



All India Magazine
May 2024

Pralaya



Blossoming of Nature

Abundant and strong, nothing can stop its growth.

(Spiritual significance and explanation given by the Mother)

Botanical name: Calluna vulgaris

Ling, Scots heather

Tiny fragrant rose pink bell-shaped flowers densely borne in one-sided spike like terminal racemes. A small evergreen shrub.

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Editor: Dr. Alok Pandey

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Phone Nos:(0413) 2336396-97-98

Email: info@aurosociety.org Website: www.aurosociety.org

PRALAYĀ

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

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Editorial note: *There is much talk about doomsday prophesy since the beginning of this millennium. At the same time there is talk about the coming of a New Age, Satyuga as it is called. There is perhaps a partial truth in both of these speculations caught by the human imagination but little understood. The old world is indeed dying and a new world is taking shape. What this means and what are its implications is the subject of this issue titled Pralaya, or the dissolution of the world, as it is called.*



I have no intention of doing so — even if all smashed; I would look beyond the smash to the new creation. As for what is happening in the world, it does not upset me because I knew all along that things would happen in that fashion. I never had any illusions about Gandhi's satyagraha — it has only fulfilled my prediction that it would end in a great confusion or a great fiasco and my only mistake was that I put an "or" where there should have been an "and"— and as for the hopes of the intellectual idealists I have not shared them, so I am not disappointed.

CWSA 35: 209

Sri Aurobindo

Four Ages of Mankind

Vishnu and the four Yugas

According to the Hindu theory of the Yugas, it is in the Dwapara that everything is codified, ritualised, formalised. In the Satya Vishnu descends among men as Yajna. Yajna is the spirit of adoration and sacrifice, and in the Satya yajna reigns in the hearts of men, and there is no need of external ritual, external sacrifices, elaborate law, government, castes, classes and creeds. Men follow the law by the necessity of their purified nature and their complete knowledge. The kingdom of God & the Veda are in the hearts of His people. In the Treta the old perfect order begins to break and Vishnu descends as the *chakravarti raja*, the warrior and ruler, Kartavirya, Parsurama, Rama, and the sword, the law and the written Veda are instituted to govern men. But there is still great elasticity and freedom and within certain limits men follow the healthy impulse of their nature, only slightly corrupted by the first descent from purity. It is in the Dwapara that form and rule have to take the place of the idea and the spirit as the true governors of religion, ethics and society. Vishnu then descends as Vyasa, the great codifier and systematiser of knowledge.

CWSA 18-163-64

The ancient theory of cyclic evolution

The ancient theory supposed that in an entirely right and sound condition of man, individual and collective, — a condition typified by the legendary Golden Age, Satya Yuga, Age of Truth, — there is no need of any political government or State or artificial construction of society, because all then live freely according to the truth of their enlightened self and God-inhabited being and therefore spontaneously according to the inner divine Dharma. The self-determining individual and self-determining community

living according to the right and free law of his and its being is therefore the ideal. But in the actual condition of humanity, its ignorant and devious nature subject to perversions and violations of the true individual and the true social dharma, there has to be superimposed on the natural life of society a State, a sovereign power, a king or governing body, whose business is not to interfere unduly with the life of the society, which must be allowed to function for the most part according to its natural law and custom and spontaneous development, but to superintend and assist its right process and see that the Dharma is observed and in vigour and, negatively, to punish and repress and, as far as may be, prevent offences against the Dharma. A more advanced stage of corruption of the Dharma is marked by the necessity of the appearance of the legislator and the formal government of the whole of life by external or written law and code and rule; but to determine it — apart from external administrative detail—was not the function of the political sovereign, who was only its administrator, but of the socio-religious creator, the Rishi, or the Brahminic recorder and interpreter. And the Law itself written or unwritten was always not a thing to be new created or fabricated by a political and legislative authority, but a thing already existent and only to be interpreted and stated as it was or as it grew naturally out of pre-existing law and principle in the communal life and consciousness. The last and worst state of the society growing out of this increasing artificiality and convention must be a period of anarchy and conflict and dissolution of the dharma, — Kali Yuga, — which must precede through a red-grey evening of cataclysm and struggle a recovery and a new self-expression of the spirit in the human being.

CWSA 20: 403-04

Yugadharmā

There is such a thing as yugadharmā, the right institutions & modes of action for the age in which we live. For action depends indeed on the force of knowledge or will that is to be used, but it depends, too, on the time, the place & the vessel. Institutions that are right in one age are not right in another. Replacing social system by social system, religion by religion, civilisation by civilisation God is perpetually leading man onwards to loftier & more embracing manifestations of our human perfectibility. When in His cosmic circling movement He establishes some stable worldwide harmony, that is man's Satya Yuga. When harmony falters, is maintained with difficulty, not in the nature of men, but by an accepted force or political instrument, that is his Treta. When the faltering becomes stumbling and the harmony has to be maintained at every step by a careful & laborious regulation, that is his Dwapara. When there is disintegration, & all descends in collapse and ruin, nothing can stay farther the cataclysm that is his Kali. This is the natural law of progress of all human ideas & institutions. It applies always in the mass, continually though less perfectly in the detail. One may almost say that each human religion, society, civilisation has its four Ages. For this movement is not only the most natural, but the most salutary. It is not a justification of pessimism nor a gospel of dumb fate & sorrowful annihilation. It is not, as we too often think in our attachment to the form, a melancholy law of decline & the vanity of all human achievements. If each Satya has its Kali, equally does each Kali prepare its Satya. That destruction was necessary for this creation, and the new harmony, when it is perfected, will be better than the old. But there is the weakness, there is the half success turning to failure, there is the discouragement, there is the loss of energy & faith which clouds our periods of disintegration, the apparent war, violence, ragging, tumult & trample to and fro which attends our periods of gradual creation

and half-perfection. Therefore men cry out dismally & lament that all is perishing. But if they trusted in God's Love & Wisdom, not preferring to it their conservative & narrow notions, they would rather cry out that all is being reborn.

CWSA 12: 55

Sri Aurobindo

Can the manifestation come to its dissolution, its Pralaya?

A very old tradition, more ancient than the Vedas, says that the present manifestation is the seventh, and that the six preceding ones were followed by six pralayas, but this one will be transformed perpetually, without returning to the Creator.

