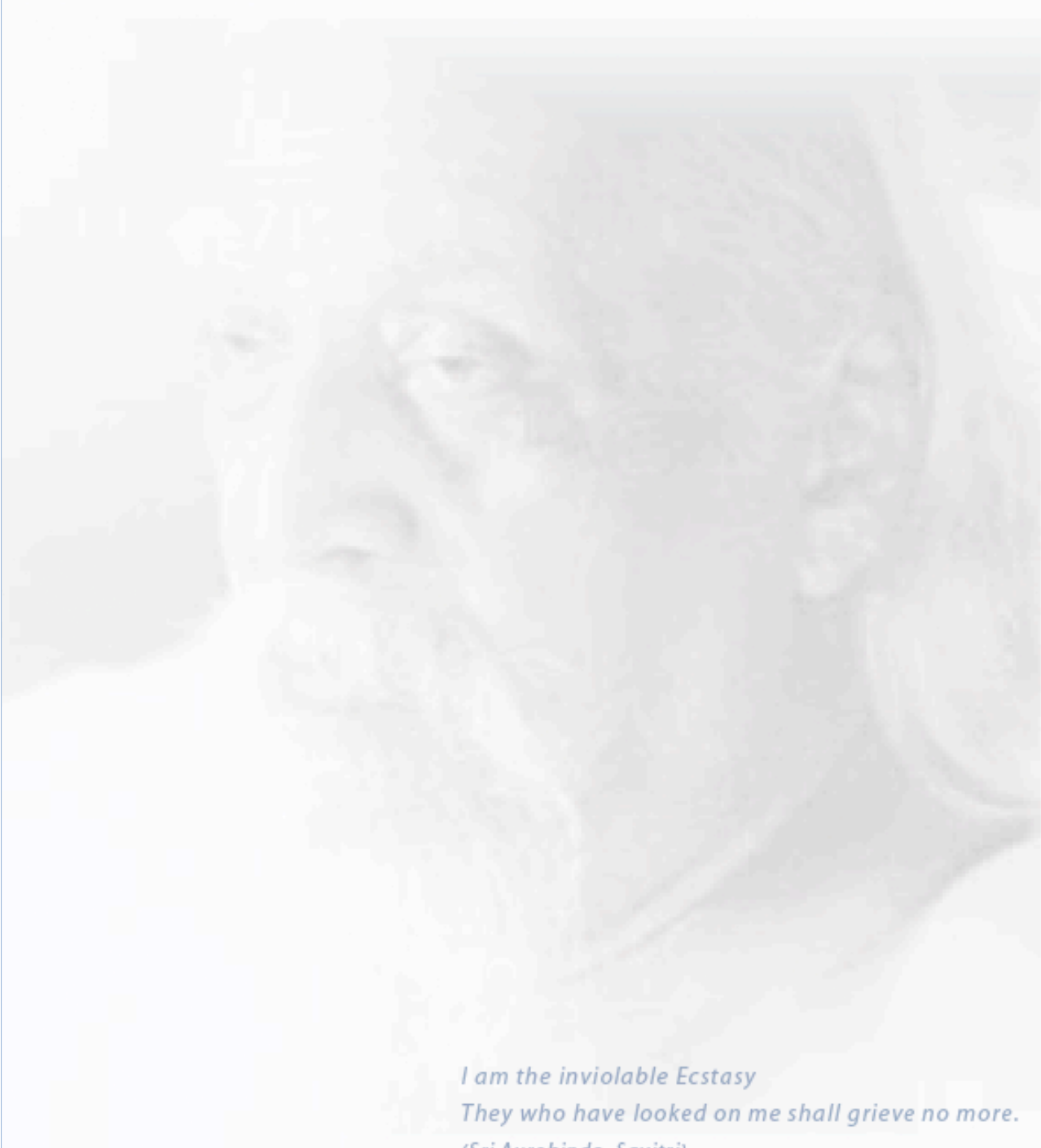


Sri Aurobindo

Mahayogi Sri Aurobindo

Life, Work, Philosophy, Yoga and Ashram



I am the inviolable Ecstasy

They who have looked on me shall grieve no more.

(Sri Aurobindo, Savitri)

Mahayogi Sri Aurobindo
(Life, Work, Philosophy, Yoga and Ashram)

Written by
Jyoti Thanki

Translated by
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From the Publisher's Table

It is not out of place to indicate the aim of publishing this book in brief. True, there are so many books about the life of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother; yet I have not come across such a book that delights common men in general and the youths in particular. A book on the life of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother written in simple but succinct language would be of great help to the people devoted to know Aurobindonian thought on the integral yoga and the Life Divine. Of course, different Aurobindo centres in Gujarat are making an effort to familiarise Aurobindo's philosophy on 125th birth anniversary of Sri Aurobindo. This book is an addition to their efforts. It will certainly be very helpful to readers.

Jyotiben Thanki met me by the grace of the Mother while I was thinking of preparing such a book. She expressed her desire to write this book. She, in fact, accepted my invitation. I am deeply grateful to her.

The guidance of elders helped the work a good deal. Particularly Shri Nautambhai Bhatt of Gandhinagar and Ambapremi of Vadodara gave me meaningful suggestions time and again. I am thankful to them. I thank Sharadbhai Joshi who took pains to proofread this book. Many sadhaks and readers encouraged me by booking the orders to purchase before this book was published. I appreciate their gestures.

Two books of Jyotiben - (i) 'Tell us Aurobindo's Story' and (ii) 'The Sweet Mother of Children' are made available to the children of schools in Gujarat. 'Mahayogi Sri Aurobindo' is written keeping in mind collegiate students and sadhaks. We expect that this book will be of much interest for the youths of our time.

14th November 1997

(Vasantbhai M. Patel)

33, Maikripa Society,
In front of the mental hospital,
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About the Book

Sri Aurobindo, seer of modern age and liberator of mankind, lived in Baroda for thirteen and a half year. He began at least four great actions – education, freedom fighting, literary creation and yoga – in Gujarat. So Gujarat feels pride in playing the role of the workplace of this Superman called Sri Aurobindo. It is noticeable that Sri Aurobindo has not lived for such a long time at any other places except in Pondicherry. I have had aspiration for writing a book introducing his life and works to the people of Gujarat and of the world. But I do not know how to materialise it. The Mother has given me this opportunity to realise my aspiration in concrete terms.

Once I drove with Shri Ambapremi and Shri Vasantbhai Patel from Vadodara to Gandhinagar. Then I gave the outlines of this book to both of them. To my surprise Vasantbhai said that he had a desire to publish such book if it was well written by someone. Ambapremi showed his desire to publish such book from Vadodara centre. Vasantbhai was kind enough to take entire responsibility of publishing this book if I wrote it sincerely. Thus three factors – my aspiration, Vasantbhai's sincerity and Ambapremi's encouragement – had gone into the making of this book.

The life of Sri Aurobindo is vast and profound. It is shining like the Sun. His inner life is not on the surface for anyone to see. Yet like Kalidas, who says that writing Raguvansa is like crossing the ocean with a boat, I too ventured to highlight Sri Aurobindo's life with devotion and utter humility. The book is ready with inspiration from Sri Aurobindo. I, therefore, offer it to him and feel great Ananda.

In short, I consider myself to be most fortunate to explore his life and to receive his blessings. I am deeply indebted to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for inspiring me and for giving me strength to complete the book. I hope that sincere readers will be raised by reading as I have experienced the Divine Grace while writing.

Jyoti Thanki

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10/11/1997

Sri Aurobindo's Symbol

Descending triangle symbolises *Sat-Chit-Anand*. Ascending triangle stands for aspiration in the form of life, light and love risen from matter. The middle is the meeting place of both and lotus in the centre expresses the incarnation of God. Water is the symbol of multiplicity in the world.

The Mother's Symbol

Middle circle indicates the divine consciousness. Four petals exhibit four powers of the Mother – Maheswari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati. Twelve petals signify twelve powers of the Mother which perform various activities – acceptability, aspiration, effort, gratitude, humility, devotion to the Truth, peace, equality, nobility, auspicious emotion, courage and progress.

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1. Krishnadhan's dream

The image of an English doctor dressed in pant and coat, hat on the head, in shining boots and a Hindu servant running after him when he had stepped down from the Victoria Coach was imprinted in the mind of Krishnadhan, son of Kaliprasad Ghosh of Konnagar. He had made up his mind to become such a doctor; it was, in fact, his dream. But it was not easy to realise this dream in actual life.

It was the time of 1859. The first war of Liberation in 1857 had failed. There was the British rule over almost entire India. English men and their children enjoyed outstanding positions. Hindu boys wanted to imitate them. It was no wonder that Krishnadhan dreamt of becoming like a British doctor. He made an effort to achieve his goal. He studied with concentration and always stood first in the school. He was sweet, vocal and handsome. The teachers liked him very much. He had trusted friends; some of them were the sons of the landlords. He got the first class in Metric Examination. This encouraged him a lot. He said to his father, 'Baba, I want to study further.'

'Do you want to study in a college?', asked the father. The economic condition of the father was poor; he wanted the son to get a job soon.

'Baba, I want to study in a medical college and be a doctor', replied the son.

'What do you say? Are you really in your sense?'

'Yes, I know that I can become a doctor.'

'Son, you are aware of our economic condition. I cannot afford to educate you in a medical college. It is enough to study up to Metric level. Find out a job so that you may earn something.'

Krishnadhan was despaired hearing his father; his dream was to be shattered. But he knew his father's condition; he was sorry for his father. He went out without speaking a word to his father. He could understand pain that his father felt when his father denied him further study.

His father was the famous landlord. His mother Kailasvasani Devi was very beautiful and kind. She always entertained known and unknown guests. She was a generous lady. She had no jewellery; so she could not keep on lease or sell out to get money for her son's study.

Krishnadhan became sad; he stopped making fun with the friends. He used to be very sincere in the company of the friends. Obviously, the friends were worried; they asked, 'O Krishna, What is wrong with you? Why are you so sad?'

'There is nothing particular.'

'Oh, you have lost your Anand; it shows that there is something. Tell us what is in your mind,' the friends insisted.

Krishnadhan said, 'I want to join a medical college. But my father has no money. Of course, I will get the scholarship; but that is possible only when I get admission. I have to pay fees first. This has worried me.'

'Why are you so worried? We will pay your fees.'

Thus in 1859 Krishnadhan entered the medical college with the help of his friends. He worked hard there and received scholarship. But his dream was only half realised. To be a full-fledged surgeon he had to go to England and study medicines and train in operations.

It was not easy to go to England for poor boys. But Krishnadhan was determined; he worked hard to get money. He did a job for some time. Finally he went to England, joined Aberdeen University and studied there surgery for three years. During these three years he became a complete anglophile. When he returned to India after three years, he was a complete materialist and a staunch atheist. He had no faith in Hindu religion.

He was appointed as a surgeon in Rangpur, Bengal. He was very happy because he had fulfilled his dream of becoming a surgeon.

2. Beautiful wife

It was the time of renaissance in Bengal. The significance of spirituality, prayer and meditation was widely accepted instead of *Karmakanda* and rigid rules of religion. Rajnarayan Bose had formulated Brahmosamaj. He had attracted awakened people of Bengal. Brahmosamaj had advocated for women's education. Shri Rajnarayan Bose had imparted English education to his daughters. His fourth daughter was Swarnalata Devi. She was beautiful, educated and well-versed in English. She could compose poems and write essays. She was deeply interested in literature. Rajnarayan Bose was searching a good match for his virtuous daughter.

Once a priest said to him: ‘Oh! Krishnadhan Ghose! He is so kind and possesses a sweet personality. I have not seen anywhere such a person.’

Rajnarayan chose Krishnadhan as his son-in-law. Krishnadhan was married to Swarnalata Devi. They returned to Rangpur after marriage.

Swarnalata Devi lived in British style at home. Krishnadhan wanted his house to be like a home of an English man. Swarnalata Devi followed her husband’s desire. She used to speak in English at home. She put on the gown, did horse riding and conversed with her husband’s British friends in English. She could mix with high officers’ wives. She published poems in Bamabodhini magazine. Krishnadhan was very happy with his wife because she behaved like an English woman; Krishnadhan’s friends called her ‘the rose of Rangpur.’ She was the most beautiful lady in Rangpur.

3. I shall not repent

Krishnadhan’s family members wanted Krishnadhan to pass through the religious ceremony for purification when he returned from England to Bengal as he had broken the law of not going to the foreign country.

‘You have to repent. Purification is necessary for you,’ said the family members.

‘Why?’

‘You have gone abroad. You have to feed the Brahmins and give them *dakshina*. Only then we can have relation with you.’

Krishnadhan lost his temper. He said, ‘I have done no sin; therefore, I will not repent. I have gone abroad for study and it is not a sin. I am not fallen. That is why I will not do what you say.’

The family members remained silent; they could not afford to sever the relationship with the surgeon. But Krishnadhan was highly disturbed; he sold his parental house to a poor Brahmin and left Rangpur forever.

Krishnadhan himself was a misanthrope but he fulfilled the desire of his mother by doing religious ceremonies of death. He did *shradha* and donated one thousand rupees to the mahant of Kashi Viswananth temple after her death. He performed welfare acts; so he could not save anything from his handsome salary.

Krishnadhan went to Bhagalpur, Rangpur and Khulana and won the love of people of his area. He always wanted to help the poor and the suffering people. He renovated Khulana; people of Khulana kept his photograph in the town-hall and began a school after his name. He was in Rangpur, there he had a British magistrate. With the help of the British magistrate he did many developmental works in Rangpur. The people of Rangpur built a K.D. Canal to pay their respect to this civil surgeon.

Krishnadhan was careless about his personal needs. But he was kind, sensitive and helpful to others. Therefore, he could attract those who came in his contact. It was difficult to forget Krishnadhan's personality.

4. I will make this son an English man

At the time of third pregnancy Krishnadhan kept Swarnalata Devi with his friend – Barister Manmohan Ghose in Kolkota. On 15th August, 1872 Swarnalata Devi gave birth to her third son at 4.50 a.m. The child attracted the father; he decided to make the child a British collector. He wanted to add some British words to his name as well.

Krishnadhan decided his son's name as Aurobindo. It was not a common name then. It was appropriate name of the child who was like a lotus flower. The British name was 'Akroyd'. Krishnadhan combined the Hindu and the English names; thus the full name of the son became 'Aurobindo Akroyd.' The son had this name till he completed his study in Cambridge.

Krishnadhan appointed an English lady as his maid servant; her name was Paget. He said to Paget, "Look, you have to bring up this boy like an English man." Paget followed Krishnadhan's instructions carefully. She taught English as the mother tongue to Aurobindo. His mother tongue Bengali was Greek and Latin to him. Of course, during vacation he had Bengali atmosphere in his maternal uncle's house. He enjoyed the company of maternal uncle and aunt and their children. But that was limited only to vacation period.

5. Lovable environment of maternal uncle's house

During vacation, Aurobindo and his other brothers went to the maternal uncle's house. There Nana and Nani, Mama and Mami and their children loved them very much. All played with them. All loved

them heartily, but elder Mama Yogendra Bose loved Aurobindo with special care.

One day Mama had a puzzle. He took a mirror, kept it before Aurobindo and said, 'Look, there is a monkey in it.'

The small child could not understand the puzzle. Elder Mama thought that the child would be angry. But it was not the case. The child took the mirror and put it before Mama and said, "Elder Mama is a big monkey." Mama had no words to answer. He thought that the child would be a great man in future.

Though his Nana was the founder of Brahmosamaj, he was friendly with children of Krishnadhan. He took them out for a walk and taught them new things. One day, all children had gone out with Nanaji; it was evening when they returned. The children walked very fast; but Nanaji was slow. He was so slow that he was not seen to the children. The children said, "Where is Nanaji? Is he not in jungle? Or is he not fighting with Rakshsa?" They were fearful; but they kept up courage. They returned to find out Nanaji. They saw a shadow; they called it Nana. But the shadow did not reply. To their surprise, they found Nanaji standing and sleeping.

Aurobindo and his brothers could not find such lovable atmosphere of maternal uncle's house for a long time because they were taken to England for study at very early age. Nonetheless, impression of his maternal uncle's house was imprinted on his memory for times to come.

6. In Convent School of Darjeeling

Krishnadhan wanted his sons not to have native Sanskara. He was in the search of a school where only English children were to be admitted. He found out Convent School at Darjeeling; it was the school run by Irish nuns. The children of British officers in India were admitted to this school. Very few Indian boys were there. Krishnadhan admitted his two sons and Aurobindo at the age of five.

At the age of five, a child is much attached to his mother. He needs the mother's affection for his development. But Aurobindo was away from his parents. True, his two brothers were there with him. But they were too small to take care of Aurobindo. Separation of Aurobindo from his parents was life-long; Aurobindo had no opportunity to live with his parents thereafter.

Aurobindo loved the natural beauty of Darjeeling. The high trees of Devdar, green hills and the white tops of the Himalayas attracted Aurobindo very much though he was just five years old. Of course, he could not write poetry then; but he had depicted natural beauty in his latter poems. And there was only foreign atmosphere in the school. Naturally he became introvert. However, he won the heart of the nuns with his sweet tongue and amicable behaviour. He learnt sincerely whatever was taught in the class. He was so shy; he did not talk with boys older to him. His teachers were very happy with his progress.

Aurobindo lived in Darjeeling for two years. During this period, he had a very strange experience. He found himself surrounded by thick darkness. This darkness also entered within his self. He was under the shadow of darkness for sixteen years. He was in darkness during his stay in England. Darkness had disappeared only when he returned to India after completing his study in England. When he set his feet at Apolo Bander in Bombay, the peace of Bharatmata encircled him and he was free from darkness. Darkness could be interpreted as his familiarity with foreign culture, literature, dharma and science. Aurobindo became free from darkness as soon as he reached his native land. He equipped himself with Indian culture and Indian languages at Vadodara.

Krishnadhan's three children were well settled in Darjeeling. They studied in a brilliant manner. But Krishnadhan was not satisfied. He was worried that his children would come in contact with Indian culture in one way or the other; they would not be English men. He, therefore, was searching a way to send his three sons to England to make them English men.

Krishnadhan had an English magistrate as his friend in Rangpur. He expressed his desire to his friend. 'It is my desire that my children should study living in an educated family in London. Could I find such a family?', said Krishnadhan.

'Yes, I have a friend. He is a priest in the church of Manchester. His name is Drewett. He lives with his old parents and wife. He has no child. He is a very lovable person. He is also a scholar. He is expert in Greek and Latin. His wife is also educated. It is better if your three sons could be placed in his house. They would certainly get atmosphere as you want.'

'Will they give consent?'

‘I think, he will not say no. But you clarify expenses. I write a letter; most probably the arrangement will be made.’

In 1879 Krishnadhan reached England with his wife, three sons and a daughter. The magistrate’s letter helped him much.

7. In England

Krishnadhan was pleased to meet the Drewett family in Manchester. He kept his sons and a daughter with this lovable family. He was relieved. He also agreed to pay the monthly expenditure to the priest. He said, ‘These are your sons. Bring them up as English boys. Give them English education.’

‘Do not worry, Dr. Ghose. Now they are my children.’ ‘Yes, but remember one thing. Do not allow them to meet with Hindu boys nor should they come in contact with Hindu culture and religion.’ ‘I know what you want. Your sons would be English men?’

Krishnadhan was satisfied with assurance given by the Drewetts. He returned to London to live with Swarnalata Devi and Sarojini. Swarnalata Devi gave birth to the fourth son. To make him an English man, he named the fourth son ‘Emanuel’. Krishnadhan was very happy with his fourth son. But he did not know that this son would fight for the freedom of India whole heartedly. He returned to India with his wife, daughter and the fourth son. He became busy with his job and had no worries for his children’s future.

8. I will teach the small boy

‘Auro is a small boy. He was peaceful and shy. I would not send him to school.’ This was the opinion of Mrs. Drewett about the small Aurobindo. ‘Yes, he is too small to go to school. But his education must start right now,’ said the priest.

‘We will teach him at home.’

His two elder brothers, Binaybhushan and Manmohan were admitted to Manchester school. Aurobindo’s education began at home by the Drewetts. Mr. Drewett taught him Greek, Latin and English literature. Mrs Drewett acquainted him with history, geography, maths and French.

Aurobindo could not find normal school atmosphere like other students. But at the age of seven he could learn Latin and English

from Mr. Drewett, the great scholar. Aurobindo learnt many languages in future; but the foundation was built at the age of seven.

Aurobindo did not go to school; he had no friends to gossip or play with. He had enough time at home. There was not the love of his parents. He grew up in foreign atmosphere at foreign land. Books were his friends; he used to read them carefully. Aurobindo was fortunate to have good books to read at the priest's house. He had completed the reading of the Bible, Shakespeare's plays and the poems of Shelley and Keats by the age of ten. During this period he started writing poetry and he published them in the family focus magazine of Manchester. He developed creativity throughout his life.

Aurobindo could not take part in sports at Manchester. He just played cricket along with his brothers twice in the garden of the Drewetts. In Hindu family boys heard the stories of Rama and Krishna, Druva and Prahlad. But this was not the case with Aurobindo. He was in the priest's house; he had to go to Church for prayers. He prayed though he did not have the belief in prayers. However, Aurobindo developed interest for reading at the house of the priest in Manchester.

9. Conversion into Christianity by Grandmother

Mr. Drewett's parents loved Aurobindo very much. His old mother wanted to save Aurobindo's soul. So she wanted Aurobindo to be converted into Christianity. She expressed her desire before her son; but her son was not ready for Aurobindo's conversion without the consent of Krishnadhan. He wrote a letter to seek his permission.

'Auro is too small', replied Krishnadhan. 'Let him wait.'

But old lady was very keen on Aurobindo's conversion. She was not ready to wait. She planned to save Aurobindo's soul privately.

That day the priests gathered in Kumberland. The old lady said, 'Come with me. We will go for darshan in the church.' Aurobindo was too small to understand her hidden motive. He accompanied her. He sat beside her. Prayers were recited; religious ceremonies were performed. People went out of the church; a few persons remained there. Then the old lady went to the chief priest and confided him something. The chief priest came and put some questions to Aurobindo. It was very strange. Aurobindo did not talk about it to anybody even at the house. It was difficult to answer in the public place. He remained silent and did not answer to the priest. His silence

encouraged the priest. All priests then said, 'Aurobindo's soul is saved; his soul is saved.' Aurobindo did not understand a word what the priests said. But the old lady was very happy.

A priest came to Aurobindo and asked if he knew how to pray. Sri Aurobindo repeated the prayer which he did at the time of his sleep. The priest was very happy.

All the priests present there announced that Aurobindo's soul was saved; he had become a Christian. The old lady was very happy; but Aurobindo was moodless. He was tired and he returned to Manchester without any interest. The old lady, however, was happy for many days.

10. Study in St. Paul's School

Aurobindo's two brothers joined the school, but Aurobindo studied mostly at home. In the meanwhile, Mr. Drewett was entrusted with works in the church of Australia. He was in two minds; he did not know what to do with three sons of Krishnadhan. Drewett's mother suggested him to take a house on rent where she would live with three sons and he could go to Australia. Drewett followed the instructions.

A house was rented at St. Stifence Avenue in London. The mother lived with three sons at that house. The three sons were admitted to St. Paul's School. The first two sons had no difficulty because they had certificates. But there was a problem of Aurobindo's admission. He had to take school test for it. He secured very good marks in test subjects. He was taken to the school principal Mr. Walker. And the principal was very happy to see Aurobindo. He found him weak only in Greek. He himself decided to teach him Greek. He found Aurobindo to be a student different from other boys. Aurobindo learnt Greek from Mr. Walker and became proficient in it.

Then Aurobindo got his school environment. He had opportunity to study with his school friends from the learned teachers. His intellect developed rapidly. One day Mr. Walker called him and said, 'You are a brilliant boy. You have the knowledge of three-four more classes. I will raise you to higher classes.' He raised him to the fourth standard. Aurobindo was not the losers as he studied at home. He would shine out in higher classes as well.

11. The class teacher's warning

Teachers loved Aurobindo very much as he was a sincere boy. There were so many English boys; but no other boys were as brilliant as Aurobindo. History and literature were the subjects of his deep interest. He was awarded 'Bedford prize' in history and 'butterworth prize' in literature. For two years Aurobindo studied the class subjects regularly; so he stood first in the class. Later, he was interested reading books other than class subjects. Naturally the teachers were worried. One day his class teacher called him and said, 'Mr. Ghose, you are reading other books and are neglecting the class subjects. This is not good. You will not secure good marks in the examination. I am worried for you.'

'Sir, I'll prepare for the exam. Why worry today?'

'No, you will not prepare all subjects at the last moments. Stop reading other books lest you will miss scholarship and other prizes,' snubbed him the class teacher. But Aurobindo continued reading other books. Only at the time of examination he prepared his class subjects. The result of the examination surprised all; Aurobindo won all the prizes of literature. Then the teachers realised that reading other books had no evil influence on his class studies. On the contrary it helped in improving his knowledge of answering the questions and his language was enriched. Afterwards the teachers encouraged Aurobindo to study more and more. Aurobindo won literature prizes every year. He also won sixteen parts of Arabian Nights. He had preserved these sixteen parts in his life.

Aurobindo's creativity was developed in St. Paul's School but he had a problem to face.

12. The anger of old Drewett lady

There was no difficulty in the house of Drewett lady for three years. Krishnadhan had decided to remit 360 pounds every month. He remitted the amount in the beginning; but he became irregular in sending money afterwards. There was difficulty in maintaining the house by old Drewett lady. She had her own savings. She used it to run the house. But she was very strict. She wanted three sons of Krishnadhan to take part in church ceremonies; they had to sit with her in prayer for three months. They disliked these religious activities. Mostly Binaybhushan read out the Bible. One day he read, 'People

did not behave as per Old Moses'. Then Manmohan said, 'It is good that people did not follow old Moses.' Old Drewett lady became very angry hearing it and said, 'Hey, you have insulted the religious book. How can you make fun of the teachings of scripture? What type of boys are you? It is difficult to live with such atheist boys.' She left the house murmuring these things.

The three brothers had felt relief when she left the house. They said, 'good riddance!' Both brothers were thankful to Manmohan. Aurobindo was very shy those days; he did not speak a word against anyone. He said, 'I did not insist on opposing anyone. I was fearful. I had no courage to oppose anyone or to start revolutions.' He did not discuss anything with old Drewett lady. It was good that old Drewett lady had left. But she was running the house with her own money. Now there was real difficulty. The father did not send money. So it was difficult to maintain house. The three brothers had financial problem.

13. Disillusionment of Krishnadhan

Krishnadhan had complete faith in British rule. But one incident shook his faith in it. He was a very popular surgeon of Rangpur; people used to worship him as God. Mr. Glazier was the magistrate of Rangpur; he was transferred from Rangpur. A new magistrate came in; he could not tolerate Krishnadhan's popularity. He complained against Krishnadhan to the government; he could see that Krishnadhan was transferred to Khulana. It was sheer injustice. It opened his eyes; he could then see injustice done to Indians by the British government. Of course, he received the love of the people of Khulana. But he was not blind to wrongs done to Indians by the Britishers. He then kept on sending the cuttings of atrocities perpetuated by the Britishers on Indians to his sons. These cuttings aroused determination in the minds of his sons to liberate India from British slavery.

Krishnadhan was generous; he could not save anything. That is why he could not send money to his sons in England. Besides, his wife suffered from hysteria; he had to spend much for his wife. To forget his sorrow he used to drink. As a result the sons had to suffer poverty in a foreign country.

14. Those days of utter poverty

The three brothers were in great difficulty in England. They did not know what to do; where to go; where to live; and who to demand help from. They were of tender ages; their studies were incomplete. They did not know many people in a foreign country. The Drewetts were in Australia. Finally Binaybhusan remembered James Cotton, the brother of Henry Cotton who was his father's friend. He went to James Cotton and narrated his poor condition. James Cotton said, 'You are in difficult situation. 'I will help you.' He ran a liberal club. He appointed Binaybhusan and agreed to give five pounds a week. Five pounds were equal to seven rupees. This amount was not enough; but it solved their problem to some extent. There was a back room to this club; it was opened for their accommodation. It was not a room to live; it was just a store room. There was not a fire place in winter. Moreover, there was a railway line behind it; there were noises of the trains all the time.

Five pounds were not enough for a week. Yet they managed their food for five pounds. Tea and a roti in the morning; tea in the afternoon and a sandwich in the evening were their food for two years. During this period they did not get evening meals at all. There was the shortage of clothes as well; they did not have overcoats to protect from cold. Aurobindo suffered this hardship; but his middle brother, Manmohan Ghose could not. He somehow managed to live in the boarding house. Aurobindo was with his brother in the godown. He put up with hunger, suffered chilly cold; but he did not complain nor did he stop his study. On the contrary, he wrote poetry in the midst of difficulties and problems. He stood first in Greek and Latin in the final examination of the school. He got the scholarship of eighty pounds for further study and one hundred and a half pounds for ICS examination. These scholarships facilitated his college studies. He got admission to the Kings College, Cambridge and decided to live in the hostel. Then he got an opportunity to breathe in open air.

15. Strict collection by a businessman

The two scholarships were not sufficient for his monthly expenditure. He had to support his two brothers from these scholarships. Once he had not money to pay his examination fees. He did not tell his condition to others. Somehow Prof. Prothero came to

know that Aurobindo had not paid examination fees. He called Aurobindo and asked the reason. 'Sir, I have no money to pay,' said Aurobindo.

'Does your father not remit money?'

'No.'

Prof. Prothero paid the fees of Aurobindo; he was very much impressed by Aurobindo's brilliance. The fees problem was solved but other problems remained.

Aurobindo had to pay some money to a businessman. But he had no money that time; he promised to pay him as soon as he got some money. The businessman did not trust him; he shouted, 'I will not tolerate it; if you do not give my money, I will go to the country court and file a suit.'

Aurobindo was perplexed; he did not have money. If there was a case in the court, he would have to pay original amount plus punishment amount. He went to Prof. Prothero and told him his problem. The professor assured him and told him not to worry. He met the businessman and said, 'Aurobindo is a brilliant student; he is a gentleman. He is in a difficult situation but he will surely return your money.'

Prof. Prothero wrote a strong letter to Krishnadhan to send money. Only then the debt was paid. A tailor had similar case. In Cambridge, a tailor sewed clothes; he would collect double amount for it. Manmohan had sewn a suit; the tailor demanded double amount for it. Aurobindo had not fully paid for this suit to him; four pounds remained to pay. In the meanwhile Aurobindo had come to Baroda; the Cambridge tailor contacted him there. Aurobindo was unwilling to pay four pounds because he had always paid double amount to him. However, he sent four pounds to the Cambridge tailor on the advice of the Maharaja.

16. I have not seen such answers

Aurobindo appeared in the test of King's college for scholarship. Professor Oscar Browning was the examiner.

A college deon invited him to coffee after the examination was over. There Prof. Oscar Browning met Aurobindo. He shook hand with Aurobindo and said, 'Mr. Ghose, you have secured very high marks in scholarship examination. I have to tell you that I have been examining the scholarship papers for last thirteen years. But I have not

seen such a good paper as yours. Your essay was very wonderful.’ This essay was a comparison between Shakespeare and Milton. It was significant for paradoxical saying, terse sentences and the style of aesthetic pleasure. Mr. Browning took keen interest in Aurobindo. He asked, “Where do you live?”

‘In the room of King’s College hostel.’

‘Oh! In that wretched room!’, he said in disgust.

‘Look, how do we behave with a student who receives our scholarship? Brilliant students come to us; we pack them in a room. I believe that we do so in order to control their pride.’

Aurobindo wrote to his father about the opinions of Mr. Browning. Krishnadhan felt pride in it. He was satisfied to send his sons to England. He showed this letter to Aurobindo’s maternal uncle Yogendra Bose; he wrote to Mr. Bose, ‘I have made my three sons healthy and wise; I hope that ‘Auro’ will shine out in the administration of India. Now he is displaying his brilliance in King’s College, Cambridge.’ Krishnadhan was fully convinced that his son ‘Auro’ would realise his dream.

17. Bengali language of Pt. Towers

English was practically the mother language of Aurobindo. He had mastery over French, Italian, Greek, Latin and the like. He did not know Bengali, his real mother tongue. He had to take a regional language at his ICS Examination. He chose Bengali. He started learning Bengali. He read Ishwarchand Vidyasagar’s ‘Kathamala’ and ‘Bodhodaya’. There was much in Bengali, which he did not understand. He went to Mr. Towers, who was living in Cambridge, to discuss such difficult passages. Mr. Towers had been a judge in Bengal; he claimed that he had mastered Bengali language. People called him Pt. Towers in fun. He had only superficial knowledge of Bengali. One day Aurobindo went to him with an extract from Bankimchandra’s novel and requested him to explain.

Pt. Towers read that extract, but he did not understand its meaning. So he refused to believe that it was a passage in Bengali. However, Aurobindo received the guidance from Pt. Towers about Bengali. He knew how to write; but he did not know how to speak Bengali.

18. Lotus and Dagger

‘Auro, see what the father writes in the cuttings of the newspapers.’

‘Oh! It is sheer injustice. It is atrocity on the innocent Hindus. How can atrocities be tolerated?’ said the elder brother. ‘We in India are slaves; we have to suffer humiliation.’ Then other brother discussed the British rule in India. Aurobindo became very angry when he read atrocities on Indians by the Britishers. Perhaps he desired to liberate India from reading the cuttings.

Then Aurobindo understood the politics of British Government. The Britishers attracted brilliant students from India to England for education. They promised good jobs to Indians in India. Such students became anglophile; they adopted the British way of life. The British rule was safe in India with the help of such students. The Britishers so far succeeded in their plan; but some Indian students knew these tricks of British government. They organised an association in England to discuss the British slavery in India; they named the association ‘Majlis’. The members of ‘Majlis’ announced India’s freedom. Aurobindo became the member of this ‘Majlis’; he was a secretary to this organisation for some time. He gave lectures on injustice of British in India. India office in England took note of his lectures; they put Aurobindo in their black list.

Moreover, some angry Indian students had an organisation called ‘Lotus and Dagger’. Aurobindo joined this organisation as well. Members of ‘Lotus and Dagger’ swore to liberate India at any cost. Of course, this association did not last long. However, it showed how fiery young students of India devoted their lives to India’s freedom. Aurobindo too was committed to India’s freedom when he came back to India.

19. Write still more

Aurobindo was interested in reading good books right from his childhood. He read a number of books in his school and college days. Later, he developed the power of writing poetry. Other students were interested in playing cricket or football, but Aurobindo was not interested in any games. He loved reading. He translated the part of ‘Hecuba’ from the Greek at the age of seventeen. He showed the translation to Professor Laurence. Prof. Laurence was pleased to read it; he advised him to ‘write still more’. Aurobindo had translated the

part of the book better than any other English educated boys. Prof. Laurence encouraged Aurobindo very much. Aurobindo wrote many poems as well.

One day his classmate Farare read out Homer's lines. Aurobindo listened to these lines carefully. He identified himself with the rhythm of the lines; he understood the meaning of that metre completely. Afterwards he wrote many poems in hexameter including his epic entitled 'Ilion'. He could grasp the intricacy of hexameter only at the age of seventeen.

20. Spiritual experiences in England

Aurobindo was brought up in a foreign country; he had nothing of Hindu culture or tradition. He was an atheist and completely westernised. However god-knowledge came to him naturally. He had read 'The Second Book of the East'. That had acquainted him with Vedantic philosophy. He came to know that Vedant was not a book to preach; it could be translated into life and action.

Aurobindo had a few extraordinary spiritual experiences in England. He said to the disciples, 'I had no spiritual experiences in my childhood. But I remember only three experiences. First, 'it was in Darjeeling; I was surrounded by tamas. Second, when I was at the age of twelve/thirteen, I experienced that I was very selfish. I thought that I had given up my selfishness. Later I made an effort to be selfless in life. The third experience was in England before I left it. I had the intellectual experience of one Brahman. All others were unreal but this experience was only for some time.'

Aurobindo was not interested in sadhana when he was in England. 'I did not know philosophy and spirituality.' He had not read even a book of Western philosophy. He himself had said, 'I had no interest in philosophy. I was interested only in poetry and literature.'

He read Shelley's 'Revolt of Islam' in his school days; it gave him the dim idea of future programme. He said to some of disciples, 'Shelley's 'Revolt of Islam' has wonderful influence on me; I read this poem time and again. Of course, I do not understand what it was. But it has touched my heart; it has given me an idea of transforming the world.'

Though Aurobindo was in England in this tender period of his life, he had some concrete spiritual experiences of India. His friends

were English boys and teachers. Yet, love for the motherland and spirituality sprouted in him.

21. I refused to receive a B.A. Degree

There were three years courses in the British university to get a B.A. Degree. Aurobindo chose Greek; and Latin in B.A. He completed three years courses within two years; moreover, he passed tripose examination in the first division. He got forty books as a prize. He received prizes in Latin and Greek; he had secured very good marks in them. He got prizes, but did not get a B.A. Degree. He had not completed three years required for this degree. Aurobindo was not ready to wait for one more year; he was, in fact, not interested in the award of the degree. He was interested only in getting the knowledge of literature. Thus Aurobindo had passed the B.A. in the first division; he was not awarded the B.A. Degree.

22. ICS Examination

ICS Examination was to be appointed to the best positions in India. Its examination was conducted in England. If one passed the examination, one would be in the best job of British government. Krishnadhan wanted his sons to be ICS officers; he instructed them to appear in the ICS Examination. All the three brothers tried for it; but the first two brothers Binaybhushan and Manmohan did not succeed. Only Aurobindo passed the examination with very good marks. Krishnadhan was very happy; he had very high hope about Aurobindo. He managed a collector's post through his English friend Sir Henry Cotton in India. He wanted Aurobindo to be placed in a very good district of Bengal. Krishnadhan was very happy with Aurobindo and had planned for his bright future. But destiny had something else to do with Aurobindo.

23. Test of Horse-riding

Indian villages had no *pacca* roads at that time; officers had to go on horses. That is why horse riding was a must for officers. ICS examination was necessary; but after passing the ICS examination, one had to pass horse riding to be a collector. Aurobindo had to appear in the horse-riding test. He knew that British government was

doing injustice to Indians; he did not want to join a British job. But he could not refuse, because his father wanted. He decided not to appear in the horse-riding test. He did not attend the test first time. Test was arranged for the second time for Aurobindo; but he skipped it as well. He came home to tell his elder brother that he had failed in the test. The elder brother did not snub him; he invited to play cards. Aurobindo did not attend the horse-riding test even second time. Manmohan came to become very angry with two brothers. He said, 'What do you understand? Is it a play to pass ICS examination? You do not go to attend horse riding test even the second time.' But it was too late to go to the test. Manmohan felt much; but Aurobindo did not think that he had lost anything at all. He said to the disciples, 'I did not go for horse riding test. Second opportunity was given to me; but I was absent. So examiners did not select me.'

'Did you get inspiration not to appear in the horse riding test at the time of ICS examination?'

'No, that time I did not know about Yoga. I appeared in ICS Examination because my father wanted me to complete it. I was too small to understand works done by the ICS collectors. Later I came to know what the ICS officers were to do. I hated administrative work; I was not interested in it. I had interest in poetry, literature and patriotism.'

Prof. Prothero came to know about the rejection of Aurobindo from the ICS examination. He was pained because Aurobindo was disqualified from ICS examination for small excuse. He wrote a letter to Mr. Cotton, 'I am pained to know that Aurobindo was disqualified from the ICS examination because of not attending the horse riding test. His behaviour here was very good for two years; he was the first in languages; his knowledge of the classics and English literature was very higher than that of brilliant English undergraduate students. He had a style of writing much better than English boys. It was short-sightedness of the British government not to select such a brilliant boy for not riding a horse.' He added, 'I know three brothers very well; they have to live a pitiable life because his parents did not send money. They grow up without the support of any English men.'

Aurobindo was not selected in spite of recommendations of two British professors. It was the first case; earlier candidates for ICS were selected without appearing in horse riding test or in regional language test. India office had taken note of Aurobindo's lectures at 'Majlis' against British government in India. They deliberately rejected

Aurobindo from ICS examination. Aurobindo was saved from the service of the British government. So horse riding test was beneficial to both – British government and Aurobindo.

Krishnadhan was deeply shocked when he learnt that his ‘Auro’ was disqualified from ICS examination due to his failure in horse riding. His hopes were shattered; he had the bad experience of British injustice. But Aurobindo did not feel at all. Of course, it was not a small thing to renounce highest examination like ICS. Aurobindo was just twenty first years old. It was his destiny that he passed the B.A. but he did not receive the B.A. degree; similarly he passed ICS examination; he was not selected for the collector’s job. Subashchandra Bose renounced the ICS examination getting inspiration from Aurobindo. Bharatmata was waiting for her distinct son who was leading a detached life in England.

24. Meeting with Maharaja Sayajirao

Scholarship of Aurobindo was stopped. There was no source of income to live in England. He wanted to return to India, he did not know anyone there. He sought the opinion of James Cotton who asked, ‘What do you want to do now?’ ‘I want to return to India; I need a good job there.’ ‘I can manage a job in India. The Maharaja of Vadodara is my friend. He is now in England. I’ll talk to him.’ ‘Yes, very kind of you.’

Aurobindo met the Maharaja and impressed him much by his knowledge and sweet nature. The Maharaja took him to be an outstanding person and decided to take him in Vadodara at any cost. He said to Aurobindo, ‘I appoint you in Vadodara state. How much do you demand as your salary?’

Aurobindo did not expect a job in the very first meeting. He had never thought of his salary; nor did he know what to demand for such work. So he decided to consult his elder brother. He said to the Maharaja, ‘I am grateful to you. But I’ll let you know about my salary after consulting my elder brother.’

Aurobindo asked about his salary to his elder brother Binaybhushan; but Binaybhushan had no experience. So, both of them went to James Cotton to seek his opinion about the salary. James Cotton was happy; he told to demand two hundred rupees or ten pounds a month. Aurobindo was to ask for two hundred rupees a month, but if this amount was more than desired, he was ready to take

one hundred and a half. The Maharaja was very happy to appoint Aurobindo for two hundred rupees. He told his friend that this appointment was very cheap.

The Maharaja invited Aurobindo to Vadodara as early as possible. Aurobindo had some problems to return to India. He had no money to buy a ticket of the steamer to India; he had some debt to pay as well. He managed to get the last scholarship of ICS. He paid his debt and bought a ticket of the steamer. He was returning to India after fourteen years. His father was very eager to meet him.

25. Pitiabile incident in life

Aurobindo was to return to India after twenty-one years; it was expected that Aurobindo would be completely westernised and anglophile. Krishnadhan was very happy if he could see his son in India. He took leave for one month, came to Bombay and waited for Aurobindo's arrival. But Aurobindo had his own problem; he had no money; he did not know 'when' and 'how' he would return to India. Krishnadhan waited for his son; he was tired of waiting. He came back to Khulana; he earnestly waited to hear the news of his son's arrival at India.

Aurobindo had bought a ticket in a small steamer to India because he had the monetary problem. But Greenlay and Co informed Krishnadhan that Aurobindo was going back to India in a big steamer. It was a very small mistake; but it caused very pitiabile incident in Aurobindo's life.

The big steamer met with an accident near Lisban. Krishnadhan got the news of this accident. His heart was weak; he could not tolerate it. 'Auro' was his hope; but he was no more with him. He was so restless that he had a heart-attack.

Vrajendranath Day had invited Dr.Ghose to dinner that day. But Dr.Ghose did not come. Vrajendranath sent a servant to inquire why Dr.Ghose did not come. The servant came back and said, 'Go soon to Dr.Ghose. He is very sick.'

'He was okay in the morning; what had happened now?'

Vrajendranath reached the house of Dr.Ghose soon. He found Krishnadhan pale and unwell. A doctor was attending him. When Vrajendranath came to know about the accident, he was shocked. A doctor and he tried to help him but in vain. Krishnadhan gave up his

life remembering 'Auro'. Like Dasarath, he had no sons near him when he died the next day.

Krishnadhan wanted his sons to be English men; he had done everything to achieve his goal. He was separated from the sons; he faced financial problems and he suffered from his hysteric wife. Then it was the opportunity to see his son 'Auro' and be happy. But destiny had some other thing to do with him. He had to die without meeting his son. Aurobindo had intense love for his father; one could imagine his sorrow over the loss of his father.

26. Landing at the Indian port in Bombay

Aurobindo landed at Bombay port; the mother India welcomed him with peace. It was the first spiritual experience in India. This peace in him was forever; it opened the doors of many other spiritual experiences which he got in time to come. Aurobindo realised that the Divine pervades the entire world. He was to be seen in matter and body.

Thus Aurobindo's arrival at India began with spiritual experience. Peace which he experienced abolished *tamas* that he had from the time of his stay at Darjeeling. Aurobindo spoke and did works from this peaceful state in the later years of his life.

27. Arrival at Vadodara

Aurobindo came to Gujarat on 8th February 1893. He came straight to Vadodara from Bombay. Nobody went to the station to receive him. He kept his luggage in the platform and started thinking what to do. Gujarat was unknown to him; but he had strong patriotism within him. His patriotism introduced him to Gujarat. On platform he thought, 'Where to go? Whom to meet?' Then he heard the voice of someone, 'Are, Mr.Ghose, are you here?' Bapubhai Majmudar, a co-student in England, welcomed him with these words. He had come to receive his relative; but his relative did not turn up. He was pleased to say, 'The Maharaja has understood your brilliance. It is very good. But where are you going to stay?'

'I am thinking the same thing. Where do I go? Whom do I contact?'

'Have you not informed the Maharaja?'

'No.'

'Then my house is for you. It is my fortune that you met me'.

Bapubhai was a barrister in Vadodara state. He was of smiling nature. Aurobindo had a horse laughter hearing his pleasant talks. Later he said, 'Bapubhai Majmudar was my first friend in Vadodara. I stayed in his house for some days.'

This is how Aurobindo got related to Gujarat. Aurobindo was shy; he did not tell about his needs to anybody. But Bapubhai and his family treated him well. Aurobindo was like his family member. He lived there for ten days. He was appointed in service on 18th February; only then Bapubhai allowed him to leave. Aurobindo was shifted to the house that was given to him by the state authority.

28. Experiences of all departments

The Maharaja wanted Aurobindo to be an expert administrator. He temporarily appointed him at the settlement department in the beginning; he asked him to learn intricacies of the department from the senior administrators. Aurobindo worked for one year in this department. Then he was shifted to the stamp department; he worked there for some time. Afterwards he was moved to revenue department. Thus the Maharaja could see that Aurobindo had got the experiences of all departments.

Besides this Aurobindo had to work as a secretary to the Maharaja. He, however, was not appointed as a regular secretary. He did all important works of the Maharaja. For example, he wrote letters on behalf of the Maharaja or prepared his lectures. He said, 'I have written many memorandums for the Maharaja. He indicated the parts and I elaborated them. But I was not interested in the work of administration. My interest was in Sanskrit literature and freedom fighting movements.'

However, he was in the service of the Maharaja; so he did whatever was allotted to him. Once he was entrusted the work of seeing European railway timetable; he did perform his duty sincerely. Aurobindo had no hesitation in working like a clerk. He moved from department to department. On the very second year of his arrival at Vadodara, there was famine in the state. The Maharaja had entrusted to collect the information regarding famine and to prepare the plan of relief works. Aurobindo himself went to famine-affected areas and collected exact information. He went to Patan, Kadi, Mehsana etc, lived with the people and saw the effects of famine. He wrote a report

on a village to Rajnarayan Bose: 'Now I am in such a village that has no post office within fifteen miles. How can I send a telegram in this situation?'

Mr. Tate, Principal, Baroda College, knew Aurobindo's scholarship and literary power. He thought that if a Cambridge scholar like Aurobindo came to college, it would be of great help to students in general. He recommended Aurobindo's name for the college. The Maharaja agreed on one condition that Aurobindo would be relieved for one or two hours to do his private works daily. Aurobindo was appointed as a part-time French teacher in the college. He was very happy to get this job.

29. The mother could not identify

Aurobindo came to Vadodara to serve; he had no time to go to Kolkata to meet his own people and relatives. Rajnarayan Bose always wrote to him to go to Kolkata, but Aurobindo had no leave. Aurobindo wrote, 'I might come to Bengal next week. Last month I had some difficulty in getting my salary; so I could not come. I had demanded one month's leave; I would start for Kolkata as soon as my leave is granted.'

Aurobindo returned to Kolkata after fifteen years. His younger sister Sarojini had become a grown up woman; he had not seen his younger brother Barindra. The family was living in Rohini. When Aurobindo met his mother, she could not identify him. She was told that it was her own 'Auro'; she refused to believe that he was her 'Auro'. She had seen 'Auro' when he was sent to England at the age of seven. She remembered only that 'Auro'. She was not ready to believe that 'Auro' had grown up. What a tragedy! Aurobindo's father was no more with him to meet; his mother could not identify him. Many stories of Auro's childhood were told to her; yet she could not recognise 'Auro'. She was reminded of the finger cut of 'Auro'; she observed Auro's finger, knew him 'Auro' and started weeping embracing him. Aurobindo spent his leave in the house of his maternal uncle. Giving the details of that time Sarojini wrote, 'He was very shy; he had sweet face; he had long hair on his head.'

He lived with the mother for some time. Then he went to his maternal uncle's house to spend the remaining days of his leave.

30. What will be in the bag?

The members of Aurobindo's maternal uncle's family thought that 'Auro' had brought precious things into his two trunks, but they were disappointed when they met Aurobindo. They found him to be shy. They were curious to know what the two trunks had. Particularly Vasanti Devi told all concerned that Aurobindo had brought shining clothes from England. But she was sad when she opened the trunks. There were books and books in them. Only one pair of clothes was there.

Vasanti Devi said, 'Will 'Auro' read these books in the vacation? Will he like to read all these books? And if he reads, will he spare time to play with us?' Vasanti Devi came into touch with Aurobindo; she liked him. She said, 'well, he reads many books, but his conversation is witty. It does not look like one who has studied in a foreign country.' Rajnarayan Bose and Yogendra Bose were also impressed by amicable behaviour of Aurobindo. They remembered Krishnadhan's words that 'Auro' would realise his dream.

Aurobindo spent his leave with the family and returned to Vadodara to join the job.

31. Love for brother and sister

Bengal was Auro's motherland; he had very little time to live there. Only during his one month's leave, he could be in Bengal. Sarojini wrote him letters to come to Bengal time and again; but he had no time to go due to either there was no leave or he had financial problem. He wrote to Sarojini: 'It seems that during Pooja, I shall not be able to come to Bengal. It is impossible to come at such a short time. If it were possible, I would have started for Bengal in the next day. I cannot come because of my work and financial problem. My position is like Judas in the Bible. Judas has betrayed Christ and was hanged for it. He has done a good work, so he gets one hour to pass in Himsheels. Rest of the time he is in the hell.'

'But, Saro, it seems to me that it is not a divine grace. It is the divine cruelty. The experience of the hell is bitter. I do not know why I am in Vadodara. I am like a. The days spent with you at Vaijnath are more delightful than my days in Baroda.'

Aurobindo loved his brothers and sister. He had not written many letters to them. But he had discharged his duty towards them completely. He took interest in Sarojini's studies. He wrote, 'From

your letter I have come to know that you have improved your knowledge of English. I would like to say something only after you have acquired the knowledge of English fully.’

The brothers and sister of Aurobindo had not received the love of their parents. The mother was insane; the father was drunkard. Aurobindo loved his brothers and the sister very much. He managed their education well. He monthly remitted money to them from Vadodara. Someone warned him about this, ‘Your elder brother is in good economic condition. They also earn. But they do not remit. Why do you send money to your brothers and the sister?’ ‘Dada is the diwan of Koochbihar; he has to live according to his standard. How can he save money? Manmohan is married; and marriage is not easy’, said Aurobindo. He believed in relationship and performed his duty sincerely.

32. Maharaja Sayajirao and Aurobindo

Maharaja was highly impressed by Aurobindo’s knowledge of English language. He was proud that he had a real scholar in his state. He used Aurobindo for the benefits of the people of Baroda.

Maharaja was to inaugurate the conference of the Congress at Ahmedabad. He had to give a lecture at that time. He requested Aurobindo to write his lecture. Aurobindo wrote and read out the lecture before the Maharaja. The famous historian, Govind Sakharam Desai, was present there. The Maharaja said, ‘Aurbindbabu, can’t you simplify this lecture?’

‘Why?’

‘It is too difficult for me. People will not take this lecture as written by me.’

Aurobindo replied, ‘Do you really think that people will understand that you have written the lecture even if I simplify it? They already know that Maharaja’s lecture is written by others. The ideas expressed on it are not important to them.’

The Maharaja laughed over Aurobindo’s reply. He said, ‘Keep the lecture as it is.’

Aurobindo had the courage to speak truth even to the Maharaja. And it was to the credit of the Maharaja that he accepted the truth without any distortion.

