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BIRTHDAYS

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BIRTHDAYS

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

CONTENTS

Significance of Birthdays	...	5
Each Thing Has a Kind of Rhythm	...	7
New Birth	...	26
Reminiscences and Anecdotes	...	29
Two Lotuses	...	31

Editorial note: The Mother has uplifted and transfigured the commonest of events by Her touch of Wisdom and Grace. One such even is birthday. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have given it a special significance thereby turning the day when our body is born into a means of a greater birth, the birth of the soul in the form it inhabits. Though our bodily birth may be the source of joy to those who are near and dear to us, it is a day when we are face to face with our divine parents giving us an opportunity to remind ourselves of the deeper purpose of our existence. This issue is dedicated to the significance of this day that comes every year in our life as a wonderful opportunity to rekindle our core aspiration and lifting the tongue of sacrifice take a leap towards the future.



Sweet Mother, What is the meaning of one's birthday, apart from its commemorative character? How can one take advantage of this occasion?

Because of the rhythm of the universal forces, a person is supposed to have a special receptivity on his birthday each year.

He can therefore take advantage of this receptivity by making good resolutions and fresh progress on the path of his integral development.

CWM 16: 308

The Mother

Significance of Birthdays

(Conversations with the Mother recollected by Mona Sarkar. The original French version of this talk was read out to the Mother.)

It is your birthday tomorrow?

Yes, Mother.

How old will you be?

Twenty-six, Mother.

I shall see you tomorrow then, and give you something special. You will see, I do not mean a material thing — that, I shall give you a card and all that — but something.... You will see tomorrow. Now, go home and prepare yourself quietly so that you may be ready to receive it.

Yes, Mother.

Do you know, my child, what “Bonne Fête” signifies, that is, what we wish here on the birthday?

Like that, I know what it means, Mother, but not the special significance You want to tell me. Yes, it is truly a special day in one's life. It is one of the days in the year when the Supreme descends into us — or when we are face to face with the Eternal — one of those days when our soul comes in contact with the Eternal and, if we remain a little conscious, we can feel His Presence within us. If we make a little effort on this day, we accomplish the work of many lives, as in a lightning flash. That is why I give so much importance to the birthday — because what one gains in one day is truly something incomparable. And it is for

this that I too work to open the consciousness a little upward so that one may come face to face with the Eternal. My child, it is a very, very special day, for it is the day of decision, the day when one can truly make a tremendous progress, when one can unite with the Supreme Consciousness. For on this day, the Lord lifts us up to the highest possible region so that our soul which is a portion of this Eternal Flame, can unite with it and absorb from the Source.

This day is truly an opportunity in life. One is so open and receptive that one can assimilate all that is given. I can do many things, — that is why it is important.

It is one of the days when the Lord Himself opens wide the doors for us. It is as though He were inviting us to further revive the flame of aspiration. It is one of the days which He gives us. We too, by our personal effort, could attain to this, but it would be long, hard and not so easy.

And this — this is a chance in life — the day of Grace.

18.1.60

(Mother's comment at a later date)

It is an occult phenomenon that occurs invariably, without our knowledge, on this particular day of the year. The soul leaves behind the body and journeys up and up till it merges into the Source in order to replenish itself and absorb from the Supreme, Its Power, Light and Ananda and comes down charged for a whole year. Then again and again... it continues like this, year after year.

This day is truly an opportunity in life. One is so open and receptive that one can assimilate all that is given.

The Mother

Each Thing Has a Kind of Rhythm

[Mother reads from Sri Aurobindo's The Synthesis of Yoga, "The Four Aids". Then a sadhak asks a question:]

Sweet Mother, here: "Last comes the instrumentality of Time, KDa; for in all things there is a cycle of their action and a period of the divine movement...." What is this period of the divine movement?

For each thing it is different.

For each activity, each realisation, each movement, there is a definite period of time, which differs. There are countless periods of time which are entangled; but each thing is regulated by a kind of rhythm which is this thing's own rhythm.

You see, for the facility of their outer existence, men have divided time more or less arbitrarily into years, months, weeks, days, hours, minutes, seconds, etc.; it is a rhythm that's more or less arbitrary, because it has been created by man, but it has in itself a certain reality, for it corresponds to universal movements... as far as possible. And that is why, by the way, we celebrate the birthday, for example: because there is a certain rhythm in each one's existence which is established by this regular return of circumstances analogous to those in which he was born.