3 September 1969

The Mother

The greater the destruction, the freer the chances of creation; but the destruction is often long, slow and oppressive, the creation tardy in its coming or interrupted in its triumph. The night returns again and again and the day lingers or seems even to have been a false dawning. Despair not therefore but watch and work. Those who hope violently, despair swiftly: neither hope nor fear, but be sure of God's purpose and thy will to accomplish.

CWSA 13: 209

Sri Aurobindo

The Past

Seventh Creation and Pralaya

Ultimately, as long as there is death, things always come to a bad end.

Only when the victory is won over death will things cease to come to a bad end... that is to say, when the return to Unconsciousness will no longer be necessary to allow a new progress.

The entire process of development, at least on the earth (I don't know how it is on other planets) is that way. And perhaps (I don't know very much about the history of astronomy) universes too — do they know if universes perish physically, if the physical history of the end of a universe has been recorded?... Traditions tell us that a universe is created, then withdrawn into *pralaya*, and then a new one comes; and according to them, ours is the seventh universe, and being the seventh universe, it is the one that will not return to *pralaya* but will go on progressing, without retreat. This is why, in fact, there is in the human being that need for permanence and for an uninterrupted progress — it's because the time has come.

The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, November 13, 1963

Fear and the memory of previous pralayas

More and more I feel there's but one way.... (*Laughing*) It makes an amusing picture: to sit on the mind—just sit on the mind: shut up. That's the only way.

You sit on the mind (*Mother gives a little slap*): shut up.

The subconscious contains the memory of all the *previous* "pralayas," and this memory is what always gives us the impression that everything is going to dissolve, to collapse.

But if you look at things in the true light, there can only be a more beautiful manifestation! Théon had told me this was the seventh and last one. Sri Aurobindo (I had told him what Théon

said), Sri Aurobindo concurred, for he said, "This one will see the transformation towards the Supermind." But to reach the Supermind, the mind must shut up! And I always get the impression (*laughing*) of a child sitting on the mind's head (*gesture like a child kicking its feet*), playing on the mind's head! If I could still draw, it would make something really funny. The mind — that huge terrestrial mind (*Mother puffs out her cheeks*) — which thinks itself so important and indispensable, and then a child sitting on its head and playing! It's so funny.

Ah, mon petit, we don't have faith! The moment one has faith....

We say, "We want a divine life"—but we're afraid of it! The second the fear disappears and we are sincere... really, everything changes.

We say, "We want nothing more of this life," but... (*laughing*) something in us clings to it!

Yes!

It's so ridiculous.

We cling to our old ideas, our old... to this old world bound for extinction — we're afraid!

While the divine child sitting on the mind's head plays!... I wish I could draw that picture, it's so wonderful.

We are so silly we even say (*Mother puts on an air of offended dignity*): the Divine is wrong, "You shouldn't handle things that way!" It's comical, mon petit.

The best remedy (I mean the easiest) for me, is: what You will — what You will, in all sincerity. In all sincerity. And then — then understanding comes. Then you understand. But you don't understand mentally, not here (*Mother touches her head*).

What You will.

The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, April 12, 1972

The Truth creation

...in the Truth-Creation the law is that of a constant unfolding without any Pralaya." (Sri Aurobindo) What is this constant unfolding?

I think we have already spoken about this several times. It has been said that in the process of creation, there is the movement of creation followed by a movement of preservation and ending in a movement of disintegration or destruction; and even it has been repeated very often: "All that begins must end", etc., etc.

In fact in the history of our universe there have been six consecutive periods which began by a creation, were prolonged by a force of preservation and ended by a disintegration, a destruction, a return to the Origin, which is called Pralaya; and that is why this tradition is there. But it has been said that the seventh creation would be a progressive creation, that is, after the starting-point of the creation, instead of its being simply followed by a preservation, it would be followed by a progressive manifestation which would express the Divine more and more completely, so that no disintegration and return to the Origin would be necessary. And it has been announced that the period we are in is precisely the seventh, that is, it would not end by a Pralaya, a return to the Origin, a destruction, a disappearance, but that it would be replaced by a constant progress, because it would be a more and more perfect unfolding of the divine Origin in its creation.

And this is what Sri Aurobindo says. He speaks of a constant unfolding, that is, the Divine manifests more and more completely; more and more perfectly, in a progressive creation. It is the nature of this progression which makes the return to the Origin, the destruction no longer necessary. All that does not progress disappears, and that is why physical bodies die, it's because they are not progressive; they are progressive up to a certain moment, then there they stop and most often they remain stable for a cer-

tain time, and then they begin to decline, and then disappear. It's because the physical body, physical matter as it is at present is not plastic enough to be able to progress constantly. But it is not impossible to make it sufficiently plastic for the perfecting of the physical body to be such that it no longer needs disintegration, that is, death.

Only, this cannot be realised except by the descent of the Supermind which is a force higher than all those which have so far manifested and which will give the body a plasticity that will allow it to progress constantly, that is, to follow the divine movement in its unfolding.

CWM 7: 204-06

Things are not in their place

As for the idea that things are not in their place, I understood it even when I was a child. It was only later that I was given the explanation by the person who taught me occultism, for, in his cosmogonic system, he explained the successive *pralayas* of the various universes by saying that with each universe an aspect of the Supreme would manifest itself, that each universe was built on one aspect of the Supreme and that one after another they had all returned into the Supreme. He enumerated all the aspects that were manifested successively and with what logic! It was extraordinary—I have kept it somewhere, I forget where. And he said that this time, it was—I do not remember exactly what number in the series—but it would be the universe which would not be withdrawn again, which would follow a progressive course of becoming that would be, so to say, indefinite. And this universe represented equilibrium, not static but progressive equilibrium that is to say, each thing in its place, exactly, each vibration, each movement in its place. The further down one goes, the more each form, each activity, each thing is exactly in its place in relation to the whole.

I was extremely interested, because later Sri Aurobindo said the same thing, that nothing is bad, it is just that things are not in their place — their place not only in space but also in time; their place in the universe, beginning with the worlds, the stars, etc., each thing exactly in its place. And so, when each thing is exactly in its place, from the most stupendous to the most microscopic, the whole will express the Supreme progressively, without any need of being withdrawn to be emanated again. On this Sri Aurobindo based the fact that in this creation, in this universe, the perfection of a divine world— what Sri Aurobindo calls the Supermind — will be able to manifest. Equilibrium is the essential law of this creation and this is why perfection can be realised in the manifestation.