Order of the Maharaja

Once the Maharaja passed an order that the administrative officers had to come to offices on Sunday to work efficiently. All officers, from collectors to the clerks, remained present in the offices on Sunday. But Aurobindo did not turn up. On the next day a friend asked Aurobindo, 'Mr Ghose, why did you not come?' 'Sunday is the holiday. That is why I did not come.'

'Don't you know about the order of the Maharaja? It was for every officer to remain present in the office.'

'Yes, I know. But I have a right to enjoy a holiday on Sunday. I do not want to surrender my right.'

'How can we disrespect the order of the Maharaja? He might be angry with you; perhaps you will have to explain.'

'Then I will explain.'

The maharaja did decide to punish those who were absent from offices on Sunday. Aurobindo did not care. He said, 'Let the Maharaja do what he wants. Saying 'No' to work on Sunday is my right. I will not give it up.'

It was reported to the Maharaja. The Maharaja knew that Aurobindo was a man of firm decision. He never wanted to punish him. He waived the order off. It proved that Aurobindo was not supporting the undesirable order of the Maharaja. It also indicated that Aurobindo was respected by all and sundry. Dinendrakumar Roy, who lived in Baroda for two years, wrote, 'The Maharaja knows the ability and capacity of Aurobindo. He also knows that there are many officers in Baroda State whose salary is two to three thousand a month. But none is like Aurobindo. To him Aurobindo is a unique man.'

Invitation of the Maharaja

The Maharaja respected Aurobindo as his family member. He never ordered him to come to Lakshmilash Palace. He ordered his private secretary to contact Aurobindo if the Maharaja had some personal work. One day a horseman was sent to invite Aurobindo to dine with the Maharaja. It was an important invitation from the Maharaja. But Aurobindo could say 'no' to it. Dinendrakumar wrote, 'I have seen that if there is no time to go to the Maharaja's dinner, Aurobindo will decline to accept and say 'No' to the Maharaja. Big persons waited for months to meet the Maharaja, but they did not find

the opportunity. Aurobindo was just a teacher but values his work much more than the meeting with the Maharaja.'

The Maharaja never forced Aurobindo to come to his palace. On the contrary he sent his daughter Indira and his son Pratapsingh to study English and French to Aurobindo's place.

Faith of the Maharaja

Aurobindo was a very sincere officer and a dedicated teacher. The Maharaja trusted him fully; he gave all important works to Aurobindo.

Vasudeva Sadashiva Bapat was the revenue officer of Vadodara State. British government was angry with him because he supported freedom fighters. They wanted to retrench him. He was harassed like any thing. He was accused of taking bribes. An inquiry was established to know truths. It worked for two years and gave the report against Bapat.

The Maharaja was not satisfied with the findings of inquiry. He suspected that injustice was done to Bapat. He appointed Aurobindo to study the case and to find out truths. Aurobindo studied Bapat's case carefully and prepared a report. The Maharaja was very happy with Aurobindo's findings. He increased Rs.50 to his salary. Then Aurobindo was paid Rs. 450/- a month.

Once the Maharaja was so pleased with Aurobindo that he granted him a bonus of rupees one thousand.

The Maharaja had full trust in Aurobindo's powers of understanding and evaluation. Many a time he took Aurobindo's advice in his private matters. The following order showed the Maharaja's love for Aurobindo:

- 1) His Highness Maharaja has ordered to increase Rs. 90 to his salary.
- 2) His Highness is pleased to announce that Mr. Ghose is a very capable man. But he is somewhat careless. If he works with discipline, he will be of much help to the state. The Maharaja hopes that Aurobindo will work with much discipline and will develop virtues to complete the works of the State.

- 3) The Diwan of Vadodara state should entrust the work of preparing the annual reports of the year to Aurobindo. Aurobindo's ability must be utilized.
- 4) The Diwan of Vadodara state should intimate works to be done by Aurobindo. He should see that his college service will not come in the way of his other works as well.

The Maharaja identified the strength and capability of Aurobindo. He wanted to use it for the development of his state. Aurobindo had written about this order of the Maharaja to his wife in Kolkata. He wrote, 'The Maharaja has increased Rs. 90 to my salary. He has promoted me. He has praised me and my way of doing the work. But I do not work according to his order and I do not complete the work on time; these are the points of complaint against me by the Maharaja.'

The Maharaja did protect Aurobindo's interest. Aurobindo had won the trust of the Maharaja; but he was very humble. He believed in doing his work of the state with complete devotion.

The Secretary of the Maharaja

The Maharaja had never appointed Aurobindo as his private secretary. Aurobindo could not attend Maharaja many times when the Maharaja sent for him. This way the Maharaja had not the happy experience of Aurobindo.

Once the Maharaja had some work with Aurobindo in Kashmir. Aurobindo's room was in his neighbourhood. He sent for him thrice or four times, but there was no response. The Maharaja went to Aurobindo's room and was pleased to see that he was in deep sleep. He returned to his room smiling; he did not disturb Aurobindo's sleep.

The Maharaja knew the capacities of Aurobindo. He gave much importance to Aurobindo's abilities – his disinterestedness, his style of work, his scholarship and the like. And Aurobindo equally respected the Maharaja. He wrote to Dinendrakumar, 'This Maharaja is capable of ruling a big empire. There are no other Rajas like him in our country.'

The real work of the Maharaja

The maharaja used to go on horse early in the morning; Aurobindo also went for a walk at the daybreak. Once there was an old lady who

was waiting for someone to help her lift her dungs. The Maharaja approached the old lady and helped her. He knew that Aurobindo was following him. Aurobindo came to him and did not speak a word about the incident. The Maharaja asked him, 'Mr. Ghose, Do you not like my work?'

'Yes, I liked. But I was thinking whether the King's work was to help someone lift the burden or it was to see that someone's burden was lessened.' The Maharaja understood what Aurobindo wanted to say. He went to the old lady, took her address and called her to the court on the same day. He gave the old lady financial help. Then Aurobindo said, 'Yes, now this is to be called the Maharaja's real work!'

33. The man in a poor house

In the beginning Aurobindo got an official quarter in Vadodara. He lived there for one year. Then he changed two houses, one was in the compound of Meer Walker Ali; the other was in the compound of a fortman. These houses did not have any facilities. During this time there was plague in the state; Aurobindo's house was also affected by it. For Aurobindo's safety, his house was shifted. He was given an old house which had no facilities. But Aurobindo lived there without any complaints. Dinendrakumar Roy writes, 'Aurobindo was not restless in this house; he was comfortable; he had the experience of living like in a palace. He did not care for sunshine or rain. His days were disturbed by flies. Nights were disturbed by mosquitoes. The summer heat was unbearable; heavy rains created a lot of problems. This house was worse than the stable.'

But Aurobindo did not mind difficulties, he was used to them. He worked even in the midst of these problems.

Then a bungalow was allotted to Aurobindo on race course road; however, Aurobindo did not live long in that bungalow. A well furnished bungalow for collector Khasirao Jadav was ready in Padia Bazaar. Khasirao shifted to it. He invited Aurobindo to live with him. Aurobindo lived in that house at Dandia Bazaar till he was in Vadodara. Only in this house Aurobindo could get some facility.

This Bungalow is famous as 'Aurobindo Nivas'. It is a place of pilgrimage to the disciples of Aurobindo.

Beginning of a series of political writings

Six months had passed of Aurobindo's arrival at Vadodara. During this period he had studied India's political life, India's leadership and the mind of the people of India. He realised that he had to prepare Indian people and Indian leaders to get India's freedom. He started writing and publishing a series of essays under the title 'New Lamp for Old' in 'Induprakash', a weekly edited by his friend Keshav Ganesh Despande in Marathi. He did so on the condition that his name would not appear in the weekly.

Despande wrote in the preface of the weekly, 'I had promised to publish a series of essays by a keen observer of Indian society. These are not the opinions of our national leaders; that is why they are more important. The foundation of our organisations are not strong, it is not too difficult to say when they will fall. We are working in wrong direction. At this time not to complain against Britishers is carelessness and crime. I have invited a brilliant, fearless and scholar to express his views on the current situations. He may have faced inconvenience and misunderstanding but he writes in his extraordinary style. We insist on reading this series carefully and attentively. We assure you that the essays published will give original thought to inspire patriots in our country.'

Aurobindo was fearless in criticising political institutions including the Congress. He also exhibited weakness of the people. He said that political leadership should be based on independence and fearlessness.

The Congress aims at wrong direction. They do not make sincere efforts to achieve the results. They do not use true methods and they are not honest people. If they are not blind men, they are certainly one-eyed men.

It is the secret of politics to take maximum advantages of the situation; but we have failed to do so. We lack in strength; we have to be awakened from within and not from without.

Aurobindo had attacked the flattery of the Congressmen; the series of lectures showed his courage to speak truths. It also indicated people's character to get freedom. Aurobindo said to his disciples:

'My essays in Induprakash are so aggressive that Maharastra Congress leader Mahadev Govind Ranade advised me not to write such revolutionary essays. He told me that the government might send me to jail. Then I gave up writing the practical aspects of the politics. After sometime I was tired so I stopped writing.'

Ranade was eager to meet Aurobindo; he was curious to know the man who was totally against the British government. Deshpande helped Ranade to meet Aurobindo in Mumbai. Ranade advised Aurobindo, 'Use your power not to criticise the Congress, write on such constructive works as jail reforms.'

Aurobindo listened to his cold advice; he stopped writing aggressive essays. However, he continued to prepare the ground for the freedom of India from behind the curtain.

34. Was this really Aurobind Babu?

Aurobindo could not speak Bengali. In Vadodara he decided to learn spoken Bengali. He wrote to his elder maternal uncle to send a teacher of Bengali who could teach him to speak Bengali.

The maternal uncle sent Dinendrakumar Roy to Vadodara. Aurobindo did not learn Bengali grammar from him; he only learnt to converse in Bengali. Aurobindo did not master Bengali to give a lecture. This was the price which he paid for living away from his motherland for twenty years.

Dinendrakumar had not seen Aurobindo; but he knew many foreign returned young men. He imagined Aurobindo to be a spectacled man with distorted pronunciation of the mother tongue. But he was disappointed when he first saw Aurobindo. He wrote, 'What is this? He is a shy youth with dreamy eyes and beautiful hair... he was in desi shoes. Is this really Aurobindo Babu? Is he not the idol of French, English, Latin and Greek? From my two-day experiences I could know that Aurobindo was child-like; he had no selfish motto in his heart. He was like a sanyasin. He had controlled himself. His aim was to acquire knowledge. Though he lived in this world, he lived like a sadhaka, a man dedicated to sadhana. I had never seen him angry.'

Dinendrakumar knew Aurobindo from a close quarter; he was very much impressed by him. Though Aurobindo had not started practising his yoga, he was living like a yogi. He spoke very little about himself. He was desireless, self-controlled and dedicated to reading.

Aurobindo did not converse with others much. Sir Desai wrote, 'Aurobindo was reticent. If a question was asked him, he would reply 'yes' or 'no'. He followed the first principle of yoga.'

Once Dinendrakumar asked Aurobindo, 'You are much more capable than any other persons in the state. Then why don't you use your opportunity to come forward and work.'

‘It had no happiness.’

Aurobindo liked to work from behind the curtain. But the situation was different. He had to come to occupy the stage.

35. Life as a sanyasin

A foreign returned Indian used to live a glorious life; his life was, in fact, higher than an English man’s life in India. But Aurobindo was not like average Indians. He lived a very simple life; he used to wear dhoti and kurta. His student Patkare wrote:

‘I have not seen Aurobindo wearing warm clothes in winter. He had no costly boots, gaudy dresses of different types to change... he lived a simple life. He did not like to decorate his house. He did not care for difficulties. He did not mind whether there was leakage in the roof of his bed and the roof was making a noise of ‘choo, choo’. He had a sound sleep in his bed.’

When he travelled Gujarat, he did not have any bedding with him. He slept on the floor of compartment of the train. Patkare asked, ‘Sir, why do you sleep so? Why do you not use comfortable bedding?’

‘You know I am Brahmachari. Our Shastras say that a Brahmachari should avoid good bedding.’

Aurobindo might have not read much about yoga at that time, but he did follow our Shastras very much.

Aurobindo was careless about food. He preferred ‘rotali’. Gujarati food had much ghee and Marathi food was hot. He avoided them. Once a servant brought food from a Maharashtrian officer. Aurobindo refused to eat it because it was very hot.

Some time Aurobindo ate meat; he gave up eating meat after he started practising yoga in Pondicherry. He continued to take tea and to smoke; he left the habits of smoking in Pondicherry. In Vadodara, he drank milk and ate bananas. He was a very big officer in the State. He got very high salary as well. But he lived very simple life; his life was like the life of a sanyasin.

36. God maintains my accounts

Aurobindo got the salary of three months together. Whatever he got in cash as a salary, he kept it in a tray on the table. He never kept them in a box with a lock. He did not keep the accounts. He never spent

money for his whims or desires. Yet all the money was spent. One day his disciple Patkare asked:

‘Saheb! Why do you keep money like this? You must save money.’

‘See, this is the proof that we live in the midst of good people.’

‘But Saheb, you do not keep the accounts. How do you say that your neighbouring people are honest?’

‘God keeps my accounts. I do not feel shortage of money. Why do I worry for it?’

Aurobindo said that it was not in his nature to save money. Only once he saved money, but he spent all afterwards.

Aurobindo was disinterested in the matter of money. He resigned the job of Vadodara College where he was getting seven hundred and ten rupees a month and joined the national college, Kolkata with only one hundred and a half rupees a month. Though God gave him only this much, he rewarded him with opportunity to serve Bharatmata. He was always in tight situation, but he did never face financial problem.

37. Literary creation

In Vadodara, Aurobindo started the work of literary creation. He devoted whatever time he got to reading and writing there. He wrote, ‘I used to write in the morning; rest of the time I spent in office. I used to meet friends in the evening. There was progress in my writing work.’

He wrote continuously for fourteen days and completed his ‘Love and Death’. He began writing his ‘Savitri’ in Vadodara. He tried to study Sanskrit. He read Vedas, Upanishads, Ramayana, Mahabharat, Valmiki, Vyas, Kalidas, Bhavbhuti, Bhatrihari, and the like. He translated Bhatrihari’s ‘Neetishataka.’

Aurobindo also translated some portions of the Ramayana and the Mahabharat. The famous historian of Bengal, Rameshchandra Dutt had come to Vadodara. He met Aurobindo and requested him to show the translations of the ‘Ramayana’ and the ‘Mahabharat’. He was extremely pleased to see these translations. He said, ‘Your translations are of best quality. Had I seen them earlier, I would not have published my own translations.’ Rameshchandra Dutt had translated the ‘Ramayana’ and the ‘Mahabharat’. When he saw the translations of these epics by Aurobindo he thought that his translations were of much less quality than Aurobindo’s translations.

Besides, Aurobindo wrote 'Urvasi' getting inspiration from Kalidas's 'Vikramorvasiyam'. He published a collection of his poems which he had written mostly in England under the title 'Songs of Myrtila'. Dinendrakumar writes: 'Aurobindo wrote poems in different metres. His poems were sweet and simple. His style was free from adjectives. He avoided exaggeration. He wrote poems on a coloured paper... He was in concentration while writing them. In Vadodara, he wrote three epics and many short poems.'

38. Only one hobby: reading

Reading was Aurobindo's habit from childhood. It continued in Vadodara. There were hundreds of books in his private library. There were books from Chaucer to Eliot. He was in constant touch with two great booksellers of Mumbai – 'Thakar & Co' and 'Radhabhai Atmaram'. They sent the boxes of books by parcel every month. He spent much of his salary to buy these books. His rooms were full of books.

Vadodara had no electricity that time. People slept at night; but Aurobindo was busy with reading the books under the light of a lantern. His reading was systematic. He underlined the important passages, wrote them in a diary and noted the essence of the book. He donated all his important books to the Kalamandir of Manekrao.

Aurobindo had passion to the books. He did not remember time and space. He forgot to take food as well. Patkare writes, 'It was the holiday. Aurobindo took up a book to read; he started reading the book till afternoon. He did not remember that he had not taken his food.

The servant said, 'Sir, I have kept your food.'

'All right', said Aurobindo. But he forgot to eat. The servant came in and saw that the dish was untouched. He had the similar experience when he came after one hour. The servant had no courage to request him to eat. He sent for Patkare who said, 'Sir, the food is waiting for you. Then Aurobindo left the book...' He said to his disciples, 'There are many people in India who have read more than I. but whatever I read, I have used it.'

39. Learning Gujarati language

Gujarati and Marathi were two languages of Vadodara state. It was compulsory to learn these two languages for every officer in Vadodara. Aurobindo was expected to learn Gujarati when he was appointed in settlement department. In his appointment letter, it was written that Aurobindo had to learn Gujarati within six months. He could not spare time to learn Gujarati. He was warned. He did not appear in the examination of the regional language of the State. He was again warned; but he did not take the test. In 1898 he was threatened that there would be cut in his salary if he did not appear in the test. The matter was reported to the Maharaja; he exempted Aurobindo from the test.

Afterwards Aurobindo learnt Gujarati from a devoted teacher named Chhaganlal Modi. He read the famous book of Nanalal entitled 'Vasantotsava'. He also learnt Marathi. Thus, he was acquainted with European and Indian languages very well.

40. Choice of Mrinalini Devi

Aurobindo took leave for a month and went to Kolkata. He became popular among the educated people there. He was an ideal for freedom fighting. Charuchandra Dutt wrote:

I heard the name of Aurobindo when I came to study in Kolkata. I was surprised because he was so simple though he was the son of anglophile Krishnadhan. His strong patriotism had influenced many Bengali youths of Kolkata.

In Vadodara, Aurobindo had studied Hindu dharmashatra and Hindu epics. He started practising the tenets of Hindu Shastra. Besides, he studied Bengali literature deeply. He learnt the devotion of Hindu woman after reading Bankimchandra's 'Anandmath'. He did realise that Hindu woman could contribute to her husband's efforts. He thought that his marriage with an educated girl would not hinder his work of liberating the motherland.

In 1901, Aurobindo had gone to Kolkata on leave. He gave an advertisement for a Hindu girl in the newspaper. He had put a condition that the girl should be from Hindu family and should have Hindu Sanskaras. The marriage also was to be performed according to the Hindu Shastras.

At that time Mrinalini was studying in Brahma School, Kolkata. Bhupalchandra Bose was her father. He was a big officer in the agricultural department of Shillong. He had also gone to England for

study and for getting a degree. He was modern. There was no girl education in Bengal, but Bhupalbabu wanted his daughter 'Mina' to be highly educated. She was beautiful, impressive and like a fairy. She became friendly with Sudhira Bose while studying in the School. Sudhira Bose became the principal of a school established by sister Nivedita.

The advertisement of the marriage gave wider publicity of Aurobindo. Many proposals from the girl's parents came to him, but he chose Mrinalini Devi. Mrinalini was a beautiful girl at the age of fourteen. She was impressed by Aurobindo in the first sight. Aurobindo was touched by her sweetness and shyness too. He chose Mrinalini as his bride. He was twenty nine and she was fourteen at that time.

On 30th April 1901 it was decided to marry them in the house of Hatkhola family. The famous scientist Jagdishchandra Bose and his wife, Lord Sinha, Vyomesh Chakravarti and the like attended the marriage ceremony. The marriage was to be performed according to Hindu laws; however, there was a hurdle. Aurobindo was expected to repent before the marriage.

'Why repentance?'

Aurobindo refused to go for repentance. Girishbabu, Mrinalini's well-wisher, greased the palm of Brahmin. To the surprise of all, the Brahmin declared Aurobindo clear; he performed the marriage peacefully.

Mrinalini was considered to be a fortunate girl to marry Aurobindo by the people of Bengali Samaj. Charuchandra Dutt writes, 'We discuss many a time that 'Mina' was really fortunate to get a husband who was scholar from Indian and European points of view. Mrinalini also thought to be fortunate. After marriage they went to Aurobindo's maternal uncle's house in Deodhar. Then they went to meet Aurobindo's mother Swarnlata Devi at Rohini. The mother was practically insane; she did not bless them with enthusiasm. Aurobindo spent some time with younger brothers and sister. Then he came to Nainital with Mrinalini and Saroja to meet the Maharaja of Vadodara. He spent one month in Nainital. Mrinalini began her new life there.

41. Family life in Vadodara

Aurobindo returned to Vadodara with Mrinalini and Sarojini; his younger brother Barindra also joined them soon. There were four members in the family of Aurobindo. The family lived in the upper

portion of Khasirao Jadav's house in Dandia Bazaar. For Mrinalini, Gujarati atmosphere was unknown; however, it was amicable. She lived eleven months with Aurobindo. This was the longest period to live with Aurobindo. Thereafter, she had not been able to stay with Aurobindo even for two months.

Aurobindo had not started practising yoga at that time in Vadodara. He was a professor in a college. He was quite different from other Bengali youths. He cared neither for himself nor for his family. He did not want to earn money, nor did he want to be great. He was reticent and introvert. He was very firm in his decision.

Mrinalini liked to live with Aurobindo, but Sarojini came in her way. She thought that Aurobindo's love had been divided by the coming of Mrinalini. She insulted Mrinalini. She made Mrinalini weep. Mrinalini was so good that she suffered everything silently. She did not complain against Sarojini. She feared that Aurobindo might send both of them to Kolkata.

Barindra was also affected by Sarojini's bad behaviour, he often snubbed her. Sarojini was very obstinate; she did not listen to anyone. Aurobindo was indifferent to such things. Barindra wrote, 'Aurobindo used to read in his study room or he used to look at the sky sitting silently in chair. He often wrote poems. He read books till late at night and got up late in the morning... He had the breakfast with tea and toast. Then he went to his study room... He came to join the family in the afternoon. Sarojini's nature was hot, but Mrinalini was shy and kind. She was silent; she did not participate in discussion.'

The wife of Khasirao Jadav had sympathy with Mrinalini; she supported her a lot. Mrinalini had good terms with Indira, the daughter of the Maharaja. She had friendly relationship with Chimanbai, the Rajmata of Vadodara.

Eleven months in Gujarat were very important for Mrinalini. She got her husband's love; people came to know about her personality. Of course, she was quite young and imperfect; she was not open to her husband's scholarship and spirituality. She was limited to materialism. She could not understand the extraordinary personality of Aurobindo. But she was a Hindu girl; as such she was devoted to her husband. Aurobindo came to Kolkata on leave; he brought Mrinalini and Sarojini with him. Mrinalini went to Shillong; she never came back to Vadodara.

42. Professor Ghosesaheb

Had Aurobindo been only an administrative officer he would have been known to a very few persons. But he was a college professor. He had magnetic personality as a professor. His style of teaching, his lovable and humble behaviour with students and his patriotism had mesmerised students very much. He was always surrounded by an aura of light; he inspired students to lead ideal life. The students of Vadodara college talked about his scholarship and fascinating methods of teaching publically.

Kanaiyalal Munshi wrote: 'I have met Aurobindo twice before I got admission to the college. I have great respect for Aurobindo; I saw him to be popular with college students. When Aurobindo gave lecture on English literature, I listened to it attentively. He was known to the students as a poet and linguist... Students discussed his personality with love and affection.'

One day I asked Aurobindo, 'How can I develop patriotism?'

Aurobindo replied indicating at the map of Bharatmata, 'Look at the map. See the image of Bharatmata in it. It is shaped by cities, mountains and rivers. The people of the country are her cells. Our literature and smriti are her speech. The soul is her culture. The pleasure and freedom of her children are her liberation. Take her to be living mother; worship her with navdha-bhakti.'

Bharatmata was not a piece of land she was a living reality. Aurobindo made Munshi experience this image.

Munshi gave expression to his impression of Aurobindo in a lecture, 'I got opportunity to see the change in Aurobindo by Yoga from 1904 to 1906. We also started doing Yoga under his influence.' Such was the influence of Professor Aurobindo.

Bhaikaka, founder of Vallabh Vidyanagar Township, also wrote, 'I entered intermediate classes in Vadodara college. Our teacher, Aurobindo taught us 'Lay of the Last Minstrel'. I was highly impressed by his teaching and patriotism. He was only for the first term. He left Vadodara and joined the national college, Kolkata with a very small salary. This had influenced students like me. He made the students elated by teaching the following line from 'Lay of the Last Minstrel': 'Is there even one person who would not say that this was my country, this was my motherland?'

Aurobindo never taught irrelevantly nor did he lecture about meaningless things. His behaviour was so amicable that students worshipped him as a god. P.B. Chandvani, his student, wrote,

‘Aurobindo was very peaceful; he was very shy. We respected him. I was so impressed; he was preparing himself to achieve something great. He never laughed in the class. His teaching was very effective. I often went to get solutions to my problems. He gave me a certificate; I could never forget it.’

Aurobindo’s silence was giving inspiration to many students. He was our ideal in politics. He had aroused patriotism in our hearts. Afterwards he went to Pondicherry. Even today we worship him as a god. People do Japa of the names of God; but we students do Japa of Aurobindo.’

Aurobindo’s teaching was very interesting. He used to prepare students for life. First, he gave a lecture on the theme of the book, and then he inspired students to go deep. Patkare wrote, ‘I was his student at intermediate classes. He had wonderful method of teaching. He was inspired to read the books himself. He taught a book effectively.’

His other student Vamanji Aapaji Nikte writes, ‘Aurobindo was teaching us Berk’s ‘French Revolution.’ He did not open the book in the first term; in the second term he did not read more than hundred pages. He discussed the topic of ‘French Revolution’ in such a way that we could prepare it on our own.’

He never dictated notes in the class; but whatever he taught in the class, students noted down in their notebooks. He said to his disciples, ‘I was surprised that students noted down my lecture coma by coma and remembered by heart. This was not the practice in England.’

His student of B.A. special Shanker Balvant, wrote, ‘We eight students of Junior B.A. used to sit in his office. He told us to read seven or eight lines of precious lesson. Then his lecture began. He used to sit in a chair. He had neither a book nor some notes with him. He lectured for nearly one and a half hour and taught us well.’

Regarding the notes of Aurobindo’s lectures, some students say, ‘Sir, our notes do not match with the notes of Nelson.’ Aurobindo replied, ‘I have not read your printed notes of Nelson; but they deserve to be thrown out in the dustbin.’

Aurobindo used to correct the homework of students. He wrote his own remarks; students were eager to read those remarks. Sometimes he wrote, ‘It is of third standard’ or ‘How have you come to college?’ Aurobindo taught for life, not for examinations. That is why students could not forget him.

43. Chairman of debating society

Aurobindo worked for all out progress of students. He was the chairman of debating society in the college. He organised many debating competitions and gave prizes to the deserving candidates. Once he organised a debate on Japanese subject when there was 'Russia-Japan War.' He encouraged students to speak with confidence; he said them to control their excitements.

The debating hall was full when Aurobindo delivered the lecture as the chairman. Patkare wrote, 'We listened to Aurobindo's lectures attentively. Aurobindo stood like a statue; his body did not make any movement while he spoke. His lecture mesmerised the listeners. The music of his voice was very sweet and inspiring.'

Aurobindo spoke from heart. As a chairman he gave learned lectures. They were preserved in Vadodara library. The lecture given on the special gathering of the college, 'What is to be learnt from Oxford and Cambridge Universities,' was still relevant to our own universities. His lectures were full of original thoughts and were devoted to the ideals. Therefore, they were very useful to students.

44. In charge of college cricket team

Students of the college played cricket daily. There was a cricket team in the college. Aurobindo was in charge of this team. It was invited by Gujarat College, Ahmedabad to play a match. A cricket team of Vadodara under incharge of Aurobindo went to Ahmedabad to play. It won the match. Aurobindo wrote to his elder maternal uncle about this cricket match, 'I took eleven players of cricket to Ahmedabad. They batted well and the result was good. We won. We celebrated it in the canteen. The players ate to the fill. We wanted more; they brought toasts. We ate even toasts within three minutes. They brought toasts again and we ate away. Then they brought mountain of *rotalis*; we finished them. The waiters were angry; but they served us well. Then we said 'no' to the canteen people. Generally the canteen people charged very high; but in our case, they had practically no profits.'

This is how Aurobindo celebrated the victory of the cricket match.

45. Guidance for students' studies.

Aurobindo Nivas was open for students to come and seek guidance from Aurobindo. Students were welcomed by Aurobindo with tea; they received guidance with love. Rajaram Patkare was his favourite student. He often went to Aurobindo's Nivas. Once he asked Aurobindo, 'Sir, I want to improve my English; should I read Macaulay?'

Patkare thought that Aurobindo would agree with him. But to his surprise Aurobindo replied, 'Be not slave to any one. Be your master. Reading Macaulay or any other writers will not make you like them. You will be just a shadow. You will not be the original writer. Think freely and be an original writer.'

Aurobindo never wanted his students to imitate any other writers. He developed students' abilities. It was real education; Aurobindo emphasised it. Therefore, his students shined out in life.

46. Complaint by the Principal

Aurobindo had a part time job in the college in the beginning. Later he had full time job in it. In addition to teaching, he had to do private works of the Maharaja. The Maharaja could call him any times. Naturally Aurobindo did not attend the college regularly. But he would invite students at home, teach them and complete their courses.

He had gone to Kolkata on leave for a month. When he returned to Vadodara, he completed the courses in French at home. Students were fully satisfied by Aurobindo's teaching. They got some more time to study at Aurobindo's home.

But English Principal complained against Aurobindo. He said to the Maharaja that Aurobindo had gone on leave without his permission. The Diwan of the State asked Aurobindo's explanation. Aurobindo replied, 'I have sent the report of leave to the Principal. It seems it does not reach him. Second, I have done the private works of the Maharaja before two-three days of my leave. Third, I have taken classes after my return to Vadodara. Moreover, I engaged classes at home. Please note that I myself have arranged extra classes for students. I have to go to Kashmir with the Maharaja in the second term. So I shall not be available in the college.'

The Diwan was satisfied by Aurobindo's explanation. He cleared the complaint. But we come to know that Aurobindo liked teaching and he did every thing to satisfy students. That is why students also loved him.

47. Realisation of the Divine

Only a few people knew about the spiritual powers of Aurobindo in Vadodara. But the Maharaja and the principal of the college, Dr. A.B. Clerk knew very well that Aurobindo had extraordinary powers. The Maharaja had made a rule to appoint only English Principal in the college. But he was impressed by Aurobindo's powers; he appointed him as officiating Principal with a salary of 710. But Aurobindo worked as a temporary principal only for some time. He took leave for a year and went to Kolkata to fight for freedom. The Maharaja appointed A.B. Clerk as the principal and C.R. Reddy as a professor of English. C.R. Reddy became the vice-chancellor of Andhra University. There he awarded Aurobindo and said, 'I have seen divinity in Aurobindo at Vadodara.' He added, 'Aurobindo and I have been the students of Cambridge University. Of course, he was a student much earlier than I was.'

C.R. Reddy quoted Dr. A.B. Clerk's opinion about Aurobindo; 'Have you met Aurobindo? Did you see his eyes? His eyes can see beyond the Universe.' Dr. A.B. Clerk was materialist. C.R. Reddy could not understand how Clerk came to know about Aurobindo's divinity. But this was the magic of Aurobindo's personality. Once one saw it, one could not forget his spirituality and his love for the mother India.

48. Beginning of freedom fighting for the motherland

For Aurobindo India was not a piece of land/plain, mountain, river and forest. For him India was the mother, 'mata'; he adored her as a goddess. A Rakshasa was sucking her blood sitting on her chest. He said, 'What should her sons do in this situation? Will they be able to be free of problems? Will they spend the time happily with their wives and children? Or Will they rush to save their mother? I have strength to save my mother. Of course, I do not have physical strength. I am not to fight with sword or rifle. I will fight with the strength of knowledge. Only Kshatriyas have strength. I am born with this emotion. It is in my blood. God has sent me on earth to do this great work. The seed has stemmed at the age of fourteen and the stem has become the trunk at the age of eighteen. Aurobindo expressed his devotion to the motherland in a letter to his wife. He terrified his enemies with his profound knowledge.

Aurobindo aroused the feeling of freedom into the minds of people. He began this work by writing and publishing essays in 'Indupraksh'.

He called upon young men to fight for freedom. He aroused Bengal because Bengal worshipped strength. From Bengal the revolution would spread throughout the country. He took many steps to prepare the national youths to fight for freedom.

He encouraged Jatin Banerji, a Bengali boy, to have military training in Vadodara. He sent Khaserao's younger brother Madhavrao Jadav to Switzerland to get foreign help. Madhavrao stayed there for one year and got the training of preparing bombs. Aurobindo paid the expenses of his foreign stay from his salary. He put into practice a plan of revolution to create environs of freedom fighting in Bengal. He inspired to form secret mandals of young people who were ready to fight for freedom. The congress leaders and people used to flatter the British government. Aurobindo did everything to arouse the feeling of patriotism into the heart of people. The awakening of people and the organisation of people were his main works. He was convinced that if the people of Hind protested against the British government, the British rule could not last long. He wanted to shake off British government by non-cooperation and peaceful resistance.

49. The only aim

Aurobindo declared his aim of participating in politics to his disciples. He said, 'I joined the politics in 1903 and was active till 1910. I had only one aim; it was to awaken people for freedom fighting. The Congress had become impotent; I had to prepare people to fight.'

From 1893 to 1902 Aurobindo worked in politics from background. He came to know the path how India could get freedom. But it was difficult to persuade the Congress leaders to believe in the demand for freedom of the country. He got the cooperation of Lokmanya Tilak, Lala Lajpatray and Bipinchandra Pal.

In 1902 there was a conference of the Congress in Ahmedabad. There was an exhibition of swadeshi things. The Maharaja of Vadodara was to inaugurate this conference. He brought Aurobindo with him. Aurobindo listened to the lectures of Congress leaders carefully. There was Lokmanya Tilak on the stage. Suddenly he came down from the stage and met Aurobindo. He took Aurobindo out and talked for an hour with him. Aurobindo had strong political association with Tilak; he was inspired to enter the active politics by Tilak.

50. Demand for complete freedom

Dadabhai Navroji, Gopalkrishna Gokhale and Firojshah Mehta were the famous leaders of the Congress; they were faithful to the British government. They wanted to get some small constitutional rights for India; they did not want to fight. They could not think of complete freedom of India. Aurobindo put the proposal of full freedom before the Congress leaders; he was not ready for compromise with the Britishers.

The demand for complete freedom was new. Lal, Bal and Pal were with Aurobindo. Yet this proposal was not accepted by the majority of Congress leaders. It took 26 years to accept this proposal. In 1930, the Congress passed the resolution for complete freedom. Had the Congress accepted Aurobindo's proposal of complete freedom in 1904 India would have got freedom much earlier and the map of India would have been different!

51. No compromise

In 1905 Lord Curzon bifurcated Bengal. People of India including the people of Bengal opposed it. Then Aurobindo was in Vadodara. He attended a meeting to oppose the division of Bengal. He did not speak in the meeting; he guided the youths of Bengal living in Vadodara. He advised them not to compromise with the British government. 'No Compromise' was his essay sent to Bengal for publication. There was the fear of British government; it could not be published. A Marathi young man composed the essay and printed one thousand copies at night. The copies reached the people of Bengal; they became very angry with the division of Bengal.

Aurobindo helped secretly movement against division of Bengal; he was really helping India for new life. In 'New Spirit of India' Henry W. Nevinson wrote, 'Aurobindo considered the division of Bengal a blessing. Indians were just sleeping; but it awakened them to fight for freedom.'

There was strong agitation; people were against it. The British government had to give up the division of Bengal. It was because people of the country protested against the British and demanded complete freedom.

In 1905, there was the conference of the Congress in Banaras. Aurobindo attended it. He played the key roles in deciding the policy of the national party. He also helped formulate the programmes for the party. There were mainly four programmes. One, it was the boycott of

British goods; second, it was to protest peacefully. The publicity of swadeshi things were the third and national education was the fourth programme. He wanted these four programmes to be passed in the conference; he guided; but his name was nowhere. He writes to the disciples, 'I was careless about my name... I was never eager for praise even when I was in active politics. I liked to work from behind. But somehow the Britishers disturbed his plan. They forced him to come to the light. People of India accepted Aurobindo as their lovable leader.

52. Plan of Bhavani Mandir

Aurobindo believed that one who fought for freedom should have spirituality. One should not hesitate to sacrifice for the motherland. He wanted to prepare an army of Sanyasins for freedom fighting; he had evolved a plan of Bhavani Mandir for it. He decided to construct a Mandir of the motherland in a solitary place. He wrote, 'We will construct a Mandir for Bharatmata in Vadodara. We will construct this Mandir away from the cities in pure environment. That Mandir would be a centre and from this centre will flow the strength of Bhavani over people of entire country. When we worship the tops of mountains, Bhavani Mata will ignite fire in the heart of 'her devotees'.

Aurobindo had seen Bharatmata as a goddess and worshipped her from heart. He had realised the necessity to collect Hindu administrators or the development of India long before India got freedom. He wanted to train Sanyasins and Karmayogins to work for Bharatmata. He writes, 'I want an association of Karmayogins; devotion alone is not meaningful; it should be implemented into practice. Karmayogins can enter domestically. They can be sanyasins. They have to accept renunciation.'

Aurobindo wanted only those people who had fire in their hearts. They had strength and spirit of development. Those people would shine out in all directions and awaken fire in those who came into their contacts. Those who were the members of this association would be trained into knowledge and education. Without knowledge, Bhakti and Karma were incomplete. The foundation of this knowledge was 'That is I', 'Soham'.

Aurobindo wanted to prepare brahmacharies who had knowledge, devotion and work. Had his plan been successful there would not have

been any problem. But unfortunately his plan failed. He had to leave for Bengal. Therefore, his plan of Bhavani Mandir remained incomplete.

53. Bhavani Bhartiyamata

Aurobindo identified himself with the motherland. His consciousness was the consciousness of Bharatmata; his speech expressed agony the motherland. He worshiped the strength of Bharatmata. He said, 'What is the motherland? It is neither a piece of land nor an image of mental creation... It is the strength expressed by crore of Indian people. What we describe Hind or call Bhavani Bharti is the unity of thirty crore people of India. But that Shakti is now under the influence of tamas.'

Aurobindo awakened the people of India. He said, 'Our people are like old men, they have the treasure of knowledge; they have emotions and desires as well. But everything is inactive because of the old age. In order to be saved from this difficulty, the Hind will have to regain the strength of the youths... The spirit of Bharatmata should be vast.'

India needed valour and strength. Aurobindo said, 'In the absence of Shakti, our knowledge, Bhakti and work are almost dead; India needs Shakti. It needs physical, mental, spiritual and moral powers.'

Bhavani Bharati replies, 'I have infinite power in the Universe. I am the world mother. You are the sons of Aryaland. You are born in this soil. You are nurtured by wind and sunshine. I am your mother.'

Aurobindo invoked Bhavani Bharati; 'Listen to the invitation of Bhavani Bharti. She is waiting to be expressed. We must worship her. She is inactive because God within our soul is covered by darkness. We must feel the presence of Bhavani Bharati in your heart. Remove the cover from your soul. Break the wall of idleness. Help the Bhavani Bharti with your intellect, your speeches, your strength and your riches. Do not go back from Her.'

'The above ideas are right; people of India live with them. Of course they are careless about the Bharatmata. But she must support India. If she does so, India will gain the place of honour in the world.'

54. Spiritual experiences

Aurobindo was quite ignorant about yoga when he came back to India from England. He was not acquainted with Hindu culture and Hindu Dharma. He said, 'At that time I had no knowledge of Yoga; nor did I know anything about God.' Yet he had spiritual experiences one after the other. And Yoga came to him naturally.

In Vadodara, Aurobindo was going to somewhere in a horse-cart. Near Kamati Baug the horse faced a problem. Something happened within Aurobindo. A man of light came forward from within and controlled the bridle of the horse. The horse stood up; he did not move even one step forward. This is how a dangerous incident was avoided. Aurobindo wrote, 'The divya Purusha was my saviour and he stopped the incident.' This incident made Aurobindo believe in divine power.

Aurobindo experienced the power of prayer. In England he had to go to a priest to pray. But he did not have belief in prayers; he doubted them. He did not believe even in the existence of God. He experienced the power of prayer in Kolkata. The daughter of his 'masi' suffered from typhoid; the fever was not coming down. The doctors left the hope of her survival; only God could save her. She was on the verge of death. Then all the members of the house prayed for her health. To the surprise of all, she became all right. This is how Aurobindo experienced the power of prayer; he started believing in it.

Aurobindo heard the significance of the prayer from his friend Madhavrao. At that time Madhavrao was living alone in Vadodara; but his family was in Navsari. There his son was seriously sick; his case was hopeless; even doctors were helpless. He wrote to them, 'Stop all medicines and pray to God.' All prayed for him and he was out of danger. Madhavrao told the power of prayer to Aurobindo; he made him experience that prayer could achieve miracle.

Aurobindo experienced that the soul would leave the body and then come to it. Moreover, the souls could be invited into the body. In Vadodara, his younger brother Barindra had interest in such things. He invited souls in his body. Aurobindo also attended some sessions in the evening.

Barindra experimented for planchette. Once he called the soul of his father. But it was difficult to know whether the soul was of Krishnadhan or not. The soul gave a proof by telling that there was a picture on the wall of Deodhar engineer. But the picture was not found. The soul said to search for it again. Then the old lady of the engineer's house told that there was a picture but it was coloured. The soul of

Krishnadhan told Tilak that he would raise his head even when his all works went wrong. This was found to be true.

Once the soul of Shri Ramkrishna Paramhansa was invited; it did not speak much. It only said, 'Construct Mandir, Construct Mandir.' People understood to construct 'Bhavani Mandir.' But Aurobindo explained its true meaning, 'Build the Mandir of 'Ma' within yourselves; you transform yourselves in such a way that you appear to be the Mandir of 'Ma'.'

These experiments showed to Aurobindo that only concrete things were not important; there were other levels of consciousness. Aurobindo could experience subtle world naturally.

He had realised the presence of eternal Brahman. He had gone to Kashmir with the Maharaja. Then he did not know about Nirvan or negative Brahman. He had not studied the Shastras. Yet he realised eternal Brahman on the top of Shankaracharya Mountain. He said to the disciples, 'I was moving on the top of Shankaracharys, then I realised 'zero', the negative eternal Brahman. Everything disappeared in zero moment by moment. I and entire world were vanishing in an inscrutable zero.'

Aurobindo wrote a poem describing this experience of eternal Zero; the title of the poem was 'Advaita'. Generally it was found that the studies of Vedas, Vedantas and Shastras gave the idea of the Divine. Then the persons realised it. But in Aurobindo's case, things were different. He had concrete spiritual realization first and then he studied the Vedas and Shastras.

Aurobindo did not believe that God was present even in statue of stone. He did not accept the worship of statues of Gods. But a concrete realisation altered his perception. Once he went to the temple of Goddess Kali in Chandod. He looked at the image of Kali; but image was not there. Mother Kali was present in person. He wrote, 'I had European Samskaras in my mind at that time, so I did not believe in gods. I had gone to Kernali. There were some temples; there was one Kali temple. I looked at the image of Kali, I realised the presence of Kali. Then I started believing in God.' He wrote a poem entitled 'The Stone Goddess'. Image worship was not meaningless; he had clear vision of Goddess in the temple. He started believing in image worship.

These spiritual experiences motivated Aurobindo to search for inner truth. It was no wonder that Aurobindo turned to yoga in Vadodara.

55. Beginning of Yoga

Spiritual experiences created Aurobindo's interest in Yoga. Traditional yoga insisted to leave the world and become sanyasin. But Aurobindo did not take this kind of yoga. He wrote, 'I have decided that this yoga is not mine if it demands renunciation of the world.' Aurobindo needed spiritual power for freedom fighting; his yoga was different.

At that time Aurobindo's younger brother Barindra had severe fever from Vindya forest. No medicines were effective; then a *naga sanyasin* came to Aurobindo's house. He said, 'Who is sleeping?'

Aurobindo told about Barindra's fever. The sanyasin said, 'Medicine might not help. But I will try the power of the mantra. If you say, I will try.'

Aurobindo agreed for the treatment by the mantra. The sanyasin wanted a cup full of water and a knife. He took the cup and whirled the knife into water. He told Barindra to drink this water. He said, 'The fever would come down.'

The sanyasin left Aurobindo's house and Barindra had no fever. Aurobindo learnt from this incident that yoga could be useful in practical life. Yoga gave strength. 'Then why should yoga be not used to gain strength in political life?' He wrote to the disciples, 'Haven't I used yoga in politics? Isn't it the grace of God?'

Aurobindo said, 'It was the age when the country was considered first and human race afterwards. There was no place for any other things. I entered the spiritual life through my love for the country. I started yoga to liberate India; but later it became my lifelong work.' Thus Aurobindo began the practice of yoga to regain spiritual power for the freedom of India.

56. Sadhana of Pranayama

Aurobindo was convinced that spiritual power was the supreme power. It could be used to do a work efficiently. At that time, the practice of pranayama was considered to be yogic practice. Therefore, he began with pranayama. His friend Babaji Deodhar was the disciple of Swami Brahmananda. Swami Brahmananda was the expert of pranayama. Aurobindo learnt the method of pranayama from him. He

devoted three hours in the morning and two hours in the evening to the practice of pranayama.

Aurobindo said to the disciples about the results of pranayama, 'My experience is that pranayama stimulates intellect and mind. I have practised pranayama for five to six hours in Vadodara. Then mind has been full of light and peace. I used to write poetry. I could write five to six lines; My power of remembrance was very slow... Pranayama restored me to health. I was not tired. Moreover, the mosquitoes did not come near me.'

Thus, pranayama gave him strength, health and cultivated his power of writing poetry. Then he gave up eating meat and started doing sadhana. The Hindu dharma was real; Aurobindo was convinced of this truth within a month. He began witnessing the scenes of subtle things.

Pranayama opened his inner power. He was inclined to see subtle worlds. He saw various shapes, colours and sizes; they could not be explained by intellect; even physics could not give their explanation.

He had a friend who had studied physics. He said to Aurobindo, 'First we see the things; then we see the secondary samskara. That is why you see the colour.'

'Can the secondary samskara last for two minutes?', Aurobindo asked him.

'No, it lasts only for few seconds.'

'Can the shape and colour of size of things beyond the earth be awakened by earthly things?'

'No, it cannot be.'

Aurobindo said that even physics could not explain the mystery of subtle worlds.

Then Aurobindo decided to see God face to face. He determined to see God directly. Of course, he did not know the path of realisation; but his determination was firm. He wrote to Mrinalini about his three madness. First, he writes, 'Whatever education intellect and money I have belongs to God. I have the right to spend only that much for the family as it was necessary. Remaining things I should return to God.'

Second, he writes, 'I want to realise God at any cost. To do japas and to pray in the presence of men are considered to be dharma. I do not like this dharma. If God is, there should be the path to realise Him and to see Him. That path may be very difficult but I have decided to travel on that path. Hindu dharma says that the true path lies within and goes through mind. I have come to know this rule of the path. I have

started practising this rule and within one month I have realised that the path is the right path. Whatever signs it has, I have realised them.’

Third, it is to consider our country as ‘mata’, the mother and to work for its liberation. Thus, Aurobindo had two main goals – (1) to fight for mother India and (2) to realise God. He devoted himself to realise both goals sincerely.

57. Darshan of Swami Brahmananda

Swami Brahmananda was a yogin. He lived in Gangnath, Karnali, Chanod, Gujarat. People thought him to be two hundred years old. The family of the Maharaja of Vadodara and many officials went to his darshan. Aurobindo’s friends, Deodhar Engineer, Sardar Majumadar, Keshav Ganesh Despande and the like were Swami Brahmananda’s disciples. Aurobindo had not started his yoga. The friends forced him to have the darshan of Swami Brahmananda. The friends of Aurobindo had his darshan; Swamiji closed his eyes. But when Aurobindo came for his darshan, he opened his eyes fully and saw Aurobindo.

Whenever Aurobindo came to Swami Brahmananda, Swamiji opened his eyes and saw Aurobindo’s future destiny. Aurobindo wrote about Swami Brahmananda, ‘There is not proof about the age of Swami Brahmananda of Chanod. He is of four hundred years; it is an exaggeration. He came to Chanod at the age of eighty; he looked to be old. I met before his death; then he was very healthy. Except his white hair, there was no other sign of old age. He was tall and healthy; he could walk miles a day. His broad head and shining face reminded of him to be an ancient rishi. He never talked of his age.’

Once, Swami Brahmananda had a toothache. Aurobindo’s friend Majumdar took medicine to him. Swamiji said, ‘I never take medicines. The water of Narmada is my medicine. My toothache is from the time of Bhaw Geeradi. Bhaw Geeradi must have been Sadashivarao Bhaw, the commander-in-chief of Panipat. As it shows, Swami Brahmananda must have been very young in 1761. If this is true, then Swamiji’s age must be more than two hundred years.’

Aurobindo also writes, ‘Every body trusted the words of Swami Brahmananda. He was very truthful. He cared neither for fame nor for power. He died naturally; he had no disease. He was moving at the bank of Narmada; a nail pricked his leg. He died of poison spread in his body.’

Swami Brahmananda blessed Aurobindo to be a great yogi. He inspired Aurobindo to practise yoga.

58. Extraordinary powers

Aurobindo had divine power within himself. The divine power was never expressed before he reached Pondicherry. But Charudatta, an ICS officer, noticed this power. He was the collector of Thana district. Aurobindo came to him. It was evening; it was raining slowly. All were trying to shoot a rifle. Charudatta's wife said, 'Ghose saheb, why not you try?'

'No, I have not touched rifle. I do not know how to shoot.'

'No, today you will have to try. I want to see how you shoot.'

Charudatta gave the rifle and explained how to operate it. But he explained very fast. So Aurobindo requested the wife of Charudatta to familiarise shooting; she did inform Aurobindo how to shoot. Aurobindo committed two or three small errors in the beginning; but he shot one after the other successfully. Charudatta said that 'Only such a person like Aurobindo could practise yoga.' Aurobindo had extraordinary power to perform the work that he was expected to do. Even Charudatta realised this truth.

Charudatta's brother-in-law on wife's side, Subodh Mallik, narrates the other story in support of Aurobindo's extraordinary power. Charudatta, Subodh Mallik and others invited Aurobindo to play cards. Aurobindo declined to play. He said, 'I do not know how to play cards. When I was very small, I played whist in London.'

'Well, we will play whist', said Subodh Mallik. Charudatta and Subodh, Aurobindo and Lilawati were the partners. Aurobindo told Lilawati to explain the rules of whist game. She did it enthusiastically. The play began; Aurobindo won the game.

Lilawati wanted to celebrate the victory. She invited all of them to ice-cream. But Aurobindo went to his room to complete his routine works.

Aurobindo did not come even after twenty minutes. Ice-cream was ready. Charudatta and Subodh went to invite Aurobindo. They knocked the door, but there was no reply. They returned and enjoyed ice-cream. Then Aurobindo came in. They asked, 'Were you sleeping?'

'No, I was meditating.'

'Did you not hear any noise? We made a lot of noise inside. Didn't you hear?'

Aurobindo replied, 'Loud noise! No, I was disturbed for a minute; but soon I was in meditation. Lilawati, your sarbat was tasty.'

Then Charubabu said, 'I have just called you to be the king of renunciation.'

Aurobindo was on leave without pay for one year. He was living in Kolkata to participate in freedom fighting movement. He stayed with Subodh Mallik. One day, while others were playing cards, Aurobindo read a book. He turned the pages of the book and completed the book in a very short time. So people present wanted to test whether Aurobindo really read the book or not, they waited.

Once Subodh and others were playing cards. Aurobindo started reading a third class novel; he completed it within half an hour. Subodh asked, 'Have you really read the entire book?'

'Yes.'

'Will you speak out any one part of the novel?'

'Yes.'

Subodh invited all to conduct oral examination of Aurobindo. Aurobindo recited a portion of the novel orally. All were surprised to see Aurobindo's power of remembrance. He knew well what was to be done. His behaviour was never whimsical. He was kind. He had harmonised justice with kindness.

Aurobindo was in Kolkata. A person committed to revolution had done a serious crime; his behaviour was not satisfactory. Such report was given to Aurobindo. Charubabu said, 'Well, I will implement what you say.' Charubabu did not know the criminal. Yet he wanted to punish him. Next day, he found Aurobindo to be very sad. He asked, 'Are you o.k.?'

'Charu, I am restless about yesterday's decision. Have I not made haste in punishing him? You do not tell me anything.' Aurobindo was very sad. He was sympathetic with people throughout his life.

59. In the flux of changing politics

Aurobindo realised from the division of Bengal that the British government wanted to crush the movement. The policy of the regional Indian leaders was mendicant; it would not bring any results. Therefore, Aurobindo awakened people of Bengal and of India to protest against British suppression.

Aurobindo had seen the effects of Vande Mataram on people; he had also seen the British suppression. He realised that awakening of people was the only solution.