And all movements — when you observe them, you become aware that they have a certain rhythm — the movements of inner consciousness, for example, not only from the point of view of understanding but that of personal reactions, of the ups and downs in progress; of a fairly regular periodic return, at once of advancing and recoiling, of difficulties and of helps. But if each person is attentive he realises that his own rhythm

is absolutely particular to him; it is not the same rhythm as his neighbour's. But even as the seasons follow a certain rhythm, regular enough on the whole, so the individual life has its seasons. And when one studies oneself attentively, one finds out that there are even certain repetitions of analogous circumstances at regular intervals. Even, very sensitive people become aware that there are certain days of the week or certain hours of the day when they can do things more easily. Some of them have particular difficulties on particular days and at particular hours; some on the contrary have better inspirations at particular moments — but every one has to find this out in himself by observation. Naturally it is far from being absolute, it is not strict, and if it is troublesome, it can be eliminated very easily simply by a little effort of resolute will. But if it helps, one can make use of it.

And all this, each thing having its own rhythm, well, it makes an extremely complicated criss-crossing of rhythms, which results in what we see: something which seems to have none — because it is too complicated, it is too complex.

Q: How can we make use of it, Sweet Mother?

Well, if... let us say, you know... we are speaking of yoga... if you observe in yourself a certain repetition of conditions, for example, that at a particular hour, a certain time of day, in certain circumstances, it is easier for you to concentrate or meditate, well, you make use of that by doing it at that time.

Naturally, you must not become its slave; one can use it but it must not become a necessity so that if the hour has gone by one can't meditate then. But if it is a good help, one uses the help; it's all a matter of observation.

If you study yourself you can become aware that in the year

certain periods come due not only to personal conditions but more general ones — conditions of Nature in general. There are times when you meet more difficulties in the sadhana; there are times, on the contrary, when you feel in yourself a greater push for the growth of knowledge and consciousness. This helps you in the sense that, if at a given time you find yourself in the midst of special difficulties or something that seems like a stoppage, instead of lamenting you tell yourself, "Why, it's the usual time; it's because we are at this particular time of the year." And you wait with patience for the time to pass; or do what you can, but without being discouraged and saying, "Ah, look, I am not getting on, I am not making any progress." It helps you to be reasonable.

And naturally one can take one more step and take precautions in such a way... inner precautions to be independent of these external influences. But this comes much later, when one begins to be the conscious master of one's sadhana. That comes afterwards.

CWM 7: 332-34

The Mother

There is a rhythm in everything unheard by the physical ear and by that rhythm things exist.

CWSA 30: 283

Sri Aurobindo

I don't see why people in general exalt their birthdays. Of course, you wrote once that on birthdays the physical is more open and receptive to the Mother than on other days.

It is not a question of a physical birthday or of the body — it is taken as an occasion for opening a new year of life with a growing new birth within. That is the meaning in which the Mother takes the birthday.

CWSA 32: 424-25

Sweet Mother, I would like to know the true meaning of birthdays, for it is an important day here.

From the viewpoint of the inner nature, the individual is more receptive on his birthday from year to year, and thus it is an opportune moment to help him to make some new progress each year.

Blessings.

CWM 16: 398-99

Right Use of Birthday Interviews

Why should you decide beforehand that your birthday is spoiled? You have only to throw off all these undesirable ideas and feelings which proceed from a still imperfectly purified part of the external being and take the right attitude which you should always have when you come to the Mother. There should be no idea of what others have or have not—your relation is between the Mother and yourself and has nothing to do with others. Nothing should exist for you but yourself and the Divine — yourself receiving, her forces flowing into you.

To secure that better, do not spend the time at your disposal in speech — especially if anything of the depression remains with you, it will waste the time in discussing things which cannot help the true consciousness to predominate. Concentrate, open

yourself and let the Mother bring you back to the psychic condition by what she will pour into you in meditation and silence.

Mother, you asked me to write what I would like to ask for my birthday. Really I do not know. You know best. I would only pray that I may become utterly devoted to you and Sri Aurobindo in every part of my being, completely open to you, and that my faith may become perfect.

That is all right then. Mother will give what you want.

