurobindo left his body, it was the Mother's spiritual task to be the 'protagonist and continuator of His work', the work of preparing the ground for bringing about the supramental manifestation on the earth. Mother says in order to be able to continue the work, the first thing was to continue to be in her body. When he went out of his body, Sri Aurobindo entered into Mother's. Mother understood that now onwards she had the entire responsibility for all the work and for the sadhana. Therefore, during the first ten years (1951-1960) after Sri Aurobindo's passing, Mother made one set of things ready, the most significant of which was the Ashram School. Mother enlarged and declared it to be the Sri Aurobindo International University Centre. Next, on 29th February, 1956, she brought about the first supramental manifestation. From that day, she began to have experiences of the supermind in Matter. On 7th Nov. 1958, for instance, she had the experience of 'a formless, limitless Vast, generator of all creation at the very bottom of inconscience'.

Towards the end of 1958 Mother formulated the central question of how to fix the supermind in the body. On July 24th 1950, the supramental light entered directly into her body and ushered her into the world of truth. She remained there only for one hour because she had to withdraw and set to work again. In this way, the transformation of the body was brought about. Side by side, the Mother made discoveries with regard to the nature and origin of pain and Death. Gradually, she was also building a new material body—body of the supramental light and power. In all these various ways, she hewed a new path and a new curve of development in terrestrial evolution. A turning point in Mother's work for the earth came in March 1962 in the form of the beginning of the formation of a 'new type' on earth. During the night of April 12, 1962, the old body was utterly failing on account of the formidable pulsations of the eternal, stupendous Love which was carrying the universe further in manifestation. But this experience meant that the Supramental Manifestation was realized. At that instant, the new "something" entered a terrestrial body. Now, 'there only remained to develop the new body.' For that work, eleven years were left to Mother before coming to the Mystery of 1973. In those eleven years the incredible "process" unfolded step by step. Finally in the year 1973 something happened, perhaps the complete fusion of the two worlds. However, it remained the 'most extraordinary secret'. For Mother left her body without revealing it. It was a secret in which the experiences of a new terrestrial transition were laid out step by step. Before her, Sri Aurobindo's secret as well. For they are the same. That secret had nothing to do with philosophy, but with living evolution. Both of them came to open that new evolutionary stage viz., a *deathless state* other than physical immortality.

CONCLUSIONS

This shows the great spiritual journey of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother which is totally for the mankind and future mankind and somewhere we find the promises of the superman and supermen hood in their writings. Their writing is the guide for those who want to march rapidly in the evolutionary journey of consciousness.

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