Aurobindo devoted himself to such work. His anger was expressed in his writings; he aroused the spirit of people. Nobody had achieved this effect. The entire country voiced 'Vande Mataram.' People's enthusiasm was very high; it looked as if people lived in some great age. The whole country had the rays of hope. People's powers were awakened; the country came on the verge of liberation.

To arouse people, one had to maintain living relationship with people. And it was 'Newspaper' that performed this work. Aurobindo consented to publish 'Yuganter'. The aim of this Newspaper was to protest against British government and to inspire people to fight gorilla war. He wrote all editorials, though he was not the editor of this newspaper. Within a short time the effect of this newspaper was far and wide in Bengal.

Aurobindo ran 'secret societies' but he detested terrorism. It was meaningless to murder one English man or to harass him. He was against the British Empire. However, suppression by the Britishers encouraged terrorism in India. Aurobindo said to the disciples, 'I wanted the revolution without weapons in the country. It was a childish act to spread terrorism. One magistrate was murdered and then there was looting. I did not approve such acts. Bengal was emotional; it wanted quick results. It was not ready to wait for longer time.'

Aurobindo was needed in Bengal. But he had to return to Vadodara because his leave expired. Soon he left Vadodara and came to Kolkata to join the post of the principal of a national college established by Subodh Mallik. He resigned a well paid job in Vadodara to join a small salary job of one hundred and a half in Kolkata. This is how Aurobindo entered the flux of politics to redress the pain and suffering of the motherland.

60. Maharaja's insistence

The Maharaja knew Aurobindo's patriotism, but he could not take part in it openly. He had appointed famous patriots like Aurobindo, Keshav Ganesh Deshpande, Madhavrao Jadhav and others in his state. The British government was not happy with Vadodara state; it supervised strictly the works of the state. Aurobindo was protesting

secretly against the division of Bengal. The Maharaja did not mind it. He did not want Aurobindo to leave Vadodara.

Aurobindo brought Jatin Benerji from Kolkata to take military training in Vadodara. Jatin Benerji could not receive the training because he was the revolutionary young man of Bengal. The military training was not easy for a Bengali boy; so Jatin was introduced as Gaud Brahmin of UttarPradesh. The Maharaja knew this and allowed Jatin Benerji to take training. Soon Aurobindo decided to leave Vadodara forever; he wanted to go to Bengal. The Maharaja told the Diwan to request Aurobindo to be in Vadodara. The Diwan tried his best to stop Aurobindo; but he could not succeed.

61. Farewell by students

Aurobindo was shy; he was not mixing with the people nor was he speaking to them. However, he was friendly with students. When he was leaving Vadodara, students requested him for a photograph. He accepted it; students were not allowed to have photograph in the college central hall. So they organised the function in the Kalamandir of Manekrao. Aurobindo went there and had photographs with three groups of students. The photographs were kept in the philosophy department of Vadodara college.

Aurobindo was very busy when he was to leave for Kolkata. But he did not forget his favourite student Rajaram Patkare; he invited him to his place in the evening. He said, 'Rajaram, we are going to be separated, but this is the separation of body, not of soul. - ... be a good man and be faithful to the voices of the soul.'

Patkare's eyes were in tears. Aurobindo went to his cupboard and took out 'Shakuntal' and 'Vikramorvashiyam' to gift them to Patkare. He also gifted his translation of 'Urvasi' and his collection of poems entitled 'Songs to Myrtilla.'

Patkare bid farewell to Aurobindo. He writes, 'Now I am too old to do anything; but the remembrance of the farewell makes me weep.'

62. Leader of the national party

The peaceful life of Aurobindo was over when he left Vadodara. He was to be involved in actual works. He did not know how many turns would come in his life. But he knew that he had to liberate the motherland.

For Aurobindo patriotism was dharma. He founded new religion into the mind of people. To sacrifice for the motherland became the ideal of young men. He raised the voice against slavery; the slogan of Vande Mataram was to break the shackles of slavery.

Aurobindo came to Kolkata from Vadodara. But in Kolkata he had no place to live. He lived in the office of 'Yuganter'; the office was not comfortable. But Aurobindo did not mind it. He worked to remove the British rule. Subodh Mallik was restless to see Aurobindo work from the office. He said to Charudatt, 'You bring Aurobindo home...' Then Aurobindo came to the beautiful bungalow of Subhodh on 12, Vilington Street, Kolkata. He was there for some days. He was comfortable. But people of different types came to visit Aurobindo. This created inconvenience to the family of Subhodh Mallik. Mrinalini and Sarojini also wanted to live with him. Then Aurobindo hired a house in Kolkata. He lived there with Mrinalini, Sarojini and Barindra.

Aurobindo was junior in age, but his political opinion was taken by senior leaders seriously. Aurobindo was made president and was invited to sit on the stage beside Tilak and Bipinchandra Pal. His militant patriotism influenced the young people of India. Shankaracharya had noted this influence at a celebration. He said, 'Just as Aurobindo is the leader of young people of Bengal, so the youths of Maharashtra are disciples of Tilak. We, the revolutionary youths, recite the Gita and practise its principles daily. However, wherever the Gita says that Krishna has spoken it, we have made it to be spoken by Aurobindo. We trusted that God had spoken through Aurobindo.' This is how the young men of India looked at Aurobindo. Had the leaders of the Congress accepted Aurobindo's advice India would have been free united.

Aurobindo's patriotism, his level of spirituality, his dedication and transparent soul attracted people towards him. His selflessness, his equality, his power of resolution to liberate India and his detachment were outstanding qualities which Bengali youths adored very much. People of India considered Aurobindo as the national leader who knew strategies to make India free.

63. Opinions of leaders about Aurobindo

Aurobindo involved himself in the political movement of the division of Bengal. Slowly he became a leader of the country. He supported militant group of the Congress. The leaders of militant group had complete faith in Aurobindo; they expressed their respect through the newspapers.

Tilak wrote in Marathi daily 'Kesari' that nobody could match Aurobindo in the matters of renunciation and knowledge. He was very thin, but he was drawn in the battle of freedom fighting. It was a blessing that he failed in the ICS Examination. Aurobindo's scholarship, religious mentality and self-renunciation were very great. He wrote that he was inspired by divine will and unflinching faith.

Aurobindo wandered in the villages of East Bengal with Bipinchandra Pal. It was then that Bipinchandra Pal came to know about his personality. He wrote, 'Aurobindo was smaller in age than many Indian leaders. But he was greater than these leaders in education and character. He was to play an extraordinary role in building the future of India.'

Aurobindo had dedicated himself to the liberation of mother India. It was not merely word that he spoke for India; he took active part into it. Lala Lajpat Ray of Punjab wrote, 'A Hindu young person was living in peace. He had self-control. He gathered his strength and participated in freedom fighting movement. His name was Aurobindo Ghose.'

He adds, 'The feeling of dharma is his speciality. He is spiritual. He is a bhakta of Lord Krishna. He is Vedanti. He has moral values of the Hindu Shastras. He believes that the people of India are born to establish spirituality in the world.'

Henry W. Nevinsion wrote, 'I suppose he was thirty. His eyes were shining even in the darkness. But he appears to be like an English graduate. Nationalism was something very great to him; it was something full of light. He was one of the people who spoke very less. He was of dreaming nature. He was out to realise his dream.'

R.C. Majumdar, the writer of 'The History of the Freedom Movement of India', wrote about the contribution of Aurobindo, 'The leadership of Surendranath Banerji had transformed Aurobindo and Bipinchandra Pal. Aurobindo and Bipinchandra Pal were in constant touch with Tilak and Lajpat Roy. Though there were four leaders of militant nationalism, Aurobindo was the first to denounce the British rule.'

Aurobindo joined the militant group of the Congress. He was an army because his influence was far and wide. Aurobindo was a new

leader; he gave the mantra of the liberation of the motherland. He encouraged other people for freedom movement. His appearance in the political stage was sudden; it seems that one morning he awoke and became the world famous. He lit the lamp of freedom. Other leaders held the lamp. They got success.

Prof. Haridas Mukherji and Uma Mukherji write in the book named 'India's Fight for Freedom', 'People and leaders accepted Aurobindo as the leader of militant group of the Congress. It seemed that the spirit of Hind had taken the shape of Aurobindo. To tell the truth, Aurobindo was real 'payagambar; he was the supreme leader of modern India. He had clear vision of freedom movement.'

Brahmabandhava Upadhyay, editor of 'Sandhya' magazine in Bengali, wrote, 'Have you ever seen Aurobindo? Have you seen the white lotus in mansarovar? Have you seen a man who devoted himself to the motherland? Yes, we have seen. He has renounced all desires. He has also devoted himself to Vande Mataram.'

Aurobindo was considered to be the leader of freedom movement. People of India worshipped him. They heard the voice of liberation from his heart and made their aim.

64. Fiery editor

A newspaper is needed to explain the aims and programmes of a new party. This is what the national party leaders asked Bipinchandra Pal to do. And Bipinchandra Pal launched 'Vande Mataram' – a daily newspaper. Aurobindo was invited to work as co-editor of this newspaper. Aurobindo accepted the invitation because it was the appropriate means to reach people. He did not forward his name because he was not free from Vadodara service. He shared all responsibilities to publish this paper from behind the curtain. He convened the secret meetings of nationalist leaders. He said that 'Vande Mataram' should be the newspaper of the nationalist party. Everybody accepted this proposal. A joint stock company was formed to finance this paper. A director of the board was appointed. Bipinchandra Pal was appointed as its president. Aurobindo made 'Vande Mataram' the national daily. Pal quitted the editorship of this paper; then Aurobindo worked as an editor. However, he did not mention his name as an editor.

The role of 'Vande Mataram' was substantial in awakening nationalism. It demanded self knowledge. It awakened spirituality

which was lying latent in the hearts of people. Moreover, it encouraged the work of the liberation of the country.

Bipinchandra Pal writes in his book entitled 'Character Sketches', 'Aurobindo was very successful as the editor of 'Vande Mataram'. The news published into this paper reached throughout the country.' He added, 'Aurobindo was the soul of this paper. He was the central person. 'Vande Mataram' gave him opportunity to be the guru of the nation.'

In editorial of this paper the following sparks of ideas were expressed. 'If injustice is not protested, the enthusiasm and unity for freedom are subsided.' 'People, desiring for freedom, must be ready to face injustice and suffering. God destroys to rebuild.'

'Hind is going to change its past... Its spirit will find a new body. We should not fear that Hind will follow old and tattered tradition of Europe. Hind has strong tradition; its soul is living. It will not accept surrender.'

'Hind will teach the world to harmonise the world and the soul'.

'Hind will be the guru of the world. It will heal the wound of man. It will give new shape to human life; it will decide the destiny of man. But it will do all these only if it is free from slavery.'

Each word of the editorial of 'Vande Mataram' had the consciousness of Aurobindo; so it touched the heart of people. The words of his essays were so attractive that they drew the attention of British newspapers like 'The Times'. S.K. Redcliff of 'Manchester Guardian' wrote, 'The powerful English had never appeared in Indian newspaper before.' The aim of militant nationalism was expressed effectively in 'Vande Mataram'. 'Prof. J.L. Banerji wrote about the effects of 'Vande Mataram', 'The soul of 'Vander Mataram' was Aurobindo. He invited young men to sacrifice themselves for the motherland.'

'Vande Mataram' attacked the mendicant policy of the Congress. It awakened people against the narrow policy of Indian leaders. It elaborated pitiable conditions of India perpetuated by the British rule. People of India came to know Britisher's cunningness. It highlighted underdevelopment, poverty, inequality and fractured development of industries in India. It also explained the meaning of freedom. It suggested social boycott of foreign goods, peaceful resistance; development of villages, and national education. Later Gandhiji adopted means to liberate India. It was Aurobindo who first awakened the spirit of India.

Aurobindo wrote the editorial of 'Vande Mataram' in such a way that nobody would find fault with it. The editor of 'The Statesman' writes, 'The editorial of 'Vande Mataram' is against British rule in India; but it is written in a style that no legal action could be taken against the editor.'

'Manchester Guardian' wrote, 'We recognize Aurobindo as a fiery editor of 'Vander Mataram' who provoked people for freedom.'

The British rule feared the weekly, 'Vande Mataram'. The Britishers wanted to stop it, but they did not succeed.

How did Aurobindo write essays in 'Vande Mataram'? One student of national college write, 'Aurobindo was sitting in the house. The paper is ready. Syamsundar Chakravarti comes to demand the editorial write-up. Aurobindo begins to write and completes it within fifteen minutes. He does not make even one error in it. Next day it is published.'

Another incident is worth noticeable. It is midnight. Aurobindo is sleeping in the office of 'Vande Mataram'. The co-editor woke up and told Aurobindo that Lala Lajpat Ray had been driven out of border. Aurobindo wrote, 'Lala Lajpat Roy has been driven out of British Hind. This incident is itself a comment on the incident. The wire tells that British government has stopped the meetings for four days. The days of public lectures and public writings have gone. The government has thrown a challenge; we should accept it. The brave people of Punjab, the sons of lion! Tell the British government that they have taken one Lajpat Ray, we should supply hundreds of Lajpat. Give your clarion call to Britishers. Jay Hindustan!'

Next day it was published in 'Vande Mataram'. Not only the people of Punjab but also the young men of entire India were ready to protest against the injustice of British government. Aurobindo had patriotism; he wrote about nation and its requirements. He encouraged Indian people to protest against injustice.

65. In national college

Aurobindo left Vadodara for joining the national college in Kolkata. This college was to offer national education. Professors and students of this college worshiped the mother land. In the college, Aurobindo was adored by the students and staff members. Students were very much impressed in Aurobindo's power of renunciation. When he lectured in the classroom, both students and professors used to sit and hear him.

The words coming from the mouth of Aurobindo attracted students; the words, in fact, stimulated their imagination. His peaceful words were really the reflection of his inner vision. They inspired the listeners. They gave the messages without any efforts.

Balai Sharma, a student of the national college, gives the impression of Aurobindo's lecture. He said, 'I saw a young man before I reached the middle hall. He was covered with a sheet of cloth. His eyes were living entities. They were concentrated on the inner vision. That day Aurobindo was lecturing before students and teachers. He was not talking about education. He was narrating a pathetic incident.'

Balai sharma adds, 'A student of Kolkata University had fallen from the first storey of a building and fainted. The crowd gathered there; but all watched the incident with helplessness. Nobody thought of giving active help to the fallen student. In the meanwhile, an English man came there in his car. He saw the fallen student. Soon he took the student to the 'Campbell Medical College' for treatment. Aurobindo then compared the characters of European people and Indians. European people are much alert about the works to be performed, 'Kartavya Karma', while Indian people are not. But when spirituality meets with practical works, then Indian character will be developed so high that it will be supreme.'

The students of other colleges also came to learn from Aurobindo. They were animated by his darshan. Amrendra Chaterji gave his impression of meeting Aurobindo for the first time. He said, 'Upendra Banerji took me to Aurobindo's place to introduce. It was our first meeting; but this first meeting had made me able and strong. Only his darshan gave 'diksha', knowledge; this was the lesson that I derived from my first introduction.'

Amrendra alone went to Aurobindo's room; there was none in the room. Aurobindo asked, 'Upendra must have talked about the national work. Have you heard it? Do you have some doubt about it? Are you not fearful?'

Aurobindo smiled and said, 'I have heard. You give much money for the swadeshi movement and that money is used to serve the nation. But the country cannot be free from the politics of salt and sugar. If we want to make our country free we have to be ready to sacrifice everything for it. We have to sacrifice even our lives. We have to be fearless if we aspire to free our country.'

'How many can do this? It is not a simple work.'

Aurobindo said, 'Do you find difficulty in sacrificing for the nation? People suffer a lot to gain happiness in life. So sacrifice for the nation should not be difficult. If India is not free, the humanity will not be free from ignorance. People of other countries work for their own selfish ends; but people of India think for the welfare of the world.'

Aurobindo's words touched Amrendubabu. He said, 'Upendra have told me to sacrifice. I have answered him remembering what Bankimbabu had said. We are going to face death one day; then why fear death? I have the fear of other thing. I feel that I am not suitable to this great work. What should I do?'

Aurobindo replied, 'Surrender to God; remember the name of 'Goddess Ma', devote yourselves to the service of the Bharatmata. This is what I want to tell you.' Amrendu wrote that his life was shaped by this mantra and his fear and attachment disappeared from him.

Aurobindo had inspired hundreds of young men to sacrifice for the Bharatmata.

66. Pain of Mrinalini's loneliness

Aurobindo was made the principal of the national college. Mrinalini was very happy because she then got the opportunity to live with him. But her hope never came true. Aurobindo had fully involved himself in freedom fighting movement. He did not spare time even for a minute. He had no idea of his own house in the beginning. He was first living in the office of 'Yuganter' and then he was living at the place of Subodh Mallik. He had the burden of giving guidance to the national party and revolutionary people. Mrinalini was then living with her father in 'Shilong'. Aurobindo wrote to her, 'I have no spare time. I have the burden of creative writings, the organisation of the Congress and publication of 'Vande Mataram'. These works are beyond me. I have no time for my own works. I cannot give up my responsibilities.' Aurobindo was busy with works. The congress was on the verge of division. Aurobindo was trying to unite it. He wrote to Mrinalini, 'I am passing through very bad days. I am under pressure from all directions; this pressure will make a person mad. At this time if you become restless, my pain will increase. A letter of consolation from you will give me enthusiasm and strength. I shall win over all difficulties and dangers smilingly.'

Aurobindo knew the pain of Mrinalini. He could understand that in Bengali Samaj a wife separated from her husband had to pass through

the pain of loneliness. He wrote to Mrinalini, 'It is difficult for you to live alone in Deoghar. But be firm in mind and have faith; if you do so, sorrows will not overpower you.'

Aurobindo was not careless about his wife. He was preparing her so that she might help him in future. He wrote to her, 'Don't consider that I am careless about you. I am at fault so far with you. It is but natural that you are restless. But I am not free hereafter. Whatever I do, it does not depend on my will; it depends on the order of God.' He had informed his mind to Mrinalini.

Mrinalini could not live with Aurobindo in Bengal. There were different types of talks about Aurobindo in Bengal, they talked because he had started practising yoga. All said to Mrinalini that her husband was going astray under some illusions. Mrinalini was of simple nature; these talks affected her very much. Even her relatives said that her life was going to be miserable.

Mrinalini became restless hearing such gossips. She desired to meet and live with her husband. She was confused. Aurobindo was always surrounded by people and programmes. He had no time for Mrinalini. Of course, he understood her confusion. He gave guidance to encourage her. He said, 'The wife is the strength of her husband. Are you going to decrease his strength by becoming sad? Or are you going to increase his strength? Perhaps you may say that a simple woman like you cannot do anything. It requires mental power and intellect for such things; but you do not have these things. I suggest simple method. Go to the temple of God; accept the path to god. He will solve all your problems. If you go to god, you will be free from fear. The conditions of women in our country are not good. But leave such idea. Walk with me; we have come on the earth to do God's work. Let us begin that work.'

Aurobindo showed the way to Mrinalini. He told her to concentrate on God and to pray daily, 'I will not come in the way of God's perception. I will be His helper. Will you do this?'

He also said, 'God has shown me His light. I hope that He will show you light as well.'

Aurobindo consoled Mrinalini by his letters. He showed her the path of the Divine. He suggested her to be firm; that would give her relief from pain and suffering. He had written in a letter, 'You are not the wife of an ordinary man of the world. It is necessary for you to be firm and to have patience. You may not get my news even for six months. You have to learn to be free from worries.'

Aurobindo knew that there was no selfish desire in freedom fighting work. He wrote to her, 'Because you have married me, this pain is in your destiny. We have to be separated intermittently.' Mrinalini could suffer the pang of living alone pleasantly. She was never a hindrance to her husband's work.

67. Advice to Mrinalini

True, Aurobindo's words were against British rule. In fact, the British government was afraid of him. Moreover, thousands of young men of India were ready to sacrifice for the Bharatmata at the advice of Aurobindo. Yet, Mrinalini was sad because Aurobindo had neither a house to live nor monthly income to maintain the family. Aurobindo lived with the relatives. Of course, he sent money to these relatives. But this money was neither enough nor regular. He spent the salary received from the national college either for books or for the donations to students. He wrote to Mrinalini, 'The national college salary will be late. I borrow fifty rupees from Radhakumar Mukherji and send it to you. Pay the rent and whatever remains give it to the mother. If possible pay some debt. Next month I will get the salaries of January and February. Then the debt will be paid fully.'

It was difficult for Mrinalini to live amidst the relatives. They were using harsh words for her. Aurobindo's words mesmerised the young men of India; but it was the destiny of Mrinalini to hear bitter words of relatives. Mrinalini wept listening to the harsh words. Some time Aurobindo consoled her. He wrote, 'You are living with our elders. Be not angry even if they used harsh words or do injustice to you. They do not speak to give you trouble. They speak in anger. So the words used by them are meaningless.'

Aurobindo always gave guidance to Mrinalini. Therefore, Mrinalini could pass her difficult times without much pain. When Aurobindo hired a house, Mrinalini got a chance to live with him, but it was only for short time. Aurobindo was busy with freedom movement and yoga; so she got practically no time to live with him. Moreover, Sarojini was angry with her without any reasons. When the suffering was more than she could tolerate, she complained against Sarojini. Aurobindo replied, 'Have patience. Everything will be alright.'

Mrinalini was not satisfied with this reply. She wanted that Aurobindo should snub Sarojini at least once, but Aurobindo did not say a word to Sarojini. One day Mrinalini was very angry. She said, 'I

will not do any domestic works if you do not say something to Sarojini.’ Aurobindo replied, ‘Do you really believe that it is easy to change one’s nature? Even if I snub Sarojini, do you think that she will rectify her error? No, she will not. There will not be peace. Be patient. It will work wonders.’

Mrinalini followed the advice of Aurobindo. She suffered the anger of Sarojini silently. Within a short time there was peace in the house.

Mrinalini got an opportunity to serve Aurobindo. He was busy with freedom movement. Then he fell sick; he suffered from malaria; he was very weak. He came to Bhupatbabu’s house for rest. Then Mrinalini served her beloved husband. He became well though he was very weak. He lived in Bhupatbabu’s house for a little longer time.

Bhupatbabu had the first experience of giving hospitality to Aurobindo. He was very careful. He bought rich vegetable from Kolkata’s market. Mrinalini made soup and other Bengali dishes for him. Aurobindo ate with love and affection. He was away from the family from childhood; he had no experience of family life. He also did not know about selflessness of women. Mrinalini introduced him selflessness and devotion.

68. Compromise between two factions of the Congress

Aurobindo was sick. During the time of his sickness Bipinchandra Pal resigned the post of editorship of ‘Vande Mataram’. When Aurobindo was well, the responsibility of managing ‘Vande Mataram’ came to him. Moreover, he had to prepare the regulations to be put into the conference of the Congress. He was overburdened; he again fell ill. He went to his maternal uncle’s house to take rest. Soon he had to come to Kolkata for the preparation of the Conference.

There were two factions of the Congress, the liberal faction and the militant faction. The leaders of the liberal faction feared that the conference might choose the militant leader like Tilak as the president. They did not want it; they invited Dadabhai Navroji from England to preside over the conference. Aurobindo supported the militant group; he said, ‘If they were to agree to pass proposals like freedom, swadeshi, boycott and national education, they will be supported by militant group.’ The militant group agreed with Aurobindo. The leaders of the liberal group accepted his proposals. Dadabhai managed the conference and it was not divided into two groups. He declared that the aim of movement was freedom; both factions accepted it. But its meaning was

different to each faction. The leaders of liberal group thought it to be the freedom of local institutions; while the militant group interpreted it as a full freedom. The division of the Congress was avoided. But it was only temporary ceasefire.

69. Travel in Bengal

Aurobindo travelled in the villages of Bengal to awaken people for freedom movement. This time Deovrata Bose was with him. He came into personal touch with many people. He saw the pitiable conditions of villages of Bengal. He organised the meetings, expressed the British oppression and exhorted people to rise against the Britishers. People responded him very well.

Aurobindo was welcomed like a Maharaja in Khulana. He was surprised. He was welcomed, not because he was the leader of militant group, but because he was the son of Krishnadhan. People of Khulana adored Krishnadhan because he had altered the face of that city. How could people forget Krishnadhan? They expressed their gratitude towards Krishnadha by welcoming his son Aurobindo.

Aurobindo wrote, 'In Khulana I got food in seven dishes. But I could eat little from the dish which was near to me.' People had love for his father even after these many years. Aurobindo was elated to find this situation.

Moreover, Aurobindo learnt, what was to be done for freedom? He explained the policy of militant faction through 'Vande Mataram'. He also highlighted British appression in India.

70. Resignation from national college

Aurobindo was involved in politics. He had little time to attend the college. The British government did not like his association with 'Vande Mataram'; it wanted to arrest him. His arrest was in the air. He never wanted the trusty of the college to be troubled. He resigned from the college. He was now moneyless. But he never cared for money.

The students and staff of the college were shocked by his resignation. They were in tears. They bid farewell to him. Aurobindo gave a brief speech on this occasion. He said, 'I am grateful to you for you feelings. You know that I have resigned. You have expressed sympathy for difficulties that I am facing; but I do not know whether

they are difficulties or not. I am doing works to achieve my aims that I have cherished from childhood.’

‘You have really sympathised with my aims. I am trying to achieve them. I want assurance from you that you will share my aims even in my absence; then I will go without any sorrows. Today whatever respect you have given to me, it was really the respect for the Bharatmata within me. Whatever I have been able to do, it is because of Her. I consider your sympathy in that light. I think that even if I fail to do her work, you people are there to do it.’

‘I give a little piece of advice to you. It is ‘to continue the work.’ Strictly follow the aims with which this college is established. We give up other professions and many other opportunities in life because we wanted to construct the foundation. We know that the morning will follow the night. One day India will win and India will be great. We do not want to give you information nor do we want to prepare you for careers. We want to prepare you for the motherland. We have begun the work, you have to complete it.’

‘I want to see you prosperous when I return to this place. I want to see some of you very great. Be great, not for yourselves, but for the motherland. Be great so that India can keep her head high in the world. India has given light to the world in the past. It can give light to the world at present as well. Those who are poor and infamous, they should give their poverty to the motherland.’

‘A time comes in the history of the nation when God decides only one aim for it and all other aims are kept aside. That time has come for our motherland. Nothing is dearer except to serve Her. If you study, study it for the motherland. Keep your body, mind and soul ready to serve Her. If you go to foreign countries, bring knowledge from these countries so that you may serve the motherland. Suffer so that the Bharatmata can enjoy Ananda. This is all I want to say.’

When Aurobindo stopped speaking, there was peace in the hall. Something had happened to the students; they were awaked. They came to do ‘pranam’ to Aurobindo one by one. The eyes of students and teachers were in tears. The image of Aurobindo was imprinted in their minds.

That day Aurobindo ceased to be the guru of students; as Bipinchandra Pal says, he became the guru of entire India.

71. Declaration of India’s soul

British government had an eye on 'Vande Mataram'. It wanted to discontinue 'Vande Mataram.' It first saw that the office of 'Vande Mataram' be searched for. It did not find anything to accuse Aurobindo. It had an objection to an essay. It arrested Bipinchandra Pal and Aurobindo.

The arrest of Aurobindo made him popular in entire India. The poet Ravindranath wrote a poem on Aurobindo; this poem was circulated throughout India. People became curious to know about Aurobindo. Tagore's poem was thus:

O Aurobindo, accept the namaskar of Ravindra.
O friend, o friend of the nation, you are the voice.
You are the soul of India, you have no pride,
You have no hunger of riches, happiness or donation.
You do not demand donation, you do not
spread hand, you are always awake.
Engrossed in the Sadhana of perfection,
Destroyed all pain or pang.
Seeking perfection day and night,
Doing penance of gods and men.
Brought lamp of god on the earth
You have come as a messenger of Shiva how can
a king be able to punish you?

Ravindranath had given the exact picture of Aurobindo. No kings were able to punish Aurobindo. It was very popular poem in Bengal.

The British government could not tolerate Aurobindo's popularity. It wanted to imprison Aurobindo. The office of 'Vande Mataram' was searched; but nothing objectionable was found. Of course, there was the proof of his being an editor of the paper. There was a letter; it said; 'our editor Aurobindbabu is out of station; we will reply the letter when he returns.' But such proofs were destroyed before the search of 'Vande Mataram' office began. Nothing objectionable was found. Magistrate Kingsford had to pass judgement to relieve Aurobindo from the jail.

Aurobindo went to Subodh Mallik's house straight from the jail. A celebration was arranged to express joy. Subodh, Charudatt, Manmohan and others were to participate in this celebration. In the meanwhile, the watchman came to inform that Ravibabu had come. Ravindranath came and embraced Aurobindo and said, 'Are you relieved from the jail?' Aurobindo replied, 'Yes, but not for a longer time.' Tagore also took

part in celebration. Charudatt said to Ravindranath, 'Your poem about Aurobindo is really very true.'

People of Bengal were also happy. They gathered in the square of the national college to hear Aurobindo. It was the day of 'rakshabandhan'. Aurobindo spoke in Bengali for the first time. Towards the end of his lecture, he explained the meaning of 'rakshabandhan'. He said, 'I do not like to speak in foreign language; but I am not trained to speak in the mother tongue. Today I will explain the meaning of 'rakshabandhan'. Rakshabandhan is to bind East and West Bengal and to unite the hearts of Bengalis. 'Rakshabandhan' is really only for a day; but our hearts are united forever. It is the national unity. Nobody can break it.'

Indian people were highly impressed by his writings and speeches of nationalism. The Indian office in England was annoyed; it wanted to imprison Aurobindo at any cost. But they did not find any proof against Aurobindo.

72. An extraordinary incident

Aurobindo was relieved from the jail. At that time Mrinalini was in Shilong; she, with her father, came to express joy. Bhupatbabu had come to Subodh to invite Aurobindo to the dinner. Aurobindo was out of the house. He extended the invitation. Lilawati, the wife of Charubabu, assured him that Aurobindo would definitely go to the dinner and perhaps he would spend night at his place. Bhupatbabu was happy to hear this assurance. And all present at Subodhbabu were happy that Aurobindo would go to Bhupatbabu's place. All waited to give the message of invitation of dinner to Aurobindo.

Aurobindo came to the house at 5.00 p.m. He saw the emotion of joy on the face of all; he surmised that something would have happened, though he did not know. He came to diwankhana and sat in his chair. All came there and clapped. Aurobindo burst into laughter and asked, 'What has happened that you all are so happy?' All spoke together. Aurobindo said smilingly, 'If you speak together, nothing will be clear to me.'

Then Charubabu said, 'Brother, such situation comes only once in life. Today, Aurobindbabu will go to meet Mrinalini ma.' Aurobindo controlled his laughter and said, 'Who is going to speak next.'

Subodhbabu was the next speaker. He said, 'Bhupatbabu has come to invite you. You have to go to his place for dinner. Mrs. Ghose has

come specially from Shilong to express her joy over the release of her husband from the jail.'

Aurobindo said, 'Understood'. The next speaker was Lilawati. 'What is to be understood? Be ready to go. I have clothes for you.' Aurobindo grew shy. Lilawati said, 'Look Ghosesaheb, Subodh's wife and I have prepared two garlands of chameli flowers, one is for you and other is for Didi.'

Charudatt wrote about this incident, 'That poor philosopher accepted the surrender. He was given no chance of speaking. He went to the drawing room after tea. Aurobindo did not protest... when he came out of the drawing room in fine dress, he looked very handsome. Lilawati brought two garlands and explained how they are to be used. Aurobindo assured her that he would use garlands as she had said.'

Subhodh shouted, 'Do not return before the morning.' He instructed the watchman, 'Close the door at 10.00 p.m. and locked. Ghosesaheb would not return at night.' All slept without waiting for Aurobindo that night.

Next day the servant came to Subodhbabu and said, 'Ghose saheb inquires whether you will come down for tea.'

'Ghose Saheb? When did he return?'

'Around 11.00 p.m.'

Charubabu wrote, 'We went down running. We saw Aurobindo sitting smilingly. We asked many questions.'

He replied peacefully, 'Brother, food was very good. I came back at 11.00 p.m. Lilawati, I had followed your instructions regarding the two garlands.'

Lilawati asked, 'Why have you come so early?'

Aurobindo replied, 'I explained to her and she allowed me to come back. I did not disturb you at night. I slept.' What is to be said to this great man? All remain silent. They saluted this extraordinary personality.

73. Pre-preparation of Congress convention

Aurobindo was shining like a star on political arena. People of India welcomed his patriotism. The leaders of liberal faction of the Congress did not like Aurobindo's popularity. It came in the way of 'Purna Swaraja'. It was difficult to prepare people for 'Purna Swaraja'. Aurobindo was working in this situation.

British government had also strict watch on Aurobindo. They wanted to arrest Aurobindo by hooks or by crooks. Aurobindo had to work under this pressure. He had to save himself from the anger of British government. The Congress convention was to be in 'Midnapore'; he had to prepare programmes for his party to be passed in that convention. He was very busy with the works.

The Congress conference was between 7th and 9th December. K.B.Datt was the leader of liberal faction; but people considered new party as their own party. People did not allow K.B.Datt to speak. The division of the Congress started from here. The militant group formed its own party and elected Aurobindo as its leader. Aurobindo managed the conference very well, he welcomed the leaders of liberal faction too. He started preparing programmes to be passed by the Congress at Surat.

Both parties of the Congress increased their membership. 26th December 1907 was the date of Surat conference. There was a plan to crush the militant group. Firojshah had employed men to harass the militant members. This was the situation before Surat conference. So members of Bengal decided not to attend the conference. But Tilak was firm. He said, 'For heaven's sake, no split.'

At that time Aurobindo was not in Kolkata; he had gone somewhere to take rest from Malaria. When he came to Kolkata, he knew the views of his members. He said that we had to go to Surat. And then all tried to go. Charudatta wrote, 'We were worried about Aurobindo's health. We sent some young men with Barindra to Surat. We instructed young men to go with Aurobindo. Some of these young men had revolvers. The members of moderate group maintained control. It was good.'

21st December 1907 was the date on which Aurobindo and other members from Bengal left for Surat. The third class compartment was reserved for all. Aurobindo came and sat silently in the compartment. He was in simple dress; from his appearance it seemed that such a man could not awaken people; but British government was afraid of him.

Syam Sundar Chakravarti, Sudhir Sarkar and Barindra Ghose came near Aurobindo and occupied the seats. The compartment was full of militant members of the Congress. The train started with the slogan of 'Vande Mataram'.

The crowd of people gathered every station to have the darshan of Aurobindo. In first class there was a Bengali officer; people thought that he was Aurobindo. So they welcomed him as Aurobindo. But that man said, 'Your Aurobindbabu is in the third class compartment.' They did 'pranams'. People were surprised to see his simplicity and humility.

They reached Surat on 23rd December, 1907, two days before the actual conference was to begin.

74. Congress conference at Surat

Aurobindo was accommodated in a bungalow of Haripura in Surat. Haripura became the centre of militant group. There the Congress was divided into two groups, liberal and militant. Firojshah Mehta, Gopalkrishna Gokhle, Dadabhai Navroji and Ras Bihari Ghose were the leaders of liberal group. Tilak, Lajpat Roy, Bipinchandra Pal and Aurobindo were the leaders of militant group. There were two meetings on two days. Aurobindo presided them. In one of the meetings he said, 'My pen is stronger than my speech.' His students came from Vadodara to hear him; they could not identify Aurobindo because he was in deshi dress. Kaniyalal Munshi wrote, 'Sudharshan took some time to recognise his professor. In the meeting Aurobindo spoke after Tilak. In his eyes were light. Sudharshan heard his professor and decided to offer everything to the motherland. Sudharshan was in tears when he heard his professor say, 'not to make these Bengali foreigners in our own country.'

Four proposals of militant group were accepted by the Congress in Kolkata conference. But Firojshah got them changed. When the militant group came to know this, they decided not to support Ras Bihari Ghose as the president.

26th December came. The conference was in the French garden. Resolutions were with Tilak. He said, 'We are deceived.' The members of militant group made hues and cries. Even Firojshah was shaken. He said, 'We will close this meeting.'

Munshi wrote, 'Aurobindo said to Tilak, 'Do you have shradha? Look, this is our rashtra.' Tilak experienced 'shradha'. He said, 'Bycott meansbBycott.' Aurobindo looked at Tilak with respect. He had looked the image of a rashtra. The leaders of liberal group were confused; they did not know what to do. They gathered, discussed but in vain. Tilak was firm.

On 27th December the moderate group announced Ras Bihari Ghose as the president of the Congress. But Tilak said, 'I want to bring a proposal to stop this meeting.'

'You cannot do it. It is against the law.'

The members of moderate group rushed towards Tilak to force him to support the proposal. Tilak was facing practically a threat, but he

remained firm. Then the members of militant group gathered on the stage to protect Tilak. There was great hustle and bustle on the stage. About two hundred members of militant group climb the stage; and the stage was broken. Surendranath Banerji said, 'Is it the fruit of forty years service to the nation?' The Congress was divided into two groups officially. All were sorry that compromise could not be made between the two groups.

Munshi wrote about Aurobindo's personality, 'What a simplicity! What an intelligence! What a divine flame in the eyes! ... It appears as if he is 'avatar', incarnation. He has derived much inspiration from three day introduction to Aurobindo. He was convinced that this mahatma would make the nation free.'

The division of the Congress in 1907 was largely due to Aurobindo's idea. The leaders of liberal party were to compromise with the British government. They were not in favour of freedom of the nation. To have an imposed unity was not of any significance. It was better to separate from the Congress. So Aurobindo asked Maharashtrian youths to separate. Aurobindo wrote, 'In the history things are perceived from behind the curtain. People did not notice them... Whatever happened in Surat is because of me. Without consulting Tilak I had ordered to separate militant group from the Congress. I have also told not to join the liberal group of the congress.'

After Surat conference, the militant group controlled the reign of freedom movement. Tilak and Aurobindo were the leaders to guide this movement.

75. Return to Vadodara.

The political career of Aurobindo was very brilliant. So students, friends, co-workers and even Maharaja invited Aurobindo to come to Vadodara after one and a half years. Aurobindo also wanted to go to Vadodara. And on 31st December 1907, he returned to Vadodara.

He was neither the employee of the Maharaja nor a professor in the college. He was the beloved son of Bharatmata. The people of Vadodara were proud to receive such a son. There was the crowd of people to welcome him at the railway station. People wanted to have his darshan. The joy of his students knew no bound. The English principal had forbidden students to go to receive Aurobindo because the British government was against him. But students defied his order. They went to Vadodara station to welcome Aurobindo. The platform was noisy

with the slogan of 'Vande Mataram.' Aurobindo was received without any plan. The students and young men of Vadodara were so enthusiastic that they drew the horse-coach of Aurobindo. In that coach Barindra and Sakhare were there. Aurobindo experienced the love of the youths. He had no doubt about the freedom of India because the young men were awakened. The coach reached slowly to Khaserao's nivas where Aurobindo was formerly living. Aurobindo met and exchanged greetings with all, and then he met the Maharashtrian yogi Vishnu Bhasker Lele.

Vishnu Bhasker Lele was a freedom fighter. He was also sent to the jail; he was released because no proof was found against him. Then his life radically changed. He performed austerities on Girnar Mountain. He invoked 'Dattatreya' Bhagwan and had witnessed the child shape of this bhagawan. He began yoga with guru Dattatreya and achieved many things. Barindra had met him in Navsari; he was impressed by this yogi. He thought that he could give authentic guidance of yoga.

After Surat conference Aurobindo had realised that his spiritual power had weakened. The political situation in the country required much strength. Only spirituality could give this strength. He said to Barindra that he would like to meet someone who could give guidance of yoga. Barindra introduced him to Lele. Lele was in Gwalior, so Barindra sent a telegram to Vadodara immediately. And Lele also felt that in Vadodara he would get an opportunity to initiate a great man.

Lele reached Vadodara. He waited for Aurobindo at Khaserao's residence. He met Aurobindo and talked with Aurobindo for half an hour in the upper room. He said, 'I shall try to see that you get some concrete experience; but for it you have to leave political life.'

Aurobindo was deep in politics. He wanted to practise yoga to gain strength for liberating Bharatmata. How could he leave the political life? Moreover, he was guiding the militant group of the Congress. It was difficult to retreat from it. But he had strong desire for yoga as well. So he said to Lele, 'First, let's experiment. Then I will withdraw from politics.'

Lele agreed with Aurobindo; he decided to guide Aurobindo in yoga. He did not know that his guidance would bring about radical changes in the life of Aurobindo.

76. Realisation of Nirvan

Aurobindo was living in the upper storey of the house of Majumdar in Vadodara. Lele was with him. But nobody knew where Aurobindo was; he was living a secrete life. Lele gave guidance to begin yoga to Aurobindo. Aurobindo started yoga with the guidance of Lele.

‘Sit down and observe your thoughts coming from outside into your mind. Throw away these thoughts before they enter your mind’, said Lele. Aurobindo also wrote, ‘I sat and watched. To my surprise I found the similar thing. I found thoughts coming through the head or overhead to enter the mind. But before they entered the mind, I drove them off. My mind became silent in one day. That silence was still with me.’

He wrote into the other letter, ‘This is how I realised Nirvan. I have this realisation for a long time. I wanted to be away from it but I could not. I had this realisation of ‘Nirvan’ in the midst of other works.’

Other yogis take years to realise ‘Nirvan’; Aurobindo had the experience of Nirvan in one day. And within three days he completely attained ‘Nirvan’. He started practising ‘Pranayam’ and ‘Dhyana’ on his own. ‘Nirvan’ gave him peace and silence. ‘Then I had overhead thoughts. Sometimes these thoughts came at night. I accepted each word of the overhead thought and wrote them down in the morning.’

The realisation of ‘Nirvan’ opened the gate to the Divine. The method of his thought had changed. Neither Lele nor Aurobindo was aware of this truth. Aurobindo said, ‘I did not know about this realisation in the beginning. I had no aspiration for it. In fact, I had aspiration quite opposite to it. I was demanding spiritual strength to help the world. But I got ‘Nirvan’.

Aurobindo himself wrote about the experience of ‘Nirvan’. He said, ‘It was a very powerful realisation. It was the realization which the Vedanta had suggested. Lele was against Vedanta. It gave me the opportunity to see God in the universe. My belief became stronger and I realised the featureless Divine in the world...It was possible with the help of the Divine.’

Both guru and disciple had not expected such a realisation. Aurobindo juxt got it with the grace of God. His consciousness was transformed. He started doing external works with silent mind.

77. Works of still mind

Aurobindo’s mind became still and silent. But he had to work in external world. He had to give three political lectures in Vadodara. He did so with silent mind. Then he had to go to Poona and Mumbai. He

was worried because he had a silent mind. He said to Lele, 'I have to go to Poona and Mumbai for the works of national party. It will be good if you come with me. I will get guidance and your presence will help me in this situation.'

Lele accepted Aurobindo's proposal and went to Poona and Mumbai. In Mumbai he lived with a friend. There he had the realisation of 'Kevaladwaita' Vedanta.

Aurobindo had to give a speech in Mumbai. But in his mind was no thought. Since the lecture was about the freedom movement, he could not say 'no' to the organisers. He did not know what to do. He asked Lele, 'What shall I do?'

Lele replied, 'Accept the invitation. Go to the meeting and pray to God. Whatever you want to speak, that will come down from above.'

Aurobindo accepted the invitation. He along with Lele went to the meeting. He went straight to the stage. He said to Lele. 'What shall I speak? My mind is vacant. Not even one idea is found there. How can I speak?' Lele encouraged him again. He said, 'Do what I have said. You will get the flow of your lecture from above.'

Aurobindo followed the instruction of Lele. He spoke fluently. He said, 'I read in the newspaper the verdict over 'Yuganter', the crime of printer and two years jail – This is the present condition in the country.' Aurobindo ended the lecture with great insight. He delivered other lectures from the silence of mind. He expressed overhead thoughts. His mind had not to construct sentences to speak; it was the grace of the Divine that thoughts were dawned upon him. He said, 'All lectures on the way to Kolkata were like this type. Of course, in some lecture, there was the mingling of the mental thought.'

Aurobindo learnt to silence mind in the company of Lele. In fact, Lele was an extraordinary yogi. Aurobindo wrote, 'At that time Lele had an extraordinary power. He was greater than ordinary men. He had spiritual power to open lower consciousness into the higher consciousness.'

Aurobindo learnt three things in the company of Lele. One, it is to silence the mind. It is the 'Sakshatkar' of wordless consciousness of the Brahman. Two, it is to speak and write without using surface mind. Third, it is to transform his lower nature into the higher nature. Then all spiritual activities are guided by the higher consciousness of the Divine. Of course, neither Lele nor Aurobindo knows that it is the first step in sadhana.

78. From Mumbai to Kolkata

Lele was with Aurobindo to guide in Mumbai. Aurobindo could do external works with inner realisation. He had to go to Kolkata. Lele would not accompany him there. Aurobindo asked, 'We will not be together; tell me how to proceed in sadhana.'

Lele explained the ways to yoga. Suddenly he stopped. He said, 'Trust the higher consciousness that leads you.'

'Yes, I will trust the higher consciousness of the Divine.'

'Then I need not give any yogic instructions to you.'

Lele and Aurobindo went to the station. They did not speak to each other on the way.

Aurobindo trusted his inner consciousness. He wrote to Dilipkumar Roy, 'Lele guided me to surrender to God and God would give further guidance. I followed this principle in life. This had saved me from false methods of Sadhana. I was free to follow my inner consciousness. It had led me till then and it would lead me even in the later phase of life.'

'it was easy to get this method of Sadhana. It was to surrender to the Divine and to work as He guided. This was the fundamental principle of the Integral Yoga. But Lele did not know it. Aurobindo wrote, 'The yogi, who was helping me, did not understand what he was doing. So when he met me after two months in Kolkata, he was afraid to see me practising inner consciousness. He, in fact, was trying to tell me to do quite opposite to what he had told me earlier.'

Aurobindo reached Kolkata through Nasik, Poona and Amarawati. People welcomed him from the place that he visited. The young people of Nasik drew his horse-cart. Aurobindo received their love and affection; they were impressed by his peaceful personality and sweet voice.

Aurobindo gave political speeches; the sources of these speeches were the silent mind. His political speech was mixed with spirituality. He spoke, 'Oppression is the hammer of God. We have to be strong people. He has given a shape to us so that we can do his works in the world... He is hammering us; but hammering is not for our destruction; it will give us a new shape. There is no growth without pain.' He reached Bengal; the new leaders of India were banished. In 'Jalakati' conference Aurobindo said, 'The government thinks that they will suppress the freedom movement by banishing leaders; but they will not. Similarly, they think that Tilak is the leader of the movement, but real

leader is God. The storm has come upon the country; it is sent by God to achieve His objective.’

He adds, ‘We are the sons of our forefathers who have performed sever austerities... These forefathers have accepted willingly to suffer any difficulties for mtherland. We are the sons of those mothers who sacrificed their lives soon after their dead husbands.’

Then thoughts from upper consciousness flowed from both his lectures and his writings. He wrote, ‘I have written essays in ‘Vande Mataram’ and ‘Karmyogin’ from yogic state of mind. When I sit for writing, thoughts directly comess through my pen.’ He added, ‘Arya’ and other writings are not mental creations. I have fully developed this method of writing.’

Thus Aurobindo did works under the guidance of silent Brahman; he did them in the best possible manners. He followed inner consciousness directly from the soul.

79. Meeting again with Lele at Kolkata

Lele came to Kolkata after two months from Bombay visit. He asked Aurobindo:

‘Do you sit regularly in meditaion?’

‘No, I do not.’

‘Do you not meditate in the morning and in the evening?’

‘No.’

Lele was shocked to hear it. He said, ‘It seems that some Asuric Shakti has caught hold of you. I must save you from this trap.’ Lele gave many instructions to practise yoga. Aurobindo wrote, ‘I heard all instructions given to me; but I did not accept them. I did not want to insult him. I had inner guidance; I needed no human guru. I had meditation for twenty four hours.’

Lele warned Aurobindo, ‘An Asuric force is leading you. If you move according to its guidance, you will face dangerous results, you will have to suffer.’

Lele could not understand the mysticism of twenty-four hours meditation. He could not know about the guidance of the Divine for higher consciousness. He said, ‘If you continue to be in Asuric force, I shall not be responsible for your sadhana.’

Despite Lele’s warning, Aurobindo trusted the inner guidance of the soul. He knew that it was the voice of the Divine and not the noise of

Asuric force. He said, 'I have full faith in inner guidance. I am going to proceed on it. You are free from your responsibility.'

Then Aurobindo became free from human guru; he surrendered himself to the Divine guidance. Henceforth the Divine took the responsibility of Aurobindo's sadhana. Aurobindo wrote to Mrinalini, 'Fourth January was decided to meet you, but I could not come. It was not my desire not to come to you. I had to go where the Divine led me. This time I did not go for my own work. I went for God's work. My mind had totally been transformed. I was not the master of my self. God took me wherever He wanted and I had to go there like a statue. I had to do whatever God wanted me to do like a puppet. I was not free. Whatever I did was not dependent on my resolution; all was done according to God's order.'

Thus all works of Aurobindo were done as per the Divine's orders. He wrote, 'I have depended on inner guru. Even if I feel that He leads me astray, I depend on Him. The inner guru has taken me to the many untravelled states of consciousness.'

80. In the midst of People's unprecedented love

After Surat conference, people of India largely supported the militant group of the Congress. Due to Aurobindo the militant group had a wider popularity. Aurobindo had to work hard. He had to lead the group, be in constant touch with leaders, guide the secret societies, edit 'Vande Mataram' and lecture on the current topics. He spent three months in all these things, time passed, though he did not realise the time.

In one meeting he spoke about the division of the Congress. He said, 'Whatever happened in Surat, it was due to the liberal party. It was not the case of personal jealousy. It was due to the principles of the party. We were ready to work with the liberal party if it had accepted our four proposals.' But leaders of liberal party were not ready to accept the proposal of freedom. So there was division. Aurobindo wanted to work together, but the leaders of liberal party never wanted it.

The regional meet of Bengal was in Hugali. Aurobindo was the leader of militant group. He rejected the proposal of the liberal party. The reformations suggested by the liberal party were unreal and so they were rejected. The leaders of liberal party threatened that if their proposals were not accepted, they would not be the member of the Congress.

This was not acceptable to Aurobindo. Yet he gave consent to the proposal of liberal party. He requested his members, 'We have won. But if there is any unity in Bengal politics, let the moderate group pass its proposals. We will not oppose to these proposals.' First, the militant group made hues and cries, but later they accepted Aurobindo's view. All the members of militant group left the meeting place without any complaints. The members of liberal group were surprised by it. They were complaining that the younger people did not listen to the senior people. But when they saw that one man directed all young people to leave the place, they were puzzled! This was the influence of Aurobindo on the party members!

Aurobindo was not entrapped into such honour. He wrote against honour in 'Bande Mataram', 'These are the days of revolution. People are respected today; tomorrow they may be disrespected. Today these people who welcome the 'Bande Mataram' with flowers; tomorrow they may neglect it or stop speaking for it.'

'Today the people who are welcomed as revolutionary and nationalists might be left behind tomorrow. They might be treated as selfish people.'

'Our work is done; we should have pleasure of getting the work done. When we contribute to freedom movement, our names are registered as helpers. Is it not enough? Isn't it good that our name is registered in the record book of God?'

'Do we serve the Bharatmata for a prize? Do we take money for it? A patriotic person lives or dies for his motherland. This is the demand of the motherland.'

Aurobindo served his motherland neglecting praises. He worked for the liberation as a disinterested karmyogi. He kept his aims in mind for all the time. He uses his pen strongly. The result was 'the anger of British government'.

81. Move of revolutionary people

The people of India were sleeping under slavery. However they were to rise. The idea of freedom was strengthened into the mind of people. There was opposition to British oppression or suppression. The British government resolved to crush the movement of the people. Magistrate Kingsford increased the cases of suppression.

D. H. Kingsford was a magistrate in Kolkata. He enjoyed sadistic pleasure in suppressing the patriots. He got arrested the editor of

‘Sandhya’, Brahmbandhava Upadhyaya. Mr Upadhyaya died in the jail. People of Bengal held Kingsford responsible for this incident.

Moreover, Kingsford gave order to arrest a fifteen year boy Sushil Sen. He beat the boy in jail though he was innocent. This incident angered the people of Bengal. The government was afraid of people’s reaction. So the British government changed him from Kolkata to Mujaapharpura. Some of the Bengali youths were highly annoyed. They wanted to kill him through the explosion of the bomb.

Aurobindo had seven acres of land in Moraripukar. There were the trees of coconuts, mangoes and soparies. There was a big house in the middle. This house became the centre of militant activities. There Barindrakumar, Nolini Kanta Gupta, Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki made bombs and prepared the plans for revolutions. And there they planned to kill magistrate Kingsford. Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki were to throw bomb on the magistrate Kingsford when he was to go in horse-cart. On 30th April the bomb was thrown on the horse-cart. The two young men thought that magistrate would have died. Alas! The magistrate was saved. It was not his horse-cart. There were Canedy’s wife and daughter in the horse-cart, they were killed. Thus the cruel magistrate was saved and two English women were killed.