*

Since I saw Mother on my birthday I feel I am living a new life in which there is a new intimacy with her. Is it true?

If you feel so — but it can be no more than the seed of a new birth, for it has to be realised by a greater inner opening.

*

It seems I have learnt a lot about myself yesterday, my birthday, when Mother gave me an interview. It was not a theoretical knowledge, but a kind of realisation or experienced knowledge and maybe a Force that she gave. I no more feel so weak or helpless or a slave to my defects and imperfections. Rather there is a growing surety that I shall be able to get rid of my whole lower nature.

It is what we call growing conscious — a perception of which the base is the psychic though it may take place in the mind or vital or physical. No doubt the Force that woke it up came from the Mother.

CWSA 32: 525-26

Sri Aurobindo

Alive in a dead rotating universe
We whirl not here upon a casual globe
Abandoned to a task beyond our force;
Even through the tangled anarchy called Fate
And through the bitterness of death and fall
An outstretched Hand is felt upon our lives.
It is near us in unnumbered bodies and births;
In its unslackening grasp it keeps for us safe
The one inevitable supreme result
No will can take away and no doom change,
The crown of conscious Immortality,
The godhead promised to our struggling souls
When first man's heart dared death and suffered life.
One who has shaped this world is ever its lord:
Our errors are his steps upon the way;
He works through the fierce vicissitudes of our lives,
He works through the hard breath of battle and toil,
He works through our sins and sorrows and our tears,
His knowledge overrules our nescience;
Whatever the appearance we must bear,
Whatever our strong ills and present fate,
When nothing we can see but drift and bale,
A mighty Guidance leads us still through all.
After we have served this great divided world
God's bliss and oneness are our inborn right.
A date is fixed in the calendar of the Unknown,
An anniversary of the Birth sublime:
Our soul shall justify its chequered walk,
All will come near that now is naught or far.
These calm and distant Might's shall act at last.

Savitri: 59

Sri Aurobindo



About the birthdays. There is a rhythm (one among many) in the play of the world-forces which is connected with the sun and planets. That makes the birthday a day of possible renewal when the physical being is likely more plastic. It is for this reason that Mother sees people on their birthdays.

CWSA 32: 524

Sri Aurobindo

To R. On Her Birthday

The repetition of thy gracious years
 Brings back once more thy natal morn.
Upon the crest of youth thy life appears,—
 A wave upborne.

Amid the hundreds thronging Ocean's floor
 A wave upon the crowded sea
With regular rhythm pushing towards the shore
 Our life must be.

The power that moves it is the Ocean's force
 Invincible, eternal, free,
And by that impulse it pursues its course
 Inevitably.

We, too, by the Eternal Might are led
 To whatsoever goal He wills.
Our helm He grasps, our generous sail outspread
 His strong breath fills.

Exulting in the grace and strength of youth
 Pursue the Ocean's distant bound,
Trusting the Pilot's voice, the Master's ruth
 That rings us round.

Rejoice and fear not for the waves that swell,
 The storms that thunder, winds that sweep;
Always our Captain holds the rudder well,
 He does not sleep.

If in the trough of the enormous sea
 Thou canst not find the sky for spray,
Fear never, for our Sun is there with thee
 By night and day.

Even those who sink in the victorious flood,
 Where do they sink? Into His breast.
He who to some gives victory, joy and good,
 To some gives rest.

But thou, look to the radiant days that wait
 Beyond the driving rain and storm.
I have seen the vision of a happier fate
 Brightening thy form.

Confident of His grace, expect His will;
 Let Him lead; though hidden be the bourne,
See Him in all that happens; that fulfil
 For which thou wert born.

CWSA 2: 280-81

Sri Aurobindo

Sri Aurobindo's Birthday Messages for Disciples

Live always as if you were under the very eye of the Supreme and of the Divine Mother. Do nothing, try to think and feel nothing that would be unworthy of the Divine Presence.

*

Go below the surface of the consciousness deep within, for there you will find the soul's profound quietude, luminous silence, freedom and spiritual wideness, there the direct touch and presence of the Divine.

*

May the inner Sun tranquillise and illumine the mind and awaken fully the heart and guide it.

*

In a quietude of the mind open to the presence of the Divine in your heart and everywhere; in a still mind and heart the Divine is seen like the sun in still water.