CWM 10: 106-07

Progressive equilibrium

The first six (pralayas), yes, it is true. Even the order is given, the order in which... Because each creation is built on certain attributes, and the order of these attributes is given. I know them, I have written them somewhere. But I don't have it with me. So I can't give it to you, I would make a mistake. But one day I could bring you the paper on which it is written. All that I know is that this time it is the creation based on equilibrium. But a special equilibrium, for it is a progressive equilibrium. It is not a static equilibrium. The attribute of the present creation is equilibrium; that is why it is said that in this creation, if each thing is exactly in its place, in a perfect balance, well, there is no more evil. What is evil? — it is things not in equilibrium! There is nothing that is bad in itself, it is only the position which is wrong, which is not the true position.

CWM 6: 171

Growing perfection

We always call "Divine" all that we are not but wish to be. All that seems to us infinitely superior, not only to all that we have

done, but to all that we feel we can do; all that surpasses both our conception and our present possibilities, we call "Divine".

I say this, not as a joke, but because I am quite convinced that if we go back some thousands of years, when men spoke of the Divine — if ever they did speak of the Divine, as I believe — they spoke perhaps of a state like that of the godheads of the Overmind; and now this mode of being of the Overmind godheads who, obviously, have governed the earth and formed many things on earth for a very long time, seems to us far inferior to what we conceive the Supermind to be. And this Supermind, which is, precisely, what we now call the Divine and try to bring down on earth, will probably strike us in the same way a few thousand or million years hence as the Overmind does today. And I am sure that in the manifestation, that is, in His self-expression, the Divine is progressive. Outside the manifestation He is something we cannot conceive; but as soon as He manifests in this kind of perpetual being, well, He manifests more and more of Himself, as though He were reserving for the end the most beautiful things in His Being.

As the world progresses, what He expresses in the world becomes what we might call more and more divine.

So Sri Aurobindo has used the word Supermind to explain to those who are in the outer and evolutionary consciousness and who have some idea of the way in which the earth has developed — to explain to them that this something which is going to be beyond all this, and superior to human creation, to man, whom he always calls the mental being — this something which is going to come will be greater and better than man; and so he calls it supramental in order to make himself understood. But we could just as well say that it is something more divine than what has been manifested before.

CWM 8: 33-34

Pulsating Manifestation

I have had a perception of this manifestation — a “pulsating” manifestation, one might say, which expands and contracts, expands and contracts.... And there comes a time when there is such an expansion, such a fluidity, plasticity, capacity for change that there is no longer any need for it to be reabsorbed so that it can take a new form; and there will be a progressive transformation. I used to know an occultist who said that this is the seventh universal creation, that there have already been six pralayas and that this is the seventh creation, but that this one will be able to transform itself without being reabsorbed — which obviously has no importance whatsoever, for when one has the eternal consciousness it does not matter whether it is like this or like that. Only in the limited human consciousness is there this kind of ambition or need for something that has no end, because, within, there is what might be called the “memory of eternity” and this memory of eternity aspires for the manifestation to share in this eternity. But if this sense of eternity is active and present, we do not grieve; we do not grieve when we throw away a spoiled garment—we may be attached to it, but even so we do not grieve! It is the same thing: if a universe disappears, it means that it has fully fulfilled its function, it has come to the end of its possibilities and must be replaced by another one.

CWM 10: 217

The curve of creations

I have followed the whole curve. When you are very small in consciousness and development, you feel a great need that the earth should not disappear, that it should continue perpetually—it can go on transforming itself, but it should always be the earth that goes on. A little later, when you are a little more mature, you give it much less importance. And when you are in constant communion with the sense of eternity, it becomes merely a question

of choice; it is no longer a need, because it is something that does not affect the active consciousness. A few days ago—I do not remember when, but very recently — I lived this Consciousness for a whole morning and I saw, in the curve of the being's development, that this kind of need, which seems to be deep-seated, for the life of the earth to be prolonged — for the life of the earth to be prolonged indefinitely — this need is objectified, so to say, it is no longer so deep-seated; it is like looking at a performance and judging whether it should be like this or like that. It was an interesting change of viewpoint.

It is like an artist, but an artist giving shape to himself, making one trial, two trials, three trials, as many as he needs, and then achieving something complete enough in itself and receptive enough to be able to adapt to new manifestations, to the needs of these new manifestations, so that it would not be necessary to draw everything back in, to mix it all up and bring it all out again. But it is nothing more than this, and as I say, a question of choice. After all, the manifestation is made for the delight of objectivisation—the delight or interest or, well... And once what has taken shape is plastic enough, receptive enough, flexible enough and vast enough to be capable of being constantly moulded by the new forces that are manifesting, there is no longer any need to unmake everything in order to remake it.

CWM 10-217-19

The Mother

The civilisation which is ending now in such a dramatic way was based on the power of mind, mind dealing with matter and life. What it has been to the world, we have not to discuss here. But a new reign is coming, that of the Spirit: after the human, the divine.

CWM 2: 159

The Mother

The Present

The peril and the danger

For this ideal, this conscious stress on the material and economic life was in fact a civilised reversion to the first state of man, his early barbaric state and its preoccupation with life and matter, a spiritual retrogression with the resources of the mind of a developed humanity and a fully evolved Science at its disposal. As an element in the total complexity of human life this stress on a perfected economic and material existence has its place in the whole: as a sole or predominant stress it is for humanity itself, for the evolution itself full of danger. The first danger is a resurgence of the old vital and material primitive barbarian in a civilised form; the means Science has put at our disposal eliminates the peril of the subversion and destruction of an effete civilisation by stronger primitive peoples, but it is the resurgence of the barbarian in ourselves, in civilised man, that is the peril, and this we see all around us. For that is bound to come if there is no high and strenuous mental and moral ideal controlling and uplifting the vital and physical man in us and no spiritual ideal liberating him from himself into his inner being. Even if this relapse is escaped, there is another danger, — for a cessation of the evolutionary urge, a crystallisation into a stable comfortable mechanised social living without ideal or outlook is another possible outcome. Reason by itself cannot long maintain the race in its progress; it can do so only if it is a mediator between the life and body and something higher and greater within him; for it is the inner spiritual necessity, the push from what is there yet unrealised within him that maintains in him, once he has attained to mind, the evolutionary stress, the spiritual *nisus*. That renounced, he must either relapse and begin all over again or disappear like other forms of life before him as an evolutionary failure, through incapacity to maintain or

to serve the evolutionary urge. At the best he will remain arrested in some kind of mediary typical perfection, like other animal kinds, while Nature pursues her way beyond him to a greater creation.