At that time Aurobindo was in Kolkata. He knew about the bomb. He had read about it in ‘Empower’. There commissioner had declared that he knew the schemers and he would arrest them soon.

Then the British government lost the balance. It started arresting any persons or every person. The government had an eye on the young people of Manektalla garden. Khudiram and Prafulla were of this group. The mission of killing the magistrate had failed. What was to be done? The government got an excuse to arrest Aurobindo. There were disturbing materials; all of them were destroyed. There people present slept thinking that they would quit the place in the morning.

During the day an unknown man spied his activities. When they rose late, they found armed police around them! Nolini Kanta Gupta wrote, ‘One armed police caught hold of Barindra and said, ‘You are arrested. What is your name?’

‘Barindrakumar Ghose.’

‘Arvind Ghose?’

‘No.’

‘Well. We will see.’

The armed police arrested all the members of the group; they made them stand in a line. They did not give them food throughout the day. They ordered to follow them. But ‘where?’ Nobody knew it. They were taken to Lalbazaar police station. All were kept in a small room. Two days after this, they were taken to Alipore jail. There they were given only boiled rice to eat. They relished rice. They ate it in such a way as if it was the nectar!

British government was angry with all who were threats to the British rule in India. Prafulla Chaki was one of them. He did not like to be killed by the Britishers. He shot himself with his pistol and died. He preferred to die; he never liked to be in the bondage of Englishmen!

Just one terrorist incident hindered the preparation of freedom movement. The editor of ‘Vande Mataram’ Shyamsundar Chakravarti condemned this terrorist activity. Aurobindo was also against terrorism. Nonetheless, this act was done. The government got an excuse to arrest all revolutionary leaders. The speed of freedom movement was slowed down.

82. Aurobindo’s arrest

Aurobindo came to know everything about the bombs. He was not involved in it. Yet the British government thought him to be the ring leader. It decided to arrest him. On 3rd May, Friday, he completed the works of ‘Vande Mataram’. He returned to the house in ‘Gray Street’, Kolkata and slept there without any fear. Mrinalini and Sarojini were with him. Everyone had sweet sleep. Sarojini was fearful when she got up early in the morning. She said, ‘Brother, get up, get up.’

Aurobindo got up in the morning. He was surprised to see armed policemen and police superintendent in his room. He did not know what was happening. Before he inquired, the police superintendent Kagan Saheb shouted, ‘Who is Aurobindo Ghose?’ One policeman had drawn the riffle at Sarojini’s chest. Aurobindo was fearless. He replied, ‘Well, I am Aurobindo Ghose.’ Kagan shouted, ‘Arrest him. Bind him with thread. See that he does not run away.’ Aurobindo wanted to know from that police superintendent the reason for his arrest. He said, ‘Why do you arrest me? Have you any warrant?’ A warrant was shown to him. Then Aurobindo understood the whole thing. He became silent. The English police arrested him and bound him with threads. Avinash Bhattacharya and Sailendrababu were also arrested and bound. After half an hour they were made free from the bondage.

Kagan said to Aurobindo, 'I have heard that you are B.A. from Cambridge. Is it not a shameful act that you sleep without bed on the floor of the room?'

Aurobindo said, 'What appears to be shameful to you is really the act of renunciation and ideal for us.' But the police superintendent did not understand this fact. It was difficult to make this English man understand reality. So Aurobindo did not make an effort to explain.

His room was searched. This search began from five and a half hours in the morning and continued till eleven hours. The boxes were opened; letters were examined, nothing objectionable was found. Mrinalini's box was also opened; there were Aurobindo's letters; he had explained her aims of his life and his sadhana. The police superintendent was happy; he said, 'These letters are of much importance. He thought that they might contain the information of the preparation of bombs.'

Mrinalini had kept soil from Dakshineswar at the corner of the room. The policeman was very happy to see it. He thought that it was the materials for bombs. On examination it was found that it was soil. Aurobindo wrote, 'I did not understand how these letters were important. In fact, I did not want to know. I knew that there was nothing in my house which would connect me to the preparation of bombs.'

There was a witness named Rakshit at the time of his house search. He was very sad. He went to Aurobindo and said in a pitiable voice, 'The police have brought me here without informing me anything. I do not know that I have to contribute to such bad work.' Another witness was helping the police enthusiastically. Then the office of 'Navshakti' was searched. The lock of a trunk did not open; so the trunk was taken to the police station. A cycle was found. On it Kushtiyar Railway station was written. Kagan presumed that the owner of the cycle was to kill the official of Kushtiyar. He was happy to discover this cycle. Aurobindo was taken to the police station at about eleven and a half hours. He was in fetters and was bound with thread.

A new life of Aurobindo began from here. He had committed no crimes; he did not know about any criminal acts; yet he was arrested on false excuse. But the British government did not achieve anything. The freedom movement was on the peak. For Aurobindo this arrest was a blessing.

Aurobindo, Shailendra and Avinash were taken under police protection to Lalbazaar and then to Rayad street police station. There he met the detective Kesari Maulavi Samshul Aalam. Maulavi said many

things to Aurobindo. For example, he said, 'You committed a great mistake in giving your garden to your younger brother Barindra for the preparation of bombs. A wise person should not commit such a mistake.' Aurobindo replied, 'The garden is mine and of my brother, how can you say that I have given it for making bombs?' Maulavi was confused, 'No, no, I wanted to say if you might have done so.' Then Shailendra and Aurobindo were again taken to Lalbazaar police station.

Aurobindo was kept in room at the second storey of the building. Food was not served to him. Only water was given. After some time English sergeant Haliday, along with other English soldiers, came there. He was angry to see Aurobindo with Shailendra. He said, 'Take care, none should live with him or none should talk to him.' Shailendra was shifted to other room. Then Haliday said to Aurobindo, 'Are you not ashamed of joining such a bad incident?'

Aurobindo replied, 'What right do you have to think that this action is mine?'

'I have not presumed. I know it.'

'Whether you know or not is not my concern. But I know that I have nothing to do with this murder.' Haliday was silent. Aurobindo had experienced hardship of jail life at Lalbazaar police station before he was sent to Alipore Jail. He was given water only to wash his face; he had no water to bathe. Half cooked rice was given for eating; he had hardly one or two crumbs. He was practically hungry for three days. Then he was given tea and roti. His advocate pleaded for bringing food from home; the judge denied it. He did not give permission to meet even the advocate.

He met a relative when he was sent to Alipore jail. That relative asked, 'Perhaps you will get severe imprisonment; have you anything to tell your people.' Aurobindo was peaceful. He gave the message, 'Don't worry for me. I will be declared innocent.'

Aurobindo had to live a different type of life in the jail. He had not murdered, though he was accused that he was a murderer. He had many physical hardships. Aurobindo did not know what turn his life would take. He did not know what was in the store.

83. In Alipore Jail

5th May 1908 was an important date in Aurobindo's life. Aurobindo was innocent; yet he was imprisoned in Alipore jail on false accusation. The British government wanted to hang Aurobindo. They kept him in

loneliness; their intention was to weaken his inner strength. But there was reverse in the jail. Aurobindo got strong inner powers in Alipore jail.

Aurobindo was kept in a room which was nine feet large and five feet broad. It had no windows. It was like a cage. Though Aurobindo was in a cage, the British government was very much afraid of Aurobindo. Nobody was allowed to meet Aurobindo in the jail. Armed police kept the watch.

There was a high wall of bricks surrounding the room. There was a big gate of wood out of this room. There were small holes in the door of the gate. The watchmen used to see Aurobindo's activities through the holes.

The room had one dish, one cup, one bucket, and two blankets. There was nothing else. Aurobindo had described the room in 'The Story of Jail'. The dish was such that if you caught it with one hand, it would move round and round. So was the cup. He wrote, 'As soon as I entered the jail I washed my legs and hands with that cup... The cup was used to have dal and vegetable at the time of dinner. I drank water by that cup. The cup had many functions to perform. Only in the British jail such a cup could be found! But the cup helped in my yoga. It clarified my mind.'

Aurobindo had only one room. In that room he ate, drank, slept and went to lavatory. The bangsi swept the room and cleared the lavatory only one time a day. The room stank much. It was difficult to eat there. Aurobindo passed one month in this condition. During one month he controlled hunger, thirst, sleep and stink with the grace of God.

Aurobindo got one bucket full of water for a day. This water was to be used to bathe, lavatory and washing. In the beginning Aurobindo had no problem of water because there was a pipe in front of him. But other prisoners had to suffer this difficulty. May month was very difficult. Water, which was provided for drinking, was boiling water. Aurobindo wrote, 'I have to drink boiled water twice or thrice; but thirst was not quenched; of course, there was perspiration.' The doctor in the jail advised that Aurobindo should be given a pot to have water for drinking, but in vain. Finally a pot was given after two months, and then Aurobindo needed it not. He wrote, 'Before I got the pot, I have fought with thirst and conquered it.'

Aurobindo had two blankets only for his use. He used them as a bed and a cushion. But in the summer the blankets were useless. Aurobindo

used to sleep upon earthen floor. He realised how cool mother earth was at that time.

The soil of the room was not even; it troubled him at night. It was difficult to sleep. However, he enjoyed rain; it gave him relief from heat. But rainwater entered the room; it often brought leaves and pieces of plants. It created a problem for Aurobindo. He used to sit and wait till the wet soil became dry. Despite these difficulties, Aurobindo liked rainy season; it brought fresh air to the room.

Aurobindo had no clothes, he was only in dress. He did not take bathes for three days. He wore the same dirty clothes for all three days. The old man of Gaushala took pity on Aurobindo; he gave him some clothes. Aurobindo took bathes wearing the same clothes. He had to wash his clothes as well.

The food was also very bad. Aurobindo laughed over it. He said that it showed English behaviour. He wrote, 'I laughed over when I was kept in the cage. I knew from the first how the British police behaved. That is why I was not surprised or pained. The British treatment of the Indians was very bad. The prisoners were the sons of respected family. Some of them were equal to the greatest men of England. They were accused of making conspiracy against the Britishers. But they were innocent; yet they were arrested. They were treated as thieves or thugs.'

The food was mostly of crude rice in the jail. It was full of water. The dal was tasteless and vegetable was of leaves and grass. This was the food given to young, educated men of very high families. Aurobindo wrote, 'I did not know about tasteless food earlier. I was sad to see black vegetables given to us for a month ... Within two days the prisoners could realise the futility of earthly life. Then the doctor advised milk for Aurobindo.'

Lapasi was given for breakfast, it was without ghee. I had no taste. Aurobindo did not take it. He said in a fun: 'There were three shapes to Lapasi. First day, it was without mixture, pure image of Shiva. Second day it was cooked with dal; it seemed to be hotchpotch of yellow colour. Third day it was of the colour of smoke. The first two days I did not taste at all. The third day I took little. He added, 'This lapasi was tasteful only for a hungry man; otherwise it was not worth eating.'

Food was served twice in the jail – (i) at 11.00 a.m. and (ii) at five and a half p.m. The revolutionary young men of very high family lived together; they ate this food smilingly. But Aurobindo was kept alone, so he did experience the tastelessness of the food.

Some prisoners were kept in a very small room; other prisoners were kept in a big room. In a very small room three persons were kept; the big room had twelve prisoners were kept together. These prisoners were enjoying because they were kept together. But Aurobindo was kept in a very small room. He had to experience loneliness.

There was complete silence at night. The tired prisoners went to sleep. The weak prisoners wept due to the sufferings of the jail. The strong prisoners remembered God. There were three thousand prisoners in Alipore jail. They could not sleep because of the watchmen's noises. Moreover, the watchmen counted the prisoners twice or thrice at night. They also awakened Aurobindo and asked, 'Are you alright?' Aurobindo's sleep was disturbed by such enquiry. After protests, this system was closed.

Thus Aurobindo had experienced a lot of sufferings in Alipore jail. But he had overcome these sufferings. He experienced the ananda of the soul.

84. Experiences of arrest in a lonely room

The very word 'jail' was awesome. Its suffering and pang were dangerous. However, in the company of other prisoners the sufferings of the jail were lessened. But the loneliness of the jail was very painful. Aurobindo has to pass through such sufferings. Whereas his other friends were kept together, Aurobindo was isolated. He could meet none except the inspector, doctor and watchmen. In the beginning even the books were not given to him to read. He watched only the walls of the room and heard the noises of watchmen. He wrote, 'I then understood why man in the jail became insane. However, it seemed to me that jail life was an opportunity to experience the grace of God. In jail one had a chance to be united with God.'

In the beginning Aurobindo was affected by loneliness. He used to look outside of the room, 'He could see one tree, a slice of sky and the jail. How long such scenes could gave condolence to the mind of a suffering person? Seeing the white wall inside the room was very painful. I started meditating but I could not. On the contrary my mind started moving. Since there was no work to do, the mind became more restless. Then I looked around. I could see ants on the floor. I spent some days in the company of these ants. But I had no other means to kill times. I tried to control mind but often mind protested. I was suppressing the mind and the mind was suppressed... I did not like to

remain idle. But I spent some days thinking and talking to myself. Then I realised the difference between free and compulsory arrest. In free arrest one was free to read the books one liked and celebrated the festivals. But in compulsory arrest, one had to depend on other and do the work. I remembered the pitiable condition of murderer Breshy of Italy. The judge gave him seven years' rigorous imprisonment. In the last year, he became mad. Did I have such a mind?'

Aurobindo had not committed any crimes. Why did he suffer? He asked God, 'O Lord, why did you punish me for the crime that I had not done?' He prayed three days and three nights. Slowly his mind had peace. One day he was in his closed room; then he had different experiences. He wrote, 'One evening I was thinking something. I had many anxieties in my mind. Our intellect had no control over any one anxiety. After some time our mind was calmed. Then the effect of intellect was seen. I had fear that I would go mad. I did not understand many things. I prayed to God to control my intellect. Suddenly my inner being experienced a power and my mind became very cool. My heart had peace and happiness. Just as a child slept with confidence in the lap of his mother, similarly I slept in the lap of the World Mother. That day all sufferings and pains of the jail came to end.'

85. Clarity of God's intention

Aurobindo prayed to God in the jail. He wanted to understand God's intentions behind sending him to the jail. His mind was peaceful; his inner consciousness was changed. As he concentrated on his prayer, he could grasp the meaning of God's intention. He wrote, 'God did not make me mad. He on the contrary lifted my consciousness to the higher level and made my intellect experience it. I got strength from this. I started pitying more and more to those people who were the victims of British rule in India. I had an extraordinary power and success.'

It became clear to Aurobindo that God wanted one to have the sufferings and pains of the jail. He wrote, 'When I was in the jail, I had to experience all sorts of pain for fifteen days. Then they disappeared.' Aurobindo could not have these experiences without being in jail. He was to liberate man from pain in time to come; how could he do it unless he had an experience. God gave him an opportunity to train himself for future works.

God's second intention was to make him live at a lonely place. A yogi had to have no difference between lonely and crowded place. He

wrote, 'Even if I lived for ten years in the jail, my mind would not be disturbed. God knows that loneliness was a boon to me; Aurobindo, in fact, needed it. So He provided him with loneliness.'

God wanted to teach Aurobindo third thing. It was that yoga could not be practised with one's own effort. Unflinching faith and surrender to God were the only means to realise Him. He said, 'Whatever God wants you to do, do it with sincerity. Things are happening for good in the world.'

After knowing God's intention, the jail was not a jail; it was a yogashrama for Aurobindo. He was practising yoga to realise God in the midst of his political life. He wrote, 'I felt to realise Purushottama with devotion but due to hindrances of the world I could not succeed... However, God removed all hindrances and taught me yoga as a guru... in the jail.'

Aurobindo had a strong aspiration to realise God. But he was involved in politics deeply. However, his aspiration became intense. The answer to his aspiration was given in the jail. God said to him, 'Leave all other activities. Go to a lonely place. Look within. You will see God.' Of course, he could not do what God had said because he was fully involved into the freedom movement. He said, 'Then I was weak. I could not welcome God's call. I loved my work much. I broadly thought that without me my work would not be continued. If I was not there, it would fail. It would stop completely. I was not ready to leave my work.' God did not want Aurobindo to be in politics; He wanted a great work to be done by him. So He made Aurobindo free. He said, 'God broke all hindrances to spirituality. It was not His desire to keep him in fetters. He wanted you to prepare him for His own works.' In fact, God had sent Aurobindo to the jail because he was preparing him for His work; so the jail became his yogashrama.

Aurobindo could get clothes and books from home. He wanted the Gita and the Upanishads from there. He had got these books at the time when he won over fear of loneliness and understood God's intention. He suffered without complaints; this created sympathy in doctor Dally and superintendent Amerson. Both of them started coming to Aurobindo to converse. Aurobindo wrote, 'I do not know why those people had sympathy with me. I was not talking with them; I only answered the questions they asked. When they started discussing any subject, I would listen to them but remain silent. They did not stop coming to me.' There Aurobindo got books and persons to talk by the grace of God. He also got an opportunity to have fresh air. One day

doctor Dally said, 'I have taken permission of the senior officer, so you may walk in the morning and in the evening outside of the room.' It was very difficult to get this facility for a prisoner. But Aurobindo achieved many surprising things because God was his leader.

86. Krishna Everywhere

Aurobindo was then free to take a stroll in front of his room. He experienced the vastness of Nature for one hour in the morning and one hour in the evening. Of course, he had not any fixed rules. He just walked between the jail and 'Gaushala'. Of course, while walking, he remembered the mantras of the Upanishads. He tried to see the Divine in animate and inanimate things; he tried to trace consciousness in all things – trees, animals, birds, men and the walls. Thus, walking in the open became his Sadhana. It did not only refresh his body or mind; it became the means to unite the soul with the Oversoul. He cultivated the habit of doing meditation while walking there; and it continued when he settled in Pondicherry.

He always remembered the mantras of the Upanishads. As a result, he could see Parmatman in living and non-living things. In 'Uttarpara' lecture he said, 'I saw the walls of the jail, not as walls, but as Vasudeva. I walked under a tree; it was not a tree; I saw that tree as Vasudeva – Krishna. He was standing and protecting me ... Narayana was keeping watch on me. Though I slept on a coarse blanket, I felt that I was sleeping in the arms of Shri Krishna.'

Aurobindo added, 'This was the first use of inner consciousness. I saw political prisoners, thieves and thugs of the jail and I found them to be 'Vasudeva'.' Aurobindo's life became full of 'Krishna'. In fact, the whole world was the manifestation of Lord Krishna. He wrote, 'I have such innocent peace in my heart as I cannot describe in words. My heart is open and from it there flows love for all creatures. I have left the anxiety of lawsuit. I am now convinced that God will protect and relieve me from the jail.'

Aurobindo had the experience of Lord Krishna even when his case was in the lower court. God said to Aurobindo, 'You were shocked when you were arrested. You cried where my protection was. Now look at the magistrate. See that government advocate.'

Aurobindo wrote, 'I looked at the magistrate, but there was no magistrate; only Vasudeva was sitting there. I looked at the government advocate; there was no advocate; there was my friend sitting and

smiling.’ God added, ‘Now you have fear. I am in all men and my honour rests in the karmas of all men. You need not have any fear. Surrender to me your anxiety of the case. This case is not for you; I have not brought you here to start a case against you. This case is a means to my end.’

In Vadodara Aurobindo had realised the Nirvan. In Alipore jail he realised ‘All is Brahman’, the active aspect of the Divine. Aurobindo’s intense aspiration was satisfied. But this was the beginning of God’s work. In fact, God revealed many secrets of Hinduism in Alipore jail. Aurobindo wrote, ‘Earlier I had many doubts. I grew up in quite different environment of England. Once I thought that Hinduism was nothing but imagination; it was unreal, full of Maya. But now truths of Hinduism were opened to me one by one in my heart. I realised those things which could not be explained by the books of physics.’

Thus God illumined the doubts of Aurobindo and made him a true Hindu. Aurobindo began his yoga sadhana in the jail. However, people of the world did not know it. After one month Aurobindo was to be presented to the court. There were noises in the law court. He had to wait for five hours in the court. It was really very painful to hear the dry arguments of the court. His mind was not concentrating first, but soon he controlled his mind. One side, the advocates were trying to accuse the young men with false allegations; other side, young men were laughing and cracking jokes. They thought that the activities of the court were meaningless. But Aurobindo was lost in meditation. He had no worries of the outside world. God had taken the responsibility of fighting his case.

87. Appeal of Sarojini

Aurobindo was awakened from sleep and arrested. His family members were worried. Would he be banished? Would he be sent to Kalapani in Andaman? Or would he be imprisoned for life? They did not know. The government was angry with Aurobindo. It could find out any excuses to punish him. It might hang him. There were gossips; Aurobindo’s relatives and his sister were worried. Of course, they knew that Aurobindo was innocent, he did not know about the bombs. Yet Aurobindo was arrested as a main criminal. What was to be done? Everybody was confused. An advocate might be appointed to defend Aurobindo. The government had advocates and police officers to accuse Aurobindo but Aurobindo had none to defend.

The fees of advocates in Kolkata was very high; Barindra had no money to hire any advocate. Aurobindo had left the national college; he was fully involved in liberating the Bharatmata. Sarojini's brother was innocent and yet he was arrested. She was worried.

Sarojini published an appeal in 'Amritbazaar Patrika' and other dailies. It had a national effect. There was a note on the main heading; 'We hope that readers would welcome our request.'

Sarojini appealed, 'My countrymen know that there are serious allegations against my brother. But I believe – and majority of my countrymen believe – that he is innocent. I have proofs of his innocence. If we appoint an advocate, he will surely be released from jail. But he has taken a bow not to earn money till Bharatmata is free. Therefore, I have to appeal to our countrymen for financial help. I know that there are many who disagree with Aurobindo as far as political opinions are concerned; but all of you respect his spirituality. This is the reason that though I am a woman, I extend my hand for help. I treat you as my brothers.'

The effect of this appeal was enormous. Help from all sides came in; even a beggar gave one silver rupee to this fund. He said, 'Ma, I cannot do anything to defend Aurobindo. But I have one rupee; please accept it.'

It was really an act of renunciation on the part of a beggar. Countless students saved money by not taking food at one time a day and contributed to Aurobindo's fund. A public meeting in Poona collected 'Aurobindo defence fund'. Many associations and persons remitted money to this fund. The government did not like people who donated for Aurobindo. So some officers, even when they had sympathy with Aurobindo, could not help. Towards the end of two months Sarojini could collect only twenty three thousand. This was not enough. Sarojini again appealed; this time the fund became sixty thousand. Sarojini decided to appoint two expert barristers. She did not know that God had taken the responsibility of defending Aurobindo. But it was revealed at the proper time.

88. The Divine plan

When Sarojini was trying to search for an advocate for her brother, the Divine had some other plan for him. He inspired an old mother that her son should defend Aurobindo. She said to her son, 'O son Chitta,

Aurobindo had offered everything to the motherland; he had nothing of his own. That is why Saro had to appeal.'

'Yes mother, his renunciation is extraordinary. Few patriots have love for motherland.'

'But English men will prove him to be a criminal. So, I feel that you should defend him.'

The son looked at the mother and said, 'I have been thinking like this for three days. I have seen Brahmavandhav Upadhyaya in dream. He said to me, 'Chitta, you have to fight the case of Aurobindo. Mother, you have supported me; I am sure that I will succeed in this work.'

'Yes son, it is your duty to help Aurobindo. But do not be restless in this work. Have patience in preparing for his case. Goddess Mother will surely help you.'

Chitranjan Das came to defend Aurobindo. Sarojini and her friends found him to be a right lawyer; they had full faith in him. They knew that this man would release Aurobindo from the jail. They offered the responsibility of the case to him.

Chitranjan Das had just started his practice; he was not very popular. But he was expert in criminal laws. Moreover, he was a poet and patriot. God had selected him as the most appropriate lawyer for Aurobindo. His entry into Alipore jail case turned the table. Aurobindo was in a defensible position after Chitranjan Das handled his case.

Chitranjan Das left his practice to fight Aurobindo's case. He concentrated on Aurobindo's problem. He collected all materials to defend Aurobindo within six months. This work was not easy; he had to face the opposition of the government and the government was fully prepared. It had collected more than two hundred witnesses and four thousand proofs. It wanted to punish Aurobindo as the leader of the criminals who prepared bombs. It was confident that Aurobindo would be certainly proved guilty. To expose the lies of the government within limited times was a very difficult task. Chitranjan Das worked so hard to defend Aurobindo that he fell ill. Nonetheless, he did not care for his health, nor did he care for his fees. He just wanted to serve the motherland. So the table was turned.

Aurobindo wanted to help Chitranjan Das. He dictated him some notes. Then he heard the divine voice within, 'Leave aside the writing works. Your work is not to advise your lawyer. I will do it. This man will release you from the fetters of the jail.'

Aurobindo had faith in God. He said, 'This case is to be fought by God. He has sent Chitranjan Das and He is furnishing with necessary

details to him. Aurobindo, therefore, has nothing to do. He has followed God's instructions and offered the case to Chitranjan Das. Afterwards he does not speak a word about his case. Sometimes an inquiry is made in the court; he would say, 'Ask the lawyer; he knows everything.' Sometime he himself replied; he realised that it was not of much help.

Aurobindo wrote about this incident in 'uttarpada' lecture, 'I was, therefore, fearless.' The voice said, 'Remember why I have brought you here in the jail. When you are out of the jail, remember that you have nothing to fear ... I am the creator of all, True, there are dark clouds; true there are situations of fear and terror; true, there are difficulties or impossibilities, yet there is not even one thing that I cannot do... I am Vasudeva. I am Narayana. It will only happen what I have decided. I want the result which no human power can prevent.'

God had promised Aurobindo to help and He did help him. There were many ways and means to help him. He did miracles as well. For example, Shri Shankaracharyaji said in 1972, 'We two have gone to Kolkata to offer to Aurobindo funds... We decided to hear the speech of Chitranjan Das in the court... One day we received a letter; it had two typed notes. We did not understand what these two notes were. But we gave them to Chitranjan Das. Who had sent these notes? From where was the letter posted? These details were not mentioned.' Chitranjan Das was surprised and said:

I have never dreamt that you will bring these important things. The notes have all important points of Aurobindo's case... You have saved my time. Had I not got these notes, I would have to collect it within a week.

'We were surprised. We thought that perhaps the judge Beachcroft had sent these notes. He wanted to release Aurobindo from the jail.'

'When Alipore case was over we rushed towards judge Beachcroft to congratulate him. We asked in private, 'Do you send those two notes?'

Judge Beachcroft only smiled. But it is easy to infer that even the judge Beachcroft had helped Aurobindo. It is difficult to believe that an English judge has helped an Indian prisoner. But God's ways are strange to man.

89. Among the prisoners

Aurobindo started his sadhana in a small room. He devoted himself to God and got ananda from Him in solitude. In the meanwhile Dr.

Dally requested jail superintendent Emerson that all prisoners were not thieves or dacoits; some of them were from noble families. They should be imprisoned together so that they could pass their time comfortably. Emerson accepted Dr. Dally's request. All other prisoners were happy but Aurobindo was not because his time for Sadhana was to be taken away. He wrote, 'I did not want to meet people at that time. My sadhana was intense. I had tasted equality, disinterestedness and peace. But I was not firm. If I was to meet people, my sadhana would have been hindered. At that time I did not know that the opposite feelings were equally important in sadhana. The Almighty forced me to leave my room and go where 'rajas' was prevailing and all became happy.'

The young prisoners celebrated this freedom. Those who loved songs were put in a room. They passed the night singing and laughing. But Aurobindo slept; when he got up, he found that they were still laughing and singing.

Aurobindo, however, tried to concentrate on the Divine. He said, 'I was doing my sadhana and I was learning how to do sadhana in the midst of noises of the prisoners. My sadhana was private; none participated into it. Prisoners around me knew that I was a sadhaka, but they did not know anything about my sadhana because I concealed the experiences of my sadhana in my heart. I expressed these experiences publicly only at 'Uttarpara Lecture.'

Aurobindo learnt many things in the jail. First, he conquered solitude. Second, he concentrated in the midst of noises. Third, he found young prisoners noble and devoted to their works. He said, 'These young men were fearless, bright and free from anxiety. They were followers of new religion, new caste and new time. They were violent; but basically they had no violence. They were free from animalism. They were not worried about the future. They had friendly relationship with the servants of the court and European officers including detectives. They liked all irrespective of friends or foes, big or small... they started reading the books in the court even though their case was discussed. Some read the books of Vivekananda's Raj yoga, while others read books of science, religion or Gita and other Puranas. The English sergeant did not object to their reading but the magistrate banned the readings of the books in the court.'

Aurobindo found that the young men were of high thinking and humorous. For example, biscuits used to come for a young prisoner, Hem Sen. They were kept under the pillow. But other young prisoners stole away the biscuits when Hem Sen was asleep and ate them.

Aurobindo sometime joined them. However, he was different from others. He was in continuous meditation.

Narendra Gosai was also a young prisoner. He could not put up with the hardship of the jail. He started informing the government advocate the news of the other prisoners. Aurobindo warned him not to do it. Finally Kanhai Dutt and Satyendra Dutt killed him. They were hanged in the jail.

There was the peace of crematorium in Alipore jail. Aurobindo returned to his small room and started doing his sadhana to gain strength.

90. The government pleader

In Aurobindo's case the government pleader was Norton, a Madrasi. He was a sworn enemy of Aurobindo. He was called 'the lion of Alipore court.' The government paid him one thousand daily; he worked very hard. Aurobindo wrote about him, 'It was difficult to appreciate fully his knowledge of laws. It was like hallucination. But he pleaded fluently, he argued without any knowledge of the laws; he was very brave in telling meaningless things; he had the great art of turning the white into the black.'

Aurobindo said, 'Just as Satan was the hero of Milton's 'Paradise Lost', so was Norton in Alipore case.' He added, 'Norton thought Aurobindo the be all and the end all of everything. When he saw any brilliant report against the British government, he would shout Aurobindo ... Norton sincerely believed that if Aurobindo was not arrested, the British rule in India would have come to an end within two years. He always reported the case of Aurobindo to the magistrate.'

Norton presented different types of witness and made them speak what he wanted. If some witnesses spoke something other than what he had said, he would shout and made them silent. If any witness said that the writing was not of the criminal, he would threaten him and would force him to speak what he wanted. Norton did these tricks daily in the court, but one day this trick made all laugh.

Norton brought Devdas Karan as a witness. Devdas said, 'In the Medanipore meet, Surendrababu asked his student to show his 'gurubhakti', then Aurobindo said, 'What has Drona done?' Norton was very happy. He thought that 'Drona' was related to some bomb activity. He wanted to know, 'What has Drona done?' Devdas did not first understand the question; then he said, 'Drona has said many wonderful

things.’ Norton was not satisfied to hear this answer. He wanted to relate it to the story of the bombs. So he asked, ‘What were many wonderful things? Norton was not satisfied with Devdas’ answer. He shouted that Devdas should speak truths. Devdas also shouted back. Then an advocate said that Devdas did not know the answer. Devdas claimed that he had read Mahabharata from the beginning to the end; how could one say that he did not know the answer.

They quarrelled for half an hour. Norton continued to ask, ‘Speak quickly; what has Drona done?’ Devdas told a big story; but Norton did not understand. All present in the court laughed. There was a recess. After the recess Devdas concluded the story. He said ‘Drona did not do anything. We had wasted our time in discussing Drona who was no more with us. Arjun killed Drona.’

Such humourous things happened in the court. Norton was trying his best to prove Aurobindo a criminal; he was presenting false witnesses to strengthen his case. Of course, he knew that he was doing something wrong. This thing stopped after the arrival of Chitranjan Das as Aurobindo’s lawyer.

91. Mrinalini’s worry

Mrinalini was happy when Aurobindo came to Kolkata; she thought that she would live with him there. In the beginning Aurobindo had no residence. He was so busy with freedom movement that he had no time to hire a house to live with his family. Sarojini and Mrinalini requested him to hire a house, but Mrinalini was not fortunate to have the company of Aurobindo. Soon Aurobindo was arrested. The cousin sister of Mrinalini inquired about what had happened at that time. Mrinalini replied, ‘Yes, first I did not understand so much noise or who knocked the door? Then armed soldiers rushed into the room and asked, ‘Tell where Aurobindo Ghose is.’ Aurobindo was awake. He said that he was Aurobindo Ghose. I could not see the soldier putting Aurobindo in fetters. I was startled; but he was very calm and firm. He asked me to be quiet. Meanwhile they searched each thing of the house. They took away my letters from the box. Then that cruel sergeant took him to the police station. When I came to consciousness, all had gone. He took Aurobindo away but he punished me. She wept while talking.’ Then again she spoke, ‘My life was covered with darkness. I could not pray even to God; I was very helpless. My God was my husband. I had seen the manifestation of god through him. When he spoke, it seemed that

some invisible voice was speaking through him. When he looked at me, I could experience that two divine eyes were watching at me. Such a divine person had been snatched from me and I was made lifeless. Then I felt that only death would relieve me from this pain. But Sudhira came to me and took me to Mata Sharadamani. I got peace and I became well.’

Aurobindo’s co-worker Devbrata Bose’s sister Sudhira was a devotee to ‘Ma Sharadamani’. She told her Mrinalini’s worries. She took Mrinalini to ‘Ma Sharadamani’. Mrinalini did the pranama to Ma and requested her to help Aurobindo. Ma went to the meditation. Afterwards she said, ‘My daughter, don’t worry. Your husband is in God’s protection. Soon he will be declared innocent. Afterwards he will not live the worldly life.’ Then Ma blessed Mrinalini. She told her to read Ramkrishna’s books and go to him. Mrinalini’s mind became peaceful by the words of Ma. She felt that her husband would be relieved soon. She went to Shilong. She started doing hard sadhana. She gave up sweet, meat or fish in meal. She also gave up nice dress; she stopped mixing up with other people. She started spending her time in meditation, pooja and prayer. She also began reading books of Swami Vivekananda. While Aurobindo was doing sadhana in the jail, she was doing sadhana at her father’s house for the release of her husband from the jail. She finally succeeded and Aurobindo was released from the jail.

92. Spiritual realisation in the jail

Aurobindo realised God in the small room of the jail. Solitude and peaceful environment of the room made it yogashrama. For sadhana this place was the most suitable place. He realised many things; but he had no freedom to reveal all realisations. He said, ‘Something happened suddenly. I was taken to the room. Then I was denied to tell what I had experienced. I could only say that God revealed his secrets daily to me.’ He did not speak about his realisations at that time; but in Pondicherry he occasionally narrated his experiences of the jail.

God ordered Aurobindo to leave all anxieties and to do God’s work. Aurobindo followed it sincerely. He practised his Sadhana day and night. He was continuously in meditation. He concentrated on heart wherever he was. He did not sleep at night because of his sadhana. He was awake for three nights and the next night he would sleep. This was his hard sadhana. As a result he realised subtle things.

Vivekananda's voice guided him for fifteen days. He explained Aurobindo the difference between inborn knowledge and knowledge produced by intellect. He said, 'Vivekananda's soul gave me the sign of the Supermind. This helped me to know how truth worked in every thing. Of course, he did not use the word Supermind. This was the word used by me.'

He saw many pictures on the walls of the room and his insight was opened to the pictures. Earlier Aurobindo did not know about drawing. But his sadhana had helped him know the beauty of the pictures. He wrote, 'Really speaking I got in Alipore jail the knowledge to appreciate colourful pictures. I meditated and saw these pictures. Then I was awakened to evaluate drawings. I did not know pictures by intellect, I directly caught the soul of the drawings.'

Aurobindo experimented fast to know whether it gave spiritual powers or not. He observed fast for eleven days. He threw the meals in the dustbins. Only the servant and the bhangi would know it. One day the servant said, 'Babu is sick. He does not eat. He will die.' Aurobindo said to his disciples, 'The fast reduced my weight by ten pounds but my strength was increased. I could lift the bucket of water up to my head which I was not able to do earlier.'

Aurobindo observed fast for twenty-three days together in Pondicherry. But his weight was not reduced. He was doing his routine works daily at that time. His mental and vital powers were not reduced. How could this happen? He answered, 'Instead of depending on physical matter one can derive strength from his vital source.'

Aurobindo was in severe fever in Alipore jail. He took quinine, yet the fever was not over. Aurobindo said, 'I had high fever. Anyhow I went to my room of the jail and ask the watchman to bring water. He brought cold water. I drank it; I felt weakness; I slept. Then within ten minutes I had no fever.'

Aurobindo lived over the earth. This news spread. Was it true? Aurobindo answer this question, 'This incident took place in the jail. My sadhana was intense on the vital level. I was in meditation. Then I thought whether rise with body was possible or not... In a very short time I lifted my body over the earth... Only one portion of the body was touching the soil, rest of the body was hanging on the wall. It was very natural; it was done without any efforts. Such extraordinary experience I had in the jail. I was doing sadhana on the vital level; that is why such experience was for me. This experience was only once;

afterwards it disappeared; I had no similar experience.’ An official of the jail saw Aurobindo in this position; he spread this news out.

Aurobindo had a similar experience at other time. He had his hand up without the support of his nerves; he slept in that position. The jail official went out running and said, ‘Babu is dead’. Afterwards he came to know that Babu was not dead; he was doing his sadhana. It was also an experiment to lift body. Aurobindo had such experiences in the jail, but he did not use them for personal benefits. It was just to test these methods.

Aurobindo’s body was shining due to his Sadhana. His eyes were shining with extraordinary light. His hair also was shining. When he was taken to the court, Upendranath Banerji asked him in low voice: ‘From where do you get oil to use on your head?’

‘Oil? Why do you ask?’, said Aurobindo surprisingly.

‘Because your hair is shining as if it was oiled.’

Then Aurobindo knew that it was the result of his sadhana.

The revolutionary young men in the jail were surprised to see Aurobindo in continuous meditation. One of them had courage to ask him what he got from the sadhana. Aurobindo stared at him and said, ‘I do not do sadhana to get anything; I do sadhana for God. I look at God and God looks at me. Why do I need?’ That young man was surprised because he was told that sadhana was for nothing but only for God. He was elated by seeing Aurobindo’s disinterested sadhana.

Due to continuous sadhana Aurobindo’s eyes always were inward. Once, the governor of Bengal Sir Edward Baker, visited Alipore jail. When he met Aurobindo, he felt that they were not the eyes of any human being. Only a mad man had such eyes. When the governor met Charuchandra Dutt he said, ‘Have you seen Aurobindo Ghose’s eyes? Aurobindo had eyes like those of a mad man.’ Charu Babu explained, ‘They are not the eyes of a mad man; they are really the karmayogi’s eyes. Yogi’s eyes do not see only the things of outer world; they also see the things of subtle world.’ But that English man could not understand the meaning of subtle world.

Aurobindo never became angry. But he stared at lies or injustice and it was enough. Once the prisoners were taken to the court and they came back to a small garden; they were standing there. In the meanwhile a scotch warder passed Aurobindo. Young prisoners were angry; they rushed towards him to beat. Aurobindo just stared at him. The scotch warder felt as if he was burning. He ran away that moment and came back to the jailer. He complained against Aurobindo. The

jailer asked Aurobindo about this matter. Aurobindo replied, 'I do not have experience of this thing.' Then the jailer pacified the crowd. He said, 'We have to bear our own cross.'

Aurobindo never gave publicity to the achievements of his sadhana. But his inner vision, his silence and his peaceful environment told everything. He was respected by all in the jail. He had many spiritual experiences to do his future works. He won over his lower nature at that time. He also conquered his mind and his vital to control negative forces. He faced many difficult situations. He had to strengthen equality and neutrality. When he surrendered himself to God, God also opened the limitation of mind and lifted it to cosmic consciousness. This was the divine plan for which Aurobindo was arrested. It was complete; so his case also took a surprising turn.

93. Changed situation

Aurobindo's case was in the lower court. English magistrate Birali was handling it. He did not know Aurobindo. He trusted the government pleader and believed that Aurobindo was a criminal. But God decided that Aurobindo should not be in the jail. His case was shifted to the High Court. Shri C.P. Beachcroft was the judge of the upper court. He knew Aurobindo; they had studied together at Cambridge. Aurobindo was first in Greek and Latin in ICS examination. Beachcroft was the second. He knew Aurobindo from the days of college time. He was of the opinion that such a noble man as Aurobindo would not murder any one. He had difficult case to handle. He thought Aurobindo to be innocent, but the government wanted to hang him as a criminal.

The government took Aurobindo as a most dangerous criminal; he was taken to the court in locked cage. Once his King's college friend Farar, who was a barrister in Malaya and had come to Kolkata, saw him locked in the cage along with other prisoners in the court. He became very sad. How could the government insult such a scholar? It was sheer injustice. He wanted to liberate Aurobindo from the locked cage, but he did not know the way to do so. Then he returned with heavy heart to Malaya.

However, Aurobindo was not sad. He was above all honour dishonour. He was seen in meditation even in the locked cage. He neither heard the arguments nor saw the proofs. It was the case of his life and death, but he was above this case. Chitranjan Das was fighting

his case of life and death, slavery and freedom. When the government pleader Norton was creating illusion of his clever speech, Chitranjan Das made inspired speech and exposed Norton's cleverness. Chitranjan Das pleaded for eight days; the hall of the court was jam-packed. The people of India were eager to know the result of his case. The British government had other intention. It had collected many witnesses and proofs to prove Aurobindo a criminal. However, four thousand proofs, four hundred objectionable things and two hundred witnesses were of little use in the court; the case was in favour of Aurobindo. Chitranjan Das exposed the lies of the government. He himself was surprised that he spoke such inspired words in favour of Aurobindo. He had admitted that he did not know the words that he spoke. He said, 'When I was arguing for Aurobindo's defence, I did not know what I spoke. When I stood up to argue, one sentence came first to my mind and then other. I argued while I was inspired. My arguments were so effective and moving that experienced judge Beachcroft wiped his tears with a handkerchief from his pocket.'

Chitranjan Das proved that 'Aurobindo was a nationalist leader; he was not a terrorist, nor was he an ordinary politician. Nationalism was not just an empty word for him; it was a spiritual entity. He had shown a peaceful way, not the terrorist way to fight. He had told to suffer, not to spread chaos.' In spite of the government's all-out efforts to punish Aurobindo, Chitranjan Das made valid arguments in Aurobindo's defence and waited for the judge's verdict.

94. Chitranjan Das's prophesy

The government pleader did all that he could do to harm Aurobindo but Chitranjan Das exposed him fully. He proved that Aurobindo had high aim of nationalism. He added that to liberate one's motherland was not a crime. He said, 'This case is about to be completed, you have to judge allegations that the government had levelled against Aurobindo.'

The government pleader had imagined the crime. Then he got the proofs collected to arrest Aurobindo. Actually the proofs should be collected first and then Aurobindo be arrested. But this procedure was not followed.

In the essay published in 'Vande Mataram', Aurobindo expressed his idea of nationalism. His opponent lawyer also accepted his views. Aurobindo had just given the message of freedom of the nation. Even

English men hardly objected to it. But Norton saw the preparation of bombs in it.

Chitranjan Das spoke about the noble ideals of Aurobindo which the government pleader had scoffed at. He said, 'Aurobindo had expressed the high aim of freedom to the nation. It was his effort to follow this aim and to realise God within him.'

He explained Aurobindo's concept of nationalism. He said, 'Just as a man has to make an effort to get God, so he has to make an effort to get freedom of the nation. This is the principle of Aurobindo's nationalism.'

He added, 'You might see that when Aurobindo came to Kolkata after leaving Vadodara, he gave the message of peace. He said that if a law was wrong, then protest against it and be ready for suffering its consequences. If you have to go to the jail, go to the jail. This is Aurobindo's peaceful protest. Is not it preached throughout the world? Haven't the people of foreign countries protested again and again? Then why should Aurobindo be exempted from it? Why should he be the victim of Norton's accusation?' He further said, 'This nation has lost self-confidence. That is why it is losing everything. Aurobindo is troubled by this truth. When he talks of freedom, he wants to have faith in oneself. One who has no faith, one will never get freedom. Aurobindo says that we are not coward nor are we the crowd of helpless people; God resides within us. Have faith in yourselves; you will move towards the goal and you will contribute to the growth of the nation.'

Then Chitranjan Das prophesies Aurobindo's work in the modern age. He says to the court, 'This man, who is accused, is not standing before your court; he is standing before the court of human history. I appeal to you all that when the debates in the court are subsided, and Aurobindo will leave the world, he will be considered as a national poet and prophet of nationalism and will be honoured as a lover of mankind. His words will echo not only in India but also in foreign countries. That is why I say that this man is not standing before this court only, he is standing before the court of humanity.'

There was utter silence in the court. Everybody was mesmerised. People present could see the man standing before the court of humanity; they did 'pranama' to him. Only the government pleader and his clerks were sad.

Today there is neither Chitranjan Das nor the judge Beachcroft nor Aurobindo. But we see that Aurobindo's words are creating miracles

even across the seas. We also see that Aurobindo's words have created wonderful effects within and without country.

95. Acquittal from the Jail

Aurobindo was arrested on 4th May 1908. On 5th May 1908 he was taken to Alipore jail. He was in this jail for one year. Jury gave the judgement after one year on 6th May 1909. The judge Beachcroft was to read his judgement; there was great curiosity in the court and in the nation. That moment also came. There were armed policemen inside and in the compound of the jail. All prisoners were locked in the iron cage. Norton had fear that someone might attack him. That is why he had brought five revolvers in his briefcase.

Mr. Beachcroft gave his judgement in a disturbed situation. He read, 'Now I turn to the most important man Aurobindo Ghose. He is such a person whom the government wants to prove a criminal at any cost. If he were not in the cage, the judgement would have been given before.'

'First I will put before you the ideals that his advocate has claimed; I shall be very brief. His lectures support his defence. Only one sentence of his lecture is objectionable. That sentence is 'to live and to die for the country.' But this sentence must be considered as an exaggeration... He also writes that this movement should be taken to the secret places to form secret groups. This sentence can be taken as a conspiracy when it is proved. Otherwise what he writes is one thing; but what he does is quite another thing.'

Mr. Beachcroft concluded, 'The proofs which are presented to the court are inadequate to prove that Aurobindo is a criminal.' Then he ordered that Aurobindo was innocent and so he be released. He also judged Nalinikant Gupta and other fifteen prisoners to be innocent. He, however, gave death punishment to Barindra and Ullaskar Durt. He sent some to kalapani; he gave life imprisonment to others. Thus Aurobindo's case was over within a year. Further, Chitranjan Das appealed the case of Barindra and Ullaskumar Dutt to the High Court. Later Barindra and Ullaskumar were also released.

Aurobindo was in the jail without any rhyme or reason. His life in the jail proved to be blessing. He said, 'My ill wishers have really done well to me. The anger of British government has helped me meet God. I did not know the reason why I was sent to the jail ... Later I understood the reason. I was sent there for sadhana and tapasya. I came out of the jail with this realisation.'

Aurobindo was released from Alipore jail on 6th May 1909. But Aurobindo that came out of the jail was different from Aurobindo of time before. His consciousness was changed. He was the knower of the secrets of Hindu religion and God's future work. When he was imprisoned, he had nationalism wedded to spiritualism; but when he was released, he was completely a spiritual person. He had realised God; his consciousness was one with the consciousness of God. Ignorance was removed; he was full of faith. His life was full of God. But the British government did not know about Aurobindo's spirituality. It tried to arrest Aurobindo again as soon as he was released from the jail, but it did not succeed.

96. After acquittal

Aurobindo was released innocent; there was joy in the nation. Letters of congratulations were sent to him. The national dailies also reported the news. They wrote, 'The hard work of Chitranjan Das and the honesty of Beachcroft released Aurobindo from the jail.' This judgement was accepted satisfactorily. The 'Tihart' daily of Mujjaffarpur wrote, 'All Hindus were happy with the release of Arvind Babu. Ultimately God protected its devotee. Chitranjan Das had proved his ability. He was praised everywhere.' Amrit Bazaar Patrika wrote, 'We are grateful to the session judge for the release of Arvind Babu. The nation itself believes that Aurobindo is innocent. We are deeply indebted; the judgement of the judge and the opinion of the people are one. Really the nation was sorry for his arrest; it has prayed for his early release. We are also grateful to Mr. Beachcroft for releasing other young men. Mr. Chitranjan Das's arguments for the release of Aurobindo are the best example in the history of laws.' Bengal daily 'Vasumati' published an essay on Aurobindo's life; it was titled, 'Welcome to Godlike Aurobindo.'

The British government wanted to remove the name of Aurobindo from the hearts of Indian people; but the result was otherwise. All Indians started praising Aurobindo. They came to know about his patriotism, renunciation and spirituality. Further, Chitranjan Das became the leading barrister of the country. Aurobindo published a letter expressing gratitude to his people in 'Amrit Bazaar Patrika' and other dailies. He thanked all those people who had contributed to the fund and helped him financially. He wrote, 'My love for the nation had

put me in difficult situation; but love of my country men had saved me from this situation.'

People were eager to honour Aurobindo publicly. But the government had banned public meetings. So people were helpless.

The British government became more fearful seeing people's love for Aurobindo. The judge had released Aurobindo; it was a sad situation for the government. It wanted to appeal to the High Court. Bengal's governor Edward Baker took Aurobindo to be the most dangerous man to the British rule in India; he also knew that he might lose the case even in the High Court. He examined all aspects of Aurobindo's case. He did not go to the High Court.

India's Viceroy Lord Minto writes to the secretary of British Empire Lord Morli, 'Again Aurobindo is attacking British Empire. If we do not control him, then he will do much harm.' Lord Minto wanted to banish Aurobindo; he wanted to keep Aurobindo in Andaman. Secretary Morli did not accept Mr. Minto's proposal. Mr. Minto felt much troubled. He thought that Aurobindo's nationalism was equal to madness. The young men of India were ready to sacrifice their lives on his words. It was very dangerous to keep such a leader among the people. So he wrote, a letter to London office, 'We have to deal with Aurobindo; he is very dangerous man. He should be banished by regional government.'

In spite of Monte's insistence Lord Morli did not give permission to banish Aurobindo. Instead, he wrote a letter of warning to the Vice-Roy, 'I have no feeling for well known Aurobindo, but action taken against him will be full of stupidity. The crime against the nation can be levelled against someone when his guilt is almost proved; in Aurobindo's case it was not so. I can never defend such activity. I will not approve the news of his banishment.'

Thus secretary controlled the Vice-Roy. But just as people were fearful of a lion from a cage, so the British government was afraid of Aurobindo. It had arranged private detectives to watch all his activities. It wanted to send Aurobindo to the jail at all cost. However, Aurobindo did not want to enjoy the hospitality of the jail.

The British government had suppressed the freedom movement. When Aurobindo was acquitted from the jail, he tried to revive the movement of freedom fighting. At that time he was living with Krishnakumar. The house that Aurobindo had hired before he went to the jail was vacated by Mrinalini because she had no money to pay the rent. She was informed of Aurobindo's acquittal in Shilong. She distributed sweets among the children of the school. She came, along

with his father, to meet Aurobindo in Kolkata, but Aurobindo was very busy with freedom movement.

Krishna Kumar also was the freedom fighter. He was arrested and kept in the jail at Agra. Aurobindo's 'massi' was sick. The doctor had advised her to take bathes in the Ganga. Aurobindo used to write essays sitting in the drawing room of the house. Some time 'massi' would come to him and request him to take her to the Ganga. Aurobindo followed her request.

One day Aurobindo was writing the essay there. His chappals were near him. His 'massi' came, put on the chappals and went to the roof for a walk. After some time some leaders came to Aurobindo; he was to go out with them. But there were no chappals. Meanwhile his 'massi' came down; he asked, 'Massi, have you put on my chappals? People have come to meet me.' She put off the chappals. Aurobindo was not angry at all. Massi's daughter Vasantidevi wrote, 'I have never seen Auroda angry.'

Aurobindo shifted his house to Sanjivani Office. Then some young men used to come to him to study the Gita. Aurobindo explained them the Gita in the peaceful manner. He forgot time or space while explaining the Gita. One day he taught the Gita upto one o'clock in the afternoon. They were grossly engaged in the study of the Gita. When Sarojini brought meal, then the young men realised that mealtime was over. They stopped the study and went out doing pranama to Aurobindo. It was same Aurobindo who had terrorised the British government. He was 'hard like vajra and soft like flower.'

97. In Uttarpada

The British government had banned public meetings of Aurobindo; he had no opportunity to express his views in the public. But the landlord of Uttarpada gave him this opportunity; he ran a 'dharmarakshini sabha'. He invited to give an annual lecture under this sabha. Since it was not a political meeting the government could not have taken any objections to it.