*

Rise into the higher consciousness, let its light control and transform the nature.

*

By the heart's self-giving the Presence and the Influence will be there even in the inconscience and prepare the nature for the true light and consciousness through the whole range of the being.

*

Put stress always on the aspiration within; let that get depth and steadiness in the heart; the outer obstacles of mind and the vital will recede of themselves with the growth of the heart's love and aspiration.

*

Keep the mind and heart open and turned inward and upward so that when the touch comes from within or the flow from

above, you may be ready to receive it.

*

To keep the soul ready for the Divine Grace so that it may be ready to receive it when it comes.

*

A persistent will for the work to be done in us and in the world is what is most needed; there is a sure spiritual result, the growth of the consciousness and the soul's readiness for the touch of the Divine Light and Power.

*

When the Light enters into the Inconscience which hedges in all our being and prevents or limits the manifestation of the true consciousness in us, when it inhibits the habits and recurrences and constant repetition of the same stimuli which besiege us and rise from the subconscious, then only can the nature be wholly free and respond only to the Truth from above.

*

In faith and confidence and joy on the quiet and sunlit path towards the home of Light and Ananda.

*

My blessings on K for the year of her life that begins today.

*

My blessings on your birthday. May you grow in spirit with this new year of life.

*

My blessings for the day and the year. Grow in faith, grow in light, grow in consciousness.

*

A veil behind the heart, a lid over the mind divide us from the Divine. Love and devotion rend the veil, in the quietude of the mind the lid thins and vanishes.

CWSA 35: 839

Sri Aurobindo

My blessings for your birthday. May this year be a step forward in consciousness and towards union with the Divine.

*

My blessings for the year. May it bring to you growth in consciousness towards the Divine.

*

My blessings on your birthday. May this be a year of more and more progress both in your inner and your outer being.

*

Devotion to the Divine, fidelity to his work and obedience to his will are the first supports of the Yoga. On these pillars all the rest can be supported.

*

Tranquillise and widen your consciousness; go deeper into your soul.

*

A clarified consciousness with strength to reject all inconscience and receive all that comes from the Light, this should be the aim before you.

*

Aspire always to grow more and more conscious so that all the small obstacles shall disappear from the physical consciousness and the obscurer parts of the vital nature.

*

Keep yourself ready by faith and self-opening to receive the Light when it comes.

*

Let the mind be quiet and receive the Light; let the vital be quiet and receive the Force that delivers.

*

Let the year that is beginning mark a definitive stage in the growth of your psychic being and its power over your nature and your life.

*

Continue to open yourself and the psychic consciousness will grow in you and the Light refine and illumine whatever is left of the shadows in the mind and vital being.

*

An increasing advance on the road to the entire psychic change is what is most important in the sadhana, for that is the straight road to the spiritual transformation. Devotion, harmony and scrupulousness in work, a growing inner perception and consciousness, more and more fading of the more vehement movements of the vital ego are among the more prominent landmarks on the road.

*

Matter, blind to the Light, deaf to the call, the material consciousness and material life are the last and most obstinate refuge of the Inconscient and its resistance. There, the nearer the light, the higher it raises its wall of resistance. When that is overcome, the decisive transformation can have an open way.

CWSA 35: 838-43

Sri Aurobindo

Let the new birth become manifest in your heart and radiate in calm and joy and take up all the parts of your being, mind and vision and will and feeling and life and body. Let each date in your life be a date of its growth and greater completeness till all in you is the child of the Mother. Let the Light and Power and Presence envelop you and protect and cherish and foster, till all in your inner and outer existence is one movement and an expression of its peace and strength and Ananda.

CWSA 35: 838

Sri Aurobindo

To persevere in turning towards the Light is what is most demanded. The Light is nearer to us than we think and at any time its hour may come.

*

Efface the stamp of ego from the heart and let the love of the Mother take its place. Cast from the mind all insistence on your personal ideas and judgments, then you will have the wisdom to understand her. Let there be no obsession of self-will, ego-drive in the act, love of personal authority, attachment to personal preference, then the Mother's force will be able to act clearly in you and you will get the inexhaustible energy for which you ask and your service will be perfect.