CWSA 21:1090

Evolutionary crisis

At present mankind is undergoing an evolutionary crisis in which is concealed a choice of its destiny; for a stage has been reached in which the human mind has achieved in certain directions an enormous development while in others it stands arrested and bewildered and can no longer find its way. A structure of the external life has been raised up by man's ever-active mind and life-will, a structure of an unmanageable hugeness and complexity, for the service of his mental, vital, physical claims and urges, a complex political, social, administrative, economic, cultural machinery, an organised collective means for his intellectual, sensational, aesthetic and material satisfaction.

Man has created a system of civilisation which has become too big for his limited mental capacity and understanding and his still more limited spiritual and moral capacity to utilise and manage, a too dangerous servant of his blundering ego and its appetites. For no greater seeing mind, no intuitive soul of knowledge has yet come to his surface of consciousness which could make this basic fullness of life a condition for the free growth of something that exceeded it. This new fullness of the means of life might be, by its power for a release from the incessant unsatisfied stress of his economic and physical needs, an opportunity for the full pursuit of other and greater aims surpassing the material existence, for the discovery of a higher truth and good and beauty, for the discovery of a greater and diviner spirit which would intervene and use life for a higher perfection of the being: but it is being used instead for the multiplication of new wants and an aggres-

sive expansion of the collective ego. At the same time Science has put at his disposal many potencies of the universal Force and has made the life of humanity materially one; but what uses this universal Force is a little human individual or communal ego with nothing universal in its light of knowledge or its movements, no inner sense or power which would create in this physical drawing together of the human world a true life unity, a mental unity or a spiritual oneness. All that is there is a chaos of clashing mental ideas, urges of individual and collective physical want and need, vital claims and desires, impulses of an ignorant life-push, hungers and calls for life satisfaction of individuals, classes, nations, a rich fungus of political and social and economic nostrums and notions, a hustling medley of slogans and panaceas for which men are ready to oppress and be oppressed, to kill and be killed, to impose them somehow or other by the immense and too formidable means placed at his disposal, in the belief that this is his way out to something ideal. The evolution of human mind and life must necessarily lead towards an increasing universality; but on a basis of ego and segmenting and dividing mind this opening to the universal can only create a vast pullulation of unaccorded ideas and impulses, a surge of enormous powers and desires, a chaotic mass of unassimilated and intermixed mental, vital and physical material of a larger existence which, because it is not taken up by a creative harmonising light of the spirit, must welter in a universalised confusion and discord out of which it is impossible to build a greater harmonic life.

CWSA 21: 1089-91

Points of resistance

Well, these two points are the most resistant. In the human consciousness this is most subject to the forces of ignorance, inconstancy and, I must say, quite generally, ill-will. This

is what most refuses all progress and all advance towards the truth; and unfortunately, in every human individual this is also the point of resistance, the point that remains narrowly stupid and refuses to understand anything it is not used to. There it is truly a heroic act to want to take up these things and transform them. Well, we are trying this also, and unless it is done, it will be impossible to change the conditions of the earth.

It is relatively — very relatively — easier to change economic and social conditions than political and financial ones.

CWM 9: 167-68

A very serious threat

There. This is the situation. It has grown considerably worse since the last war; it grows worse year by year, and one finds oneself in such a ridiculous situation that, unfortunately, as one is at the end of one's resources, to simplify what has been made so complicated, there is an idea in the earth-atmosphere — an idea which might be called preposterous, but unhappily it is much worse than preposterous, it is catastrophic — the idea that if there were a great upheaval, perhaps it would be better afterwards.... One is so jammed between prohibitions, impossibilities, interdictions, rules, the complications of every second, that one feels stifled and really gets the admirable idea that if everything were demolished perhaps it would be better afterwards!.... It is in the air. And all the governments have put themselves in such impossible conditions; they have become so tied up that it seems to them they will have to break everything to be able to move forward.... (*Silence*) This is unfortunately a little more than a possibility, it is a very serious threat. And it is not quite certain that life will not be made still more impossible because one feels incapable of emerging from the chaos — the chaos of complications — in which humanity has put itself. It is like the shadow

— but unfortunately a very active shadow — of the new hope which has sprung up in the human consciousness, a hope and a need for something more harmonious; and the need becomes so much more acute as life, as it is at present organised, becomes more and more contrary to it. The two opposites are facing each other with such intensity that one can expect something like an explosion....

CWM 9: 167-69

A decisive turning point

After all, the whole problem is to know whether humanity has reached the state of pure gold or whether it still needs to be tested in the crucible.

One thing is evident, humanity has not become pure gold; that is visible and certain.

But something has happened in the world's history which allows us to hope that a selected few in humanity, a small number of beings, perhaps, are ready to be transformed into pure gold and that they will be able to manifest strength without violence, heroism without destruction and courage without catastrophe.

But in the very next paragraph Sri Aurobindo gives the answer: "If man could once consent to be spiritualised." If only the individual could *consent* to be spiritualised... could consent.

Something in him asks for it, aspires, and all the rest refuses, wants to continue to be what it is: the mixed ore which needs to be cast into the furnace.

At the moment we are at a decisive turning-point in the history of the earth, once again. From every side I am asked, "What is going to happen?" Everywhere there is anguish, expectation, fear. "What is going to happen?..." There is only one reply: "If only man could *consent* to be spiritualised."

And perhaps it would be enough if some individuals became pure gold, for this would be enough to change the course of

events.... We are faced with this necessity in a very urgent way.

This courage, this heroism which the Divine wants of us, why not use it to fight against one's own difficulties, one's own imperfections, one's own obscurities? Why not heroically face the furnace of inner purification so that it does not become necessary to pass once more through one of those terrible, gigantic destructions which plunge an entire civilisation into darkness?