Amarnath Chatterji went to invite him. He took Aurobindo as his guru. He was happy to meet and invite him. He wrote, 'When I went to Sanjivani Office, he was sitting peacefully. It was as if he was in meditation. I did not talk much. We went to Uttarpada by the train. Many listeners also came from Kolkata by the same train. We reached there at 3.00 p.m. The meeting was at 5.30 p.m. Piyari Mohan, the

landlord of Uttarpada and his son Michhavi Babu had come to receive him at the railway station. Aurobindo was for sometime at Surendranath Chattopadyaya's place. He took tea. Then a big procession was out. Its meeting place was the library maidan on the Western coast of the Ganga. Aurobindo was the speaker. There were about ten thousands listeners. His voice was not loud; so listeners kept unbelievable silence.

There was complete peace in the meeting. There was no loud speaker. It was the first public meeting after Aurobindo's acquittal from Alipore jail. In that meeting he first told his spiritual experiences. He explained the theme of his lecture in the very beginning of his talk. He said, 'I have to speak on the theme of dharma chosen for this meeting. I do not know whether my wish shall be fulfilled or not. I have just an idea in my mind; I want to tell it to you and the people of India.' Afterwards he told about the divine ideal behind his imprisonment and his realisation of Krishna, Vasudev everywhere. He said, 'What I speak is not my speech; some unknown Shakti is forcing me to speak.'

Then he gave the divine message to attentive audience. He said, 'God wants me to tell you that the upliftment of the people of India is the sanatan dharma; it is for the world and not for itself. Freedom is given to the people of India. This is also for the service of the world. When it is said that India will rise, its meaning is also the same; it is the rise of the sanatan dharma.'

What is the sanatan dharma? Hinduism is the sanatan dharma because it is preserved by Hindu people. It is grown between the Himalayas and the oceans. It is offered to the Aryan people to preserve. It is not confined to any one country or to any one region. What we call Hinduism it is eternal religion. It is the broad religion that subsumes all religions of the world. If it is not the religion for the world, it cannot be the sanatan dharma. If the religion is narrow, sectarian or only for a few people, it lasts for a very limited time. Hindu religion is such as it has foreknowledge of the research as in physics as well as in that of philosophy. Therefore it has victory over materialism. It tells that God is very near to man and it includes all paths of realising God. It is the only dharma that emphasises the presence of God in all things. It is the dharma which could be understood by intellect and translated into action by faith. It is the dharma that reveals the world as the lila of God. It is the dharma that has realised what the Divine element is. With the ideals of spirituality it overcomes Death completely.

'This message is put into my mouth by the Divine. I have nothing more to say.'

Nobody had explained the secrets of Hinduism in such a profound manner. So the listeners were mesmerised. They felt that as Lord Krishna was giving the message to the people of India.

Jitendranath Roy was one of the listeners of this speech. He wrote about his impressions of this speech, 'Aurobindo's speech has very deep influence on the audience. This lecture has been wonderful. It has a Preface. It has awakened our soul. When Aurobindo has uttered Vasudev Narayan, Shri Krishna, these words are spoken by Shri Krishna himself.'

After the realisation of Nirvan, Aurobindo's lecture given at Mumbai National Congress, gave much inspiration to people. There he described nationalism in a very concrete term. He said that sanatan dharma was our real nationalism. He spoke this in a very peaceful style; it influenced thousands of people. This lecture gave the impression that Aurobindo had not only the first place to national movement, he had the first place in spirituality as well. People adored him as a god.

Aurobindo had disclosed his spiritual realisation. Amarbabu was very happy to hear Aurobindo, he had given 'some pieces' as news in some daily. Banerji, editor of Hitvad, commented that Aurobindo should not have expressed his realisations. The shastra were against it. Amarbabu said that my Guru had constructed new shastra; he did not follow the old one. But Mr. Banerji did not understand what Amarbabu wanted to say.

The government had banned Aurobindo's meeting. But numerous people came from Kolkata to hear him. They welcomed Aurobindo despite the order of the government. He was covered with garlands. Mirchharibabu had a garland from Aurobindo's tip to his toe.

Mirchharibabu actually wanted this garland, as a 'prasadi'. He was very angry when he did not find the garland. Amarbabu said, 'Everybody wanted to garland Aurobindo so be not angry.' He gave up his anger. Next day the garland was found out. He said, 'Go to God and repent; I have forgiven you.'

Uttarpada lecture showed us Aurobindo's spiritual realisations. It also gave the idea of Aurobindo's changed consciousness. There were British detectives to watch his actions. Yet Aurobindo gave the message of freedom without fear. So the British government was upset.

98. Adesha from the Divine

It was not easy to revive the fight for freedom. All leaders were in the jail. Tilak was in Verma Jail; Lalaji was in Uttarpradesh jail; Bipinchandra was in house arrest. The government had suppressed main freedom fighters. If any men had even a little sympathy for freedom, they would be harassed by the government. The 'Vande Mataram' edited by Aurobindo was closed.

In this situation Aurobindo started his work. He arranged meeting every week, but the numbers of the people that attended the meetings decreased. There would hardly be two hundred people. Most of them had no enthusiasm. Aurobindo realised the need to start a daily; but he had no money. He launched two weekly – 'Krmayogin' in English and 'Dharma' in Bengali. He hired a house in 4, Shyampukur Lane, Kolkata, for this work. He used the front portion for the press and office and back portion for his living.

Aurobindo came to this room at 4.00 p.m. He did the works of the weekly. He held pen, sought inspiration from the Divine and wrote essays. He sat in the dark room up to 8.00 p.m. Vijaynag, Nolini and other young men joined him there. The souls of Dante, Bankim and others visited Aurobindo and motivated him to write. Such experiments went on some time. Once, the soul of Bankim lectured in Bengali. Much of the night was spent in such experiments.

'Krmayogin' and 'Dharma' were not the exclusive weekly on the politics. They published essays on literature, science and philosophy as well. Essays were written in such a way that they inspired readers to sacrifice and to be courageous. They were based on spirituality. The government tested each word to find Aurobindo guilty but in vain. Bengal's governor Baker and Vice-Roy Minto were Aurobindo's sworn enemies; they collected Aurobindo's information daily. The government was bent to arrest Aurobindo at any cost; but it did not succeed in its efforts.

Sister Nivedita came to know about the government's plan through English friends. She had met Aurobindo in Vadodara and was very much impressed by his actions. She informed him the plan of the British government. She said, 'Either hide yourselves in the secret place or leave British India lest the government would arrest you again.' But Aurobindo did not think it proper to leave British India in this manner. He did not accept the advice of sister Nivedia. He said, 'I will make an appeal in 'Karmayogin' and the government would not think of banishing me.'

He wrote an open letter to the people of India and published it in 'Karmayogin'. He mentioned what to do if the government banished him and signed the letter. After the publication of this letter, the government dropped the idea of arresting him again. Aurobindo got the time to prepare people for freedom fighting.

Then he started arranging the meetings. In Hugali meeting he gave a new sutra, 'No Power, No Compromise.' If the government gave freedom, only then its reforms were accepted. He wrote in 'Karmayogin' about the bad intention of the government and its reforms. The government found something against Aurobindo. Meanwhile the high police official Samshula Alam was murdered by the revolutionary young men. The government was shocked. It thought that if Aurobindo was allowed to move freely, then English men in India were not safe. So it made up its mind to arrest Aurobindo again. However, Aurobindo came to know this news before his arrest and the government plan failed.

It was the day of 14 February, 1910. It was the evening time. Aurobindo came in shawl because it was cold. Four young men were working in the office. Ramchandra Majumdar, a worker in the office, rushed in the office and said, 'The police wants to search 'Karmayogin'; it wants to arrest Arvind Babu; most probably in the morning.'

'Who said you?', asked a man in the office.

'My father. He is in the government office. He has managed to know this news and he wants it to reach Aurobindo as soon as possible.'

'Then this news must be true.' Nolini, Vijay, Suresh and Bhavin were worried. Ramchandra wanted to fight with policemen. Different ideas came for implementation. Aurobindo concentrated himself and heard a voice from the soul, 'Go to Chandranagar.' Aurobindo heard the voice and followed it sincerely. So he decided to go to Chandranagar without much delay.

However, before he left, he made arrangements for the publication of 'Karmayogin' and 'Dharma'. He requested sister Nivedita to do this work. And she accepted it willingly.

It was 8.00 p.m. There was complete darkness. Aurobindo had to go without the knowledge of the secret police. The detectives were arranged around the office of 'Karmayogin'. It was not easy to escape their notices. There was a detective watching the movements of everyone. But at 8.00 p.m. he disappeared. Aurobinod got a chance to

leave. Ramchandra, Biren, and Suresh also managed to leave the Krmayogin office.

They followed zig-zag way and reached the Ganga Ghat within ten minutes. They hired a boat to Chandranagar. Nobody knew where Aurobindo went.

Aurobindo did not know what to do in Chandranagar. He did not take anything, not even money. He did not go home to inform that he was leaving. He followed the divine adesha. What a faith Aurobindo had!

Aurobindo was on the top of his political career; he was adored by the people. But he renounced everything. He became the traveller of the unknown place. His aim was now different. He was to work to liberate mankind from pain and sorrows and to do yoga for the descent of new consciousness. However, he was unaware of all these things.

99. Towards the Unknown place

That day was 'ashtami'. Half-moon was shining from the sky. Water in the Ganga was flowing. The boat was piercing the darkness of the night. Two boatmen were sailing the boat. Two travellers were sitting peacefully; it was Aurobindo. The other two were Biren and Suresh, Aurobindo's disciples. Both were taking their beloved leader to an unknown place. It was the 'adesha' of the Divine to go. So they were going. They had nothing with themselves but they were not restless. They were sitting in the boat as if they were sitting in the office of 'Krmayogin'. Above was the open sky, below was flowing the water of the Ganga. The boat was taking them out of British India.

When Aurobindo was shining fully, when his pen was writing aggressive essays to awaken people and when people had accepted him as a divine leader, then he renounced the politics and turned to the yoga. He did so following the 'adhesha' of the God.

Renouncing position was not something new to Aurobindo. He had withdrawn himself from ICS Examination. He had given up the principal's position in Vadodara to join freedom movement. It was natural for him to give up his political activities. He accepted to go to the unknown place. He had full faith in God. He was ready to do what He wanted him to do.

The boat rowed throughout night. The two disciples were worried; Aurobindo was fearless. He was peaceful; he was friendly to all

situations because they were full of 'Narayana'. It was 'Narayan' who was protecting him. How could a place be unknown if the Divine was with him?

It was the time of early morning. The sun was yet to rise. Then the boat reached Chandranagar. Aurobindo had left the territory of British India; he had reached the French territory. He crossed the border; nobody knew about it in Kolkata. The British government searched the office of 'Karmayogin', but they found nothing objectionable. Aurobindo had left British India without the knowledge of the British government. God had lifted Aurobindo and kept him in Chandranagar. The British government searched Aurobindo's office; they spread rumours about him but they did not find anything. Aurobindo had left the politics to follow the path of the sadhana of the Divine Life.

100. In Chandranagar

The boat reached the shore of Chandranagar. The question was, 'What was to be done?' One thing was clear; something had to be done before the sunrise so that Aurobindo's secrecy was maintained. Aurobindo told Biren to meet Charuchandra Roy; he had met Charuchandra in Alipore jail. Biren went to Charubabu and asked him to allow Aurobindo to live in his house. Charubabu was afraid of the British government. To help Aurobindo was to become the enemy of the British government and to suffer many trials and tribulations. Charubabu was not ready for any suffering. Biren was confused to do an alternate arrangement; he was worried. Something had to be done for Aurobindo before the sunrise. Then God who had given him 'adesha' managed something special for him.

When Biren was in two minds, Shishir Ghose came to him and told that he would take Biren to Motilal Roy for help. Motilal Roy was a noble man.

Biren was surprised to have help from a stranger. First he doubted that the man was a detective. He examined him from top to toe and found him innocent. He was convinced that the man would never betray him. He took him to Motilal Roy who said, 'Are! We are not so fortunate that Aurobindo would come to me. Well, let us go to the ghat and take Aurobindo here.' Biren was surprised. Motilal had not seen Aurobindo; he had only read essays by Aurobindo. But he adored

Aurobindo like a god. Such a person was there in Chandranagar. Biren warned Motilal Roy to be very careful; nobody should know that Aurobindo was in Chandranagar. Motilal was sincere. He came to the ghat secretly; he did 'pranam' to Aurobindo and promised to keep him in complete secrecy. This was how the relationship between Aurobindo and Motilal was established. This relationship could last as long as 1923.

Aurobindo and his two disciples came to Motibabu's house in darkness. Suresh and Biren could see that Aurobindo was comfortable at a stranger's house; then they left the place. They did not know that their guru would not be seen in Kolkata thereafter. They thought that their guru would come to Kolkata after the situation would be normal. They left their guru to be responsibility of God and set sail to Kolkata.

Motibabu's responsibility was great. He had to help a person who was like a shining sun. She had to manage Aurobindo in such a way as even family members did not know. He first made him sit in his drawing room; then he gave a room, which was used as a godown to keep old furniture, at the first storey. The room was dirty; it was full of dust. Motibabu was dissatisfied with himself to give him this room. But Aurobindo was calm and quiet. Consciousness was the same everywhere. He maintained equality in all situations.

Motibabu brought meal for Aurobindo, he found him in meditation. He did not want to disturb him. Aurobindo was in meditation for quite a long time. Then he ate mechanically. Motibabu described, 'What a wonderful dharshan! He took refreshment mechanically; he always was in meditation and was at one with God.'

In the afternoon Aurobindo was taken down for bath. Water was very cold, but he did not speak a word. He took bath happily. He was in meditation. Motibabu then came to know that Aurobindo was not only a political person; he was a yogi. He decided to take special care.

Motibabu bought meal for Aurobindo from the market. He was sorry but he could not help. Aurobindo did not mind eating bazaar food.

Motibabu kept Aurobindo in a secret place during the day; but the problem was where to keep him at night. He thought to keep Aurobindo with his trusted friend at night. He took him there in the darkness of night. He left the place promising him to see next day. Aurobindo could not sleep at that night. The environs were not congenial. It was not safe to live there. Next day he told Motibabu to shift him at other place. Motibabu took him to his house and gave him a small room. Aurobindo was comfortable even at that small room.

Then Motibabu took Aurobindo in a horse-cart to the north of Chandranagar. There was an empty house of Bulaichandra De. It was very good house; it was spacious too. Aurobindo lived in this house for one and a half months, from 15th February to 31st March 1910. In this house he met Motibabu and a servant. He spent all the time in meditation.

Aurobindo had left all political activities. He always was busy with his sadhana which opened new horizons. As his sadhana deepened it seemed that his main work was spirituality and not politics. God had led him to this action. He had left political activities like writing editorials and devising political strategies; he cared for divine consciousness. He started his intense sadhana at the guidance of the Divine within.

It was a complete solitariness there. In Alipore jail also he was in solitariness but that solitariness was disturbed by the coming and going of men in the jail. He used this solitariness for sadhana. He saw many subtle things, he had many spiritual experiences. He could meet many gods and goddesses. Many goddesses used to come to him to guide his sadhana. Aurobindo did not know much about them. In Pondicherry he realised that they were the goddesses of ‘rigveda’ – Ila, Mahi, Bharati and Sarswati.

Chandranagar proved to be a gate to Aurobindo’s sadhana. In Vadodara he had realised Nirvana; in Alipore jail he experienced ‘Vasudeva’. In Chandranagar, he explored the states of the upper mind and the levels of vital and body. He saw the light of God in all the states of mind. He descended into sub-consciousness, unconsciousness and Inconscient; he found God light there. He then realised that God Light was in the thick matter and in Inconscient itself. He had seen only a ray of God Light; he was convinced that matter and Inconscient had covered the Light of Parmatman. He could realise that body had covered the Divine in its innumerable cells. If the covered Divine was uncovered, then the problem of death would be solved.

But how to uncover the Divine in matter? There was no ready button to press for Light. He had to search out the ways for it. His stay in Chandranagar was significant from this point of view. The Divine showed him the direction of his sadhana; it led him to his destined place – Pondicherry.

Aurobindo had practically left politics; but the British government did not believe him. It employed detectives to search for him. But real information was not coming to it about Aurobindo. Though Chandranagar was French territory, the British detectives came there to

inquire about Aurobindo. Motibabu was then worried; he saw danger to Aurobindo's life in Chandranagar. He said to Aurobindo, 'If you agree, I can send you to France; two trusted friends of mine would help.' Aurobindo was lost in meditation. Then he received an 'adesha' of the Divine, 'Go to Pondicherry.' Since it was an 'adesha' of the Divine, Aurobindo followed it. Years after a disciple asked Aurobindo, 'Why did you select Pondicherry as a place of your sadhana?' Aurobindo replied, 'Because there was an adesha for me to come here.' Thus God Himself had chosen the place of Aurobindo's sadhana. It was Pondicherry, a French territory and a city of fishers.

101. Belief of the Government

Aurobindo published 'another letter to my Countrymen' in 'Karmayogin' on 25th December, 1909. Reading it the government stopped the arrest of Aurobindo. But it was worried because Aurobindo was free. It issued the order of arrest on the basis of his lectures and some essays published in 'Karmayogin.' Meanwhile Aurobindo disappeared; the man who published the essay was arrested and punished. The government also made its administration alert to arrest Aurobindo if he was found.

The government sent the team of police officials to arrest Aurobindo whenever somebody informed about him. This situation was very funny. People wrongly informed the government that they had seen Aurobindo. The police party visited the place where people had informed and examined each person carefully. They were finally disappointed.

The British government got information about Aurobindo through letters, telephones and persons. Local dailies also published to misguide the government. For example, one daily wrote, 'Aurobindo has gone to Tibet. He is seen with Mahanta Kuthami'. Another daily published that Aurobindo had gone to the foreign country. There were so many rumours about Aurobindo. The government and its friends started imagining about Aurobindo. Letters challenging Aurobindo had come; it was allegedly said that Aurobindo had hid himself like a coward. Such letters were written by the government's own persons. It was to provoke Aurobindo to come out so that he could be arrested.

Aurobindo understood the tricks of the government. He knew that the government wanted to arrest him at any cost. That is why it was

throwing challenge. In spite of allegation Aurobindo did not appear in the public. The government's strategies failed.

Rumours could not last long. Aurobindo wanted to clarify his situation. In 'Karmayogin' it was published that Aurobindo had not met Mahant Kuthami in Tibet; he was there in India. Of course, he was doing his sadhana in a secret place. He did not want that many people should know about his sadhana. He was doing yoga in a secret place.

The 'dharma' also published the same news. It wrote, 'Aurobindo is busy with his own yoga Sadhana. He does not want to meet any leaders or media persons.' But the government did not believe in it. It said, 'How could a person leave national leadership for sadhana?'; it was to mislead the government. It kept armed police officials at all places of suspicion. It thought that Aurobindo in a secret place was more dangerous than Aurobindo in public places.

Aurobindo was arrested thrice and sent to the jail. First, he was arrested for writing an essay in 'Vande Mataram.' Second, he was sent to the jail in Alipore bomb case. Third, he was accused for writing objectionable essay. But every time he was acquitted from the jail and declared innocent in the court of laws.

Then the secretary of states in London wrote to the Vice-Roy in India, 'The session court case accusing Aurobindo is very unfortunate. He is well known in England. Everybody knows him as a good soul unable to do any crimes. Such person should not be accused without valid proofs.'

Macdonald had met Aurobindo and gave very high opinion about him to the Secretary in London. The secretary informed the Vice-Roy of India, 'The proofs which we have gathered prove Aurobindo an able leader. Now give up your efforts to arrest him and sit silently.'

Many persons of England knew Aurobindo from his student life. They had very high opinions about him. They did not consider him an accused. The British government in India wanted to arrest him. But it had to honour the letter of Secretary of States in London. Moreover, Aurobindo had disappeared. Nobody in the government knew about his whereabouts.

When Aurobindo was discussed passionately in England and India, Aurobindo had left the politics and devoted himself to yoga.

102. Preparation for Pondicherry

There was 'adesha' for Aurobindo to go to Pondicherry from Chandranagar. It was not easy. Aurobindo arranged his travel in such a way as no one could know. He instructed Motibabu to do what he had thought.

Aurobindo's disciple Amar Chaterji gave a secret letter to Motibabu. It informed that Aurobindo would come to Dumartalla ghat in a boat from Chandranagar on the 31st March. Then he would be seated in Duplex streamer. Sukumar Mitra was to help him. Amar Chaterji was very happy to sit with Aurobindo in the boat.

Motibabu had a letter from Sukumar Mitra; he had to manage Aurobindo's travel with great secrecy. Sukumar Mitra was the editor of Bengali Daily 'Sanjeevani'. Aurobindo was living at his place. The armed forces were deployed to search for Aurobindo near his house. No member of his family knew that Aurobindo stayed in that house. Sukumar Mitra was very sincere in arranging Aurobindo's travel.

The problem was, where would Aurobindo live in Pondicherry? Sukumar Mitra was worried about it. He had sent Suresh Chakravarti to Pondicherry in advance to manage.

It was not easy to find a proper place in Pondicherry. Sukumar Mitra knew about the editor of a Tamil daily 'India'; his name was Srinivasachary. The poet Subramanyam was connected with this daily. Sukumar gave a letter to Srinivasachari to arrange for a house in Pondicherry so that Aurobindo could live and practise his yoga there. Sukumar and Saurine Bose had come to Hawra station to see Suresh off. Sukumar gave him the second-class tickets along with thirty rupee notes. Suresh had reached Pondicherry four days before Aurobindo could reach there. It was not an easy task to find a suitable accommodation for Aurobindo.

103. Chaos in Planning

Sukumar arranged for Aurobindo's travel to Pondicherry carefully. He said to a worker in 'Sanjeevani', 'Nagen, there are two trunks; take them to your mess. Keep them carefully. Then take them where I tell you.' Nagen saw these two big trunks. He was very surprised. He said in a fun, 'Sukumarda, have you kept bombs and pistols in them?' Sukumarda replied, 'Let there be anything. Don't try to know it. You will come to know when times come. Now keep them carefully.'

Nagen took those two trunks at his mess in 44/1 college street; they were safe there. Nobody could see them.

Sukumar called Nagen on Friday, the next day. He gave Nagen money and said, 'Nagen, Duplex steamer of Messangery Mary Time Company is going to set sail in the morning of 2nd April. Two householders will travel in it. Book their tickets to Kolombo. Reserve one cabin, which has two seats so that both can travel comfortably. The names of these two householders are Jyotindranath Mitra and Bankimchandra Basak.'

Nagen was surprised to hear these names. He had never heard these names from Sukumarda. He did not inquire about it. He kept silence and went out for tickets.

In reality, Aurobindo and Vijay Nag were to go by this steamer up to Pondicherry. Sukumar changed the names and the name of destination to misguide the government officials. But there were two householders of the same names. One was from Ranpur and the other was from Lakshmipur. Sukumar had these names from the office of 'Sanjeevani'. Sukumar's plan succeeded and Aurobindo was safe from all sides.

Nagen bought two tickets. Sukumar told him to keep those tickets and give him when he demanded. Nagen doubted the whole thing, but he had no time to enquire. He decided to wait for the right time.

Two days passed. Sukumar sent for Nagen and said, 'Nagen, you have to go to Chadpal ghat taking Surendra Chakravarty. Hire a boat from the bazaar. Take those two trunks that you have and keep them in the cabin of Duplex steamer. Two persons would come to the ghat. Take them to the reserved cabin of Duplex steamer. Give tickets to them.'

'But how do we know these two persons?'

'I have explained it to Suresh. You need not worry. Everything will be alright.'

Nagen understood the whole thing. He happily said, 'He! Is not your Auroda going?' Sukumar was surprised to say, 'You are really very intelligent. How do you know?'

'Yes, I came to know from within.'

'You are right, Nagen. Be careful. Pretend that you do not know anything. I have not discussed with my family members.'

Nagen was very happy. He was eager to have the darshan of Aurobindo, the Devpurusha. He had extraordinary experiences.

Nagen had heard about Aurobindo. He had not seen him. He got this opportunity at Raja Subodhachandra Mallik. He saw Aurobindo and fell on his feet. His heart was filled with joy. Years after he wrote, 'When

an extraordinary person comes to the world as a common person, we are surprised to see him. My condition is like this.’

Aurobindo was in a simple dress. He had put on simple dhoti and simple chappals. He was calm and peaceful. His eyes were shining. The day when Nagen saw Aurobindo was a memorable day. It was Nagen’s fortune that he saw Aurobindo.

Nagen had to help such a godlike person. He was filled with emotions. He became eager to go with Suresh to the ghat.

Amar Chatterji and Manmath Viswas had come with a boat to Dumartalla ghat. Aurobindo left his boat from Chandrapur, sat in the boat of Amar Chatterji and reached the destination. From there he had to go in the boat of Nagen and Surendra to catch Duplex steamer. But there was mismanagement in it; so Sukumar’s plan seemed to be failed.

Amarbabu and Manmath Viswas had reached the destination on time, but Nagen and Suresh had not come. Amarbabu decided to contact Sukumarbabu at Sanjeevani, but Sukumarbabu was not there. He tried to find out Sukumarbabu at his home but he was not there as well. Aurobindo was in close horse-cart. He decided to wait for Nagen at the ghat.

Nagen reached the ghat late. Amarbabu was waiting for Nagen. In this situation Nagen was confused. He rushed to Sukumarbabu and informed him everything. Sukumarbabu was also worried. He told Nagen to bring two trunks from the steamer. When Nagen reached the steamer he found that the doctor had left the steamer checking all passengers. If Aurobindo came, who would check up him? The travel was not possible without the certificate of the doctor. He took the address of the doctor’s home from the captain.

Clever coolie was observing him. He asked, ‘Babu mosay, why are you worried? Are you worried because the doctor has gone home? I have seen doctorbabu’s home. His peon is my friend. If you grease my palm, I would see that you should meet the doctor.’

Nagen found a way in the confusion. He asked, ‘Will you really do this work?’

‘Trust me, I will do. I swear by the mother Kali. If I don’t do, then cut my two ears.’

Nagen was impressed by the firmness of the coolie. He said that he would please him if he did this work. He asked, ‘How much would he take?’ The coolie demanded ten rupees for himself and five rupees for the peon of the doctor. Nagen agreed to pay him this high amount. He

asked the coolie to wait; he himself rushed to Sanjeevani to meet Sukumarbabu.

Sukumarbabu said to Nagen, 'Why are you late? The guests come on time but you are late. So there is disorder. Now Amarbabu is on the ghat. See that the two trunks are kept in the steamer. But there will be the problem of the doctor's check up.'

Nagen said to Sukumarbabu, 'Don't worry. I have managed to get the doctor's certificate from his house.' He took fifteen rupees from Sukumarbabu and rushed towards the Chadpal ghat.

104. Certificate of medical check-up

Nagen saw the closed horse-cart and was relieved to see Aurobindo there. He had to do many things; time was very less. The coolie came to him and said to hurry up; otherwise the doctor would sleep. He managed to drive the horse-cart to the doctor's place.

It was half past nine. The doctor was awake. The coolie discussed with the doctor's peon. Nagen gave Aurobindo the ticket of Colombo and introduced him as a patient of malaria.

The coolie saw four people. He saw Vijay, Surendra and Nagen talking to one another. But Aurobindo had not spoken even a word. He was in meditation. But how could the coolie know? He was worried for Aurobindo. He went to Nagen and whispered in the ear, 'It seems your babu has too much fear. The doctor is a very gentleman. Tell him not to fear the doctor.'

Nagen laughed at coolie's remarks. He said, 'No, he is not afraid of anybody. He is a patient of malaria and he is not well. So he looks like it.'

The coolie was not satisfied. Nagen did not tell Aurobindo what the coolie had said. So the coolie himself decided to help. He went to Aurobindo and said, 'Babu Mosay, don't fear. The doctor is a very good man.' But he was not convinced that Aurobindo's fear had gone away. So he shook Aurobindo's shoulders. Everybody laughed; even Aurobindo smiled. This satisfied the coolie.

Meanwhile the doctor's peon came and said, 'Saheb is calling you.' Aurobindo went into the cabin. The doctor came to know that Aurobindo had studied in England. He wanted more details about England, but Aurobindo was not ready to talk to him. He gave the certificate of physical check-up within fifteen minutes. Aurobindo came out from the cabin and went towards Chadpal ghat in a horse-cart.

105. Farewell to Aurobindo

The horse-cart moved in the streets of Kolkata. The streets were silent, but the disciples were not. Amarbabu wrote, 'We were worried with anxiety for Aurobindo, but Aurobindo was peaceful and firm. He was in meditation.'

Nagen also wrote about this situation, 'Aurobindo was free from fear and worries. He was a complete fearless person; we had heard about it, but then we saw it.' All the time Aurobindo was with God. How could fear or worry touch him? God had taken the responsibility of protecting him, and He was taking care of him.

God had given him adesha to go to Pondicherry and he was managing his journey. Of course, human mind had planned; but it did not work. The boat did not reach on time. There was chaos. In a way it was good. Had the boat reached on time the police would have caught him. There was a police superintendent at the time of medical check up; he was searching and detecting every traveller. He was there during the day. But Aurobindo got the certificate of medical check-up at night. Therefore, he was safe.

All came to the ghat. Two trunks of Aurobindo also reached the cabin of the steamer. The thing was arranged in such a way that no travellers could know who was in the cabin. Aurobindo came in the cabin at 11.30 p.m. Vijaynag managed the bed; Amar and Nagen stood up at the door. Amar gave Aurobindo rupees that Michharibabu, the landlord of Uttarpada, had given and did pranama. Nagen also touched the body of Aurobindo and felt gratitude. Both Amar and Nagen were free from worries; they were sad because the person they adored was going far off place. There were tears in their eyes. When would he come back? This made them unhappy. But there was a hope; he would surely come to Kolkata some day. They took the blessings of Aurobindo and returned. Next day on 2nd April, the steamer set out for Colombo. At that time, Aurobindo did not know that he would be yogi at Pondicherry; but he was destined to be the same.

106. Efforts of British government

The government officials searched for Aurobindo in Kolkata, Chandranagar and other districts of Bengal; they did not find any information about Aurobindo. The government appointed detectives to

check up steamers and railways. Nevertheless, they did not get the trace of Aurobindo. The detectives wanted that Aurobindo should not leave the British borders in India; but destiny did not support them. Aurobindo crossed the borders of British India safely and came to the French territory.

The government came to know that two travellers set out for Colombo in Duplex steamer at late night. It imagined that they might be Aurobindo and Ajitsingh. It believed that they would go to Colombo and from there they would go to France. It approached the officials of Ceylon and instructed them to arrest Aurobindo in Colombo itself. These government officers were sure that the so-called criminal named Aurobindo would be arrested. He would not go Scott free from Colombo.

Ajitsingh of Lahore also protested against the British government; he was hiding himself. The government officials thought that both of them were going to France secretly. They were happy that the two culprits would be caught at Colombo. They were waiting for Duplex steamer; they were elated when it came. They searched all passers-by, but there was none like Aurobindo and Ajitsingh. Where did they go? The cabin was empty; there was no sign of anybody's presence. They searched the entire steamer, but found none like Aurobindo or Ajitsingh. They were sad. They did not understand what had happened.

The detectives wanted to know who Jyotindranath Mitra and Bankimchandra Vasak were; they had travelled by Duplex. They found that Jyotinath Mitra was a very simple man. He had never seen the sea. So they rejected his name. they thought that J.M. Mitra might be Aurobindo. They went to the English doctor to ascertain. The doctor said that J.M. Mitra seemed to be Aurobindo. So aurobindo's name was ascertained. But who was the second person with Aurobindo? It was surmised that the second person might be Nolinikant Gupta because he was not seen after Aurobindo disappeared. The detectives did all that they could to find out Aurobindo and Nolinikant Gupta.

The police searched for them for a week but in vain. On the eighth day they received a telegram from Madras that Aurobindo was in Pondicherry. He was welcomed there by Srinivaschari and other Indians. On the thirteenth day they received a message from Madras that Aurobindo was in Pondicherry, but nobody knew him. A request was made to send some one who could identify Aurobindo.

There were rumours about Aurobindo. One rumour said that Aurobindo would go to Germany via Bombay. But there was a financial

problem; so he came in a Duplex steamer to Pondicherry. Aurobindo's Nana, Masa, Masi and other were worried; they did not know where Aurobindo had gone. Sukumar had maintained secrecy.

But his Masa got the information about Aurobindo through other sources. One day a guest came to his house. He said, 'Sir Charles Cleareland, the Director General of Criminal Investigation, had come to Eastern Hotel in Kolkata. He had sent me to inform you that Aurobindo was in Pondicherry. Aurobindo's relatives were relieved by this message.

The government knew that Aurobindo was in Pondicherry; but it was helpless. Pondicherry was then a French territory; British rules did not work there. Of course, it employed detectives around Aurobindo and made a number of efforts to take him to British India. But God was Aurobindo's protector. The government's efforts failed.

107. Doubting Suresh Chakravarti

Suresh Chakravarti was the lover of art and beauty. He had the highest regard for France rather than England. He had heard about the beautiful city of Paris in France. He came to Pondicherry as the lover of art. But he was disappointed in Pondicherry; it was the town of fishermen. He noticed the difference between Kolkata and Pondicherry. Kolkata was the city of activities; Pondicherry was the small town of the silence of crematorium. Nolinikant Gupta, who came to Pondicherry six months after, was also disappointed to be in Pondicherry. He wrote, 'The place was a desert; it was an ordinary village of fishermen on the sea-shore. There were dusty roads, uneducated people, wine shops, dominance of goondas, dirtiness and poverty everywhere. This was Pondicherry.' Why did Aurobindo make this place of sadhana instead of the peaceful environs of the Himalayas? But Aurobindo had not chosen this place. It was the Divine that selected the place and managed his sadhana.

Suresh met Srinivaschari, editor of 'Indian Weekly'. He gave him the letter of Sukumarda. Srinivaschari stared at Suresh. He doubted him to be a government detective. He said, 'If Aurobindo wants to come, we will manage for him. Rest assured.' Then he gave the letter to Subramanyam Bharati who was impressed by an article of Aurobindo in 'Vande Mataram'. That time his age was only twenty eight years. He lived in Madras and took part in the freedom fighting movement. His one article was against the government; he was to be arrested. So he

came over to Pondicherry. He was not ready to believe that Aurobindo would come to Pondicherry from such a distance.

Suresh left the office. Then all discussed this problem. Srinivaschari said, 'He does not seem to be cunning. But nothing can be said.'

'But looking to the present condition, we cannot trust anybody.'

'Well, within four days Aurobindo is to come. If he does not come, we will beat him and know truth from him.'

'But remain silent in this situation.'

They did not trust Suresh. So Suresh had to suffer for four days.

Nobody trusted Suresh. Two days were spent. Suresh became restless. He thought, 'What type of men are they? They do not do anything for Aurobindo.' He said to Srinivaschari emphatically that Aurobindo would come next day. He asked, 'Where would he live?' Then Srinivaschari showed him a small house in a dirty street, full of darkness. Suresh became sad. He did not like such house for Aurobindo; in fact, these people did not know who Aurobindo was. Aurobindo was the man for whom the youths of Kolkata were ready to sacrifice their lives. These people had no respect for him. How could he be accommodated in such house? But he was helpless; he made up his mind to wait for Aurobindo to come. Then he would protest.

108. Arrival in Pondicherry

Srinivaschari doubted Suresh. He was not ready to believe that Aurobindo would come to Pondicherry. He said to Suresh, 'If Aurobindo comes to Pondicherry, we will go to receive him on the steamer. We will welcome him and we will come in the form of a procession.'

'Please don't do all this. If we do so, it will come to the knowledge of the British government. If the government officials come to know, then his journey to Pondicherry would be difficult. We are bringing him in complete secrecy,' said Suresh.

The idea of grand reception of Aurobindo was dropped. But still they doubted; they did not believe that Aurobindo would come to Pondicherry.

It was 4th April 1910. Suresh and Srinivaschari came to the port; they saw the Duplex steamer standing far off. They hired a boat; the boat went to the steamer. Suresh pointed at Aurobindo; then Srinivaschari believed Suresh. They went to the cabin of the steamer. Srinivaschari was surprised to see Aurobindo. Then all the four people

in the cabin took tea. It was a great moment for Srinivaschari; he was overjoyed to see a person peaceful and firm. He thanked God for giving him an opportunity to sit with a person of Aurobindo's stature.

Aurobindo put his first step in Pondicherry at 4.30 p.m. on 4th April 1910. It was the same land where years before a yogi from the North had come saying, 'I would return after some time. So O Vindiyachal, you should wait for my arrival. Do not rise up till I come.' That yogi came to Pondicherry but he did not return. He established Vedshala and interpreted the Vedas in the light of Dravid Sanskrit. That Yogi was Agastya. Years after another yogi came there for some time, he also did not return from there.

What was there in this land? Ordinary speaking it was fishermen's village. It became the capital of French people in India. Some foreigners came and civilised the native people. But majority of people were illiterate. Yet it was considered a pure land in ancient India. It was then known as a Vedpuri where the Ved mantras were recited continually.

The French historian Zurva Dubraile had proved that there was Ved University in Pondicherry and Agastya was its head. He also had proved that Agastya Muni did tapasya on the same place where Aurobindo's Ashram was. The land was of tapasya for the change of Time; so Aurobindo came there.

Pondicherry meant 'a new city' in Tamil. It was an unknown town for Aurobindo. Yet he came there; Paramatma brought him there.

Darjeeling, Manchester, London, Cambridge, Vadodara, Kolkata and Chandranagar – they were the places that rose his consciousness up to the Summit. But his journey continued. God brought him to Pondicherry so that he could reach the highest summit of consciousness.

109. Change of the house

Srinivaschari finally trusted Aurobindo's disciple Suresh. He took Aurobindo on a horse-cart and asked Suresh to come with his man behind.

A dirty house was first chosen for Aurobindo. But Srinivaschari's man brought Suresh to a posh area. The house was neat and clean; it was airy; it was very big. Suresh was surprised to be there. He thought that perhaps he was brought to this clean house for a time being; later

he would be shifted to a dirty house. He remained silent because Aurobindo was there.

Suresh was asked to put his luggage in the upper room. Then he was convinced that it was not a temporary arrangement. Five people were standing before Aurobindo; Srinivaschari was one of them. What a wonderful house for Aurobindo! Suresh wrote, 'I believed in the wisdom and strength of these people when I saw Aurobindo sitting peacefully in the upper chamber of the house.'

'Then was it not a dark house for Aurobindo?', Suresh said to Srinivas. 'We believed you to be the secret detective of the government. That is why we never wanted you to know the residence of Aurobindo', said Srinivaschari. 'We have already decided this house to appropriate for Aurobindo. Only we have not informed you.'

Poor Suresh! He had come, four days before to arrange accommodation for Aurobindo, but he succeeded doing so only in the last minute!

This house was the house of Shankarchetty in Kamatti Matti Street, Pondicherry. It was the same house where Swami Vivekananda stayed before going to Chicago; it was the house where Aurobindo also lived when he stepped in Pondicherry. The room was in such a way as no one could see anyone in the room from outside. It was a complete safe house. There was solitude; it was place most appropriate for sadhana. Shankarchetty himself was a noble person. He took great care of Aurobindo's sadhana. Aurobindo's two disciples – Suresh and Vijay – were also living in this house. Shankarchetty sent lunch to Aurobindo. Rasam, vegetables, the food items of the south were daily served to Aurobindo. Aurobindo specially appreciated 'Rasam' of Shankarchetty's house. He was not taking dinner. Only a cup of 'Payas' did he take. This was his only need. All the time he was up; he came down only to take bathes. The two disciples were strictly instructed to see that nobody would go to up. And obedient disciples followed this instruction sincerely.

Aurobindo never wanted any disturbance in his sadhana. He did not like people coming and disturbing his solitary life. Only three persons – Srinivascharya, Krishnamachary and Subramanyam – were permitted to see Aurobindo. These people met Aurobindo in the evening and informed the news of the nation. They discussed different topics with Aurobindo. Aurobindo was out of sadhana this time and took interest in worldly things. He also met four other persons during his stay in this house. He lived in this house for five months and did not meet any

persons except those ten people. He continued his deep sadhana of upper consciousness.

110. The foreknowledge of Aurobindo's arrival

There was a landlord of Kodyaram near K.V.Iyengar of Trichirapalli. His guru was siddha yogi. Iyengar got guidance from his teacher; he took his advice on everything. When the guru had his last time, he asked, 'God, what will happen to me? Now from whom will I get guidance?'

Then the guru looked at him with kindness and said, 'Don't worry. A yogi will come from the North to the South. He will guide you in your sadhana.'

'But gurudeva, how will I identify him?'

'That yogi will have certain signs; these signs will help you identify him.'

'Please tell me these signs.'

'First, he will come to the South because he did not get a place to live elsewhere. Secondly, he will declare three things before his arrival in Pondicherry. These signs will help you identify him.'

After saying this Iyengar's guru breathed his last. Iyengar started waiting for a yogi from the North. In 1910 he got the news of Aurobindo who came to Pondicherry for sadhana. He came to know that Aurobindo was the yogi that his teacher had predicted. He had read about Alipore bomb case; he had also read the letter written to Mrinalini written by Aurobindo. In this letter Aurobindo had mentioned his three madness. These three madness were three things suggested by his guru? And Aurobindo had come to Pondicherry because he had difficulty in staying elsewhere. He took Aurobindo to be the yogi of the North that his teacher had suggested. He specially came to PONDY to meet Aurobindo. He was convinced that Aurobindo was the yogi of the North that his teacher had foresaid in the very first meeting. He did his sadhana under Aurobindo's guidance. He helped Aurobindo financially. He got a book named 'Yogic Sadhana' published.

So a siddha purusha had foretold about Aurobindo's arrival at PONDY before he came. Such mystical predictions were made in case of the yogis. When he was in Alipore jail, his masi was worried for him. Rumours were that he would get life imprisonment of Kalapani or be hanged. She was greatly disturbed; she went to Swami

Vishuddhanandji. She asked him, ‘Baba what will happen to my son named Auro?’

Swami Vishuddhanandji went to deep meditation. When he came out of meditation he said, ‘Ma, nothing will happen to your Auro. God Himself is his protector. He will be acquitted in some time, but then he will not be your Auro.’ This view came true in the life of Aurobindo. Similarly, Ma Sharadamani went into meditation hearing the sad story of Mrinalini. When she came out of meditation she said, ‘My daughter! Don’t worry at all. Your husband is in the supreme protection of God. By the grace of Thakurji he will be proved innocent very soon; but afterward he will not live a worldly life.’ This prophecy also proved to be true.

When Aurobindo was in Vadodara and was not in public life, then Narayan foreteller of Kolkata had made three prophecies about Aurobindo. He had said, ‘Aurobindo will be thrice accused. His enemies will be of white colour. But everytime he will be declared innocent.’ He also added, ‘Aurobindo will meet his death at 63 years but he will be able to prolong his life through his yogic power.’ This prophecy also proved to be true in the life of Aurobindo.

111. Experiments with writings

Brahamanda is larger than the material world. We do not see the subtle world with physical eyes but it influences human life deeply. Leaving body the soul enters into the subtle world. Aurobindo had experimented with this Sadhana before he came to Chandranagar. He practised it into the office of ‘Sanjeevani’. Three disciples would sit around Aurobindo and Aurobindo would be the instrument of bodiless phenomenon. Nolinikant Gupta remembered, ‘Aurobindo would go to deep meditation. Then we would hear sound coming from the inside. The sound was unlike the sound of external world. Different souls came to Aurobindo’s subtle body and gave messages. The soul of Bankimchandra came to lecture him continuously on education, literature and politics.’

Similarly, Aurobindo had experimented with writings. He would sit peacefully. The bodiless elements wrote through him a lot. He continued this practice in Pondicherry. ‘Yogic Sadhana’, a book written in Shankarchetty’s house, was the product in this way. He would hold the pen and some subtle power would write through this pen. In the

beginning he did not understand who was writing, but later he came to know that it was the subtle body of Raja Rammohanroy.

From this phenomenon Aurobindo knew that the mind and the vital of the human being go to live, for a longer time, in a subtle world from earth. But this experience had little influence on Aurobindo's sadhana. When he reached uppermost state of consciousness, this experience did not enter there.

112. Future knowledge of the individual in the subtle world

Aurobindo was open to the subtle world right from Vadodara. As his sadhana progressed, his vision also developed. Future event used to come to his perception. But Aurobindo did not pay attention to such events. When the human consciousness rose from mental consciousness to cosmic consciousness and then to the consciousness of the Supreme, then such events became natural to the sadhakas. What human mind considered difficult, the divya Consciousness treated it as simple and natural. Aurobindo's aim was to rise to the Supreme Consciousness of Paramatma and then bring down that Consciousness to mind, vital and body to transform these elements. He was struggling to realise this consciousness.

Aurobindo talked about seeing the subtle phenomena to his disciples, 'I have seen such scenes in the subtle world. But I did not care to verify whether they are true or not; I forgot most of them. However, I remembered one or two events.' One incident was about the future of a man who came to see him.'

K.V. Ramaswami had come to see him. He was peaceful, sober, bearded bhakta from Madras. Aurobindo found him differently. He perceived him beardless man of rajas quality. He became Aurobindo's disciple; in future he was as Aurobindo had seen him. Aurobindo wrote, 'I have seen a man whom I had not met earlier; I have seen him as he would be in future.'

Aurobindo could see past, present and future as well. But he had never used this achievement for personal gain. His aim was to reach the Supreme State of Paramatma and to bring down the Consciousness of Paramatma to the earth. He went on to realise his Supreme goal.

113. Experiments to gain power from the subtle world

Can man sustain his physical and mental powers without food? Can he transform external phenomenon by gaining subtle powers? Will body survive without food? To get the answers of these questions Aurobindo observed fasts for twenty three days in Pondicherry. He experimented on himself all possibilities that he had surmised in sadhana. Like a scientist he explored the secrets of the subtle world. He never trusted what others had said or written. For example, to realise fire element he kept his finger on the flame of an earthen lamp. He had experimented the effect of eating opium on the body. He ate substantial opium but it had no effect on his body. From this he concluded that if one controlled mind, external objects had no effect on the body. He wrote all his spiritual realisations in a diary. This diary was preserved in the archives of the Ashram.

During his fasts for twenty three day, he drank only water. But he continued writing, reading, meditation and sadhana as before. He had the habit of meditating while walking. During the fast, he walked but he did not feel any nervousness. Only the flesh of his body was reduced. He had no key to control it. He wrote, 'I did not follow the rules that a person of long fasting observed. I took the same amount of food as I was having it before the fast. I did not reduce.'

How can a man sustain his body without concrete food? Aurobindo answered this question, 'A man can draw power from the Vital instead of getting it from matter.' Thus a sadhaka could get powers from mental and vital planes; he had not to depend on matter itself. However, the weight of the body was reduced. Aurobindo wanted to get the key to stop it but he did not find it. From it he concluded that the structure of the present body needed food; it did not have the power to transform from matter to the subtle body. Controlling the weight of fasting body would be possible only when he got the divine body. This was the secret of fasting that Aurobindo learnt. After that he had never fasted in his life.

114. Advertisement in the newspaper

Aurobindo had given up politics; but British government was not ready to believe it. It thought that Aurobindo and his co-workers were befooling the British government. In fact, they were leading the secret movement for freedom. Not only this, they were providing bombs to the

freedom fighters. It could not be allowed to happen. So it sent private detectives to watch the activities of Aurobindo. Neither the British government nor some of Indian people were ready to believe that Aurobindo had left politics. So Aurobindo published a letter in the 'Hindu' newspaper. He wrote:

'Where am I? I will be thankful to you if you inform this to the people who are interested in knowing this truth. They must note that I am in Pondy and I shall live in Pondy forever. I left Kolkata one month before a case was filed against me. I have left politics to do my yoga. I do not feel that I shall be arrested politically. I live here in solitude. Some French and Hindi friends meet me. It is an open secret where I am. The government workforces know it for a longer time. Everybody in Pondy knows it. I have to declare against my wish that my presence is in Pondicherry. It is a rumour that I am not in Pondicherry, but in British India. This rumour is spread by a deliberate intention. But I do want to declare that I have not been in British India for last March. It is not to be trusted if somebody says that I am in British India.

I also want to clarify that I am free from all political activities for some time. I will not meet anyone to discuss political condition nor will I have any correspondence regarding it. I will live in Pondicherry till there is some solution to the case against 'Karmayogin' in Kolkata high court.

Rumours about Aurobindo's whereabouts stopped. He was declared innocent in the case of an essay that he published in 'Karmayogin' by Kolkata High Court. He was free; he decided to live in Pondicherry to complete his sadhana. However, the British government wanted to draw him out of Pondicherry and to arrest him at any cost.

115. In the rented house

When Aurobindo came to Pondicherry he was living in the house of Shankarchetty as his guest. He then did not know how long would he stay in Pondicherry. In the beginning he believed that he would live there only for some time. But as his sadhana deepened, his stay at Pondicherry was also prolonged.

At outset Aurobindo with Vijay and Suresh lived in Shankarchetty's house. Nolinikant Gupta and Saurin Bose were later to join him. It was not appropriate to burden Shankarchetty. Aurobindo rented a house and in October 1910 he went to it. That house belonged to Sundarchetty. It was to the south of the city. He lived there upto April 1911. Then he

shifted it to the house of Raghav Chetty. He stayed there for two years. He had no money to pay the rent. So he hired another small house in Mission Street. There he lived only for six months. From there he went to the big house known as the guesthouse in Fransva Street.

This house was airy; but its rent was thirty-five a month. Subramanyam Bharati objected to this house. He said that there was no point in paying thirty-five instead of fifteen rupees. What was the use of having such a big house when money was not there to pay. But he kept mum when he was told that it was Aurobindo's desire to hire this big house. He agreed to this decision.

This house was on the corner of two streets. It had two gates. One gate was in the North and the other in the West. The North gate was normally closed. There were four rooms at the upper storey. Similarly, there were four rooms at the ground floor. Aurobindo was using the upper two rooms; there were terraces on both the sides. There was a courtyard; it had only one tape. All took bath in the open space. The house was very big; but it had no light. The work was done in the dim light of lantern at night. Light came there after much time. They got four points for five rupees. Four bulbs were used for Aurobindo and other. All disciples of Aurobindo had gone to play football. When they returned home, they were happy to see light.

Aurobindo lived in this house for eight years. He used to give his talks in the upper room. Here he meditated eight hours while walking. There was the sign of his legs on the floor; he had walked very much. The mason put cement over the signs and signs were destroyed. Otherwise, these signs would have been a great proof of his sadhana.

There was a library house in front of the main Ashram gate. Aurobindo came to live in it in 1922. He stayed there for five years. On 8th February, 1927 he went to live in the house which was in the north-east direction. Aurobindo was using three upper rooms. He lived there for the rest of his life. But they were noisy rooms. The Mother wanted to shift him to a peaceful place. He said, 'If I shift, then everything would be destroyed on the earth.' He lived in his room and did the sadhana of transformation of the earthly life.

Aurobindo's sadhana was difficult to practise; even his external life was not very simple. He did not get money enough to have an Ashram and to do sadhana nor did he get the support of his own 'family members' in any way. He faced the challenges of British detectives, economic problems and living among the strangers far from his own

people. He had also difficulties to satisfy even his basic needs. But he had a determination to show man the way of the Life Divine.

116. In the midst of contradictions

Aurobindo came to live in Sundrachetty's house in October, 1910. There were five people in his so-called family. All started the life of austerity. They had no money; they could not get money directly from Bengal. If somebody helped financially to Aurobindo from Kolkata, he would be sent to jail. Only Motilal Roy sent some amount secretly from Chandranagar. But this amount was irregularly sent and very small. Therefore, all faced economic problem. In breakfast they took tea and bread. They had very simple lunch. Four disciples made food one by one. Nolinikant wrote, 'I was cooking rice. Moni was in charge of pulse. Vijay was expert in making curry and vegetables. This is how we prepared our food.' Aurobindo ate what we prepared. He never complained about food prepared by us. That day the house had no furniture. There was no place to keep books; so we kept books on the floor of the house.

The four disciples slept on the floor; only Aurobindo slept on a camp cot given by Srinivaschari. That cot was broken one side. Aurobindo had to take care when he slept on it. We had two chairs and one table. Aurobindo used to sit in one chair and the other chair was used for the guest. His four disciples used to sit on the floor. There was a small table; Aurobindo used to write on it. There were only two lamps for night. One was of kerosene and the other was of the candle. One was near Aurobindo and the other was kept in the kitchen. At the time of taking meal Aurobindo sat in the darkness. There was no bathroom; we took bath in the open one by one. There was only one towel for the five. Aurobindo took bath at last; so he used the wet towel to clean his body. Aurobindo had seen poverty right from childhood. And he experienced poverty in Pondicherry for first four years as well.

In those days Motilal Roy came from Chandranagar to meet Aurobindo. He was sad seeing the hard life of Aurobindo. He had written, 'These days neither hotchpotch was cooked nor puri was fried in Aurobindo's kitchen. Only ordinary food was cooked due to the shortage of money.'