*

Fidelity, devotion, self-giving, selfless work and service, constant aspiration are the simplest and most effective means by which the soul can be made ready and fit to be in the abiding presence of the Divine.

*

To light always and keep alight the psychic fire within, the fire of aspiration, devotion and self-giving — not to stifle it with the damp smouldering logs of vital desire and egoistic reactions. If that becomes permanent and continuous, then it will be easy to bring down the spiritual transformation.

*

Clarity of knowledge and inner self-vision, subjugation of the ego, love, scrupulousness in selfless and dedicated works, are the four wheels of the chariot of Yoga. One who has them will progress safely on the path.

CWSA35:246-47,838,841,840

Sri Aurobindo

Prayers for a Sadhak and other messages

Deliver me from anger, ingratitude and foolish pride. Make me calm, humble and gentle. Let me feel your divine control in my work and in all my action.

*

I pray to be purified from self-will and self-assertion so that I may become docile and obedient to the Mother and a fit instrument for her work, surrendered and guided by her Grace in all I do.

*

May I henceforth with a firm determination cast away from me my faults and defects and may I do it with energy and perseverance till I succeed entirely. May I get rid of all arrogance, quarrelsomeness, self-esteem and vanity, disobedience and revolt against the Mother, hatred and rancour against others, violence of speech and conduct, falsehood, self-assertion and demand, discontent and grumbling. May I be friendly to all and without malice against anyone. May I become a true child of the Mother.

*

You must make grow in you the peace that is born of the certitude of victory.

Keep firm faith in the victory of the Light and face with calm equanimity the resistances of Matter and human personality to their own transformation.

*

Our blessings are with you always. Persevere and have full confidence.

CWSA 35: 843-44

The Mother's Birthday Messages to disciples

My dear child, my love and blessings are and will be with you throughout the year. Let them help you to make one more progress on the way towards the divine goal.

*

Let this year be a year of progress and transformation — one more step on the way leading to the Divine Realisation.

*

Let this year be for you the year of a complete opening and of the breaking of all limitations.

*

Let this year bring you the true faith — a faith that no darkness can obscure.

*

A grain of practice is worth a mountain of theories.

“Lord, on this anniversary day of my birth, grant that the power to know changes in me into a power to transform myself integrally.”

*

A bonne fête!

A new birth also, the birth into a new consciousness in which you will be above all little personal reactions because you will constantly feel in your heart the presence of the Divine; may it give you the force to surmount all obstacles, all pettiness and all difficulties.

With my love and my blessings.

*

On this day, we take the decision to make a decisive step towards the victory of truth.

Each year that passes should be — and necessarily is — a new conquest.

Let a decisive step be taken this year towards His Victory.

*

With this new year that starts for you, you must start a new life, with a renewed resolution to drive away from your consciousness and action all that deforms, diminishes, obscures and finally stops your progress and impairs your health.

In your effort for inner growth and purification, you can be sure of being sustained and helped by my force and my blessings.

*

Bonne Fête!

May this new year be for you a year of progress in the perfection of work and of consecration, in sincerity, energy and peace. With my blessings.

*

Bonne Fête!

With my blessings for a year of perfect consecration and integral progress in love and peace.

*

Bonne Fête

In silent endurance, one step forward towards the victory, with the help of eternal love.

*

It is the lesson of life that always in this world everything fails a man — only the Divine does not fail him, if he turns entirely to the Divine. It is not because there is something bad in you that blows fall on you—blows fall on all human beings because they are full of desire for things that cannot last and they lose them or, even if they get, it brings disappointment and cannot satisfy them. To turn to the Divine is the only truth in life.

CWSA 35: 844

Sri Aurobindo

Bonne Fête

To mark one more step on the luminous road leading to the Divine Realisation in Peace, Love and Joy.

*

Bonne Fête

With my love for a life of collaboration and my blessings for the prolonged continuation of this happy collaboration in peace and love.

Bonne Fête

With my love, my trust and my blessings for transformation. Forward to the Realisation.