This is the problem before us. It is for each one to solve it in his own way. This evening I am answering the questions I have been asked, and my reply is that of Sri Aurobindo: If man could once consent to be spiritualised....

And I add: Time presses ... from the human point of view.

CWM 9: 74-75

Night before the dawn

I am afraid I can hold out but cold comfort for the present at least to those of your correspondents who are lamenting the present state of things. Things are bad, are growing worse and may at any time grow worst or worse than worst if that is possible—and anything however paradoxical seems possible in the present perturbed world. The best thing for them is to realise that all this was necessary because certain possibilities had to emerge and be got rid of if a new and better world was at all to come into being; it would not have done to postpone them for a later time. It is as in Yoga where things active or latent in the being have to be put into action in the light so that they may be grappled with and thrown out or to emerge from latency in the depths for the same purificatory purpose. Also they can remember the adage that night is darkest before dawn and that the coming of dawn is inevitable. But they must remember too that the new world whose coming we envisage is not to be made of the same texture as the old and different only in pattern and that it must come by other means,

from within and not from without—so the best way is not to be too much preoccupied with the lamentable things that are happening outside, but themselves to grow within so that they may be ready for the new world whatever form it may take.

CWSA 31: 691

The Great Flood (*The Mother's narration of an experience allied to Pralaya*)

Something interesting happened last night exactly between ten and eleven. I was in some kind of vehicle. I didn't see the vehicle but I was in it. Someone in front of me was driving, though I could only see his back; I didn't bother about who it was – he was simply the one meant to do it.

It was as if the doors of destruction had been flung open. Floods – floods as vast as an ocean – were rushing down onto ... something ... the earth? A formidable current pouring down at an insane speed, with an unstoppable power. It was brackish water – not transparent, but brackish. And it was imperative to reach a certain spot before the water. Had the water reached there ahead of me, nothing could have been done. Whereas if I got there first (*I say 'I', but it was not I with this body*), if I got to the other side before the water, I would be completely safe; and from this safe position, I would be able, I would have a chance to help those left behind.

And this vehicle was going faster than the flood (I saw and felt it by its motion) – a formidable flood, but the vehicle was going still faster. It was so wonderful. In places there were some especially difficult and dangerous spots, but I always got there before the water, just before the water barred the way. And we kept going and going and going. Then, with a final effort (there was no effort, really, it was willed), with a final push, we made it to the other side – and the water came rushing just behind! It rushed down at a fantastic speed. We had made it. Then,

just on the other side, it changed color. It was ... it changed in color to a predominant blue, this powerful blue which is the force, the organising force in the most material world. So there we were, and the vehicle stopped. And then, after having been looking straight ahead the whole time we were speeding along, I turned around and said, 'Ah, now I can start helping those who are behind.'

The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, July 12, 1960

... The vehicle and the forward movement are the sadhana, beyond the shadow of a doubt. I understood that the speed of sadhana was greater than the speed of the forces of destruction. And it ended in certain victory, there is not a shadow of doubt. This feeling of power once I was firmly grounded there [in the 'square'], enough power to help others.

These were universal forces. I can't say it means war. I've foreseen many wars – widespread wars, local wars, so many wars – and up to now they have never been presented to me in that form. They've always come as a fire – flames, flames, the home burning. Not as an inundation.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, July 12, 1960

Condition of the earth

This is the situation. It has grown considerably worse since the last war; it grows worse year by year, and one finds oneself in such a ridiculous situation that, unfortunately, as one is at the end of one's resources, to simplify what has been made so complicated, there is an idea in the earth-atmosphere – an idea which might be called preposterous, but unhappily it is much worse than preposterous, it is catastrophic – the idea that if there were a great upheaval, perhaps it would be better afterwards.... One is so jammed between prohibitions, impossibilities, interdictions, rules, the complications of every second, that one feels stifled and really gets the admirable idea that if

everything were demolished perhaps it would be better afterwards!... It is in the air. And all the governments have put themselves in such impossible conditions; they have become so tied up that it seems to them they will have to break everything to be able to move forward.... (Silence) This is unfortunately a little more than a possibility, it is a very serious threat. And it is not quite certain that life will not be made still more impossible because one feels incapable of emerging from the chaos — the chaos of complications — in which humanity has put itself. It is like the shadow — but unfortunately a very active shadow — of the new hope which has sprung up in the human consciousness, a hope and a need for something more harmonious; and the need becomes so much more acute as life, as it is at present organised, becomes more and more contrary to it. The two opposites are facing each other with such intensity that one can expect something like an explosion....

This is the condition of the earth, and it is not very bright. But for us one possibility remains — I have spoken about it to you several times already — even if, outside, things are deteriorating completely and the catastrophe cannot possibly be avoided, there remains for us, I mean those for whom the supramental life is not a vain dream, those who have faith in its reality and the aspiration to realise it — I don't necessarily mean those who have gathered here in Pondicherry, in the Ashram, but those who have as a link between them the knowledge Sri Aurobindo has given and the will to live according to that knowledge — there remains for them the possibility of intensifying their aspiration, their will, their effort, to gather their energies together and shorten the time for the realisation. There remains for them the possibility of working this miracle — individually and to a small extent collectively — of conquering space, duration, the time needed for this realisation; of re-

placing time by intensity of effort and going fast enough and far enough in the realisation to liberate themselves from the consequences of the present condition of the world; of making such a concentration of force, strength, light, truth, that by this very realisation they can be above these consequences and secure against them, enjoy the protection bestowed by the Light and Truth, by Purity — the divine Purity through the inner transformation — and that the storm may pass over the world without being able to destroy this great hope of the near future; that the tempest may not sweepaway this beginning of realisation. Instead of falling asleep in an easy quietude and letting things happen according to their own rhythm, if one strains to the utmost one's will, ardour, aspiration and springs up into the light, then one can hold one's head higher; one can have, in a higher region of consciousness, enough room to live, to breathe, to grow and develop above the passing cyclone. This is possible. In a very small way, this was already done during the last war, when Sri Aurobindo was here. It can be done again. But one must want it and each one must do his own work as sincerely and completely as he can.