Motilal Roy started sending some amount regularly from Chandranagar; but it was a very small amount. Some time there was no money with Aurobindo. He had friends in Pondicherry; but they were

scholars. They were not economically rich; they had also left British India for Pondicherry; they could not be of any help. This fact became very clear from a letter written to Mitalal Roy, 'I write this letter to my friend. Whatever he gives me, send immediately to me. If he does not, then manage fifty rupees from earth or heaven on debt; this is my demand. Now I have only half a rupee with me. Srinivas has no money. Srinival, Barati and other live without any income. I can demand money from a person, but he is out of station. I am sure that God will surely help in difficult time. But why to wait till such time.'

Aurobindo had only half a rupee; he had to manage for five people. He had to pay rent as well. It was most difficult thing to do; Aurobindo described this difficulty as if it was an opportunity. In Vadodara he had said, 'God keeps my accounts. He never leaves me in monetary crisis.' He had this faith throughout his life. And God had always helped him through some ones.

He spent two years in financial crisis. He had no money to hire a tolerable good house. He lived in a very small house. However, he never complained about his conditions. In fact, he had never felt the shortage of anything. Whether he had things or not, whether he got good food or not, he was not worried. He treated both the situations with equality of mind. But he was worried for disciples. When he had money with himself, he bought the books of Greek, Latin and English for disciples. He taught them these languages.

Afterwards he gave his Bengali and English books to Motilal Roy for publication. He had then regular income. Moreover, Durgadas Sheth of Chandranagar sent him much money. He translated Bengali poetry of Chitranjan Das. He had given Aurobindo one thousand rupee. He also sold the land and the house of Morari Pukur Bagan. His financial situations were eased; but he was troubled by British government even in Pondicherry.

117. Plan to abduct Aurobindo

British government was bent on arresting Aurobindo; but it was helpless because Aurobindo was in French territory. The British detectives wanted Aurobindo to be out of Pondicherry. Perhaps this was the only way out to arrest Aurobindo. They made a plan to abduct Aurobindo and keep him in British India. They took help of Nandagopal, a fisherman of makawa community.

Nandagopal was a leading political person. He also supplied things to steamers. He had a big business in Pondicherry, Madras and Nagapattam ports. He was the leader of fishermen and had much influence in French politics in Pondicherry. He agreed to abduct Aurobindo to please British government.

A disciple of Aurobindo came to know Nandagopal's plan. He said to his fiends, 'Goondas are appointed to abduct Aurobindo.'

'Who said?'

'I have information that Nandagopal is involved in this conspiracy. He has appointed goondas.'

'What will the goondas do? Nobody can touch Aurobindo. If he does, he will not be alive', Nolini said in the voice of a revolutionary.

'The British government is still after us. We will see how they approach Aurobindo.'

Nolini, Moni, Vijay and Sirin made a plan to oppose goondas, but Aurobindo, who was to be abducted, remained firm, peaceful and devoted to God. Not even one layer of worry touched him. God was protecting him. Then why should he be worried of goondas or British detectives or officers? He was busy with his sadhana day and night. He was not worried; but four disciples had limitless worries. They waited for the goondas sitting in a motar car with acid bottles. But somehow the goondas did not turn up. They had to leave for Madras.

How did this happen? The day when Aurobindo was to be abducted, Nandagopal was to be arrested because opposition party was against him. It was an extraordinary case in the electoral politics of Pondicherry. It had never happened before. Nandagopal thought that it was wiser to go to Madras rather than to live in Pondicherry and be arrested. He ran away to Madras at night. British government again failed in her effort to arrest Aurobindo. Yet, the government did not give up its efforts to arrest Aurobindo; it formulated another plan after some time.

118. New plan of detective police

Detective police had a new plan to arrest Aurobindo. They decided to catch Aurobindo right in Pondicherry. They arranged detectives for this purpose.

Detective police greased the palms of Mayursen; he complained against Subramanyam Barati, V.V. Iyyar and other. The police wanted to search their houses along with house of Aurobindo. They expected

that objectionable literatures would be available from their houses. But objectionable materials were thrown into the well of V.V. Iyyar in a tin pip. So nothing was found.

The British government failed again; the situation took a new turn. In the morning of a day the maidservant went to the well to fetch water. She was surprised to see the materials. She brought Iyyar to show it; Iyyar talked to Subramanyam and Subramanyam informed everything to Aurobindo. And Aurobindo said, 'Go straight to police station and inform the French police everything. Bring them home and show the materials in the well.'

British detectives planned that Mayursen would apply and the French police would come to check the well. But the case was otherwise. Iyyar himself called French police to check the materials in the well. This the British detectives had not thought of. So their plan failed.

The French police opened the tin. They saw the materials inside it. The materials were related to the revolutionary Indians. British detectives thought that the materials would have some link with Aurobindo. And that would provide them an opportunity to search Aurobindo's house and to arrest him. In the tin not only the materials were there; it had an idol of goddess Kali.

Because of the idol, Bengali houses were searched. And in that connection Mr. Nadow, French police Head, public prosecutor and French Magistrate, came down to search Aurobindo's house.

Mr. Nadow was surprised to see the house of Aurobindo. There was nothing in the house; it had no boxes, no trunks and no cupboards. There were a few utensils, one table and a bed. There were five people living inside the room. But they had not clothes enough. What was to be searched? Only it was to search two sides of a table. When the Magistrate opened the drawers of the table, he did not find any materials to make bombs. Instead he found beautiful English poems and essays in Greek and Latin. Magistrate spoke in surprise, 'Are, Mr.Ghose knows Greek and Latin?' He also knew that Mr.Ghose was an expert of French, Italian and Russian languages. Mr.Nadow was convinced that such a great scholar could never be a conspirator. He was very much impressed by his talks with Aurobindo. He, in fact, invited him to his house. And Aurobindo went to his house twice.

Thus British efforts to arrest Aurobindo had failed. In his book named 'The Story of Jail', Aurobindo wrote, 'All those who wanted to harm me really did something good to me.' It was true in this case as

well. Instead of arresting Aurobindo the French officials and Magistrate started respecting Aurobindo. They wanted to take action against Mayursen; Mayursen ran away from Pondicherry! This is how the British government was making all out efforts to arrest Aurobindo but in vain.

119. Spy in the house

Vijay Nag, who was living with Aurobindo, had a cousin Nagen Nag. He was a T.B. patient. The doctors advised him to go to an open place. He decided to go to Pondicherry for two reasons. One, the climate would change and he would have fresh air. Second, he would have contact with Aurobindo. He came to Pondicherry and employed a Bengali youth Biren Roy as his servant. They were living in a room of Aurobindo's house; they helped Aurobindo financially as well. Biren was also mixed with other members of the family and was willingly doing their works. All was relieved.

Much time passed. One day Biren saved the head. Moni asked, 'Biren! Why did you save your head? Is there some special reason?'

'No, there is no special reason. It is my liking.'

'I also want to get my head saved.'

Biren was surprised. He said, 'Why do you want to be clean saved? Your hair is very beautiful.'

But Moni did not listen to him. He got his head saved. It was a fun; but his fun exposed the plan of the British government.

Biren was actually the detective of the British government. He was sent as a servant of Nagen Nag from Kolkata. Nagen did not know it. He was one with Aurobindo's house. In fact, he was considered as one of the members of Aurobindo's house. He came to Pondicherry before four/five months; he wanted to return to Kolkata. He had requested to send a new detective. This man would be at Megavi Hotel and meet Biren. Aurobindo had five/six Bengali persons, so Biren was asked to save his head so that he could be easily identified. But his plan failed.

'God knows, why did Moni save his head?', Biren was puzzled by this fact. He imagined that Aurobindo's men would have known him as a detective. Why did Moni save his head? He was worried. He, along with Moni, went to sea shore and said, 'I do not like to be in Pondicherry. What should I do?'

'You go to Kolkata. There is no point in living here if you don't like. We will look after Nagen Babu,' Moni said.

One night all were in pleasant mood. Biren said, 'I am a C.I.D. man.'

Aurobindo's men thought that Biren was making a fun; they laughed. Biren was then convinced that these people really knew who he was. He said, 'I am not making a joke. I am really a C.I.D. man.'

He went to the adjacent room and came back taking a hundred rupee note from the box. He said, 'This is my salary money.' All were surprised to see a hundred rupee note; yet they were not ready to believe that Biren was a British detective.

Then Biren went straight to Aurobindo. He put money at his feet and said, 'Yes, I am a C.I.D. But I have not reported against you. Please excuse me.' Then he broke in. The atmosphere of fun was transfigured into the atmosphere of sadness. All were stunned. There was silence in the atmosphere. All were excited; but Aurobindo did not speak. He stared at Biren and forgave him. Biren lived for a month with Aurobindo, but he had a constant fear. When he slept at night, he bolted the door. After one month he went to Kolkata. He had a fear there too. He knew that if the revolutionary people had come to know that he was spying Aurobindo, they would kill him. Then he went to the war of Mesopotamia.

Aurobindo's men were taken aback. The British detectives were watching Aurobindo from outside; that they knew. But they had entered the house of Aurobindo; they could not imagine it. All became very careful; but Aurobindo was least bothered; God was protecting him. Otherwise, a British detective would not confess like it.

The Abdul Karim, the main C.I.D. inspector of Madras, sought permission to meet Aurobindo. And Aurobindo agreed to meet him. When Abdul Karim came to Aurobindo he had brought a garland of roses for him. He not only garlanded Aurobindo but also offered him two baskets of fruits. He also talked with Aurobindo for half an hour in private. Nobody knew the content of his talk. But the disciples surmised that he had come to know Aurobindo's viewpoints on the First World War. They thought that perhaps British government's opinion about Aurobindo had changed. But it was their illusion. The incidents of the second day proved it.

120. Arrest of Vijay

Aurobindo came to Pondicherry four years before. Still he could not go back to Kolkata. But his disciples wanted to return to Kolkata to

meet their friends. Nolini, Saurin and Moni gave the responsibility of Aurobindo's house to some one and went to Kolkata in February 1914. The British government was empowered to arrest Nolini and Saurin if they were in Kolkata. So they returned to Pondicherry soon. Then Vijay wanted to go to Kolkata; he also wanted to meet his friends. When he asked Aurobindo, Aurobindo told him not to go there. Aurobindo knew the British policy well. He warned Vijay; but Vijay earnestly desired to go to Kolkata; he did not pay heed to what Aurobindo had warned. Abdul Karim, CID Inspector, had said that it was safe to go to Kolkata. So he decided to go.

Vijay did catch a train for Madras from Pondicherry. As soon as he crossed the border of Pondicherry the police showed him the warrant and arrested him. He was first taken to Kudhar jail and from there to his own native jail – Kolkata. He suffered the jail life till the war was over; he was in the jail for five years. Aurobindo was deeply shocked. Had his warning been carried out Vijay would not have gone to jail. But he did not care for Aurobindo's warning; he had to suffer. After five years he again returned to Pondicherry.

Thus British government did not spare even one chance to harass Aurobindo; but it always failed in one way or the other.

121. Aurobindo's decision

The First World War had changed the condition of the world. British government wanted to imprison all revolutionaries in India. It had pressurised the French government not to give shelter to the revolutionaries in Pondicherry. Accordingly the French government thought that Aurobindo should practise his yoga in Algeria. This news disturbed all. Where to go? What to do? All were worried. Bharati was agitated. All went to Aurobindo and expressed their views. But Aurobindo was silent and peaceful. He did not respond to their views. Bharati was upset to see Aurobindo silent. He directly asked, 'Arvindbabu, would you like to go out of Hind or not? What do you think about this problem?'

At that time Aurobindo was sitting peacefully; he continued to sit in that position. Then he said, 'Mr. Bharati, I will not move even an inch from Pondicherry; I will face no problem. You do what you like.'

There was firm a decision in what he said. His disciples were convinced of this fact and decided to live in Pondicherry. Aurobindo's

firm decision made them stable. Really, nobody faced any difficulties in Pondicherry.

122. Pressure of British government

Aurobindo had resolved to live in Pondicherry till he got perfect Siddhi. British government adopted one method or other to drive him out of Pondicherry. Its all methods failed before the firmness of Aurobindo. The government tried another method. It pressurised French government to implement an existing rule.

The French government had a rule for foreigners in Pondicherry. It sought certificate from them. The certificate was to be issued from higher officers of the country. If he failed to produce certificate from the officials, he had to submit to the French government a certificate from five leading citizens of Pondicherry. British government wanted the French government to use this rule for Aurobindo. Aurobindo was a British Citizen and was living for a long time in Pondicherry. It knew well that Aurobindo was living in solitariness and was not mixing with any people. It was difficult for Aurobindo to get a certificate from even two people. It would be easy to arrest him.

But this plan of the British government failed. Nolinikant Gupta wrote, 'We had not the first option. It was too difficult to get a certificate from the higher officers. We went for the second option. Five leading citizens certified for Aurobindo. Rasendran, Zer Naidu, Larba, Shankar Chetti and Murugan Chetty were the leading citizens of Pondicherry to sign the certificate issued for Aurobindo. And Aurobindo was grateful to them for all that they had done for him. He thanked the leading citizens of Pondicherry. This is how the British government's plan failed.

123. Intense aspiration of a boy of thirteen years

In 1910 Aurobindo came to Pondicherry. Subramanyam Bharati, Srinivaschari and others used to meet Aurobindo in the evening daily. A young man named 'Arvamudacharri', along with his uncle, went to see Aurobindo. He was the son of a poor Iyer Brahmin of neighbouring village. He was living with his uncle and was doing his studies. His uncle was a friend to Bharati. When Arva heard the name of Aurobindo, he said to Bharati, 'I also want to have darshan of Aurobindo.' Bharati did not pay attention to what he said. Yet whenever Bharati mentioned

Aurobindo, he said that he would like to have Aurobindo's darshan. It was the time when Aurobindo did not meet even big persons; there was no question of taking him to Aurobindo. Bharati remained silent and did nothing to take him to Aurobindo.

Then he expressed his desire before his uncle. His uncle clarified, 'Even I get an opportunity to meet Aurobindo once in a month. You are too small. When you grow up, you will be able to see Aurobindo.' The boy kept mum; but in his heart he had firm faith that Aurobindo would give him darshan one day without fail.

In the meanwhile this boy met Ramswamy Iyenger between 5.00 p.m. and 5.30p.m. Ramswamy was Aurobindo's disciple. He was a genuine creative writer. The boy used to meet Ramswamy daily; he did his odd works. He heard a lot about Aurobindo from him but did not know how to meet Aurobindo.

The boy's aspiration was intense. He thought that if he had his lunch with Ramswamy he might have an opportunity to have Aurobindo's darshan. He requested for lunch with Ramswamy. This surprised Ramswamy. He agreed and asked him to come on sharp 12.00 noon.

The following day he came straight from the school to Ramswamy. It was sunshine. Ramswamy asked him to go to a hotel for lunch. He was crust-fallen. He did go to hotel for lunch; he was not satisfied. He aspired to see Aurobindo but in vain. Instead, he suffered sun heat. However, his aspiration to see Aurobindo became more. The boy went to the room of Ramswamy; the other disciples of Aurobindo recognised him. He had no courage to wander around the entire house. Aurobindo used to live upstairs; he could not climb up and see Aurobindo. Two years passed; he requested Ramswamy and Bharati; they did not oblige him. His aspiration to see and meet Aurobindo became stronger and stronger.

In 1913 it was to celebrate Aurobindo's birthday on 15th August. The boy expressed his aspiration before Ramswamy. And Ramswamy promised to try. The boy was very happy; he waited for 15th August. On this birthday few people of Pondicherry were allowed to have Aurobindo's darshan; the boy was lucky to be one of them. All were invited to have Aurobindo's darshan at 5.00 p.m.; the boy reached Aurobindo's house at 4.00 p.m.

Aurobindo's birthday was being celebrated for the first time in Pondicherry. About twenty-five people came at 5.00 p.m. for Aurobindo's darshan. At 5.30 p.m., the door opened and Aurobindo appeared. Someone garlanded him; all clapped. Aurobindo spoke in

English a few words. Arva was too happy. He had waited for three years for Aurobindo's darshan; he was very happy to see Aurobindo on his birthday.

All sat with the leaves of bananas for meal. Aurobindo passed through all. Sweets were distributed. All took meal. Aurobindo sat on the chair in the veranda. After meal all went away one by one. Arvam did not know what to do; he continued to sit where he was. Ramswamy came and said to him, 'Now Bharati, Srinivascharry and V. S. Iyer would greet Aurobindo. After that we would go to Aurobindo; so wait.' It was seven in the evening. The boy's family was waiting for him at home.

Ramswamy came to call him at eight and a quarter. He said, 'You are lucky. Today you will see Aurobindo from a close quarter. Go to his table and do pranam. Stop a while when you passed by him. Fold your hand and do pranam and go home.' Arva followed to do what Ramshamy had said.

And Arva reached near the table. There was the light of lamp. Aurobindo looked at him; then he felt that light of Aurobindo was much more than the light of the lamp. Aurobindo's image was imprinted in his heart. He did the 'pradakshina' of Aurobindo and stood before him. Aurobindo called a disciple to give him sweets again. Then he felt that Aurobindo had accepted him. He came happily to his house where he, of course, was snubbed for being late. But he did not care for anything else; he was very happy to see Aurobindo. He got up early in the next morning and wanted to see Aurobindo again. He, in fact, became anxious for it.

Ramswamy had gone to his village. Arva continued to go to Aurobindo's place. He became friendly with Aurobindo's disciples. Particularly he became very close to Vijay. He did his postal works. He had no courage to go up and see Aurobindo. He requested Vijay. And Vijay answered that he would inform him consulting Aurobindo.

One day he was coming to Aurobindo's house via his own house. The sun was shining; the roads were lonely. Suddenly he felt that behind the sun Krishna was illumining. Everything was replete with flame. His being was full of the flame of the Sun. It was a unique experience. He was very happy to have this experience. He reached Aurobindo's house. There Vijay said, 'I was waiting for you. Sri Aurobindo wanted to see you up. Let us move upward.'

He later recorded this experience. 'It was 12.15 in the afternoon. I do not know how I climbed up the staircase. As if I was moving from

deep darkness to the limelight. I was going to have Aurobindo's darshan for the first time in this way. There was light around me. My heart was open. It was free and full of ananda. Sri Aurobindo was standing. His lotus feet were attractive. Some of his wet hair was on his chest; others were on his back. He had just taken bath. His big chest was beautiful. His look was not on me. Vijay went first; I followed him. Aurobindo was twenty feet away from me. He cast his look on my. I jumped towards him; I did not know that I had jumped. Thousands of lamps were lit in me. I moved towards him; I was moving in the wordless sea; I fell on Aurobindo's feet. 'You are my shelter'. Aurobindo lifted me with his flower like hands; he gave me something to drink. When he lifted me, there were tears in my eyes. Those tears were the tears of ananda or disappearance of ahankara; I did not know. But they were very important moments in my life. I became grateful to him.'

He was satisfied with Aurobindo's darshan; yet his heart aspired more. It aspired to have Aurobindo's darshan more and more. He spent eight days without having Aurobindo's darshan. On ninth day he requested Vijay to take him to Aurobindo. Vijay got the consent of Aurobindo and took him straight to Aurobindo at 5.00 p.m. next day.

Aurobindo was sitting in a wooden chair in his room. His mouth was toward the South. He was writing something. He looked up. He welcomed Vijay and Arva. Kindness flowed from his eyes. Arva looked behind; Vijay had gone away. There were only two: Aurobindo and Arva. Aurobindo did not know Tamil and Arva did not know English. Yet Arva spoke in broken words in English, 'I won't come daily see you.' But Aurobindo experienced the aspiration of his heart. He said, 'Come daily at 5.00 p.m.' He was overjoyed to hear this. It was a great opportunity. It opened the door of his destiny.

He started coming to Aurobindo from next day. Aurobindo was alone in the house. He later said, 'I stood up before Aurobindo and talked. I talked about my house and about my school. Slowly I learnt how to speak. I had no hesitation to speak with him. I did not know what to speak and what not to speak. My heart was full of him. He hardly spoke a word or two. But I spoke between 5.30 p.m. and 6.30 p.m.'

'I went on speaking; I spoke for weeks, fortnights and months. Then a change came into me. I used to speak in English for hours. This gave confidence to me. On 14th December I asked, 'Can't I live with you?'

He replied, 'First you clear your matriculation and then we will think of this.'

He had to go to Madras for matric examination. It was the time of famine. He had no examination fees. He decided to take drop from the examination. He came to Aurobindo and said everything. He had no fees; he had no preparation. There was no meaning in appearing the examination. He came next day to Aurobindo; Aurobindo gave him nine rupees to pay his form fees. Those were difficult days for Aurobindo; yet he spared this amount for him. He ordered to give the exam; he appeared and passed the exam.

Aurobindo managed his further study in Madras. He did intermediate in Madras. He came to Pondicherry every Saturday and Sunday. Though he was in Madras, his inner consciousness was with Aurobindo. That is why he kept himself aloof from physical attractions and domestic relationships. He came to Aurobindo to serve him. Aurobindo named him 'Amrita'. Really his life overflowed with nectar.

Years after the children asked Amrita, 'You were the first young boy to go to Aurobindo. Tell us about your experiences.' He said, 'People ask me to tell my experiences of Aurobindo. What shall I say? Who can tell his experiences of Aurobindo? We may use adjectives to describe him and yet his greatness will remain untold. I am confused when I have to describe my experiences. But I have spent life under the protection of Sri Aurobindo. So I will tell one of many experiences.'

'I have freedom to go to Aurobindo. He came down to my consciousness and became one with me. But I experienced as if I was standing near a vast ocean. I was touching the things of the world; that was my experience.'

'And another thing is to note. Sri Aurobindo was one with me. He was flooding light and flowing ananda through me. I had experienced this.'

Thus the aspiration of a young boy made his life divine.

124. Forgiveness to the thief

The French people were in greater number in Pondicherry. They used to eat breads in their meal. A boy would give breads to houses and get signature. This was the arrangement for Sri Aurobindo.

In Aurobindo's house the lunch was over by noon. Then all members but Aurobindo would sleep in the afternoon. There was

extreme heat; so doors and windows had to be closed. All disciples slept between 12.30 p.m. and 2.30 p.m.

A boy would come at 2.30 p.m. He kept breads on the table and noted in the accounts book. Then breads would be taken to kitchen and there would be signature of the breadman. This was the arrangement in Aurobindo's house. Moreover, there was a table. The table had only one drawer. There was no lock and key. There were about 10 rupees notes and 5 rupees changes. But nobody counted money. One day Vijay opened the drawer and was shocked to see less money. He watched two/three days; he saw all notes had disappeared. Only a few coins were left.

Then Vijay kept five rupee note and three one rupee notes. To his surprise, one rupee note was not there. Second day two rupees were not there. He was convinced that money was stolen while they slept. Then they decided to catch the thief. They kept watch between 12.30 p.m. and 2.30 p.m. The boy came in; he kept the breads; he opened the drawer and took 5 rupee note. Then the three disciples appeared and started beating him.

First the boy did not open his mouth; then he confessed that he had stolen money. He was crying. Aurobindo came out of the room. The hands which were lifted to beat the boy were stopped. The three men stood as if they were criminals. Sri Aurobindo told them, 'Don't take rupees from him. If you have taken, give it back to him.'

The three persons were taken aback. The boy continued coming to give breads. But he had become a right man. A criminal was not to be punished, nor to be forgiven. He was to be lifted by inner love. A thief became a right man in the influence of Sri Aurobindo!

125. A period of four years of silence

It was the period of four years, that is, from 1910 to 1914 of silence for Aurobindo. He entered yoga at 1908. During six years from 1908 to 1914, it was the descent of new consciousness. In Baroda he had realised silent Brahman. Then he was busy with political activities for two years. He passed through many storms. And his life in Pondicherry was not free from problems. Facing acute financial crisis and the harassment of British government he had to do his sadhana of divinising his Nature.

Today human nature is imperfect; it works under lower consciousness. This lower nature has to be changed in to divine nature. Sri Aurobindo had to do sadhana for the descent of what he calls the Supermind into mind, life and body. He has written a letter to Barindra in Pondicherry, 'Lele has shown me a path to search the way and I have to adopt two/three things from traditional yoga to test them. From my arrival in Pondicherry my inner guru (soul) has taught me completely ten principles of yoga.'

In fact, God has drawn Sri Aurobindo to the yoga of divinising nature. He has to do the sadhana of manifesting God in human life. He wrote to Barindra, 'Brahman, Soul and God do exist; there is no doubt about their existence. But they have to be manifested in human life.' Thus Sri Aurobindo has to manifest God in human life. He has to find out the way to this truth. The way seems to be strange and unknown. He has to begin his sadhana for it.

126. Visit of Paul Richard

Pondicherry was won by the French. French India conducted election there. The candidate elected would be a member of 'Paris's Chamber of Deputy.' Paul Richard was contesting for this position in Pondicherry. He left for India in the middle of 1910. When he was about to go to Hind, his yogin wife named Mirra gave him a symbolic picture and said, 'I have seen this symbolic picture in my subtle darshan. None has explained it. Hind is a place of many siddha yogis. If you meet him, show this picture and seek its explanation. And the person whom I have drawn would be the guru of my sadhana.'

Richard came to Pondicherry; he completed his election. Then he started searching a siddha yogi. He asked Zeer Nayadu, a member of French Council, for help. Zeer Nayadu replied, 'You can find siddha yogis in Himalays. But a yogi has come to Pondicherry. He does not meet any one. I have met him thrice with the help of Subramanyam Bharati. I am highly impressed by his knowledge and sadhana.'

'Will you take me to him?'

'I shall try. If Aurobindo agrees, I shall take you to him.'

Sri Aurobindo was living in Shankar Chetty's house. He met Paul Richard at the request of Zeer Nayadu. Paul Richard was deeply influenced by his knowledge, intensified sadhana and divine personality. He saw Sri Aurobindo as the liberator of mankind. He was the first man from the West who identified Sri Aurobindo as a Yuga

Purusha. He introduced Sri Aurobindo's sadhana of transformation to the people of the West. When he went to Japan, he said, 'The time for big things and great events has come. This is also the time for Asia's Yogis. I have experienced in my life; they live somewhere on earth. If they are not there, the world would not survive. They are the light of the world; they are the dawns. I have met the greatest man in India; he is Yuga Purusha and the leader of future. His name is Aurobindo Ghose. Due to him India's culture and spirituality will spread in the world.'

It was the beginning of Sri Aurobindo's sadhana; forty years of hard tapasya were yet to come. But Richard had experienced in Sri Aurobindo the future leader. He asked for second visit to Sri Aurobindo; it was granted. He brought the symbolic picture given by his wife. He told about the yogic knowledge of his wife. Then he showed the picture and asked for explanation.

Sri Aurobindo took that picture; he concentrated on it for a while. He understood the meaning. He knew that higher sadhana was done by the person who gave the picture. Sri Aurobindo explained the meaning of the picture. The coming dawn triangle was of Sat, Chit and Anand; the ascending triangle was life from Matter, Light and expression of Love as answering aspiration. The square was formed at place where they met. There lotus was manifested. Lotus was the manifestation of God. The water in the square was the symbol of infinite world.

Paul Richard was overjoyed by this explanation. He greeted Sri Aurobindo with reverence. He needed not to go in search of a guru for his wife. He found a guru in Pondicherry itself. It was, of course, the divine plan to get a guru in such a way.

Paul Richard took leave of Sri Aurobindo; he said, 'Can Mirra and I come to you now?' Sri Aurobindo gave answer in affirmation. He left for Paris to give this happy news to his beloved, tapaswani wife.

127. Mirra's wonderful childhood

Mirra was not an ordinary child. She was born on 21st February in a rich family of the banker Alfassa and Matilda in 1878. She was a very beautiful child; she had a unique personality. She could meditate on her own at the age of just five; she concentrated on the chair which her mother had prepared for her. She could see the circle of light around her. Of course, she could not understand what that circle was. She asked about that circle to her mother. The mother answered that it was her whim; she did not know that it was the experience not available even to

the greatest yogis. Without knowing spirituality, Mirra was living a spiritual life even in her childhood. Later the Mother said to the children of Ashram, 'I have been seeing the colour of the light from the age of five. It is the light to guide me.' Thus Mirra was led by the guidance of spiritual light. This light increased to guide her when she was grown up.

There was the other extraordinary thing in her at the age of five. Her soul was separated from her body. She could see that her desires were coming from outside. She organised them in such a way as they contributed to her growth. She derived much more pleasure in it than she got interest in playing with other children.

Mirra had a brother named Mati. One day the father wanted to take brother and sister to a circus. The brother was ready to go but the sister declined. She said, 'I have much more interest in the work that I do at home; I won't come with you to a circus.' The father did not understand why she said 'no'. The fact was that she had no interest in doing outward thing.

Mirra had identification with nature. She went for a walk in Fontainebleu forest of Paris. She was, one with the consciousness of trees and birds in the forest. She became the branch of a tree. Her identification was so deep that the birds took her for a tree and wandered on it.

The forest had trees of two thousand years old. Mirra took them for rishis. The trees talked in their own language with Mirra.

Once, a woodcutter was cutting a tree, while Mirra was taking a walk in the forest. The tree was weeping. Its noise was heard by Mirra. She went to the woodcutter and requested him to stop. The woodcutter obliged her and went away picking up dry firewoods. The tree was saved. Mirra had this identification with Nature throughout her life.

Mirra was a very sincere child. She could speak only what she needed. When the children of her age were passing their time in enjoyment, she would be busy with her sincere works. She had influence on all other children who respected her heartily. She had courage, fearlessness and inner strength even at the age of seven.

Once, a boy of thirteen/ fourteen years old was making fun of girls. All the girls were afraid; they could not speak a word against him. Then this Mirra of eight years old went to him and said, 'Stop'. The boy rushed to beat Mirra but Mirra lifted him and knocked him down. The boy was afraid of this little girl; he ran away. He stopped making fun of the girls from that day.

Mirra's father also had experienced her strength. He was very angry. One day her elder brother Mati came late to the house for some unknown reasons. The father started beating the child. Mirra came to him and said, 'If you continue beating him, I will leave the house.' The father was dumbfounded; he stopped beating the child. This was the strength of child Mirra.

A similar incident took place in the school. Then she was ten years old. The boys and girls were quarrelling; the boys, in fact, kept the girls in a room and closed that room. The girls were very much afraid; they did not know what would happen. Mirra was one of them; she boldly opened the door and said, 'Let me go.' There was silence; the boys did not know what to do. Mirra went out fearlessly and other girls followed her. Thus she was full of courage and fearlessness right from her childhood.

Mirra was expert at other arts in addition to her studies. She learnt painting in the famous studio of Paris. She also learnt the art of dancing, music and dramatic performances. A drama troop named 'Comedy Frances' invited her to play the role of main heroine in its dramas. Had she accepted that invitation she would have been the greatest dancer and performer. She would have been very famous if she had chosen the career of painting and music.

She was brilliant in her studies. She was quite receptive. Her memory was very sharp. She had mastery over her mother tongue French. She wrote the best essay in French at the age of fifteen. Teachers appreciated her writings. One of the essays was preserved in the Ashram. She wrote beautiful stories and dramas. She would have been the greatest creative writer if she would have chosen that career. But her aim was not to be an expert in any one art; she wanted to go beyond Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram to reach the Supreme who was the ultimate source of all arts. Besides her studies, she took interest in sports. At the age of eight she started playing tennis with the best players of tennis in the world. Of course, she did not win; yet she learnt the art of playing tennis from them. She was deeply interested in music; she played organ music in such a way that it seemed ragas were coming straight from the divine world.

At the age of sixteen she entered the famous studio of painting in Paris. Many students used to come there; Mirra was the smallest girl. She was very sincere, introvert, and of firm determination. Reticence, equal behaviour to all, fearlessness and deep understanding were the traits of her personality. Her co-students called her sphinx. 'Sphinx' in

Greek meant a mysterious woman. Mirra was really a mysterious woman. All were impressed by her dazzling personality. All respected her. When the boys and girls quarrelled, they came to Mirra for solution. Mirra heard both groups and then gave her judgement. Both groups accepted her judgement. Sometimes Mirra exposed the ideas that were going on into the minds of the groups; then all were surprised. At that time it seemed that Mirra was really a mysterious woman.

128. Spiritual experiences of Mirra

Mirra was born and brought up in an affluent family. She was conscious of the world beyond our eyes right from her childhood. She said to the children of Ashram, 'I know that I did not belong to this world from the age of five.' This consciousness grew up with the passage of time. She said, 'I had a number of spiritual experiences from the age of eleven. I knew not only about God but also I was sure that man would get God in his life one day.'

Thus Mirra had the spiritual experiences of establishing divine life on earth at the age of just eleven. She had a feeling that she had come to earth for this purpose. Her spiritual experiences deepened with the passage of time.

She had a very strange experience at the age of thirteen. This experience, in fact, lasted for one year. She said, 'When I slept in the bed, I would feel that my 'I' would leave my body and go up and up. I could see that I had put on a golden kurta. The kurta was larger than me. It would cover the whole city. Then I saw that suffering old men and women, youths and children, gathered under that kurta from all directions; they demanded for help. They told about their pains, struggles and difficulties. That kurta extended to each person and consoled them. Their disease had disappeared; they looked happy and brave.' I was very happy to see this scene. My day to day works became less interesting; my night dreams were real and delightful.'

This was real spiritual experience of Mirra. When she cast her look of kindness over the men standing with folding hands at 6.30 p.m. from balcony, it seemed that kurta of Mirra was extending to them. All were happy by the light of the Mother. Thus the work of liberating men from pain and suffering by Mirra started from the age of thirteen.

There was no spiritual atmosphere in Paris. Yet Mirra got guidances through meditation and vision. Spiritual gurus guided her at night when she was asleep. Mirra knew nothing of Hindu culture and spirituality at

that time. Yet Krishna used to guide her spiritually. She drew the picture of Krishna. She was confident that she would meet Krishna at some corner of earth.

Thus Mirra got spiritual guidance. But she did her sadhana without anybody's help. She said to the children of Ashram, 'I became one with Divine Presence at the age of eighteen or twenty. I did so without anybody's help. I did not take help from books as well.'

When Mirra was one with God, then she got the Bhagwadgita. One Indian named Chakravarti gave her the French version of the Geeta. He said to her, 'This is the book of Indian Yoga. The French translation is not correct; but this is the only book in French. Read this book. Its Krishna is the inner God.'

The Mother completed this 'Geeta' within one month. Then she got Vivekanand's book named 'Rajyoga'. It was a wonderful book for her. She started understanding spirituality. It explained many things within a short time which would have taken her years to understand.

Thus Mirra did her sadhana on her own after establishing her union with God. She said to the children of Ashram, 'I knew from the very beginning. Nobody told me that I had to search God within. But this was most important thing for me... I rushed towards God like a storm.'

Mirra progressed in a spiritual field. Many mysteries were unveiled before her. She realised that it was not necessary to leave the world to find God in human life. But every moment had to be experienced with God in life. The works of life had to be done with establishing relationship with God every moment. Therefore, she never neglected life. She married and became a mother to one son. But she did all her works as offerings to God. She was trying to reach the summit of spirituality.

129. Mirra's training of occultism

We see this physical world with our own eyes. But there are many subtle worlds in the universe which we cannot see with physical eyes. These subtle worlds have influences on the people of physical world. To make free from sorrows and sufferings of physical world the knowledge of subtle worlds are very necessary. It is known as occultism. To know occultism the first principle is to be fearlessness. Mirra has started learning occultism at the age of twelve. She can go to subtle world and has contacts with it. She finds subtle world as concrete as physical world. To establish the divine life on earth, the knowledge

of subtle worlds is very necessary. So she has learnt occultism from Theon family.

Theon and Alma were expert teachers of occultism. They could wander in subtle worlds; they remembered the incidents of those worlds and they could talk with the elements of those worlds. They brought down changes in the matter with the power of occultism.

Mirra knew about the occult power of Alma. She had seen that Alma would not come to put on sleepers; but sleepers would come to her. She could enter the locked room without unlocking it; she could pass things through thick matter. Theon couple had complete control over subtle worlds. Tlemcen's farmer requested Theon to get rain in his fields. And due to Theon there was rain in the fields while neighbouring fields had not even a drop of water. Once a light came to the dark chamber of Alma; it was covered with ice; it had put on red shoes. It said to Alma, 'I am the king of ice. I have come to tell you that I shall be coming to you.'

'It is the hot land of Sahara. How can ice be there? Yet it is there because there are fur trees on its hills. These trees are calling us; so we are coming.' Alma got up the next day. She saw that the hill tops were covered with ice. Fur trees, instead of pine trees, were grown. And fur trees had invited its king of ice. Thus, the things of subtle worlds were under the control of Alma. And Alma said this to Mirra.

Mirra studied occultism from expert Theon couple. She could pierce all twelve states of the body. She became an expert in occultism. She could converse with the elements of subtle worlds. Once Mirra, with Theon, was travelling by a steamer. Then there was a storm in the ocean. All travellers were fearful; even the captain of the steamer was afraid of. Then Theon told Mirra to go and stop the storm. The captain did not understand anything. Mirra went to the cabin, gave up her body and flew over her soul to the source of the storm. There she saw small atoms storming the sea. Mirra requested them to end the storm and the storm was subsided. When she came out of the cabin; all travellers were celebrating the end of the storm. However, nobody knew how the storm stopped. From this incident her guru Theon was convinced that Mirra had become an expert in occultism.

Mirra did get the knowledge of occultism; but she did not find thing which her heart aspired. She did not realise the consciousness which could establish divine life on the earth. In fact, she was confused about it. Therefore, she would rush towards the possibility where this realisation could be made. She became expert in the fields of art, life

and occultism; this expertise did not make her ‘perfect.’ Alma knew Mirra’s aspiration. So she said at the end of the training in occultism, ‘This is not the aim of your sadhana. We are not capable of taking you to your aim. When you get a greater guru, only then you will realise your ultimate aim.’ Mirra trusted her guru Alma and was convinced that she would find a greater guru in times to come. Though she did not know the exact timing of her meeting with a guru, she was sure that the day of a fixed date was not far away.

130. Inner condition of Mirra

Paul Richard’s first visit to Pondicherry was spiritually successful. Reaching Paris he gave the happy news to Mirra, ‘I got the meaning of your symbolic picture in Pondicherry.’ ‘Hey, ... Who is that yogi?’, asked Mirra happily. ‘That yogi is really the yuga purusha. I have met him twice. I have talked to him on various subjects. I was surprised to find his knowledge in literature, art, philosophy, yoga and politics. He has his own extraordinary views on each subject. His strong inner power will certainly raise the world.’

Richard's talk reminded Mirra of her childhood guru ‘Krishna’. She experienced that the yogi described by Richard was really her own guru. Paul Richard was an eminent person in Paris, the yogi who had influenced him would not be an ordinary yogi. Mirra became curious to know about this yogi.

Richard further said, ‘He is Aurobindo Ghose. He has been the front leader of India’s freedom fighting movement. Now he has given up politics, he is yogi.’ He also explained the meaning of Mirra’s symbolic picture that Aurobindo had told him. Mirra was highly impressed by exact explanation. She felt that only this yogi could show her spiritual path. She had seen this yogi in the subtle world; then she got an opportunity to see him in the concrete world in India. But the time of meeting with guru had not come. Perhaps she was not fully ready.

Then Mirra started preparing herself to meet this guru. Her prayers became intense; her meditation lasted for a longer time. She experienced such things as human mind could not understand. She got up early at five o’clock in the morning and meditated. Later she noted her experiences in five diaries. In Pondicherry her prayers were selected and published as ‘Prayers and Meditation.’ These prayers expressed her intense love for God, her aspiration and her identification with the Divine. She was very clear about her life work. In 1912 she wrote, ‘My

lifelong works would be to transform human life into the Divine Life, to establish Divine Life on earth and to create environment so that man could experience God in life.' To realise this work she needed to do sadhana. She had occult knowledge, she had the highest experiences. She had the guidelines of creating a new world. She had knowledge and strength to realise them. Yet she was lacking 'something'. That 'something' she would get from her guru. And soon God created an opportunity to meet her guru.

131. Towards Pondicherry

Richard had to come to Pondicherry after four years to contest the position of French India Council. This time he was not alone; Mirra accompanied him. In fact, Mirra had prepared herself for a long journey. She wrote in her diary, 'I have entered into a peaceful state as the moment for my departure comes nearer to me. I have looked hundreds of small things that are my friends with love and affection. I am grateful to them because they have filled sweetness and light in my life. Now those things will go to others' hands; I wish other people should behave softly with them.'

Mirra had deep affection for external things. She treated them as if they were living things. She wrote about her future, 'I do not know what is in the store. I only wish that this future time will be the beginning of inner fulfilment. During that time we should leave attachment to worldly things, follow the cosmic rules and manifest cosmic consciousness. It should be the time of greater love. It may prove to be the time of much devotion.'

Mirra was to start for Pondicherry on 4th March. She wrote, 'Sitting in this peaceful room I am writing for the last time. It is quite possible that we have to be out for a longer time.' She further wrote, 'Now the page turned and with the turn of the page the past disappeared. I saw the second page; it was empty. But it would be full of mystery.'

Then Mirra got up in the steamer. She was highly sensitive to the sorrows and sufferings of the travellers in the steamer. She wrote on 6th March, 'I was deeply pained with the sufferings of fellow travellers. But I put these sufferings in Thou.' She prayed, 'Oh, the healer of the world pain, destroyer of Ignorance, resides in the hearts of all suffering travellers who might experience thy presence within them.'

Mirra turned towards God as steamer moved on and on. She prayed, 'O God, my sweet guru, I experience, on this steamer, thy love for

everything. It is a moving temple; it is in unconscious state of mind; but unconscious is yet to be awakened. When the earth will be conscious and will know thee, that day will be momentous day for all of us.'

Mirra was inwardly grateful to God; she had unconditionally and completely surrendered to Him. She wrote in her diary, 'O Lord, thou art our protector; thou art our life; thou art the reality of our existence. I do pranam to you with respect and ananda.' She further wrote, 'O Divine Teacher, O Eternal Speaker, Thou livest in all things and in all beings. Thou love is seen in the eyes of those people who are still ignorant. Everyone should be aware of Thee from their depth; hatred for Thee should disappear from their hearts. My remembrance should reach Thee with gratitude.'

She still further wrote, 'My chitta, a faulty mind is replete with Thee. My heart is full of Thee. My whole being experiences nearness to Thee. I realise a peaceful state of mind which gives us ananda.'

'O Lord, my aspiration rises to Thee as a soundless source and wordless prayer. Thy Divine Love illumines my love... My heart demands absolute peace; I would manifest thy Sankalpa, resolution. I cooperate with the situations that give rise to Thy Sankalpa. My entire future is in Thy Hand.'

Mirra and Richard entered into the boundary of Pondicherry after twenty four days from Paris. When the steamer was ten kilometres away from Pondicherry, Mirra experienced the touch of mild light from environment. She told the children of the Ashram thus, 'I experienced Sri Aurobindo's consciousness from ten miles away when I came to Pondicherry for the first time. Consciousness suddenly dawned upon me. It seemed that as if fresh air was lifting me.'

Mirra was the knower of the subtle worlds. She understood that it was the consciousness of Sri Aurobindo's sadhana that welcomed her. In fact, it was his jyoti, flame that had spread ten miles. Mirra experienced inscrutable ananda to meet such a guru.

132. At the feet of the guru

The fixed time had come. Mirra, along with Richard, came to meet Sri Aurobindo. That time she was thirty seven years old. Though she had met him in subtle world and received guidances time and again, it was for the first time that she was meeting him in person. She saw Sri Aurobindo standing up near the ladder. He was waiting to meet her. He was lean with wonderful forehead and flashy eyes. It was he who used

to come to her meditation and guided her in sadhana at childhood. Yes, it was he whom she called Krishna. Mirra experienced inwardly; she had similar experiences in the past as well. She surrendered herself unconditionally to him and accepted him as her guru at very first sight. In fact, she took him to be God who showed her the path to spirituality. That moment was transformed into the moment of the change of consciousness. She, at the first sight, had identified him as an avatar. In reality, Aurobindo's consciousness and her consciousness became one. Her search for divinity ended that moment. She began her new journey in the company of the new guru; it was the journey for the descent of consciousness. She wrote, 'When I first met Sri Aurobindo, I knew that I was meeting a person whom I used to call Krishna. I became sure that both my place and my work were with him in Hind.'

Then Mirra went up climbing the ladder. There Sri Aurobindo was sitting in a chair. There were a few more chairs in front of him. He asked Richard and Mirra to sit on them. But Mirra preferred to sit on a stool near the feet of Sri Aurobindo. She did not do any external formalities. She just meditated and surrendered her mind to Sri Aurobindo. In fact, she offered all her achievements including occultism to Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo accepted her offerings without any outer formality and made her mind still and peaceful.

The Mother said to a disciple about this incident, 'I sat at his feet. There was stool in front of me; it was up to my forehead. It covered me. I did not do anything. I did not think anything. I did not make any efforts. I did not demand anything. I just sat before him. When I got up, he had established peace within me. My mind had no thoughts. The experiences of so far disappeared. Really it was wonderful. My mind was empty. But I began realising what was beyond mind; this power stayed within me for ever. It was the proof of Sri Aurobindo's power. That peace in mind was always there. I went to Japan; I did many things. But that peace did not leave me any time.'

Mirra returned with a new consciousness from Sri Aurobindo. She was full of ananda. She was convinced that the Divine Principle had manifested on the earth. Her aspiration to make the earth heaven-like and to fill it with love, light and ananda would be fulfilled. She saw God doing sadhana in the form of Sri Aurobindo.

Next day she wrote in her diary, 'It is quite possible that thousands of men of the earth are in darkness, but I have the darshan of the man who assures that deep darkness will be turned into light and Thou will establish thy rules on the earth.'

She further wrote, ‘O Lord, the maker of wonderful events, when I think of this meeting, my heart flows with ananda and gratitude and my hope becomes limitless. I have no words to speak.’

Sri Aurobindo’s presence on the earth is a boon for humanity; Mirra realised this truth in her very first meeting with Sri Aurobindo. She had grown like a child. Two days after she wrote in her diary, ‘It seems that I am taking a new birth in a new life. Customs and rituals of the past had no use. Thoughts of the past were taken away from me. My mind was free from false ideas; it became empty. I became a blank page on which the Divine wrote His message fluently... It seems that I am standing before the person whom I was searching for a long time.’

Mirra thus became a blank page. Sri Aurobindo had not seen such surrender before. When Mirra came to India for the first time, Sri Aurobindo’s younger brother Barindra was in Andaman jail. When he was acquitted from the jail and came to Pondicherry, he asked Sri Aurobindo, ‘What have you felt when you met the Mother first?’ Sri Aurobindo replied that he knew for the first time that the last cell of the body could surrender. When I met the Mother, her surrender was perfect.’ Sri Aurobindo also said that perhaps only a woman could make such complete surrender.

Thus Mirra surrendered her being to the Mahaguru. Sri Aurobindo visualised Ma Bhagawati in her. She was to give new direction to Sri Aurobindo's sadhana.

133. Introduction to Sri Aurobindo’s greatness

Only three/four disciples were living with Sri Aurobindo. When Mirra came to India all of them were enjoying complete freedom. Sri Aurobindo did not impose any rules. He was also living like his disciples. He never ordered for anything in life. Sri Aurobindo was to be adored; the disciples knew it. Yet they behaved in equal manner with Sri Aurobindo. Amrita wrote, ‘Sri Aurobindo never named any disciple even to post a letter. He came out with the letter in his hand and said, ‘I think this letter be posted. Of course, some disciple would gladly take the letter and posted it.’

Amrita gave another example of Sri Aurobindo's humility. Once, Sri Aurobindo's leg touched Amrita. He sat in the chair and said to Amrita, ‘I beg your pardon.’

Sri Aurobindo never showed his greatness to anyone, not even to his disciples. He was their guru, pathmaker, friend and father; they lived in

the same house in which Sri Aurobindo was living. Yet they did not recognise his Sadhana for humanity. It was the Mother who identified with Sri Aurobindo's sadhana in her very first meeting and acquainted it with the disciples. She taught them how to behave with Sri Aurobindo through her action. Nolinikant Gupta wrote, 'The Mother changed everything about Sri Aurobindo. She taught the relationship between the guru and the disciple through her behaviour. She did not sit equal to Sri Aurobindo and showed her reverence for him. She also changed the life of the disciples.'

Richard and Mirra were living in 10, Fransva Street, Pondicherry. It was near to Sri Aurobindo's house. She visited Sri Aurobindo with coconut sweets between 4 and 4.30 p.m. She distributed the sweets among all Sri Aurobindo's disciples. She discussed the issues of spirituality with Sri Aurobindo. Richard also joined them after completing the works of election and participated in the conversation with Sri Aurobindo. He invited him to dinner every evening on Sunday. Sri Aurobindo went to him after 4.00 p.m. Others joined him after the football game. Sri Aurobindo was with Richard till 10 o'clock at night.

Sri Aurobindo's presence itself lifted the consciousness of the people; it made one experience vastness and infinity. The Mother wrote, 'Sri Aurobindo's presence always made you feel as if you are entering eternity. It made us realise vastness; it made the mind peaceful. You would experience that you were led away from your limited mind.'

The Mother told the disciples about Sri Aurobindo's divinity. She said, 'Sri Aurobindo was always present whenever the great events of transformation took place on the earth from the beginning to the present day.' Thus it was the Mother who familiarised Sri Aurobindo's greatness to all disciples.

There were different types of sadhana on the earth; yet the earth was not free from sorrows and pains. Mirra also doubted about the transformation of suffering and pain into ananda and divinity. She asked Sri Aurobindo, 'Will the efforts to bring down heaven on the earth be bound to failure?'

Sri Aurobindo looked at her and said, 'No, it will not happen this time.'

Sri Aurobindo's firm reply cleared all her doubts. She was convinced about the divinisation of the earth.

Paul Richard and Mirra thought of bringing to light Sri Aurobindo's spiritual knowledge and his integral yoga. They made a plan which brought his spirituality to light.

134. Publication of Arya

Richard asked Sri Aurobindo, 'We believe that the world may be benefited by your spiritual knowledge. Mirra and I have thought of a plan for the spread of your knowledge. If you permit, we will put it into practice.'

'What is your plan?'

'To publish a spiritual monthly to spread your spiritual knowledge and yoga.'

'We will take the responsibility of its expenditure. You have to write about spirituality and yoga.'

Sri Aurobindo had many spiritual realisations between 1908 and 1914. These realisations were the same as they were revealed in the Vedas and the Upanishad. He had spiritual knowledge and higher consciousness. He proposed for the divinisation of the earth. The period of his secret living was over. It was God's desire to spread his knowledge. Therefore, he accepted the proposal of Mirra and Richard. His sadhana was thus spread from a house to the world. And this work was done by the monthly 'Arya'.

Sri Aurobindo wrote, 'Arya will be my intellectual work for the world.' He stated the aim of Arya thus, 'It is to link thee living element to what was the best in the tradition.'

'Our earth is made up of matter and vital. Man is neither vegetable nor animal. He is a being who thinks of spiritual thing like sat. He has been given the shape of an animal to achieve some highest objective.'

'So it is to find out the right path to get truth and harmony. First, it is to reveal the secret of Atman. So man may take up mental and material life. Along with that he would develop living methods of sadhana for self-control and self-development... Besides, it is necessary to get free individuality and social unity and to achieve harmony between the two. Our search in 'Arya' will be to discover these things.'

Thus it was the aim of 'Arya' to develop the Sadhana for self-growth, to achieve harmony between inner and outer life and to establish peace in the world.

On 15th August, 1914, the first issue of 'Arya' was launched. Aurobind Ghose was written on its front page. Mirra and Richard were two editors of this monthly. The first issue was published in English and French. Mirra and Richard were translating Sri Aurobindo's English versions into French. Richard's house became Arya's office.

Mirra and Richard took up the financial burden of this monthly. Mirra prepared the list of its customers. There were two hundred customers of this monthly in the beginning. This list was preserved in Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Sri Aurobindo proofread this monthly and could see that it was dispatched to all customers on the fifteenth August. He objectified his spiritual knowledge on the blank pages of Arya. All his great works were published in series in 'Arya' thus:

The Life Divine: August 1914 to January 1919

The Synthesis of Yoga: August 1914 to January 1921

The Secret of the Veda: August 1914 to July 1916

Isha Upanishad: August 1914 to May 1915

Kena Upanishad: June 1915 to July 1916

The Ideal of Human Unity: September 1916 to 1918

Essays on the Gita(1) : August 1916 to July 1918

The Human Cycle: August 1916 to July 1918

The Future Poetry: December 1917 to July 1920

Essays on the Gita(2): August 1918 to July 1920

The Renaissance in India: August 1918 to July 1919

A Rationalistic Critic of Indian Culture: February 1919 to July 1919

A Defence of Indian Culture: August 1919 to January 1921

It was the 'Arya' which made these works of Sri Aurobindo available to the world. Credit goes to Mirra and Richard to spread Sri Aurobindo's spiritual knowledge and the principles of yoga.