CWM 15: 198-201

The Mother

The Master of our works respects our nature even when he is transforming it; he works always through the nature and not by any arbitrary caprice. This imperfect nature of ours contains the materials of our perfection, but inchoate, distorted, misplaced, thrown together in disorder or a poor imperfect order. All this material has to be patiently perfected, purified, reorganised, new-moulded and transformed, not hacked and hewn and slain or mutilated, not obliterated by simple coercion and denial. This world and we who live in it are his creation and manifestation, and he deals with it and us in a way our narrow and ignorant mind cannot understand unless it falls silent and opens to a divine knowledge. In our errors is the substance of a truth which labours to reveal its meaning to our groping intelligence. The human intellect cuts out the error and the truth with it and replaces it by another half-truth half-error; but the Divine Wisdom suffers our mistakes to continue until we are able to arrive at the truth hidden and protected under every false cover. Our sins are the misdirected steps of a seeking Power that aims, not at sin, but at perfection, at something that we might call a

divine virtue. Often they are the veils of a quality that has to be transformed and delivered out of this ugly disguise: otherwise, in the perfect providence of things, they would not have been suffered to exist or to continue. The Master of our works is neither a blunderer nor an indifferent witness nor a dallier with the luxury of unneeded evils. He is wiser than our reason and wiser than our virtue.

CWSA 23: 245-46

Sri Aurobindo

Let this day of your birth be for you an occasion to give yourself a little more, a little better to the Divine. Let your consecration be more total, your devotion more ardent, your aspiration more intense.

Open yourself to the New Light and walk with a joyful step on the path.

Resolve on this day that it may be thus and the day will not have passed in vain.

CWM 15: 199

The Mother

New Birth

The psychic new birth

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

CWSA 30: 337-38

Sri Aurobindo

What is new birth

What is called “new birth” is the birth into the spiritual life, the spiritual consciousness; it is to carry in oneself something of the spirit which, individually, through the soul, can begin to rule the life and be the master of existence. But in the supramental world, the spirit will be the master of this entire world and all its manifestations, all its expressions, consciously, spontaneously, naturally...

In the individual existence, that is what makes all the difference; so long as one just speaks of the spirit and it is something one has read about, whose existence one vaguely knows about, but not a very concrete reality for the consciousness, this means that one is not born into the spirit. And when one is born into the spirit, it becomes something much more concrete, much more living, much more real, much more tangible than the whole material world. And this is what makes the essential difference between beings. When *that* becomes spontaneously real — the true, concrete existence, the atmosphere one can freely breathe — then one knows one has crossed over to the other side. But so long as it is something rather vague and hazy — you have heard about it, you know that it exists, but... it has no concrete reality — well, this means that the new birth has not yet taken place. As long as you tell yourself, “Yes, this I can see, this I can touch, the pain I suffer from, the hunger that torments me, the sleep that makes me feel heavy, this is real, this is concrete...” (*Mother laughs*), that means that you have not yet crossed over to the other side, you are not born into the spirit.

CWM 9: 430

The Mother

The vast majority of men are like prisoners

In fact, the vast majority of men are like prisoners with all the doors and windows closed, so they suffocate, which is quite natural. But they have with them the key that opens the doors and windows, and they do not use it.... Certainly there is a time when they don't know they have the key, but long after they have come to know it, long after they have been told about it, they hesitate to use it and doubt whether it has the power to open the doors and windows or even that it is a good thing to open them! And even when they feel that "after all, it might be good", there remains some fear: "What will happen when these doors and windows are opened?..." and they are afraid. They are afraid of being lost in that light and freedom. They want to remain what they call "themselves". They like their falsehood and their bondage. Something in them likes it and goes on clinging to it. They still have the impression that without their limits they would no longer exist.

That is why the journey is so long, that is why it is difficult. For if one truly consented to cease to exist, everything would become so easy, so swift, so luminous, so joyful — but perhaps not in the way men understand joy and ease. In truth, there are very few people who do not enjoy fighting. There are very few who could accept the absence of night, few can conceive of light except as the opposite of darkness: "Without shadows there would be no picture. Without struggle, there would be no victory. Without suffering there would be no joy." That is what they think, and so long as one thinks in this way, one is not yet born into the spirit.

CWM 9: 430-31

The Mother

Reminiscences and Anecdotes

Champaklal's Birthday

Today, on the eve of my birthday, Mother tied a tulsi garland around my neck, saying: "Tie yourself with devotion." As you know, devotion is the significance she had given to tulsi.