CWM 9: 169-171

God has all time before him and does not need to be always in a hurry. He is sure of his aim and success cares not if he break his work a hundred times to bring it nearer perfection. Patience is our first great necessary lesson, but not the dull slowness to move of the timid, the sceptical, the weary, the slothful, the unambitious or the weakling; a patience of a calm and gathering strength which watches and prepares itself for the hour of swift great strokes, few but enough to change destiny.

CWSA 9: 74

Sri Aurobindo

World War

"If a world-war breaks out, it may not only destroy the major portion of humanity but may even make living conditions for those who survive impossible due to the effects of the nuclear fall-out. In case the possibility of such a war is still there, will it not affect the advent of the Supramental Truth and of the New Race upon earth?"

"All these are mental speculations and once you enter the domain of mental imaginations there is no end to the problems and to their solutions. But all that does not bring you one step closer to the truth.

"The safest and most healthy attitude of the mind is like this one: we have been told in a positive and definite way that the supramental creation will follow the present one, so, whatever is in preparation for the future must be the circumstances needed for the advent whatever they are. And as we are unable to foresee correctly what these circumstances are, it is better to keep silent about them."

CWM 15: 111-12

Establishing a New order

Since the morning, it has been like that — strikes, quarrels, disorders....

And then the feeling that order must be re-established with the help of those who have created the disorder. That is the thing to be done. Instead of the basis of ordinary goodwill and all the moral and social rules — all that dashed to the ground — one must rise above, the divine Will and the divine Harmony must be there, it is that which we want; and then those who have revolted against the ordinary law of things and the ordinary social conventions: prove that you are in relation with a higher consciousness and a truer truth.

It is time to do it (*gesture of a leap upward*).

And from the point of view of organising power, it is a power... extremely powerful. It is a wonder. And then, if this power is placed at the disposal of the higher order, the truer consciousness, something can be done.

One must... must make a leap upward.

All the people who want to re-establish order pull backward into all the old ideas — that is why they never succeed. That is finished, finished for good. We go upward. Only they who rise can act.

You have nothing? Nothing to ask?

I do not know very well in which direction I am moving.

There is only one direction — towards the Divine. And as you know, it is as much inward as it is outward, as much upward as downward. It is everywhere. It is in the world as it is that one must find the Divine and cling to Him — to Him alone; there is no other way.

*

Possibility of catastrophe

Only a few days ago it was as though the catastrophe was impending. And then, at that moment, my whole being was, as though... (how to say it?) it was, yes, one might call it an aspiration for the true Victory, not that which this one wants or that one wants or... but the real Victory. It is this which seems to have brought in all the difficulties — *these exclusive wills*. And then, all at once there appeared as though a light: the possibility of the Victory. It is still... it is not miraculous, but it is the Intervention... the intervention of the Supreme Wisdom. Will it be concrete? We will see. It seems to come, it seems to come in this way (*gesture of a certain height, the two palms turned downward*), as a possibility.

No, it is recent, quite recent. I cannot say, for it did not come suddenly, but it is a question of days.

Yes, because for some time I was feeling a great pessimism.

That is a bad attitude.

I did not have that attitude, however, but it was as though a pessimistic atmosphere was coming in.

All that does not want the Divine creates this atmosphere purposely to discourage those who want the Divine. You must... you must not pay attention. That, that is the way of the devil. Pessimism is the demon's weapon and he senses his situation (*gesture of shaking*). Well, if what I see as possible is realised, it will be truly a decisive victory over the adverse forces — naturally, he defends himself as best he can.... That, it is always the devil; as soon as you see even the tail of pessimism, it is the devil. That is his great weapon.

CWM 11: 256-57

The Mother

After all, as long as there is death, things always end badly. It is only victory over death which will make it possible for things not to end badly; that is when the return into the Inconscience will no longer be necessary to allow a new progress.

The whole process of development, at least terrestrial development, is like that. (I do not know how it happens on the other planets!) Traditions say that a universe is created, then withdrawn in the pralaya, then a new one comes and so on; and according to them we should be the seventh universe, and being the seventh universe, we are that which will not return into pralaya but progress constantly without going back. It is because of this, besides, that there is in the human being this need of permanence and of an uninterrupted progress; it is because the time has come.

CWM 4: 23

The Mother



Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

I know that this is a time of trouble for you and everybody. It is so for the whole world; confusion, trouble, disorder and upset everywhere is the general state of things. The better things that are to come are preparing or growing under a veil and the worse are prominent everywhere. The one thing is to hold on and to hold out till the hour of light has come.

CWSA 35: 222

Sri Aurobindo

The Future

World will to be saved

All that [answers to various questions] is however another matter than the question about the present human civilisation. It is not this which has to be saved; it is the world that has to be saved, and that will surely be done, though it may not be so easily or so soon as some wish or imagine or in the way that they imagine. The present civilisation must surely change, but whether by a destruction or a new construction on the basis of a greater truth, is the issue. The Mother has left the question hanging and I can only do the same. After all, the wise man, unless he is a prophet or the Director of the Madras Astrological Bureau, must often be content to take the Asquithian position. Neither optimism nor pessimism is the truth, they are only modes of the mind or moods of the temperament. Let us then, without either excessive optimism or excessive pessimism, “wait and see”.

CWSA 35: 221

Withdrawals to spring forward

Generally it is believed that things always end badly in Nature. Everyone knows the story of those who have met a lamentable end after having enjoyed great success in their life; of those who had extraordinary capacities and who finally lost them; of a nation which for a long period was the model of a marvellous civilisation — the civilisation vanishes and the nation is changed into something so deplorable that one can no longer recollect what it was. It seems that the story of the earth is a story of victories followed by defeats and not of defeats followed by victories.

But in fact, whenever it is a question of universal and divine

things, what is needed is the universal vision and divine understanding of things in order to know how the truth expresses itself. There is a kind of general pessimism which says that even if things begin well they end badly, that it is weakness, hypocrisy, falsehood and wickedness which always seem to have the upper hand. That is why those who see the world in their own personal dimension have said that the world is bad and that we have only to finish with it and get out of it as soon as possible. Teachers have taught this but their teaching only proves that their vision is too narrow and in the dimension of their human individuality. In truth, the movements of Nature are like those of the tides: they advance, they recede, advance and recede; in the universal life and even in terrestrial life, this means a progressive advance, though apparently it is cut up by withdrawals. But these withdrawals are only an appearance, as when one draws back to spring forward. You seem to be drawing back but it is simply in order to go much farther.