135. Return of Mirra and Richard to Paris

Richard came to Pondicherry to contest the membership of India Council of France. He lost the election. Thus his external aim of coming to Pondicherry failed but he achieved the big work of the publication of 'Arya'. Moreover, he became very popular among the youths of Pondicherry. He thought that he would do some works for these youths. He organised an association of 'The New India'. He had got some guidance for this association from Sri Aurobindo as well. There were two aims for this association: (1) to meditate daily and (2) to help others as far as possible. This association had a library and a reading room of its own. Richard was engrossed in the activities of shaping those young men.

Mirra was busy with her sadhana and with translating into French from English for 'Arya'. Sri Aurobindo came out of his silent sadhana and became known to the world. Thus all the three – Richard, Mirra and Sri Aurobindo – were very busy in their own ways.

Meanwhile there broke the 'First World War'. Richard and Mirra could not live in Pondicherry according to the French rules; they had to return to Paris. They celebrated 21 February, 1915 as Mirra's birthday. Mirra and Richard returned to Paris on 22nd February, 1915. They lived for eleven months in Pondicherry; during these eleven months they did the wonderful work of publishing Sri Aurobindo's great writings.

After Richard's departure Sri Aurobindo owned the entire responsibility of publishing 'Arya'. French version was stopped after the departure of Mirra and Richard to Paris. But English version continued for seven continuous years. Sri Aurobindo wrote essays for 'Arya'; in fact, he brought out chapters of six books together in each issue of 'Arya'. Generally a rough copy was prepared for a fair copy. He received the knowledge from higher planes of consciousness and typed them till late night. The books published in 'Arya' had different layers of consciousness and spirituality.

He said in a conversation with disciples, 'Most of the works for Arya were done without efforts. I never tried to be a mimansaka. Richard requested me and I started writing. He left Pondicherry, and then I took up the responsibility of bringing out Arya'.

Sri Aurobindo wrote on different subjects like art, literature, history, sociology, national and international politics, yoga, spirituality, future society and like. He wrote in the light of spirituality; he opened new directions to knowledge. It was possible only through 'Arya'. He manifested the Divine even in the Inconscient. He assured the world that their saviour was on the earth.

136. Assurance for India's Independence

The new-paper 'Cronical, Bombay' had published the advertisement of 'Arya'. Ambubhai Purani had read it and had registered his name as a customer to the very first number of 'Arya'. It was the time when Sri Aurobindo's literature was banned by British government. If it was available from some one, that person would even be imprisoned. Ambubhai ordered 'Arya' from a different address; he avoided his college address lest some doubted him. He came into contact with his guru through 'Arya'.

In fact, Sri Aurobindo was known to Ambubhai Purani before. His elder brother Chotubhai Purani was Sri Aurobindo's student. It was Chotubhai Purani who perhaps mediated between Sri Aurobindo and Ambubhai Purani. However, the lecture which Sri Aurobindo gave when he returned from Congress conference, Surat had deeply influenced Ambubhai Purani. Of course, then he had not met Sri Aurobindo in person.

Sri Aurobindo's younger brother Barindra had given the formula to prepare atom bomb to Ambubhai Purani. There were many young men like Ambubhai Purani to sacrifice their lives for India's freedom. But Ambubhai Purani needed the permission of Sri Aurobindo to enter into freedom fighting movement. So he decided to go to Pondicherry.

Ambubhai Purani was in touch with Sri Aurobindo through letters. He used to read 'Arya'; he had some genuine questions. He asked these questions to Sri Aurobindo and got answers from him. Saurin Bose used to send him Sri Aurobindo's answers. Ambubhai had sought permission to translate from 'Arya' and Sri Aurobindo had agreed to it. Thus, Sri Aurobindo knew Ambubhai Purani indirectly.

Ambubhai Purani reached Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry. It was the month of December 1918. It was 8 o'clock in the morning. It was a strange house where Sri Aurobindo resided. Right side was the chain of coconuts and left side were four rooms with four doors. He sat there in in-between place and talked with Amrita and Suresh. Sri Aurobindo gave him the appointment of 3 o'clock in the afternoon. He had no other place to go; so he waited there.

Ambubhai Purani met Sri Aurobindo at 3.00 p.m. Sri Aurobindo was sitting on a wooden chair. In front of him was a small table with brown table cloth. There was an aura of light around Sri Aurobindo. His look was penetrating. Ambubhai said to Sri Aurobindo, 'Our association is ready to implement Kanti's revolution. I have come to take your permission for that.'

Sri Aurobindo remained silent listening to this truth. He did not remember Kanti at all. He asked Ambubhai Purani about his sadhana. Ambubhai answered, 'Yes, we practise yoga; but we cannot concentrate on it till India is free.'

Then Sri Aurobindo said, 'Perhaps it will not be necessary to go for revolution for India's freedom.'

'Then how can the British leave India?', asked Ambubhai Purani.

‘It is another story. If India is to be free from some other way, why do you want revolution? Instead, it is better to concentrate on yoga’, said Aurobindo.

‘Yoga is in India’s blood. I believe that thousands of men will go for yoga if India is free. But who will be ready to listen to truth, or spirituality from a slave country?’, said Ambubhai Purani.

Sri Aurobindo answered to this question, ‘It is determined that India will be free. Leaders and workers will be available to achieve this goal. But all persons are not ready for yoga. Now when you have a call for yoga, it is better to concentrate on it. If you want to be a revolutionary, you are free to be; but my permission is not there.’

‘But you inspired for revolution in India. Why do you now say ‘no’ to it?’

‘Because I have done revolution. I know the difficulties confronting it. The youths become revolutionary through ideals and enthusiasm; but ideals and enthusiasm do not last long. It is very difficulty to maintain self-control. We do organise small associations; but there are competition between associations and individuals. Government’s officers are already the members of these associations. So the associations do not work effectively. Sometimes they are so degraded that they fight for small things.’

Thus Sri Aurobindo clarified the real situations. But Puraniji was still in doubt; he said, ‘Suppose I accept that the yoga sadhana is useful and should concentrate on it. Yet I have experienced for last two and half years that I should do something for India’s freedom. I cannot rest without it. I try to be peaceful, but my mind is disturbed; it wants to do something for India’s freedom. I cannot properly sleep till this goal is achieved.’

Sri Aurobindo was silent for two/three minutes. Then he said, ‘Suppose, assurance to India’s freedom is given to you.’

‘But who will assure me about it?’

‘Suppose I assure you about it.’

Ambubhai was silent for a minute. Then he said, ‘If you give me assurance, I will accept it.’

Ambubhai gave the message of Keshav Das to Sri Aurobindo, ‘If you need money, it will be remitted from Vadodara.’

Sri Aurobindo replied, ‘Expenditure is met with money from Bengal, particularly from Chandranagar; so I need it not.’

Sri Aurobindo had financial hardship. But he did not want to put anyone in difficulty. Besides, to help Sri Aurobindo was to invite the

anger of the British government. Sri Aurobindo never wanted that anyone should suffer the government's anger due to him. The government troubled those people who came to meet Aurobindo.

During this time Dahyabhai Purohit had come to the South. He knew Aurobindo from Baroda. He came specially to meet Aurobindo in Pondicherry. After he returned to Baroda, he lost his job. British Residency pressurised the Maharaja to remove Prof. Purohit from job. British government was so afraid of Sri Aurobindo that it did not tolerate anyone to meet him. Ambubhai said that Prof. Purohit resigned the job and became an advocate. Of course, he earned more than what he was earning as a professor. Sri Aurobindo was satisfied knowing this truth.

When Ambubhai Purani did pranam to Sri Aurobindo before he left Pondicherry, he asked the same important question of his life, 'Are you really sure of India's Independence?' Ambubhai had still doubt about it. Sri Aurobindo became silent and sincere. Then he said, 'This event is as sure as the rising of the sun. It is already decreed; the result will come very soon.'

Ambubhai Purani was convinced. He returned to Bharuch. He wrote, 'That day I could sleep peacefully, after more than two years, in the train... Let there be Kaliyuga in the world. But there is a divine person who knows the divine truth and who puts his life to achieve it. This truth makes India and the world extraordinary.'

Ambubhai had gone to seek permission for revolution, but he was initiated in yoga. His life was changed.

137. Much delay

Saurin Bose and Nolini Kanta Gupta were going to Kolkata second time. Saurin was Mrinalini's uncle's son; he had willingly accepted to serve Sri Aurobindo. He asked Sri Aurobindo, 'Which message of yours should I give to Mrinalini?'

Sri Aurobindo replied, 'My individual sadhana is over; now I have to work for the world. Tell her that she should be a companion in this work. If you bring her here, I shall be very happy.' Saurin Bose went to Kolkata to bring his 'didi', sister, to Pondicherry.

Mrinalini had the pang of being away from her husband. When Aurobindo came out of Alipore jail, she had a hope to meet him. But she was disappointed. Sri Aurobindo had become God's man. He devoted himself to God. He was ready to do what God had said.

Mrinalini knew about it. She wanted to help him in his effort. So she was away from him. When Aurobindo left for Pondicherry, she was broken; her life was in darkness. However, Sri Ramakrishna's teachings gave her strength; she could put up with her pang. She accepted the situation and did 'tapasya' being away from him.

Mrinalini hardly came to Kolkata; she was with her father in Shilong. She spent her time in pooja and in reading of scriptures. She worshipped Sri Aurobindo along with other gods. She worshipped Ma Kali and prayed to Her daily to give her strength so that she could help her husband in his divine work. She could spend many years alone; this sati's faith was not disturbed. Lastly, her aspiration was fulfilled. Her god, her mortal husband, did not come to her but his message had come to her after eight years. Saurin told Mrinalini about many siddhis that Sri Aurobindo had achieved. He said, 'Well, Meenudee, be ready to go to Pondicherry.' This message opened the door of ananda for Mrinalini.

But it was not easy to go to Pondicherry. First, it was necessary to get the permission of the British government; then other formalities were to be performed. Saurin and Bhupalbabu completed all formalities. It was decided that Bhupalbabu would take Mrinalini to Pondicherry. Saurin and Nalinikant Gupta left for Pondicherry.

Mrinalini was happy with the very idea of meeting Sri Aurobindo. Of course, Sri Aurobindo had achieved many spiritual siddhis. Yet he was her guru, pathmaker, and everything to her. She experienced gratitude for getting the chance to live at his feet.

But the Divine had some other plan for her. When Mrinalini came out of Shilong to Kolkata, she had pain in her eyes. She did not mind that pain. When she reached Kolkata, there was the break of 'flu' in Kolkata. People were dying of flue fever. She became the victim of flu. It was difficult to be free from the influence of flu.

Mrinalini prepared herself to go to the other world; her plan to go to Pondicherry failed. She sold her precious clothes and ornaments. Part of the income that she got she gave as donation; some other part she assigned to her friend 'Sudheera' and remaining part was to be spent, from the interest, for the poor girls of Nivedita school. In fact, the poor girls were to be given scholarship with the permission of Sri Aurobindo. She had a box of Sri Aurobindo's letter; she had preserved it very well. When there was no life of hers, what was the use of these letters? She offered those letters to the water of the Ganga. She was living with a hope to meet Aurobindo. That hope had come to an end.

Her inner heart was torn with the pang of separation. She was sick for eight days. She left her body at the age of thirty two on 17th December 1918. That day Mrinalini's photo in Sri Aurobindo's room fell down and its glass was broken.

Mrinalini was destined to die at the age of thirty-two. Her parents knew it; they had told it to Sri Aurobindo. And Sri Aurobindo had told them to remind him of her death. But situation was different; it could not be informed to Sri Aurobindo. When her mother came to Kolkata, Mrinalini was on the deathbed. In this circumstance she forgot to remind Sri Aurobindo of her death.

Bhupalbabu informed Aurobindo about Mrinalini's death. Sri Aurobindo uttered only few words, 'Too late – it is much delay.' Saurin was standing near Aurobindo; he wrote to Mrinalini's mother, 'I saw tears in the eyes of your son-in-law. In his hand was the letter and in his eyes were tears.' Sri Aurobindo said to Saurin, 'Mrinalini's soul has come to him after death.'

Bhupalbabu had written a letter to inform Sri Aurobindo about Mrinalini's death. Aurobindo also replied it; he wrote, 'I did not write to you about the pitiable incidents of my life. Perhaps words could express sensitivity; but the sensitivity aroused by this incident could not be expressed. God had done something auspicious to attack me fiercely. What was good to me was known to Him. I surrendered to Him when the incident was over. As you said, the link between the two was broken. But I was still emotionally bound. When I loved, I did not stop loving her. Of course, our eyes could not see it; yet she was with us.'

'I agree to what Mrinalini has suggested. Whatever Mrinalini has desired, all must be done. She would have agreed to it. I do not have little doubt about it. Her bangles should be kept by her mother. But if you send one or two books signed by her, I shall be very happy. I have only her letter and photo.' This Mahayogi had deep love for Mrinalini. But like Seeta, Yashodhara or Vishnupriya Mrinalini was destined to have no husband in her company.

138. Call to return to British India

Political leaders of the time thought that Sri Aurobindo would return to British India from Pondicherry. Sri Aurobindo also had this idea in the beginning. Afterwards his mind changed. As his sadhana became intense, his stay at Pondicherry became more and more stable. He

decided to live in Pondicherry and make it the land of his tapasya. Nalinikant Gupta wrote, 'Instead of saying that Pondicherry had given shelter to Sri Aurobindo, it is more appropriate to say that Sri Aurobindo had given shelter to Pondicherry in his consciousness and made this land pure.'

The political parties in British India waited for Sri Aurobindo, but there was no sign of his return. These parties made great efforts to invite him to British India; even the British government was ready to welcome him. He was proved innocent for the essay that he had written by the High Court. But Sri Aurobindo wanted to do his sadhana in Pondicherry. Lord Karmail had written to him, 'If you want to do yoga, arrangements for an Ashram could be made in Darjeeling. You may stay there permanently.' Sri Aurobindo declined to accept this invitation. He knew that the British government would harass him under one pretext or other. He never wanted to have any disturbance in his sadhana.

National party also wanted Sri Aurobindo to return to British India. Lokmanya Tilak was its leader. He wanted to make this party very active. He proposed to start a daily. In 1920 he requested Sri Aurobindo through Baptista to be the editor of this daily. He declined to accept even this proposal. He was not afraid of British government; he had no temptation to be in India's politics. Therefore, he was not tempted to return to British India.

Sri Aurobindo wrote to Baptista, 'You have put tempting demand before me. But I am sorry that I cannot accept it. Its reason is obvious; I want to tell you. I do not want to return to British India. It is not a political decision; it is a spiritual one. I do not want to waste my time; even if the government assures me that I should do my work in my own way, I would not return to British India.'

He further said, 'I came to Pondicherry with a definite goal. There is no relationship between the politics and that goal. I have not taken parts in any works directly after coming over here. Of course, I shall be doing whatever I can for the country. But I cannot take up the public assignments lest my goal for which I came here will not be fulfilled. Pondicherry is my solitary place; it is the cave of my tapasya. I have to complete this tapasya, this sadhana. I have to prepare myself for my work.'

Sri Aurobindo had chosen sadhana as the aim of his life; he did not want to have any relationship with politics. National party again

requested him to return to British India after the death of Tilak in 1920, but Sri Aurobindo did not oblige it.

139. Meeting the patriots

Sri Aurobindo did sadhana in the care of Pondicherry, but he was fully informed of happenings in India and abroad. Many political leaders used to come to him for guidance. Lala Lajpat Rai, Purushottam Das Tandon, G.S. Kharparde, Deshbandu Chitranjan Das, Saraladevi Chaudharani and others met Aurobindo to discuss political situations in India from 1920 to 1925. Specially there was a note preserved in Ashram about Sri Aurobindo's meeting with Saraladevi Chaudharani who was the niece of Ravindranath Tagore.

Saraladevi asked Sri Aurobindo, 'Are you really against non-cooperation movement?'

Sri Aurobindo replied, 'No, I am not. What I want is to do the hard works for independence.' He further said, 'Had I been in India's politics; I would have seen what preparation I had made.' He emphasised that it was urgently needed to have a strong organisation for Independence.

Chitranjan Das had also come to Pondicherry. He requested Sri Aurobindo to take India's political responsibility. Sri Aurobindo replied him, 'Spirituality is the real foundation of life and work. I am convinced of this truth. It is necessary to develop new consciousness through Yoga. I have decided that I should not work in political field.'

Chitranjan Das again came to Pondicherry on 5th June 1923. Sri Aurobindo asked him to leave politics and do yoga. But it was not easy for Chitranjan Das to leave politics. He had started 'Swaraj Party'; Sri Aurobindo had extended his full support to it. Chitranjan Das died in 1925. Sri Aurobindo said that the country had lost a big leader after Tilak.

Lala Lajpat Rai also came to Pondicherry. He had talked to Sri Aurobindo for forty five minutes in private. The details of their conversations were not available.

Mahatma Gandhi had sent his son Devdas Gandhi to meet Sri Aurobindo. Devdas Gandhi had put many questions to Sri Aurobindo. He asked about 'Ahimsa' as well. Sri Aurobindo said to Devdas, 'Suppose Afghanistan attacks India, how would you oppose it.' Devdas had no answer. Devdas informed Gandhiji about Sri

Aurobindo's beliefs. For one reason or other, Gandhiji decided not to meet Sri Aurobindo.

Shubhash Chandra Bose had deep regard for Sri Aurobindo. He could not meet Aurobindo due to some circumstances. He had written about Aurobindo thus:

Sri Aurobindo retired from politics at my college time in 1910; yet he was the most popular leader. He had magical influence on us. He had sacrificed all lucrative jobs to get freedom for India. When other leaders were demanding regional freedom for India, Sri Aurobindo fearlessly wanted complete freedom for entire India. I came to Kolkata in 1913; then Aurobindo had become a legendary figure. People were talking enthusiastically about him. This 'mahamanava' had many achievements. His letters were read with great curiosity. In our group, some person would read his letter; others would listen to it attentively.

Sri Aurobindo was not in politics; but he was giving guidance to political leaders. It showed that he was primarily interested in India's freedom. He published an essay on Tilak's demise at the request of Bipinchandra Pal. He wrote about Tilak, 'A great leader has disappeared from great resolution. During this time of crisis we needed him most but he was no more with us. His death had created vacuum. However, his working capacity was commendable. It will create new leaders.'

Tilak died; Dr. Munje requested Sri Aurobindo to take up the responsibility of replacing Tilak. Sri Aurobindo replied, 'Now I am not a politician; my work is different. It is based on spirituality. I want to do radical changes in society, culture, economics and spirituality. My attention is only on all these things.'

Regarding the presidentship he said, 'President's work is not merely to give lecture; it is to provide leadership to it. And this work I cannot accept. About Tilak he wrote, 'Tilak is Tilak; I cannot take his place.' Thus Sri Aurobindo had declined a big position that came to him.

140. Difficult path of sadhana

Man's life is full of sorrows. He has to suffer birth, old age, disease and death. To be free from all these sorrows he needs the Supramental Consciousness; Sri Aurobindo has got this key. But how to do the work from the Supramental Consciousness was not clear to him. There was no guidance from any one. To go to the Supramental way

was not known to him. Inspiration and faith were his tools. This path was not trodden by any one in the past. Sri Aurobindo wrote, 'Formerly, this sadhana was not done. Whatever efforts were made, they were made by way of preparation. If someone had done this sadhana, its tradition was not maintained. It was lost in the flow of time.'

Thus he did not get guidance from the yogis of the past. He himself was carving his ways to overcome difficulties in his sadhana. His disciples did not know much about this yoga. One disciple wrote, 'You were born with the Supramental Consciousness, how could you know the realities and difficulties facing this sadhana.' Sri Aurobindo replied, 'How strange your belief! I am born with the Supramental Consciousness and I do not know about the hardship. Good God! My life is spent in confronting hard realities of life. Starting with difficulties and starvation in England, I have to battle with most difficult situations in Pondicherry. In fact, my life had been a battle field from my childhood. Even now I have to fight with spiritual difficulties and external forces. Of course, we do not cry; so others think that we are roaming in the world of dreams and enjoying life. This assumption appears to be true, but how false it is!'

Sri Aurobindo's life was really the life of war. He had to fight for India's freedom against Britishers. More than this truth he had to fight for spirituality. It was his war against the earth's matter or against the Inconscient. It was to rise to the Supramental Consciousness fighting against lower Nature which was refusing to transform body, life and mind. In 1920 he wrote to his brother Barindra, 'I had many problems. I had difficulties regarding body, life and mind. And I had very little time to remove them. But God was shaping my life. It was not my power, but God's power that was doing my yoga.'

Sri Aurobindo retained self-control by God's Power. He had prepared his mind, life and body to receive the Supramental Consciousness. It was not an overnight achievement. He had achieved this siddha after a long Sadhana. Even if God took shape of man, he would have to accept men's weaknesses as well. He had to do Sadhana to liberate from these limitations. The Divine, who took of the human form, worked accepting human nature and the principles of body. Divinity was not a magical wand. Sri Aurobindo wrote, 'God does not neglect Nature's rules and circumstances. He works through situations. He acts in the similar way in Bhakta or Jnani. Even the rishis have to face difficulties.'

God had made rules; so He could not break them. Sri Aurobindo had to transform his physical nature into the Divine Nature. In a poem named 'God's Labour' Aurobindo wrote:

Those who wish to bring down heaven,
They have to descend into the earth,
Had to bear the burden of earthly Nature
And run the path of strife.

He who does not experience pain cannot remove it. Sri Aurobindo wrote to a disciple, 'My sadhana has experienced the difficulties of all sadhakas. We have fought these difficulties thousands of time. We have tolerated these difficulties to make other's path safe.'

Sri Aurobindo had love and kindness for mankind. He wrote, 'Only Divine Love can sustain the burden which I would like to bear. The sadhakas who want to lift the earth from the darkness will have to sacrifice themselves. Sri Aurobindo suffered the burden to take the divine consciousness to the physical cells. He did not desire anything for him; he did not need any siddhis for himself. Had he desired anything for himself he would have received it in no time.'

Sri Aurobindo's sadhana was the sadhana for humanity. It was the sadhana to solve the problem of death in life. He did not know how to begin his sadhana. He wrote, 'After ten years of sadhana, it became clear how to do yoga for the Supermind. The Supermind Consciousness was the need of the integral yoga.'

Sri Aurobindo became clear about sadhana after ten years. There were many obstacles in the descent of the Supermind. He wrote to Barindra, 'It is not easy. I am entering the lowest range of the three levels and am trying to lift all from lower consciousness to the higher consciousness. If I succeed in attaining the Supermind, God will make less time for others to realise the Supermind. I am fully convinced of this truth.'

The descent of the Supermind into matter was very difficult. He wrote, 'When my sadhana was going on in the mental plane, it was very easy. Sadhana in Prana was not easy but was very interesting. But it was very difficult in the physical plane. The yogis of the past left it there; no body paid attention to it. Of course, the efforts were made to concentrate on matter but result was not obtained. Nature's all difficulties were concentrated there. One had to labour to win over them; one had to fight.'

It is necessary to win over physical consciousness. The reason is that subtle mental and subtle vital consciousness remain after death. However, if the sadhana is done in physical cells, then it is destroyed everything. But his sadhana is very difficult. Sri Aurobindo wrote, 'I have to do sadhana for two years because the Inconscient is thick and mind has little influence on it.'

Sri Aurobindo worked on physical consciousness day and night without being disappointed by anything including temptation. Lastly his physical consciousness was open to the divine consciousness. It was a very hard sadhana. He wrote, 'It is a Herculean task. When man enters there, he finds that it is an unexplored land. Had I known it before perhaps I would have become less enthusiastic. But I do not leave my sadhana there. If the victory is attained on the physical consciousness, then it would be easier for others.' To awaken consciousness in the inconscient and to make higher consciousness active in that plane were his real work of life. He worked day and night for months, yet he did not get success. He wrote, 'I am accustomed to disappointments, difficulties and impossibilities to the extent that I do not feel their efforts on me.'

Internal exploration and surrender to God were his forces in the sadhana. He wrote, 'If man has no ideal perspectives, he will be disappointed soon. I follow the divine adesha. Nothing is mine.'

Sri Aurobindo visualised the transformation of human consciousness into the divine consciousness. Any obstacles to the transformation were met with divine forces to win. He wrote, 'The anti-divine forces fight inch by inch. We have to fight back with the forces of spirituality. There is no enthusiasm within then the sadhana gives pain. But the higher knowledge controls the situations.'

Sri Aurobindo had experienced the period of slowness in his sadhana. Some time he felt that he had to retreat. But in every situation he maintained samata, equanimity and undisturbed peace. His retreat in sadhana actually became the mode of ascent. His attitude in sadhana was to look beyond deluge a new creation.' He wrote, 'I had many successes in sadhana, yet I had to retreat ... But every retreat brought down spiritual development.'

Sri Aurobindo's sadhana was for total transformation. It was the sadhana of the descent of 'New Consciousness' on the earth. It was the most difficult sadhana of the earth. Sitting alone in the upper room of Pondicherry, he fought a battle against cosmic war. He did a

Herculean task. His sadhana carved out the path of sunlight for divine transformation of physical consciousness.

141. At the heart of night

Mirra was for eleven months in Sri Aurobindo's service. Then she left for Paris. At time of leaving she felt that she was going towards dark place. While coming to Pondicherry, environment lifted her, but going back to Paris was going to darkness. In 1915 she wrote on Kamomaru steamer, 'solitariness, a dangerous solitariness, I felt as if I was but in some unknown hell. What I believed as truth in life turned opposite to what I believed. I had never experienced so.'

'O Lord! What have I done that you have thrown me at dark night.'

She wrote on seventh March, 'I have been driven out of all happiness. This is the most difficult test of all.'

Mirra wanted to be in samadhi from her external consciousness. But her sadhana was to transform all external consciousness to the Divine Consciousness. So she could not escape from any situations. She wrote, 'How wonderful it is to go out of external consciousness! But she has stopped it... It is not necessary to run from the world. If the help is withdrawn from the world's darkness, the darkness will increase. I have to live in the heart of night... Let there be inner light or not; I have to move on and on.'

She accepted the 'adesh' of the Divine and passed through the darkness of night. She wanted to have the experiences of the Inconscient world so that she could liberate from it.

Though Mirra lived at the dark night, her sadhana continued with intensity. The environs of Paris and the world were disturbed. Human beings were terrified by the slaughter of the First World War. Mirra experienced the sufferings of the First World War in her body. She felt that her entire body was a battle field. She aspired that humanity should live in unity.

Mirra was in Paris for one year during the First World War. She studied Indian scriptures at that time. Upanishads, Purans, Yogasutras, Naradbhaktisutras and other scriptures were the books of her interest. She became clear about her spiritual realisation. She wrote eight letters to Sri Aurobindo in order to get guidance from him. Sri Aurobindo had answered these letters.

In Paris Mirra met Abdul Bahai, the son of Bahai Ullah, the founder of Bahai religion. Abdul Bahai was highly influenced by the spiritual realisations of Mirra. He was not well. So he requested Mirra to speak. Since Mirra was not of Bahai religion, she declined. But Abdul Bahai knew the spirituality of Mirra; he insisted her to speak. Mirra spoke and impressed the audience. Bahai guru offered that she should take the responsibility of spreading Bahai religion, but Mirra refused. Her aim was not to propagate any religions. She aspired for the divinisation of life; she was getting guidance from an Indian guru. So she was not tempted.

After one year Paul Richard was entrusted responsibility of fighting war from Japan. He and Mirra went to Japan in that connection. She was there in Japan for four years; she came to know about Japan's culture, art, beauty, and samskaras. Mirra founded a society. There were debates on spiritual themes. There was regular meditation as well. Most of them who came to listen to Mirra were highly impressed by her spiritual knowledge, sweetness and kindness. Poet Rabindranath Tagore met her in Tokiyo; he invited her to take up the entire responsibility of Shantiniketan. But Mirra's aim was decided; it was fixed, so she declined to accept this invitation.

Mirra had many spiritual and subtle realisations during her four year stay in Japan. Here she identified her consciousness with that of cherry tree; she also met ones who were the causes of deaths and diseases. She had saved people fighting diseases that spread in Japan. Her sadhana was continuous; but her soul did not get the proper atmosphere. She wrote, 'Now it is difficult to live here (Japan): show me the way.' Later she said to the disciples, 'I prayed to God eagerly, O Lord! What am I to do? Tell me.' Afterwards everything subsided within... I had the darshan of God; it was better than what was described in the Gita. It lifted my hands and moved towards East. It was the movement towards Bharat and it kept me there. I saw Sri Aurobindo stand in the opposite direction. Yes, it was he. I closed my eyes; but what I saw was beyond description. It was vastness and it lifted me like a blade of grass. There was no noise of words. I saw only this much; then everything disappeared. I prepared myself to come to India next day.' She wrote in the diary when she left Japan, 'Nothing remains of the past. I have only the selfless love which makes me a child and gives me God's liberation.'

Thus, there was light in Mirra's heart. It manifested as a rosy flower. And Mirra left Japan for India.

142. In service of Sri Aurobindo

Mirra reached Pondicherry on 24th April 1920; she never left Pondicherry thereafter. She wrote, 'I came to India to meet Sri Aurobindo. Then I lived with Sri Aurobindo in India. I had continued to complete his works when he left his bodies. These works were to do service to truth, to give light to humanity and to establish the rules of Lord on the earth.' She started doing the work of Lord with double speed.

Mirra had come to Pondicherry for permanent living. All considered her as a very high sadhika, but none could identify her divine powers. She was not accepted as the Mother by many sadhakas. Sri Aurobindo informed his disciples to live differently in the presence of Mirra. Nalinikant Gupta wrote, 'Should we change in our likings. There was no order in our dress, conversation or the method of sleeping. We were not behaving like cultured men. We decided that we should continue as we were doing. We were not ready to curtail our freedom.' There was always a problem when there was a change in human nature. This was the case.

All disciples were related to Sri Aurobindo because they had worked together for freedom fighting. Nolinikant Gupta was in Alipore jail. They loved deeply to Sri Aurobindo. They had left everything and come to Pondicherry with him. Sri Aurobindo had also accepted them. Though he had financial constrains, all lived happily. Sri Aurobindo had given freedom to all. He was beyond liking or disliking. He ate food happily cooked by disciples whether it was hot or cold, fresh or stale. He was always busy with his sadhana. Once there was no salt in the cooked vegetable; yet he ate. Later, when somebody asked, 'Was not the salt in the vegetable?' He replied, 'Yes, there was no salt in the vegetable.'

Sri Aurobindo did not care for external situations. The disciples were happy with him; they lived in their own ways. Then they were doubtful; they doubted that their freedom would be curtailed after Mirra's arrival at Pondicherry. Their life would be to follow some disciplines. They were restless.

This restless was from the lower nature of disciples. But Mirra's extraordinary personality, vastness of the heart, divine love and higher knowledge impressed them much and they started living a disciplined life. Then they realised that there was a greater freedom in living a

disciplined life than living a free life. Because they experienced greater freedom, worked with interest and enjoyed working with Mirra.

Mirra made changes in the arrangements of the house. Sri Aurobindo had not to come down to take bath, arrangement for his bath was made up. The street was cleaned. Flower plants were grown there. There was a radical change in the arrangements of kitchen. Mirra's cook was in charge of the kitchen. He provided regularly the tasty food to all disciples. The outer lives of the disciples were changed. Then they realised that the divine power had come to Pondicherry.

Sri Aurobindo regarded Mirra as the Mother of the Integral Yoga. He addressed her as the Mother but the disciples were not ready. Nolinikant Gupta wrote, 'Nobody knew when Sri Aurobindo uttered the word Mother; but it was a historical day in human history when the Mother was established in human consciousness.'

When Sri Aurobindo addressed 'the Mother'; his divine consciousness became one with the consciousness of Mirra. Mirra's consciousness would descend into earth's environs to divinise human life.

In the beginning the Mother was living in Megavi Hotel; then she shifted her residence to Subhu's hotel. On 24th November 1920 there was a great cyclone in Pondicherry. Many houses were fallen; some houses were in water. The terrace of the Mother's house was in water. It was dangerous to live at that house in the rain. So the Mother and Miss Hodson shifted to Sri Aurobindo's house which was Rui Franswas Marte's house. Since then, the Mother lived with Sri Aurobindo.

The Mother's living with Sri Aurobindo was not liked by disciples. Staunch nationalist disciples did not like a foreign mahila with their guru, Sri Aurobindo. They, in fact, opposed it. But the Mother's faith in Sri Aurobindo and selfless love for disciples and all sadhakas subsided the tense atmosphere. In the beginning the Mother was in the background; however she took all responsibility of maintaining Sri Aurobindo and his disciples. Slowly, Sri Aurobindo went into the background offering the responsibility of looking after the disciples to the Mother. Thus the Mother was in the forefront.

The Mother's arrival at Pondicherry gave new turn to Sri Aurobindo's life. She knew that Sri Aurobindo's life was priceless on the earth. She arranged to look after Sri Aurobindo very well. She

took the responsibility of providing him food. She was very busy with Ashram works. Yet she used to serve food to Sri Aurobindo; she bought fruits and vegetables for Sri Aurobindo from other places. She used the Ashram gardens for this purpose. She brought in wholesale manner whatever was needed for Sri Aurobindo. She had entrusted the disciples to provide writing materials, mosquito cream and other necessary things to Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo used to take bath at 2.00 a.m. with hot water. The Mother appointed Ambubhai Purani for this work. Ambubhai Purani did this work upto the last minute of his life. She also entrusted special services of Sri Aurobindo to Champaklal, Nirod, Nalinikant and others. Besides, the Mother took up the burden of external and internal responsibilities of all sadhakas. So Sri Aurobindo was free to concentrate on his sadhana for the descent of the Supramental Consciousness. Thus the Mother became the image of unconditional surrender to Sri Aurobindo.

Sri Aurobindo talked very less about himself; it was in his nature to be reticent. When permission was sought to write his biography, he said, 'Nobody can write about my life because it is not on surface for man to see.' The Mother alone knew his inner life; others could presume from his external behaviour. The disciples used Sri Aurobindo's Cambridge name and called him, 'A.G.' When the Mother came to know it she was hurt. She put a note on the notice board. She wrote, 'Henceforth while talking about Sri Aurobindo only Sri Aurobindo name should be used because it was the name of Parmatma.' Since then everyone started calling him Sri Aurobindo.

The Mother herself addressed Sri Aurobindo as Lord or Prabhu. She became concentrated for a while when she talked about Sri Aurobindo to sadhakas and children. In fact, her expression for Sri Aurobindo had love and bhakti. It was not merely a name; it was the living experience of Prabhu. Disciples and sadhakas still remembered her utterance as 'Sri Aurobindo' in her sweet voice.

As Swami Vivekananda introduced Ramkrishna Paramhansa to the world, the Mother introduced Sri Aurobindo too. She accelerated the process of the descent of the Supermind. Yoga was related to life; it was accepted not to leave life for yoga. The work of the divinisation of life through yoga began after she shouldered the entire responsibility of the Ashram.

143. Use of occult power in the Ashram

We do not see the events in the subtle worlds; but they do influence the external lives of men. Diseases, fire, incidents and the like are the external influences of the subtle worlds. One who knows occultism stops these things. In 1921, such an event has taken place in Ashram.

There was a bad cook named Vattel in the Ashram. Vijay snubbed him time and again because he was not working properly. One day his behaviour was intolerable, so Vijay dismissed him. The wicked cook threatened, 'You dismiss me, now you will see how people live here!' Vijay did not mind what Vattel said. The cook was burning with jealousy. He went to a fakir who knew occultism. He requested him to harass the Ashramites. The fakir refused when he came to know that it was about Aurobindo Ashram. But the cook requested him again and again; the Fakir became ready. He said, 'Well, stone will be thrown on the person who has threatened you; but I will not be able to do anything within ten feet from Aurobindo's residence.'

That fakir used 'shakti', mantra. He made a mad boy in the Ashram an instrument. Wherever the boy went, stone would fall there. Sri Aurobindo had seen this incident. He wrote to Dilipkumar Roy, 'First stone fell to the kitchen side. It appeared that someone was throwing stones from the terrace; but there was none on the terrace. It was evening time; the stones fell for half an hour. Slowly the time increased; even the size of the stone was large; the speed of the throw of stones also increased. The kitchen was not the only place where stones were falling for one hour; even outer veranda was included. We filed a complaint in the police office; but the investigation of the police was not of any help. Stones fell near police men. The police were terrified; they stopped the investigation. We also searched the sources of stone throw; but we could not find any persons anywhere.'

'Lastly stones started falling in a closed room. One stone was very big. I saw it falling, it fell on the table. Stones then fell dangerously; they fell on Vijay's doors forcefully. I was watching them; they were seen in the sky, in the wind and in a few feet above the earth. They appeared suddenly. We could not decide the direction because no person or no thing was seen. Stones made a stupid boy a victim. Vijay had kept him in his room; stones fell on the body of this boy. The boy was bleeding. Vijay called me and I went there and saw the last stone falling on the boy. Vijay and he were sitting near to each other. Stones were coming from the front side; but nobody was seen.'

'We were observing but now it became dangerous; we decided to stop it. The Mother knew occultism; she found that there was a

relationship between the boy and the stone throw. She decided to break this relationship. She sent that boy to Hrishikesh's house; so stone falling were stopped.'

Sri Aurobindo, Barindrakumar, Upendranath Banerji, Hrishikesh Kanjilal, Vijay Nag, Satyen and Amrita had seen this incident. Upendranath Banerji, a scholar of the first water, ridiculed subtle activities. He ran in the terrace taking lathi and lattern in his hands; yet the stones were falling there. Ultimately he had to accept subtle powers. Amrita had gathered those stones for a show for a month. This shows that things of subtle world were as real as the things of the earth. Sri Aurobindo wrote, 'This proves that things of subtle world are real; they follow certain rules like the things of physics. They work according to these rules; they stop as per the rules and they can be destroyed as well.'

The Mother started meditation. She could see that the stupid boy was the medium of the subtle power. In the kitchen there was found signs drawn by coal; the Mother wanted all signs to be removed. The wicked cook suffered from disease and was hospitalised. He went to the Fakir and requested him to save.

Next day the cook's wife came crying to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. She requested to save her husband. That time Amrita was also present there. Sri Aurobindo said to the Mother, 'We cannot let him die for few stones.' These words were enough for the Mother; she said, 'Go, tell your husband that he should not use this lower knowledge on any one. This time he is saved by the grace of Sri Aurobindo.'

Three small elements of the vital power of the subtle world came before the Mother and asked about the place where the stones were to be thrown. The Mother said to them to bring a big flower of rose. They could not because they were made to throw stones alone. Then the Mother said that those three elements were of no use to her. They might go. Afterwards the cook became well.

Sri Aurobindo said to Dilipkumar Roy, 'There are thousands of examples that puzzle human mind. It is only the experience that decides which things are real and which things are not real.' The Mother said to the children, 'All substances of the subtle world are not problem creators; some help man in progress and development. Sometimes they foretell about the future events so that we can stop them.'

The Mother appeared as if she was a small fairy. It was the beginning of the Ashram. The Mother was very busy with other activities keeping milk on fire and forgetting it. Then a small hand drew the Mother to milk which was about to boil. Many times this happened. Such a small fairy did help men, but not in all activities. It chose certain actions in which it would help. Subtle fairy did help us, but we, full of materialism, did not see with our own eyes.

Some time subtle elements made fun of people. Sri Aurobindo had its experiences. He used to meditate while walking; he walked from one room to another. The meditation and walking period were for hours. He, of course, needed to know the timings in between. So the Mother had asked to place a watch at wherever Sri Aurobindo walked. One day he asked, 'What is time?' He looked at the watch; it did not work. He went to other room; the watch of other room was not functioning. Then he went to the third room. To his surprise the watch of the third room also stopped. Then he said, 'This is an impossible accident. This type of mischief is not good. Then all watches start working.' Sri Aurobindo knew the mischief of the watches; they stopped playing mischief when Sri Aurobindo asked them to do so.

Yogis, siddhas and occultists know subtle worlds; they perceive the mystery behind physical world. They can stop the evil effects of the subtle world. The incident of the Ashram supports this statement.

144. First darshan of Sri Aurobindo

In 1921 three Gujarati youths got down from the train at Pondicherry. They travelled from Bharuch in Gujarat; their names were Kantilal, Natvarlal and Champaklal. They saw men pulling rickshaws; so they did not hire a rickshaw. They went to their host's house. But the host's house was affected by small pox. They were allowed to stay in the house; but there was no arrangement for food. Champaklal prepared his food; the other two took their meals in the restaurant. All the three were eager to meet Sri Aurobindo. Their host had asked them not to go in the afternoon. They did not obey the host. The sunshine of the afternoon did not deter them. They reached where Sri Aurobindo resided. They said to a disciple, 'We come from Gujarat, from Bharuch; we want to meet Babuji.' That time Sri Aurobindo was mostly known as Babuji.

The disciple said, 'Babuji is busy with some works. Come a little earlier before five in the evening.'

‘Well, Babuji might meet us at five in the evening. But we will sit here and wait.’

‘No, you cannot sit and wait here. Come at sharp five.’

The three went to the sea shore and sat and slept beneath the shadow of a tree. They got up at a quarter to four in the afternoon. Then they came to Sri Aurobindo’s house; they asked for water as a Prasad; they got it. They were called at ten minutes to five in the evening. They went up in the house where Sri Aurobindo was sitting. Champaklal, a young man of fourteen, fell straight into the feet of Sri Aurobindo; his whole being became one with that of Sri Aurobindo. He went into meditation. Nobody disturbed him.

Sri Aurobindo put his hand on Champaklal’s head; then Champaklal came to the outer consciousness. He saw Sri Aurobindo smiling. Sri Aurobindo said, ‘Well, tomorrow.’

Champaklal said to the children of Ashram, ‘I fell into the feet of Sri Aurobindo and when I got up I realised that I had nothing to do in my life.’

All the three reached Sri Aurobindo’s house next day. Sri Aurobindo asked Champaklal, ‘Do you know English.’

‘No.’

Then Aurobindo spoke in Hindi. But Champaklal said, ‘You speak in Gujarati.’

‘I knew Gujarati when I was in Vadodara; but now I had forgotten it.’ Then he explained Champaklal about meditation in Hindi and asked, ‘How long would you like to be here?’

‘We would live here till you keep us here.’

Then Sri Aurobindo said, ‘Well, tomorrow.’

These three young men used to come to Sri Aurobindo at five o’clock in the evening daily and were with him for one hour. Then Sri Aurobindo said, ‘Well, tomorrow.’ This practice was for a week. Then Sri Aurobindo said, ‘God is everywhere; He is in all; try to see Him in everything.’

‘Which book should I read?’ asked Champaklal.

‘The Secret of Nature’ and ‘Bhaktisutra of Shandilya’, replied Sri Aurobindo.

‘When will I realise God’, asked Champaklal. In answer to Champaklal Sri Aurobindo told the story of Naradmuni and two devotees. Both the devotees had asked Narad to know when God would give darshan to them. Narad said, ‘You will have darshan in as many ages as there were leaves on this tree.’ One devotee was

disappointed; he left sadhana. But the other devotee danced with happiness; he said, 'Well, I shall realise God in these many ages.' His inner life was filled with intense love for God and he realised God then and there. The gist of the story was that realisation of God depended on the intensity of love for God.

One day Champaklal said that he wanted to see Sri Aurobindo's room. Sri Aurobindo agreed. He said, 'That is my room; go and see.' Only Champaklal went into this room; no other persons had got this opportunity.' Champaklal did not know English; nor did he study in the college. Yet Sri Aurobindo identified his soul and accepted him in his service. He allowed Champaklal to enter into his room.

Champaklal did not know how long he would stay in Pondicherry. He had left the responsibility of his return journey to Sri Aurobindo. And Sri Aurobindo used to tell him, 'Come tomorrow.' On the eighth day he was to return; then Sri Aurobindo said to him, 'Remember me if you have any trouble.' And after some time he said, 'Write to me.'

All the three persons thought that permission was granted to return. They left Pondicherry next day. Champaklal saw Sri Aurobindo for the first time and decided to serve him. His aim of life was fixed. Of course, Sri Aurobindo felt Champaklal's aspiration and invited him to live in Pondicherry Ashram.

Punamchand, a Gujarati sadhak in Ashram, visited Bharuch. Sri Aurobindo asked, 'What does Champaklal do there? If it is possible, bring him with you.'

Champaklal reached Pondicherry in 1923 and surrendered himself to Sri Aurobindo. He served Sri Aurobindo wholeheartedly. His 'gurubhavana', devotion to the guru, was unique.

145. Visit of an unknown sanyasin

In 1921 June/July, five sanyasins reached Pondicherry wandering Tanjor, Trichanipalli and others. One was the guru and four others were disciples. The name of the guru was Kevalanand; Kevalanand was tall with hair spreading on shoulders. He attracted the attention of all with his impressive personality. He sought permission to meet Sri Aurobindo. Disciples became conscious. They thought that the sanyasins was unknown. How could he seek permission? Disciples did not allow him to enter into Sri Aurobindo's house. The situation became very grave. Then guru said something into the ear of a Bengali disciple. Motilal Roy was there. He embraced Swami

Kevalanand, he took him to Sri Aurobindo's room. But Sri Aurobindo's room was closed. Motibabu knocked the door and said, 'Gabriel has come.'

Gabriel was the name given by Sri Aurobindo; but his real name was Amrendra Chatterji. He was called Govin out of love; from Govin Sri Aurobindo named him Gabriel. Listening to his name Sri Aurobindo said, 'Good Lord, O God!'

Sri Aurobindo had initiated Amrendra to a revolutionary works. Amrendra was a devotee to Sri Aurobindo. When disciples came to know about this fact, they were very happy seeing Amrendra in the guise of sanyasin. They hid the identities of four disciples of Kevalanand. Four disciples managed to live in some other's house but Kevalanand lived with Sri Aurobindo.

Amrendranath was the leader of Revolutionary Party. British government wanted to arrest him at any cost; they searched him at every nook and corner of India. It was declared that if one helped to arrest Amrendra, one would be given handsome amount as a reward. He had come to Sri Aurobindo to seek guidance. He had established his Ashram in Tanjor; he had many disciples into this Ashram. He was guru Kevalanand; no body knew that he was a revolutionary person. Sri Aurobindo said to him, 'I got the news that some Panjabi sanyasin was teaching philosophy near Tenjor; but I did not know who he was. Now the secret was disclosed.'

British government wanted to arrest Amrendra; so Amrendra disappeared from Kolkata. He ran away to the jungle of Assam. He became a primitive man; then a Muslim who sold eggs... He changed himself in various ways; finally he became Kevalanand. He became very popular as Kevalanand. He was not identified by his own friends, how could the police recognise him?

'Now what to do?' Kevalanand came to Sri Aurobindo for guidance. The First World War was over. The British government in India had released Indian prisoners. Even Barindra and Ullaskar Dutt were released from Andman Nikobar jail. There was no danger for Amrendra to be arrested. Sri Aurobindo advised him not to do anything. He said, 'Go straight to Kolkata and wait for some time.'

Thus Sri Aurobindo sent Amrendra as Kevalanand to Kolkata. But in Tanjor disciples waited for Kevalanand to come and help them as guru.

146. Golden colour of Sri Aurobindo's body

Ambubhai Purani came to meet Sri Aurobindo second time at Pondicherry in 1921. He was very much surprised. He wrote, 'The colour of Sri Aurobindo's body was radically changed during these two years. When I met him in 1918, he looked wheatish like an ordinary Bengali. Of course, there was flame in his eyes. But when I met him again in 1921 I found his neck to be red. His entire body was shining. It was quite new to me. I could not help asking him, what has happened to you?'

Sri Aurobindo did not reply. He asked, 'What has happened to me.'

But later Sri Aurobindo answered Puraninji. He said that when sadhana began from mental to the vital planes, then there were many transformations. Thus, due to sadhana there were inner changes; light surrounded his body.

Ambubhai was to be in Pondicherry only for three days; Sri Aurobindo asked him to stay for a few more days. He stayed there for thirteen days. He had the darshan of the Mother for the first time during this visit. He wrote, 'When Aurobindo was going to the staircase the Mother was standing there. She was extremely beautiful; I had not seen such beauty in the world. I could imagine her age to be 20 or 25; but she was really thirty seven or so.' There was excitement in Pondicherry. The Mother and Dutta came to Sri Aurobindo's house. Afterwards there were many changes in the house. Earlier there was the chain of broken pieces of coconuts, later, there was a garden. Grass and flowers were grown there. Every room had a table and a chair. The house was neat and clean. This was due to the Mother. But the environment of Pondicherry was tense. Its reason was that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were concentrating on vital aspects of their sadhana.

Ambubhai learnt yoga sadhana and collective life from Sri Aurobindo during his stay in Pondicherry. Even on the day when he was to leave for Gujarat he learnt from Sri Aurobindo the secret of sadhana at 4.00 p.m. He wrote, 'There was the descent of the Divine Power in Sri Aurobindo. Even the students of physics could verify this truth through experiments. His wheatish body had become golden; everyone could see it.'

Chidanand, another disciple of Sri Aurobindo, had noted the same. He wrote, 'Sri Aurobindo was a real rishi. There was deep peace and light on his face. When I had his darshan, I could find that he was not the phenomenon of the earth. He was thin; for me he appeared to be

the embodiment of infinite strength. He was golden; his personality was very impressive.’

He started reading Sri Aurobindo’s literature after his first meeting with Sri Aurobindo. As he read he became very clear that only Sri Aurobindo’s yoga would solve the problems of the world. By 1925 he accepted Sri Aurobindo as his guru. He said, ‘When I met Sri Aurobindo I was deeply surprised. I saw him earlier; then he was a little wheatish, but now he appeared as white as gold... His eyes spread light.’

Sri Aurobindo’s physical transformation was the event which even the physicist could know through experiments. Ambubhai asked Sri Aurobindo, ‘What are you waiting for?’

Sri Aurobindo replied, ‘It is true that descent is there; but it has not reached the root. Till that work is done, we cannot say that our goal is achieved.’

Ambubhai bid farewell to Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo had gone to his room. From there he looked and smiled at Ambubhai. Ambubhai wrote about his second meeting, ‘I sat in the train thanking myself. I had accepted a ‘bibhuti’ who was conscious about his spiritual realisations. And yet his intellect had equanimity to judge humbly what remained to be achieved. He was such a guru who did not care for external things nor did he pay heed to his so called self-respect. It was wonderful. To take part in such action was a big opportunity.’

Ambubhai returned to Gujarat but he realised that his place was at the feet of his guru in Pondicherry. He was waiting for a call from the guru. And he received and went back to Pondicherry to serve his guru.

147. Evening talks

It is an Indian tradition to live in guru’s house and to solve his problems after discussing with his guru. The guru lived the truthful life, and solved the problems of the disciples with truths. Times have changed; yet Upanishads and Aranyakas are there for the enlightenment. A group of disciples gathered round Sri Aurobindo, a seer of the modern age, in the evening to get answers to their menacing problems. Sri Aurobindo’s evening talks showed the height of his consciousness and his sense of humour. At the same time they revealed his divinity.

Evening talks of Sri Aurobindo began when he went to live in Rui Fransva Marte house. Subramanyam, Srinivasachrya and others also

talked to Sri Aurobindo but they did not take the notes of these talks. In the new house the conversation between Sri Aurobindo and disciples started at four and continued in the evening from 1918 to 1922 daily. In this house there were four Verandas and four rooms; there was a table of 3'x1.5' size. Behind the table was a strong chair on which Sri Aurobindo sat. In front of the table there were a few chairs on which disciples used to sit. The table had beautiful table cloths. There was a flower pot and a watch on the table. For Sri Aurobindo there was a Japanese chair. In the beginning there was meditation. After that the talks began.

Sri Aurobindo came to Verandah from his room at 4.30 p.m. He knocked the door before he came. He was in a dhoti. Lower half of the body was covered by dhoti; the upper half was open. He hardly used a shawl. When he entered into the verandah, peace prevailed there. He looked at the sky for sometime; but disciples focussed their eyes on him. He sat into his chair; many times there was silence. In fact silence was maintained for many days. No disciple was able to break the silence. Disciples dragged Sri Aurobindo into conversation; but none succeeded against the wish of Sri Aurobindo. Chidambaram wrote, 'Then a dozen disciples were living near Sri Aurobindo. It was like a gurukul. In the evening we had talks; it was informal like a table talk. Sometimes politics and at other times nation and foreign nations occurred in the evening talks. Subjects were not decided. Sri Aurobindo's voice was sweet. His words were coming naturally. He was always at one with upper knowledge and upper consciousness. He got inspiration from higher worlds. His sadhana was vast and profound. We were happy in his presence. We resorted to simple humour as well. The evening talks had the sparks of our intelligence; they revealed Sri Aurobindo's personality and philosophy of life.'