Champaklal Speaks, 1.2.1929

Dyuman's Birthday

In those days Mother gave darshan from the small terrace (the one above Madhav's office) to inmates collected in the courtyard below. That terrace used to be swept by Pujalal. And it was Dyuman's work to sweep the terrace outside Mother's salon — the one above his own room. Dyuman and Pujalal would go up by a ladder from the southern side of Madhav's office.

The door from the salon to Dyuman's terrace was normally kept closed because just beside it Sri Aurobindo would sometimes sit and attend to correspondence. The Mother's couch was next to the western wall. At times Sri Aurobindo and the Mother would go on working till early in the morning. And whenever Mother wanted to speak to Dyuman while he was sweeping, she would open the door just a little, peep out and speak to him.

Mother told Dyuman that today Sri Aurobindo had answered 72 letters - a most remarkable thing!

She also told him: "Today is Wednesday, there is special cooking in the kitchen. And it is your birthday. So you will tell Tara to make some special dishes." And so eleven dishes in all were cooked.

Champaklal Speaks: 19.6.1935



Two Lotuses

I wanted to offer something to the Mother. And I got the idea of painting two lotuses, one white and the other red.

Curiously, I received two beautiful lotuses and took up the painting. But due to other work I could not finish them in a day. These too, like my other paintings, I did during my lunch time as it gave me great joy. It took some days before I could finish them little by little. Naturally it would have been better if the colouring could have been done in one sitting. However the result was not bad and it was with great joy that I took the paintings to Mother on my birthday on 2 February 1940.

She received them very well indeed and exclaimed: "Oh! Very pretty! Very pretty!" She wondered how I could get time to do them. She took them in both hands and with a broad smile said: "I give them to you, Champaklal! Take them, they are for you. They are very pretty. You keep them."

I did not answer and did not take them. And she repeated: "Take them, Champaklal, I give them to you as my present."

C: "But Mother! I have done them for you."

Seeing the state of my mind she found a way out. She gave another broad smile and said softly, almost in a whisper: "Champaklal, I will take them to Sri Aurobindo and I will ask him to write on them."

I said: "Mother! Are you taking them to Sri Aurobindo? If so, it would be very nice if you ask him to write the significance. Mother! Sri Aurobindo will write on the white lotus and you will write on the red one."

When Mother brought them to Sri Aurobindo I was there. She showed them to him and said: "See, how nice they are! Today is Champaklal's birthday; he has done these paintings for me. If you write the significance on them I will give them to

him. He wants you to write on the white lotus and I on the red."

With a beautiful affectionate smile Sri Aurobindo said: "Umm." Then he wrote above the white lotus:

Aditi

The Divine Mother

And under the red lotus he wrote:

To Champaklal

With blessings

2.2.40

Sri Aurobindo

After writing, he looked at me and gave a sweet smile. Then above the red lotus Mother wrote:

The Avatar

Sri Aurobindo

And under the white lotus she wrote:

To Champaklal

With blessings to my dear child

2.2.40

Mother

Then Mother told me not to show the lotuses to anybody.

But you know that after many years blocks were made out of these paintings and printed for distribution. Do not ask me why I was told not to show them to anybody at one time as later things were changed. Obviously circumstances changed and the Mother never stood rigidly by what she said on an earlier occasion under different conditions. There are so many instances of this kind.

Champaklal Speaks: pp. 102-06

First Alphabet

Today it was the birthday of a child. The parents wanted her to learn the first alphabet from the Mother. Mother was gracious and she gave a pen in the hands of the little one and made her write MA in English.

Champaklal Speaks: pp. 130-31

A monkey's birthday

Yvonne had brought Thoth, the monkey she had adopted, to the Mother as it was his birthday today. The interview took place in the Music room. I was there by Mother's side.

It "was interesting that from the moment Thoth came into the room he behaved not only with Mother but even with me as if he knew us both. He sat in Mother's lap, folded his hands and did namaskar and looked at her so wonderfully. The Mother gave him the flower *Sri Aurobindo's compassion* to eat; he was very fond of it. He played for a while, then jumped and sat on my head and played with me too! So very human!

Mother always helped wherever she saw some possibility.

Champaklal Speaks: pp. 253

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Flower on the Cover:

The New Birth

*Birth into the true consciousness, that of
the Divine Presence in us.*

(Spiritual significance and explanation given by the Mother)

Botanical Name: Origanum majorana