CWM 4: 22-23

Truth or the abyss

(Regarding the New Year message: "Men, countries, continents! The choice is imperative: Truth or the abyss." A disciple asks Mother, "What is the meaning of 'abyss' in your New Year Message?" Mother's reply, in English:)

Right now there is a great tension. They have all taken positions as if to start war. It is the blind passion that men put into their international relations.

At the base of it all there is fear, general distrust, and what they believe to be their "interests" (money, business) – a combination of these three things. When these three lowest passions of humanity are brought into play, that is what I call "the abyss."

When someone has decided to consecrate his life to the seeking for the Divine, if he is sincere, that is to say, if the resolution is sincere and carried out sincerely, there is absolutely nothing to fear, because all that happens or will happen to him will lead him by the shortest way to this realisation.

That is the response of the Grace. People believe that the Grace means making everything smooth for all your life. It is not true.

The Grace works for the realisation of your aspiration and everything is arranged to gain the most prompt, the quickest realisation – so there is nothing to fear.

Fear comes with insincerity. If you want a comfortable life, agreeable circumstances, etc., you are putting conditions and restrictions, and then you can fear.

But it has no business in the sadhana!

CWM 15: 180-181

Greatest resistance to change

It is likely that the greatest resistance will be in the most conscious beings due to a lack of mental receptivity, due to the mind itself which wants things to continue (as Sri Aurobindo has written) according to its own mode of ignorance. So-called inert matter is much more easily responsive, much more – it does not resist. And I am convinced that among plants, for example, or among animals, the response will be much quicker than among men. It will be more difficult to act upon a very organized mind; beings who live in an entirely crystallized, organized mental consciousness are as hard as stone! It resists. According to my experience, what is unconscious will certainly follow more easily. It was a delight to see the water from the tap, the mouthwash in the bottle, the glass, the sponge – it all had such an air of joy and consent! There is much less ego, you

see, it is not a conscious ego.

The ego becomes more and more conscious and resistant as the being develops. Very primitive, very simple beings, little children will respond first, because they don't have an organized ego. But these big people! People who have worked on themselves, who have mastered themselves, who are organized, who have an ego made of steel, it will be difficult for them.

Unless they go beyond all this and have enough spiritual knowledge to be able to make the ego surrender ... in which case the realization will naturally be much greater – it will be more difficult to accomplish, but the result will be far more complete.

The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, June 6, 1958

The Last Judgement

One thing seems clear: humanity has reached such a generalized state of tension – tension in effort, tension in action, tension even in daily life – with such an excessive hyperactivity, such an overall restlessness, that the species as a whole seems to have reached a point where it must either burst through the resistance and surge forth into a new consciousness, or else sink back into an abyss of obscurity and inertia.

This tension is so total and so generalized that obviously something must break. It cannot go on like this. Yet all this is a sure sign that a new principle of force, consciousness and power has been infused into matter and by its very pressure has produced this acute state. Outwardly, we might expect to see the old habitual means used by Nature whenever she wants to bring about an upheaval; but here there is a new phenomenon, which is evidently visible only in a select few, although even these few are widespread enough – this phenomenon is not lo-

calized in one point or one place in the world, for the signs are to be found in every country all over the earth: the will to find a new, a higher, an ascending solution, an effort to surge forth into a vaster, more encompassing perfection.

Certain ideas of a more general, more extensive, more collective nature, as it were, are being worked out and are at work in the world. And the two go together: a greater and more total possibility of destruction and an inventiveness that unrestrainedly increases the possibility of catastrophe, a catastrophe that would be much more massive than it has ever been; and at the same time, the birth, or rather the manifestation, of much higher and more comprehensive ideas and wills which, when heard, will bring a vaster, more extensive, more complete and more perfect solution than before.

This struggle, this conflict between the constructive forces of an ascending evolution, of an increasingly perfect and divine realization, and the more and more destructive forces – powerfully destructive, forces of an uncontrollable madness – is becoming more obvious, unmistakably visible, and it is a kind of race or battle as to which will be first to reach its goal. All the hostile, anti-divine forces, these forces of the vital world, seem to have descended upon earth and are using it as their field of action; and at the same time, a new, higher, more powerful spiritual force has also descended upon earth to bring a new life to it. This renders the battle more bitter, violent and visible, but apparently more decisive, too, which is why we may hope to arrive at an early solution.

*

Redemption through Grace

That part of humanity, of the human consciousness, which is able to unite with the Supermind and liberate itself will be completely transformed. It is moving towards its future reality

as yet unexpressed in the outer form; the part very close to the simplicity of the animal, close to Nature, will be reabsorbed by Nature and thoroughly reassimilated. But that corrupted part of the human consciousness, which through its wrong use of the mind allows this perversion, will be abolished.

That kind of humanity belongs to an unfruitful attempt – and will be eliminated, like so many other abortive species which have vanished in the course of universal history.

Certain prophets in the past had this apocalyptic vision, but as usual things became mixed, and along with their vision of the apocalypse they did not have the vision of the supramental world that will come to uplift the consenting part of humanity and transform this physical world. However, to give hope to those born into this perverted part of the human consciousness, redemption through faith was taught: those who have faith in the sacrifice of the Divine in Matter will automatically be saved, in another world – faith alone, without understanding, without intelligence. They never saw the supramental world, nor did they see that the great Sacrifice of the Divine in Matter is that of an involution which will lead to the total revelation of the Divine in Matter itself.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, June 1958

A Beginning, Not a Completion

What we are doing, if and when we succeed, will be a beginning, not a completion. It is the foundation of a new consciousness on earth – a consciousness with infinite possibilities of manifestation. The eternal progression is in the manifestation and beyond it there is no progression.

If the redemption of the soul from the physical vesture be the object, then there is no need of supramentalisation. Spiritual Mukti and Nirvana are sufficient. If the object is to rise to

supraphysical planes, then also there is no need of supramentalisation. One can enter into some heaven above by devotion to the Lord of that heaven. But that is no progression. The other worlds are typical worlds, each fixed in its own kind and type and law. Evolution takes place on the earth and therefore the earth is the proper field for progression. The beings of the other worlds do not progress from one world to another. They remain fixed to their own type.

The purely monistic Vedantist says, all is Brahman, life is a dream, an unreality, only Brahman exists. One has Nirvana or Mukti, then one lives only till the body falls — after that there is no such thing as life.

They do not believe in transformation, because mind, life and body are an ignorance, an illusion — the only reality is the featureless, relationless Self or Brahman. Life is a thing of relations; in the pure Self, all life and relations disappear. What would be the use or the possibility of transforming an illusion that can never be anything else (however transformed) than an illusion? There is no such thing for them as a "Nirvanic life".

It is only some Yogas that aim at a transformation of any kind except that of ignorance into knowledge. The idea varies, — sometimes a divine knowledge or power or else a divine purity or an ethical perfection or a divine love.

CWSA 28: 288-89

Supermind and catastrophes

There need not be [catastrophes when the Supramental descends]. There will necessarily be great changes but they are not bound to be catastrophic. When there is a strong pressure from Overmind forces for change, then there are likely to be catastrophes because of the resistance and clash of forces. The supramental has a greater, in its fullness a complete mastery

of things and power of harmonisation which can overcome resistance by other means than dramatic struggle and violence. There are three powers of the cosmos to which all things are subject — creation, preservation and destruction; whatever is created lasts for a time, then begins to crumble down. The taking away of the power of destruction implies a creation that will not be destroyed but last and develop always. In the Ignorance destruction is necessary for progress — in the Knowledge, the Truth-creation, the law is that of a constant unfolding without any Pralaya.

*

It is not by a general descent that people come out of the physical mind. If one chooses to remain in the physical mind, one million descents can come down and make no difference to him. The Supermind coming down on earth will change nothing in a man if he clings to the ego.

CWSA 28: 292-93

A spiritualised society

A spiritualised society would live like its spiritual individuals, not in the ego, but in the spirit, not as the collective ego, but as the collective soul. This freedom from the egoistic standpoint would be its first and most prominent characteristic. But the elimination of egoism would not be brought about, as it is now proposed to bring it about, by persuading or forcing the individual to immolate his personal will and aspirations and his precious and hard-won individuality to the collective will, aims and egoism of the society, driving him like a victim of ancient sacrifice to slay his soul on the altar of that huge and shapeless idol. For that would be only the sacrifice of the smaller to the larger egoism, larger only in bulk, not necessarily greater in quality or wider or nobler, since a collective egoism, result of the united egoisms of all, is as little a

god to be worshipped, as flawed and often an uglier and more barbarous fetish than the egoism of the individual. What the spiritual man seeks is to find by the loss of the ego the self which is one in all and perfect and complete in each and by living in that to grow into the image of its perfection, — individually, be it noted, though with an all-embracing universality of his nature and its conscious circumference. It is said in the old Indian writings that while in the second age, the age of Power, Vishnu descends as the King, and in the third, the age of compromise and balance, as the legislator or codifier, in the age of the Truth he descends as Yajna, that is to say, as the Master of works and sacrifice manifest in the heart of his creatures. It is this kingdom of God within, the result of the finding of God not in a distant heaven but within ourselves, of which the state of society in an age of the Truth, a spiritual age, would be the result and the external figure.

CWSA 25-255-56

Sri Aurobindo

The greater the destruction, the freer the chances of creation; but the destruction is often long, slow and oppressive, the creation tardy in its coming or interrupted in its triumph. The night returns again and again and the day lingers or seems even to have been a false dawning. Despair not therefore but watch and work. Those who hope violently, despair swiftly: neither hope nor fear, but be sure of God's purpose and thy will to accomplish.

CWSA 13-209

Sri Aurobindo

He rises now; for God has taken birth.

The revolutions that pervade the world
Are faint beginnings and the discus hurled
Of Vishnu speeds down to enring the earth.

The old shall perish; it shall pass away,
Expunged, annihilated, blotted out;
And all the iron bands that ring about
Man's wide expansion shall at last give way.

Freedom, God, Immortality; the three
Are one and shall be realised at length,
Love, Wisdom, Justice, Joy and utter Strength
Gather into a pure felicity.

It comes at last, the day foreseen of old,
What John in Patmos saw, what Shelley dreamed,
Vision and vain imagination deemed,
The City of Delight, the Age of Gold.

The Iron Age is ended. Only now
The last fierce spasm of the dying past
Shall shake the nations, and when that has passed,
Earth washed of ills shall raise a fairer brow.

This is man's progress; for the Iron Age
Prepares the Age of Gold. What we call sin,
Is but man's leavings as from deep within
The Pilot guides him in his pilgrimage.

CWSA 2: 243

Sri Aurobindo

Wherever thou seest a great end, be sure of a great beginning. Where a monstrous and painful destruction appals thy mind, console it with the certainty of a large and great creation. God is there not only in the still small voice, but in the fire and in the whirlwind.

*

The hand of the divine Artist works often as if it were unsure of its genius and its material. It seems to touch test and leave, to pick up and throw away and pick up again, to labour and fail and botch and re-piece together. Surprises and disappointments are the order of his work before all things are ready. What was selected, is cast away into the abyss of reprobation; what was rejected, becomes the cornerstone of a mighty edifice. But behind all this is the sure eye of a knowledge which surpasses our reason and the slow smile of an infinite ability.

*

Wherefore God hammers so fiercely at his world, tramples and kneads it like dough, casts it so often into the blood-bath and the red hell-heat of the furnace? Because humanity in the mass is still a hard, crude and vile ore which will not otherwise be smelted and shaped; as is his material, so is his method. Let it help to transmute itself into nobler and purer metal, his ways with it will be gentler and sweeter, much loftier and fairer its uses.

*

Wherefore he selected or made such a material, when he had all infinite possibility to choose from? Because of his divine Idea which saw before it not only beauty and sweetness and purity, but also force and will and greatness. Despise not force, nor hate it for the ugliness of some of its faces, nor think that love only is God. All perfect perfection must have something in it of the stuff of the hero and even of the Titan. But the greatest force is born out of the greatest difficulty.

Thoughts and Glimpses, CWSA 13: 392-93



*Let the waves of the past flow far from you, carrying away
with them all attachments and all weaknesses.
The luminous joy of the divine consciousness is waiting
ready to take their place.*

CWM 15: 72

The Mother



*Our Gratitude and consecration to the
Mother and Sri Aurobindo*

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