Ambubhai used to note down evening talks; he published three books of evening talks. In the preface he wrote, 'The beginnings of the talks were some news of the daily, some letters of the disciples or the questions asked by any one of the disciples of Pondicherry. It was so informal that nobody could judge the direction of the talks. It was good to listen to; the whole group was eager to hear Sri Aurobindo. Light things were discussed; sometimes sincere subjects were explained with great intensity.'

In fact, evening talks concentrated on external things. In reality, Sri Aurobindo was concerned with inner and outer nature of his disciples. He came in direct contact with mental and vital states of disciples and

worked on them with universal mental and vital consciousness. For the disciples nearness to Sri Aurobindo was enough. His mere presence opened their inner consciousness. He was human, but he had realised God within. So he could manifest God. The divine nature of Sri Aurobindo worked as a magnet for disciples. However, Sri Aurobindo's sadhana became intense; so evening talks were completed slowly. By 1926 Evening Talks were closed in the last week of November. Sri Aurobindo privately resorted to intense sadhana of the Supermind.

148. In search of God

Philip Barbiyer Saint Hilary, a young man in the polytechnic college of Paris, aspired to know God. But he did not find a way. He completed his studies; he got first division in the engineering examination. He could have made a brilliant career; such was his academic degree. But his love for God made him disturb in the midst of the affluence of Paris. He left France, came to Japan, a Buddhist country, in search of God. Then he arrived at Lama Monastery in Mongolia; he felt that Lamas could not give him what his soul needed. Then he came to Pondicherry in search of a dedicated guru.

December, 1925 were the days. He did not know that even in Pondicherry some yogi resided. A French man said to him, 'Here lives a spiritual person; he has been doing sadhana for fifteen years. Now Mirra, his French disciple, helps him in his sadhana. You will certainly get guidance if you meet him.'

That French man sought the permission of meeting Sri Aurobindo. And Sri Aurobindo met that unknown French man. He had the darshan of Sri Aurobindo; he realised that his soul had found a guru that he was seeking so far. That Mahayogi would satisfy him. He thanked God to get him there. He realised that he had relationship with Sri Aurobindo for many years. He was convinced that he would attain his spiritual goal with the help of this yogi. Sri Aurobindo also accepted him as his disciple in the very first meeting. He needed not to go anywhere in India; he stayed with the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. And Sri Aurobindo gave him a new name, 'Pavitra'. Philip Hilary became 'Pavitra' due to Sri Aurobindo's grace; he had achieved many realisations in Sri Aurobindo's company. He worked as the director of Ashram school and as the Head of Science Department. He was a secretary to the Mother. He was her driver, her

letter writer and her helper. He left his body in 1968; he achieved his life's aim in company of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

149. Even animals and birds received his grace

The grace of yogi and saints are not only for human beings; it included vegetables and animals. Sri Aurobindo showered grace over the animals that came into his touch. These animals performed extraordinary works.

That time Sri Aurobindo was living at 42, Rui Fransva Marte. There a big cat came; it was tamed within a short time. Sri Aurobindo named her 'Sundari'. She was very beautiful. Her kittens were known as 'Boshee' and 'Kiki'. Boshee kept all kittens of hers at the feet of the Mother. As if she surrendered the kittens to the Mother.

The story of 'Kiki' was different. She meditated for hours. Sri Aurobindo's room had an armchair; Kiki would sit and meditate. Sri Aurobindo could see that her meditation was not interrupted. Some time 'Kiki' would sit in Sri Aurobindo's chair and meditate; then Sri Aurobindo sat on the edge of the chair.

The Mother said the story of this cat to the children of Ashram, 'This cat lived in samadhi for hours. She was sleeping ... She had short breathing because she might have seen inner phenomenon. When she came out of samadhi she did not eat anything. We tried to feed her but she would not take food. She went to samadhi again. This was a great thing about a small cat; but she was not a small cat at all.'

This cat played with the things in the house. Once there was a scorpion in the house. The scorpion stung the cat; the cat suffered too much. When she was about to die, she went to the Mother. She showed where the scorpion had stung. The Mother lifted Kiki on a table and called Sri Aurobindo. She said, 'The scorpion had stung Kiki; cure her.' Kiki looked at Sri Aurobindo and Sri Aurobindo looked at Kiki. There was a call from Kiki; the grace of Sri Aurobindo answered. Kiki became well within a short time. She lived in the Ashram for a longer time.'

That time the Mother was experimenting on the animals. She wanted to know whether the secret consciousness in the animals could be raised to the human level or not. She said, 'My experiment succeeded completely. Three animals were raised to man's level. It was due to

the grace of the Mother that three cats were transformed from animals to men.’

Besides cats, the bitches were fortunate to get the Mother’s grace. Nolinikant Gupta had noted this phenomenon. That time Sri Aurobindo and only four disciples were there. A bitch started coming to the house where they lived. She would come silently, sit near Sri Aurobindo and look at him. She was elated then. Sri Aurobindo named this bitch as ‘Yogini’. This Yogini became a member of the house; she started living into the house silently in the evening. Once she was late in coming to the house; the doors were closed. Nobody knew that Yogini had not come. She knocked and pushed the outer doors, but the doors were not open. She started barking; but nobody listened to it. She knew that the house had a door at the back side. She went there and pushed the door. But it was closed. Then she started weeping loudly.

Her weeping was heard by someone in the house. He opened the door. The bitch ran away straight to Sri Aurobindo. She begged his forgiveness and requested ‘not to drive her away from the house.’ Sri Aurobindo forgave her. She gave birth to two sons. She took both sons to Sri Aurobindo and asked for his blessing. She was in Sri Aurobindo’s house as a member and then went out after some time. But she had received the blessings of Sri Aurobindo.

The another bitch had also received Sri Aurobindo’s grace. Champaklalji talked about it. Her name was Goldy. Laxmibhai brought this bitch to the Mother. From the Mother she went to Sri Aurobindo’s room. Efforts were made to stop it from going to Sri Aurobindo’s room; she made her way to it. Champaklal was happy to see her love for Sri Aurobindo; he lifted and gave it to Sri Aurobindo to love. Sri Aurobindo had seen many qualities of Goldy. In fact, Goldy was lucky to have the touch of Sri Aurobindo and licked his feet. This was the way to show her love for Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo did not stop her from licking his feet; he accepted her silent but intense love. He fondled her. This was his divine love; this was how Sri Aurobindo showed his grace to all animals.

A small sparrow also had experienced this grace. That time Poojalal used to sweep the room of Sri Aurobindo. He used to go up at 5.00 a.m. for this work. The Mother would open the door. Poojalal would greet her and then start his work. One day the Mother opened the door slowly. Then she told Poojalal not to make noises, otherwise the sparrow which was sleeping on the main door would awake.

Poojalal obeyed the Mother's instruction. He did his work without making noises. He saw the sparrow sleeping in the room of Sri Aurobindo as if she were a guest. How lucky was that sparrow! Even the wisest persons could not dare to look into Sri Aurobindo's room; but a small sparrow was sleeping peacefully without any disturbances. And Sri Aurobindo was taking care of that sparrow. Poojalal was highly satisfied by his guru's love for birds and animals; he was very happy.

That sparrow had a nest in the main door and lay eggs into it. Sri Aurobindo did not use that door till the eggs were hatched. He had this much grace for a small sparrow; his love for animals and birds was commendable.

150. The first meeting of Dilipkumar Roy

Dilipkumar Roy was the son of the famous dramatist and musician Dwijendranath of Bengal. He studied with Subhashchandra Bose. He himself was a great musician. He had travelled much in the nation and abroad. He had heard about Sri Aurobindo in Kolkata. However, he did not know anything about his spiritual sadhana. He had come to know about Sri Aurobindo for the first time through his foreign friend Ronald Nixon who became a sanyasin and who was known as Krishnaprem. And Krishnaprem had said to him, 'I have not read a book like 'Essay on the Gita' written by Sri Aurobindo.' Dilipkumar wrote, 'It is a matter of surprise that I had several Indian friends; but I did not hear either the name of Sri Aurobindo or his books. I heard about Sri Aurobindo from a foreign friend and then I turned towards that Mahayogi.' He wrote a letter to Sri Aurobindo seeking permission to meet him but there was no response to his letter. In the meanwhile he read Sri Aurobindo's book on yoga. Many questions raised into his mind regarding yoga. He wrote these questions to Sri Aurobindo and requested to see him personally if permission was granted. This time he had positive answer from Pondicherry. It said, 'Come, you will meet Sri Aurobindo.'

Dilipkumar Roy noted down coma by coma about his first meeting with Sri Aurobindo. He gave it to Sri Aurobindo for correction and Sri Aurobindo corrected it. Dilipkumar Roy then published it as 'Among the Great', a book which revealed many things about Sri Aurobindo. This book was translated as 'Tirthsalil' in Gujarati.

It was 25th January 1924. Dilipkumar Roy went into the upper room of Sri Aurobindo in the morning. Sri Aurobindo was sitting in the chair. Dilipkumar Roy wrote, 'He was an image of peace. I had not seen this peace in anybody else. There was slight beard on him, but his hair hang upto his shoulder. There was doubt in the mind. I had seen yogis from afar; I had never seen yogi like Sri Aurobindo from close quarters.' Later Sri Aurobindo had written, 'I know that you have an interest in music.' Dilipkumar said, 'Sri Aurobindo looked at me. There were many emotions in me. I could not express them; I could only say, 'I have come to know whether I would be initiated into your yoga or not.'

'First arrange the ideas in your mind and then say why you want to be initiated into my yoga,' said Sri Aurobindo.

Then Dilipkumar was confused. He said, 'I want not only to know it but also to practise it as the aim of life.'

Sri Aurobindo said in sweet voice, 'This question is not easy. There are many aims in life. You decide and tell me why you want to do yoga.'

Then there was a long conversation between Sri Aurobindo and Dilipkumar Roy. Sri Aurobindo explained him the meaning of yoga and renunciation. He said that yoga was not the curiosity of mind; it was to realise God. One had to transform lower nature; one could transform lower nature when one was dissatisfied with it. Where there was an end to material world the immaterial world started from there. Of course, there was a pleasure in material things. But it withered away with the passage of time.

Dilipkumar Roy expressed his problem before Sri Aurobindo. He said, 'If man is the son of God, 'amritasya putrah', then why does he not get nectar? Why does he have to search? When I see the world I find it full of 'dukha, pain. My heart weeps.' Sri Aurobindo looked at him; Dilipkumar experienced Sri Aurobindo's look of kindness. He realised peace within. He was happy to know Sri Aurobindo's vision on the problem of pain in the world.

Sri Aurobindo said, 'I understood your view. Once I too experienced that I should change the world in a moment through the power of yoga; I should shape human nature in a new way. Whatever was evil in the world I should destroy with my sadhana.' Dilip was very happy to hear this fact. He thought, 'What a surprise that Sri Aurobindo could talk seriously with such an unknown person like me.' Sri Aurobindo said, 'I had the similar aspiration when I came to

Pondicherry. Of course, I came because I had an adesha.’ He added, ‘I started doing Purnayoga in Pondicherry. I could experience that it was my ignorance to think that I could do many more things.’

‘Ignorance?’ asked Dilip.

‘Yes, because that time I did not know that it was not enough to solve the world’s problem with cosmic consciousness. However, great the man was it was not enough to get his individual salvation. Cosmic man also be entitled to get salvation. Mere ascent was not enough. Descent was necessary so that the foundation could be built. Of course, we should share our consciousness among others; but that was not always possible. Many times men with whom you want to share were not ready to receive it. And all persons did not demand happiness or knowledge. There was not a panacea to remove cosmic evils. History supported this truth.’

‘If the man does not aspire for knowledge, how could his sorrow be removed?’

‘Why do you do sadhana? Is it for your salvation or for siddhi?’

Sri Aurobindo answered this question very peacefully. He said, ‘No, my sadhana is not for my personal salvation or siddhi. If so, this much time would not have been spent. I do sadhana for the things which you would not understand right now or you would misunderstand. But one thing you should know. I want to bring down light from upper world into this world that would radically change human nature. It would be a divine power which had not worked so far on the earth.’

Then Dilipkumar asked about the Supermind. Sri Aurobindo answered how the Supermind would work. He said, ‘First it will work in a few men; in two or four persons; these persons will be prepared for it to a large extent. They will explain others about the radical transformation of earthly life. Do you understand?’

‘I could understand a bit. Could I ask you a question?’

‘Will Supermind power effect a few persons or many persons?’

‘The Supramental power will effect many. Had Purnayoga for me alone, then I would not have given importance to it. I do not want to leave the practical life. I want a total transformation of it.’

‘Will men have to work after you do sadhana for such transformation?’

‘No, not afterwards. That is why I have been saying from the very beginning that my yoga is not for me alone, it is for all men. One who carves out a way in the unknown forest bears much pain; for others it

is easy.’ Dilipkumar thought that not many persons had recognised a great yogi like Sri Aurobindo.

Dilipkumar asked about himself. Sri Aurobindo said, ‘It is not appropriate time for you. You have only mental curiosity. You need something more to be initiated into yoga. Wait for some time.’

‘If I take some more time to do your yoga could I expect help from you?’

Sri Aurobindo shook his head.

Dilipkumar went to Kolkata and waited for four years to be initiated into Aurobindo’s yoga. In 1928 he came to Pondicherry again, but that time Aurobindo had withdrawn himself to a room. The Mother said that Sri Aurobindo considered him fit to practise his yoga. Then he decided to leave Ashram. He said, ‘I became a follower of that Mahayogi. I surrendered everything to him. My love for him increased with the passage of times. I could surrender my life to him alone.’

151. On the way to realisation

Sri Aurobindo’s sadhana moved through different stages towards siddhi. It was the period of silent and intense sadhana from 1910 to 1914. He had to do sadhana for the descent of the Supermind as well as for the publication of ‘Arya’. He continued his inner sadhana along with creativity from 1914 to 1920. During these six years he had ascended to the Supermind, but its descent was not achieved. Perhaps the foundation was not ready. His sadhana became intense after the Mother’s arrival at Pondicherry in 1920. He brought down the power of Paramatma to the lowest level from 1920 to 1926.

The Mother marked from behind the scene. She did not meet many people except outstanding sadhakas in the Ashram. Some sadhakas came to get guidance from her. There were three/four sadhikas in the Ashram; they used to come to her for meditation. Slowly sadhakas increased to get guidance from her. Then sadhakas depended on the Mother for necessary things of their lives. This transformation was automatic; nobody knew it. The Mother came forward to supervise everything. There was delay in the Evening Talks of Sri Aurobindo. It became eight, ten, eleven or the midnight when Sri Aurobindo came to fore for a talk. His consciousness was gathered to the realisation of the upper consciousness. He did not want to waste even one moment from his aim. Therefore, he had little time for sadhakas.

Those, who did not know much about Sri Aurobindo, doubted whether Sri Aurobindo's sadhana would be practical or not. Even those sadhakas, who had hope about the descent of the Supermind, were disappointed. Some sadhakas thought that Sri Aurobindo had gone astray in sadhana. Other sadhakas pondered that Sri Aurobindo had lost control over physical consciousness; he was disappointed by the sufferings of the world. But these people suffered from the ignorance of the mind. Sri Aurobindo had consciousness higher than the mind; he knew what he was doing. He was interested in doing work with total surrender. He was at one with the consciousness of 'the Param'; so he could establish relationship with the sadhakas of the near and distant places. He helped many sadhakas to get help from the sufferings of matter.

Had Sri Aurobindo been indifferent to humanity he would not have started this hard sadhana. He began yoga to liberate man from sufferings. Sri Aurobindo had to pass through many accusations till he got siddhi. He alone knew how difficult his sadhana was. If the Supermind worked in the material consciousness only then divine life was possible. Days passed, month went on and years were not counted; Sri Aurobindo waited patiently. He said, 'The physical consciousness was open to divine power', but the Inconscient repelled against it.

Sri Aurobindo tolerated these protests; he made his physical consciousness plastic and delicate. He took one and a half years for this work. Many seers and philosophers of the past had neglected physical consciousness, but Sri Aurobindo accepted it through his 'tapa'. Then many sadhakas realised that Sri Aurobindo was doing a sadhana for great things. They started waiting for the descent of the Supermind.

152. Siddhi Day

It was the day for which every sadhaka was waiting. It was the day of 24th November 1926. It was five and a half o'clock in the evening. All Ashramites were busy with their works. Some had gone to the sea-shore for a walk. The Mother gave a message to all; it was all to reach in the Verandah where they meditated.

There were only twenty four disciples in the Ashram. The Mother's message reached all and all gathered in the verandah on a due time. There was a silken cloth in the room. There were embroidered three

Chinese dragons; their tails were interwoven. (It was Chinese belief that when three dragons would meet in the sky, truth would manifest on the earth.)

There was utter peace. All were waiting silently for the Mother and Sri Aurobindo to come. All sadhakas experienced the pressure of consciousness on them in the mind coming from above the mind. Ambubhai Purani described this experience thus, 'The entire environs were accelerated as if by electricity. In fact, the environs were different on that day. There was knock on the door. Sri Aurobindo looked at the Mother and indicated her to come first. The Mother entered the room followed by Sri Aurobindo. The environs were filled with divine silence. All went into meditation; the meditation went upto fortyfive minutes. Both gave them blessings. While the process of pranam was on, there was the meditation of sadhakas with open eyes for five minutes.'

Meditation was done daily; but that day's meditation was unique. Everyone experienced the divine light descending from above the mind. Some experienced pressure on the head. All twenty four sadhakas realised that as if they were flown in to the ocean of consciousness.

The Mother and Sri Aurobindo went back to their rooms. Then Miss Datta said, 'Today God has descended into the physical consciousness.' She was right. The Overmental consciousness has descended into Sri Aurobindo's body. It was also called Krishna consciousness. The descent of the Overmind gave a hope to the descent of the Supermind. 24th November became a 'siddhi day'; it gave a decisive turn to Sri Aurobindo's sadhana.

153 Descent of the Overmental light

When man's mind becomes peaceful and wordless, then his 'atma' illumines. Then the inner journey to the higher realms (higher than the mind) begins. This is the journey of ascent. It does not reach the Supermind; but it includes different stage of the mind. There are four stages between the mind and the Supermind; they are Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuitive Mind and Overmind.

Higher mind comes beyond our surface mind. It lives in touch with 'aneratma' and paramatma. It knows truth. It has spiritual understanding of the worldly things. The mind receives inspiration from higher mind, but it gives a mental shape to it. So there is the

mixture. However, the higher mind is the first stage of the upper mind.

Illumined Mind comes after the Higher Mind. It has no thoughts; it sees Truth. Truth seeing and Truth light are brought down by the mind to the lower nature. But truth seeing is 'imperfect'; it divides truth to see. And truth seeing is ephemeral.

Intuitive Mind is higher than Illumined Mind. There is identification with knowledge. Inspiration directly comes from Paramatma as a glimpse. Mind receives inspiration directly; it follows truth. The truth comes to light; but light is only for some time.

The Overmind is the summit of the mind. The mind rises to meet this Overmind in sadhana. The Overmind is really a bridge between the mind and the Supermind; but it is the highest range of the mind. Truth or Prabhu's light or the Supermental light is the characteristic of the Overmind. But here in the Overmental plane, the light or Shakti is divided. In fact, the Shakti is divided into many units. Though divided into many units, they have relationship with the Source, the Supermind. Therefore, there is no conflict in this plane; there is no paradox. There each god creates his own world, establishes his own ideals and develops his own creation. As the divine power descends, it is divided into many more units. The divine light practically does not work because of the necessities, demands and limited possibilities of the mind, vital and physical phenomena. This dull divine light does not purify the lower nature. The descent of the Overmind into the matter does not change the matter. Only the Supermind can do it.

Yet the overmental consciousness is the upper consciousness of the mind. One can establish new religion in the world; one can even be popular in the world; but one cannot transform human nature into the divine nature. Shri Krishna has established the Overmental consciousness on the earth; perhaps the earth consciousness of that time has not been ready to receive the Supramental consciousness. Then Shri Krishna has entrusted the work of descending the Supermind into mental level to Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo has achieved siddhi, Krishna consciousness. If he has desired, he would have established a new religion in the world and become a guru. But he has never wanted to launch a new religion. His aim has been to transform human nature into the divine nature. That is why he does not stop at the Overmind; he has done sadhana to realise the Supermind.

Sri Aurobindo has realised siddhi; it has been the greatest achievement from common men's point of view. But Sri Aurobindo has a higher goal to achieve. He has never talked about his siddhi; even his twenty four disciples experienced this siddhi only in silence.

The pressure on Sri Aurobindo from highest consciousness was there. In the meanwhile Sri Aurobindo retired from active life and went to solitariness. He said to the disciples, 'I go to my sadhana from today. The Mother will look after all. You have to inform her. Now she will represent me.' Then he withdrew from all outer activities and focussed his attention to the sadhana of the Supermind.

Yet he was not indifferent to the outer world. He did not talk to the disciples; but he answered the letters of his disciples without fail. Thus he was helping the Ashramites sincerely, though the mode of the help had changed. Then he helped through the Mother. The withdrawal was not easy for Sri Aurobindo. Particularly it was hard not to meet those disciples who used to visit him daily. Besides, some disciples were not ready to accept the Mother as guru; they had left the Ashram. Sri Aurobindo's younger brother Barin had also not accepted the Mother. He had left the Ashram. But Sri Aurobindo did not bow down; he did not break the rule that he had made for himself.

'Why do you want to withdraw to a room?' asked a disciple.

'I want to be away from physical world. The Mother did some works; I was doing some other works. If I did what the Mother was doing, then I had no time for my works.'

Sri Aurobindo did sadhana for the descent of the Supermind into the mind. He did Sadhana practically for twenty four years. He manifested God completely into the matter.

154. Inspiration to create a new world

The Overmind was established in Sri Aurobindo's body. Because of this descent there happened wonders in the Ashram everyday. There were many changes in sadhakas's lives. The pressure of the divine consciousness was everywhere experienced. Sadhaka's meditation with the Mother became deep and profound. Every sadhaka felt that a new world was emerging. The Mother used to sit in meditation in her room those days.

One day the Mother had got an inspiration when she was deep in meditation; it was inspiration for a new creation. After meditation she

went to Sri Aurobindo and said, 'A new creation is possible through this consciousness.'

Sri Aurobindo listened to her; he concentrated for some time and said, 'This light has not much significance because it is from the Overmental consciousness. It cannot transform the physical consciousness to the divine consciousness. Yes, it is a creation of one in many. Human nature would be divided.' The Mother informed the children, 'When I talked this interesting thing to him, he said, yes, it is the creation of the Overmental consciousness. This creation would be the sources of many wonders and it will make you popular in the world. You will change the incidents of the earth in the way you like...' Then he smiled and said, 'It will be a great success; but it will be only the Overmental. We do not want success; we want to establish the Supermind on the earth.' The Supermind will create a new world and for that we have to renounce even the so called success.'

The Mother added, 'I understood what Sri Aurobindo had said. I dissolved the creation which I had made within hours. I began yoga for a new creation.' The Mother sacrificed the Overmental creation because Sri Aurobindo was interested in a higher and newer world. Then both the Mother and Sri Aurobindo concentrated on the descent of the Supermind.

155. Only one consciousness

The work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother was one; their sadhana was also one. It was to bring down the perfect consciousness of Paramatma to the earth so that it could transform human nature into the divine nature. In this regard Sri Aurobindo said to a disciple, 'The consciousness of the Mother and of Myself is one. Both have a divine consciousness. Nothing can be done without the Mother's knowledge and shakti. If a person experiences the Mother within himself, he must trust that I am behind her. And if he realises my consciousness, he should trust that the Mother is behind me.'

The Mother had also said, 'I exist not without him; he is not manifested without me.' It was after the Mother's arrival at Pondicherry that Sri Aurobindo's yoga became practical for men. Sri Aurobindo himself said, 'If there was no Mother, my philosophy would have been only a matter of principles. The Mother gave it a practical form.' The Mother helped in his sadhana. He said, 'I could complete my sadhana within one year after the Mother's arrival which

would have taken ten years without her.’ The Mother took up all external burdens. Sri Aurobindo could concentrate on this sadhana. He took guidance for his sadhana from the Mother. The Supermind was descending in the mind and the vital; but it was not stable. How to make it stable was a problem to Sri Aurobindo. The Mother said to him, ‘If the work is done on the matter instead of mind and vital, it would be stable. The transformation would not lose till the work is done on the matter.’ Sri Aurobindo got the way; his sadhana changed its direction. He withdrew to a lonely room to concentrate on the matter.

Then the Mother made the sadhakas meditate. When she went for meditation, she would take the blessings of Sri Aurobindo. She reported activities of the day to him daily. She would put the garlands given by the sadhakas at his feet in the evening. She maintained this practice till Sri Aurobindo was in the body. She was the centre of all activities of the Ashram. Yet she used to tell, ‘Everything is done by Sri Aurobindo; I do not do anything.’ She said to a disciple, ‘Sri Aurobindo gave every responsibility to me and went to the background; but ultimately he was doing everything. I have to conduct; I had no responsibility.’

The Mother did all activities in the name of Sri Aurobindo when he was in his body. If Sri Aurobindo was preparing the path for the descent of the Supermind, the Mother was preparing suitable sadhakas who could walk on it. Thus, the consciousness was one; but different works were done in double way of sadhana.

156. Beginning of Sri Aurobindo Ashram

Sri Aurobindo got siddhi on 24th November 1926. There was the descent of the Overmind consciousness in the matter. Afterwards Sri Aurobindo went to solitariness for his sadhana of the Supermind. He withdrew from the outer activities of the Ashram; he entrusted the Mother to look after the sadhakas and the Ashram.

Well, Sri Aurobindo did not like the word Ashram for his residence. He was living with his limited disciples in one house and was doing sadhana. He had no intention to begin Ashram at that time. But as his sadhana became higher and higher, the situations got changed. Disciples from foreign countries and his own country came there and development was possible. This is how the Ashram started. The Mother came to Pondicherry in 1920. She made the life of the

sadhakas systematic. This was the seed of the foundation of Ashram. The Mother could not guide whether Sri Aurobindo's sadhana should be individual or collective. But things took its own course. The sadhakas used to come from all directions and collective sadhana started. Thus Sri Aurobindo Ashram was made by the Divine Himself. In this Ashram there were meditation hall, kitchen, Samadhi and other places of sadhana. But this Ashram was in the mind of different sadhakas who lived in different houses in Pondicherry. Sri Aurobindo Ashram was really a lab of experimentation; experiment was made to link humanity with Divinity.

157. Sri Aurobindo's letters

Sri Aurobindo withdrew from the outer life to a room, but he was indirectly in touch with the sadhakas and visitors. Dilipkumar Roy wrote, 'Sri Aurobindo met none personally; but his letters daily. How fine these letters were! How did they inspire? These letters had made my life rich; they had made others' lives richer. Sri Aurobindo used to distribute through letters what he was trying to achieve. He explained sadhana in the way people understood. He wrote about poetry to some; while to others he informed about his philosophy. He expressed his views about science and arts. He answered all my menacing questions; I understood my questions only after he explained them.'

He added, 'I lived for more than a decade under his loving shadow. I alone had written three thousand letters to him. He had answered all letters. I was not the only person to do it. He had to answer the letters of more than hundred sadhakas in a week. Once he wrote to me that he answered letters from nine to ten at night; then he extended it from nine to the midnight. A day came when he wrote letters through night. He continued answering letters of the disciples and sadhakas from 1929 to 1938. He had written thousands of letters.'

Sri Aurobindo wrote to Nirodbaran in a humorous style, 'My dear Sahib, you will see me engrossed into letters these days. To read letters and to reply them is my main activity. Even hard hearted sadhakas will pity me. I am not avoiding the letters of my sadhakas. Like Raman Maharsi, I have accepted them.'

Any sadhakas could write a letter to him and get guidance of sadhana. Sri Aurobindo answered the letters of Ashramites consulting the Mother because the Mother was in direct touch with them. Sri Aurobindo's reply was really a solution to the problems of the

sadhakas. Sri Aurobindo also came into contact with different stages of the mind. These letters could be considered as part of his sadhana. Thus letters abolished the distance between Sri Aurobindo and the disciples. The disciples opened their minds through letters and Sri Aurobindo replied them happily. This showed that Sri Aurobindo was living in 'samata', equanimity. The disciples asked very strange questions. For example, 'Should I keep ahead my left leg or right leg when I start walking? Should I mix sugar with milk this way or that way?' But Sri Aurobindo answered every letter patiently. Dilipkumar, Nirodbaran, Amal Kiran and others were given full freedom to ask any questions. So they asked different types of questions; they picked up each aspect of human life. The reply to these letters was the knowledge gained through realisation which could solve the puzzles of human mind. His letters were unique; they were written in the language understood by human mind. His letters on the yoga are published into three books. Besides these, there were many other letters on different subjects.

Nirodbaran said to the students of the Ashram, 'If you read my letters to Sri Aurobindo you will come to know how he lifted an ignorant and doubtful man to a sadhana. He opened his eyes to creative writings. Letter writing was a special thing for sadhakas. It changed their consciousness without their knowledge.' Nirodbaran was shy in the beginning. But as the answers came from Sri Aurobindo; he became frank with him. Afterwards he wrote many letters seeking guidance for sadhana. Nirodbaran had written letters to Sri Aurobindo for five and a half years and Sri Aurobindo had answered them peacefully and patiently. Nirodbaran was a doctor. Sri Aurobindo said, 'A doctor should be soft like cream, sweet like a sugar and tasty like murabba.'

Regarding the language of the letters, Cambridge expert J.A. Chedwick wrote, 'The language of his letter is light without warmth; it enters straight into the mind and heart of the readers. The integrality of his writings really surprises all. Sri Aurobindo has not either accused or taught his readers through letters. There is humility and kindness in them. He has not used harsh words for the sadhakas who had committed serious errors.'

Sri Aurobindo received letters contradicting his yoga. He replied patiently the secrets of mind and heart. He never revised his letters. In fact, he wrote what he had got from the upper states of consciousness.

It is a wrong belief that Sri Aurobindo was harsh or rough in reply. Nirodbaran wrote, 'Your Himalaya like tapsya terrifies us.' Sri Aurobindo replied, 'How meaningless it is! I am pained to note such adjectives like 'harsh' or disappointed for me. What has happened to your intellect?'

Dilipkumar wrote about his kindness. He said, 'You are kind enough to bring down your Divine consciousness and make it human. So you are near to us.' Sri Aurobindo replied, 'Is your humanity not eager to change into divinity?'

There are many examples from sadhakas's letters. Sri Aurobindo has withdrawn from outer life of Ashram. But through letters he has given 'darshan' and explained the problems of sadhakas. It has been a great achievement in the history of sadhana.

158. Namaskar of Ravindranath

Sri Aurobindo had withdrawn to a room. He used to give darshan to his disciples only on a darshan day. But this rule was not like the rules of jail. He met Ravindranath and a few others during the period of his withdrawal.

Ravindranath met Sri Aurobindo for the first time in Kolkata in 1907. Sri Aurobindo was then arrested and acquitted innocent. Ravindranath was going to Europe by a steamer. His steamer was to stop for quite some time at Pondicherry. He had a strong desire to meet Sri Aurobindo. He wrote to Sri Aurobindo for permission and permission was granted. He was to meet his old friend Sri Aurobindo after twenty four years.

First time when Ravindranath met Aurobindo, he embraced him. He wanted to embrace Sri Aurobindo even the second time. But when he went up to meet him he did 'pranam' instead of embracing him. He met different Aurobindo. It was Sri Aurobindo who had recognised the Divine within himself. Ravindranath realised the deep sadhana of Sri Aurobindo. So he did 'pranam' to him.

Ravindranath had to meet Sri Aurobindo few minutes. Those few minutes became memorable for Tagore. He was introduced to the divinity of Sri Aurobindo. In 'Modern Review' he wrote, 'I could see that he was doing sadhana for self realisation and he had achieved self realisation as well. He had gathered inner power in this process. His face was shining with inner light. I could know that he had self realisation without suppressing his soul.' He added, 'It seemed to me

that old Hindu rishis were teaching him the lesson of ‘samata’, equanimity; this ‘samata’ leads to every field of life.’

He further said, ‘You have ‘adesha’ and we are ready to accept that adesh. India will lead the world through your words. Years ago I had seen you in your youth and I sang, Aurobindo, accept my Namaskar. Today I have your darshan again. I pray, Hey Aurobindo, accept my Namaskar.’

Ravindranath had a flame on his face when he returned to the steamer. He was extremely happy.

159. I became a friend of Sri Aurobindo

Sri Aurobindo was a mahayogi and great philosopher. He had attained the higher consciousness. But he was a loving father to sadhakas. Besides, he was a friend to them. He had the relationship of love with all his disciples. Dilipkumar wrote, ‘Sri Aurobindo stoop down to my level from the upper consciousness and for my sake he became a lecturer of literature and a teacher of metres... When I laughed, he laughed louder. He made me a friend.’

Once, Dilipkumar had a guest from Kolkata. He was an expert in cooking. He made a dish and sent it to Sri Aurobindo. And Sri Aurobindo appreciated it by tasting. The guest said to Dilipkumar Roy, ‘You send a lot of papers to write poetry. But feed him something by cooking.’

Dilipkumar accepted this challenge. He had not prepared even the hotchpotch, how could he prepare an item? He decided to take help from some one else. He requested a Bengali sadhika Amiya, ‘You have simply to say, I will do, O Amiya.’ He prepared an item of potatoes and tomatoes and sent it to Sri Aurobindo. Next day he received a letter from Sri Aurobindo. He said, ‘You cooked well. Had you not taken the help of Amiya I would have thought it to be a wonder of yoga. If I use the words of Gita, ‘Acharya Vat Pasyati Kaschidenam, some see it like a wonder.’

Dilipkumar Roy became emotional receiving this love for his cooked item. He wrote, ‘This is not a common man who paid attention to our small things and clarified our small misunderstandings. He is the Mahayogi of the Supermind who worked day and night for descent the highest consciousness on the earth.’ He added, ‘I made arguments with Sri Aurobindo; some times I tested his points of view.

But I did so because he was kind enough to treat me as a friend and son. Despite this fate, I was sad like Arjuna.'

'I have said something on haste thinking you a friend, I have said something in the fun, I pray, excuse me for all these things,' said Dilipkumar Roy.

160. Charubabu's pain of separation

Charudatt was the active supporter of Sri Aurobindo in freedom fighting movement. He and his wife Lilavati loved Sri Aurobindo very much. Sri Aurobindo went to Pondicherry without informing others. He retired from the active politics. This had shocked Charubabu. He always thought, 'Why did Aurobindo leave us at this time?' His mind was not at rest. His wife Lilavati said, 'Go to Ghose Sahib once and your mind will experience peace. But Charubabu did not go to Pondicherry.'

After sometime he received a letter from a Bengali youth from Pondicherry. It said, 'Many want to meet you here. Is it not possible for you to come?'

Charubabu did not accept the invitation. He replied, 'I will not come to your Ashram to satisfy your curiosity. If I come, I will offer myself to him.' He wrote like this, but he was not ready for a spiritual life at that time. And yet some invisible hand was dragging him to spiritual life.

Charubabu did not go to Sri Aurobindo even after his retirement from politics. He was engrossed in creative writings. He wrote the biography of Nehru in Viswabharati. Someone showed it to Sri Aurobindo and asked, 'Did you have some relationship with him, particularly political relationship?'

Sri Aurobindo replied, 'Yes, Charudatt! I have met him for some time. Our ways have been different in outer life. But short meeting has been very deep. He is one of the persons whom I liked most. But the strange thing is that I have very short relationship with such a person. Perhaps the reason has been that I have to do some different work.'

This sadhak sent Sri Aurobindo's reply to Charubabu. To read it Charubabu was stunned; he was full of pain. He became quite silent. Sri Aurobindo had this much love for him! And what was he? He had maintained distance from Sri Aurobindo for last thirty years. How stupid he was! Yet Sri Aurobindo had loved him; his force drew away towards him. He suffered the pang of separation from Sri Aurobindo.

Lilavati said to him, 'I have been telling you to go to Sri Aurobindo. He alone will make you free from your inner sufferings.'

Then Charubabu wrote to that friend, 'My time is ripe for coming to your Ashram. Kindly seek permission of Sri Aurobindo and make other arrangements.' He got the reply, 'Sri Aurobindo has agreed that you should come on the darshan day of next February.' Besides, he said, 'How can Charu live into the Ashram when he uses 'Chungi', pipe.'

Sri Aurobindo had not forgotten him. He remembered Charu very well though thirty long years had passed. He was very happy. He wrote, 'Tell Sri Aurobindo that my 'Chungi', pipe, is my slave and I am its master.'

Charubabu came to Pondicherry after thirty years. He wrote, 'When I went to 'sinhasana', the place where Sri Aurobindo sat, I was trembling; my eyes were shut. At 'sinhasana' my eyes were open; I saw a face of indigo colour with peacock feather on the head. The face was very beautiful; I had no courage to look again at him. I was thoughtless then. I only thought that I should not change my resolution.'

After two/three days Ambubhai met Charubabu. He said, 'I asked Aurobindo, how did your old friend Charu look?' He burst into laughter and said, 'Charu did not allow me to look at him. What could I say?' Charubabu said that this was how he began his sadhana. Perhaps he was moving around and was near to sadhana. One thing was sure that Sri Aurobindo's grace was for me.'

Charubabu and Lilavati came and settled in Ashram. Charubabu had suffered separation from Sri Aurobindo for thirty years. He wrote, 'We were separated in 1910; it was very difficult for me to bear this separation. When I got opportunity, I told the Mother. She asked me tenderly, 'Now you understand why Sri Aurobindo had come to Pondicherry in 1910.' 'Yes, Mother, now I understand. Because I understand, I have run away to you. My boat has finally reached the shore. I am very happy,' said Charubabu.

Charubabu never left the Ashram. He had never suffered separation from Sri Aurobindo thereafter.

161. Most attractive guru

K.D. Shethna, a twenty two year youth of Parasi community, had a strong desire to know yoga. One day he read the advertisement that a

Maharashtrian yogi was teaching yoga to people. K.D. Shethna's curiosity brought him to that yogi. The yogi taught him a simple method of 'samadhi'. Practising it he knew how the soul could fly out of the body. His body was in the bed, but his soul moved into the sky. This fact convinced him that he was something more than a body. His interest in yoga grew more and more.

A theosophist friend said to K.D. Shethna, 'You are a man of multiple interests; your guru can be only Sri Aurobindo.' K.D. Shethna did not pay attention to him. He continued practising yoga on his own. A few months passed. Then he got a booklet. It said that Sri Aurobindo could be seen in many places at the same time and he knew half a dozen European languages. A yogi had the knowledge of these many languages; it was matter of surprise to Shethna. This is how Shethna's interest in Aurobindo grew; he thought that he might meet Sri Aurobindo. But he was yet to accept him as a guru. He never tried to know much about Sri Aurobindo.

One day he went to buy shoes from Kraford Market in Bombay. He returned home after buying shoes. He opened the packet to test it. The wrapper of the packet had a write-up entitled 'Sri Aurobindo and his Ashram.' He read the write-up carefully and felt that he needed a guru like Sri Aurobindo. He decided to go to Pondicherry.

That time Sri Aurobindo had withdrawn to a room. He used to give darshan only on three darshan days. 24 November had gone. It was the month of December when he came to Pondicherry. But Sri Aurobindo would give darshan only on 21 February. So he had to live for two months in the Ashram. During this period he was acquainted with methodology of Sri Aurobindo's yoga and the transformation of physical nature into the divine nature. His aspiration to realise truth was also satisfied here. But he had not the darshan of his guru. Of course, he had heard much about Sri Aurobindo from the sadhakas; he was eager to have his darshan. And that day came soon.

K.D. Shethna described his first darshan of Sri Aurobindo, 'My turn came; I went to the Mother. I did not know Sri Aurobindo, but I had met the Mother many times. I did pranam to her; she blessed me. Then I touched Sri Aurobindo's feet. What a man Sri Aurobindo! I saw him sitting peacefully. His nose was like the beak of the parrot; his eyes were deep; his moustache was subtle... Lastly I did 'pranam' to him. He put both his hands over my head. I felt that he was very attractive guru... He was very fine. It seemed that I would accept him as a guru.'

K.D. Shethna would like to accept Sri Aurobindo as a guru; but whether Sri Aurobindo would like K.D. Shethna or not was the real question. So when the next day K.D. Shethna met the Mother he asked, 'Did Sri Aurobindo say something about me?'

'Yes, he said that your mouth was very beautiful.' Thus Sri Aurobindo had observed K.D. Shethna carefully. In brief, the guru and the disciple liked each other. When the disciple came to the Ashram he was named 'Amal Kiran', 'pure ray', by Sri Aurobindo.

Amal Kiran was very intimate to Sri Aurobindo. He was free to ask any questions. He had written thousands of letters. Particularly, he wrote many letters to gain understanding of Savitri. Sri Aurobindo wrote Savitri; he first showed it to Amal Kiran. Amal Kiran would read and return it with his own questions. Letters on Savitri were published in the form of a book. Amal Kiran became a poet, critic and thinker due to the active touch of Sri Aurobindo. He had been an editor to 'The Mother India', a monthly. His personality and his devotion to Sri Aurobindo were commendable.

162. Sri Aurobindo met with an accident

23rd November 1938 was the happy day in Ashram. Next day was the darshan day. Every sadhaka was happy. Darshan was only for some time; it included infinity. It was the moment of transformation of many sadhakas's lives. Every darshan day was a day of celebration. Not only Ashramites but also the visitors remained present on the Darshan Day. Some sadhakas slept early so that they could have 'darshan' next day; others sat in meditation. It seemed that there was deep silence in Ashram. There was light from Sri Aurobindo's room. The Mother had gone to take rest early because the next day was a Darshan Day. Only Sri Aurobindo was busy with his work late at night. Preparation for darshan day was almost over.

As usual Purani got up at 2.00 a.m. for hot water to Sri Aurobindo. Suddenly there was alarm. Purani climbed up the ladder. The Mother asked him to send for Dr. Manilal because Sri Aurobindo had fallen. Dr. Manilal had come from Vadodara for darshan; he was immediately called. He came up; he saw Sri Aurobindo sleeping on the floor. He examined him; he came to the conclusion that the bones of right thigh had been broken.

Sri Aurobindo had completed the night works; he was going through the sitting room which had a leather of the tiger. He collided

with leather and fell down. He was busy with the transformation of human nature; but before the Darshan Day opposite forces attacked him. Though his bones were broken, he did not call any one nor did he make any noises. He lay down silently. He tried to stand up but he could not. The Mother was sleeping in her bed room. She felt that Sri Aurobindo was in some difficulty. She got up and went to Sri Aurobindo's room. She saw Sri Aurobindo lying down on the floor. She knew that Sri Aurobindo's bones had been broken. She called the doctors immediately. Dr. Manilal and Dr. Nirodbaran examined him. There was confused smile on Sri Aurobindo's face. It seemed as if he was ignorant of this accident. Dr. Manilal examined bones and gave medicines.

Dr. Nirodbaran wrote, 'Sri Aurobindo had written to me that he had control over diseases and death; but there was the possibility of an accident.'

Sri Aurobindo had complete control over outer environs. He also had the control over the cosmic forces. It was surprising that he had an accident at noon of the Darshan Day. Sri Aurobindo explained this accident thus, 'The Mother retired to take rest at night. All gods were sleeping. Opposite forces chose those moments; they were clever and cunning. There was an attack of the ignorance of the Inconscient.'

The darshan of Sri Aurobindo was cancelled. The news of accident spread in the Ashram. All gathered to know what had happened. The daughter of President Wilson of America was one of them. All accepted the situation. The Mother gave darshan in the evening and removed disappointment from sadhakas.

A special orthopaedist and a special radiologist were invited from Chennai. X-rays showed that thigh had been broken; the broken parts were difficult to join. In this condition it was not proper to join them with force. It was better to put the leg in plaster and bring bones to the original place by pulling them with wooden strips. Sri Aurobindo had to lie down in the bed for quite some time because of the plaster.

The outsider doctors came, gave advices and went away. But real responsibility of treating Sri Aurobindo came to Dr. Manilal. Fortunately Dr. Manilal had treated the Maharaja of Gaekwad of Baroda, so he was calm and without disturbance. The Mother asked Dr. Manilal, 'What do you think about this fracture?'

Dr. Manilal seemed to hide something and said, 'I do not consider it very serious.'

The Mother did 'pranam' to Sri Aurobindo and prayed earnestly for him. Then the disciples realised that the accident was serious. Everybody was stunned.

The Mother shouldered the responsibility of taking care of Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo's room was not open for disciples for twelve years. Then the Mother opened the room for the doctors and for those who served him wholeheartedly. She employed Dr.Manilal and Nirodbaran for Sri Aurobindo's treatment. Champaklal, Purani and Satyendra were asked to serve Sri Aurobindo. But overall charge of Sri Aurobindo's treatment was on the shoulder of the Mother. As if the twelve years of Sri Aurobindo's sadhana were over and a new age had begun.

163. Service to Sri Aurobindo

Earlier only Champaklal could enter Sri Aurobindo's room. Now there were opportunities to enter into his room for a few devoted disciples. In the beginning there was a wall of fear between the guru and disciples, but slowly this wall was broken. Dr.Manilal's childlike nature made Sri Aurobindo soft. He was allowed to enter Sri Aurobindo's room. He asked questions like other disciples. This is how the evening talks began.

The morning arrangements of Sri Aurobindo were made properly. In the evening all devoted disciples gathered near the bed of Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo spoke slowly but sweetly lying down in the bed. Ambubhai Purani had published Evening Talks Part-II and Part-III. These talks continued for twelve years. The talks were on the politics and international situations.

Sri Aurobindo changed his daily habits. He did light breakfast in the morning; he had lunch in the afternoon and dinner at night. He liked to take tea right from childhood; he used a big cup for tea. Then he stopped the light breakfast of the morning. And one day he said, 'Now I will not take tea.'

He gave up the habits of life as he had given up smoking cigarette in the past. Sponge bath was arranged for him; Dr.Manilal gave sponge bath. His skin was affected because of his sleeping straight. A pillow of rubber was arranged. However, Sri Aurobindo did not show that he had any pain. He maintained 'samata', equanimity in all conditions.

Dr. Nirodbaran described the incident of Sri Aurobindo's suffering and samata. Once a sadhaka came and told that Sri Aurobindo was calling Nirodbaran. Nirodbaran went to Sri Aurobindo who said, 'No, no, nothing has happened.' It seemed that he was apologetic for giving troubles to Dr. Nirodbaran. Then he showed right thigh and said, 'Here is pain. Will you do something?' If there was small pain, he would not tell it to someone. It was unbearable pain; Nirodbaran knew it. Sri Aurobindo was suffering pain for a long time. Nirodbaran felt it. He was surprised to see that Sri Aurobindo was humble and indifferent to these situations. He would never give troubles to any disciples. He would say, 'Will I get this thing?'

Sri Aurobindo used to read newspapers daily. He was in touch with India's freedom fighting movement and world's happenings. Nirodbaran used to read the newspapers. 'Hindu' was the favourite newspaper of Sri Aurobindo. First he wanted the headings to be read. He said, 'What does it say? Let us hear it.' He was interested in some editorials. He used to see the satirical pieces of daily mail. In the evening Puraniji used to read weekly, New States and Manchester Guardian. This is how Sri Aurobindo was in contact with worldly things.

Sri Aurobindo's leg was in plaster for two months. He was bedridden for that period. Even in that condition he continued doing sadhana. Nirodbaran asked, 'Why do you not use your spiritual power?' Sri Aurobindo answered, 'Don't think that I don't use spiritual power. But spiritual power does not work in sleeping condition. The body is in the tamasic position. I feel tamas in using spiritual power.' However, his body overpowered tamas, then there was no difficulty in using spiritual power. Sri Aurobindo had meditation while walking; then he started meditation while sleeping.

Dr. Rao used to come from outside to examine Sri Aurobindo. He knew pain which Sri Aurobindo had in sleeping position. He saw Sri Aurobindo cool and calm in this situation. He said, 'Sri Aurobindo was a wonderful patient. When the plaster of his leg was removed after two months his legs were swollen; yet he was calm; he did not show any trace of pain in him. His bones were joined. The doctors told that swellings would go slowly with massage. Dr. Manilal was sent for from Vadodara after the plaster was removed. He was treating Sri Aurobindo's swellings. He suggested massage. After some months there were no swellings. However, he could not walk; then exercises were suggested. He started walking with the support of Champaklal

and Satyendra. Champaklal and Satyendra were tall; so Sri Aurobindo had no difficulty in walking. Slowly he started walking with the help of Champaklal and a wooden staff.

Sri Aurobindo did all exercises suggested by the doctors. The heat of the summer did not distract him. He made self efforts; he became alright within five months. This made all Ashramites happy.

24th April was decided as a Darshan Day; it was due to the request of the Mother. It was the aspiration of the Ashramites who had missed 24th November and 21st February as Darshan Days. 24th April was the day when the Mother came to settle permanently at Pondicherry. On this darshan day disciples and visitors had the darshan of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Thereafter Sri Aurobindo gave darshan to the Ashramites and visitors on four days; 15th August, 24th November, 21st February and 24th April.

The opposite forces had attacked Sri Aurobindo to disrupt his sadhana. There was radical change in doing his yoga. Sri Aurobindo said, 'I got good results at the hands of opposite forces.' The opposition came either in the form of men or in the form of subtle events. As a result there was the descent of higher consciousness into the cell of the body. The devoted disciples were ready to serve him. So he got more time for his sadhana. In 1939, Dr. Manilal had asked him, 'Have you got any benefit from the accident?'

'Yes. I have progressed a lot from last November. I have completed several books. Now I get more time for concentration', said Sri Aurobindo.

The accident accelerated his sadhana and created an appropriate condition for him.

164. Writings of Sri Aurobindo

Sri Aurobindo was ill; he took up the writing works. The Arya Publishing House of Kolkata wanted to publish 'The Life Divine'. The Mother thought it appropriate to publish it in a book form, though 'The Life Divine' was brought out serially in 'Arya'. She sought the permission of Sri Aurobindo and Sri Aurobindo readily gave it. He added some new chapters to 'The Life Divine.' A new table was made to write and kept near his bed. Three pens, two pencils and papers were kept on the table.

Nirodbaran wrote in his book 'Twelve Years with Sri Aurobindo': 'We had heard about complete silent mind; but we saw thought

coming from complete silent mind in Sri Aurobindo. He was writing without any break. He was not writing like a common man who thought and wrote with hesitation.’

‘He sat in the bed and wrote continuously... It seemed that every thought was arranged in the upper consciousness and flowed down to write in his still mind. He was absorbed in complete ‘samata’. He had perspiration; he wiped out it with his hand. He wrote for two hours daily.’

He had much perspiration while writing. His bed sheet was wet and it had to be changed. There were no electric fans in Ashram. Sri Aurobindo did not care for heat or cold. He used to write down thoughts from the higher mind. Nirodbaran just watched him with surprise.

Sri Aurobindo was free from writing letters eight to nine hours; he devoted this time to writing his own works. He started revising all books published in ‘Arya’. His famous book ‘The Life Divine’ was published in 3 parts. Besides, during these twelve years there were many revisions of his epic ‘Savitri’. In fact, the final draft of ‘Savitri’ was prepared; it expressed what Sri Aurobindo called the Supramental Consciousness. Sri Aurobindo had given high literatures from his pen. They include poems, dramas, essays, philosophy, yogadarshan, Indian culture, Gita, Secret of Veda, Upanishad and others. Yet he had not been able to reveal his entire knowledge. In one discussion it is said, ‘Had he produced ten times more literatures than what he had he would not have expressed his complete knowledge.’ His knowledge was limitless and very deep.

When one is identified with God within, then there is no limit to knowledge. In one of his sonnets he said, ‘I have drunk the honey of one Vast Consciousness.’ ‘When one has drunk infinity, it is not a surprise that one’s knowledge and strength become limitless.’

165. Sri Aurobindo’s literature

Sri Aurobindo was a creative writer. He had written every form of literature. In 1972, his writings were published in thirty volumes; they were later extended upto thirty five volumes.

In the first volume Sri Aurobindo’s political writings are published. The second volume has his poems. About his poems Sundaram wrote, ‘His poems open the door to consciousness. They lead to the summit of Supreme Consciousness.’

Sri Aurobindo has written dramas and stories. Then there is spiritual literature. He has given priceless volumes on the Vedas, Upanishad, Gita, Yoga and Life Divine. They are the treasures of world knowledge. Sri Aurobindo's 'Essays on the Gita' is remarkable. He said, 'I have practically discussed all issues of the Gita in these essays.'

'The Life Divine' is his book of philosophy. When it is published in a book form, then 'London Times' has reviewed favourably. Now America has published this book. In 'The Life Divine' he has developed the principle of spiritual growth. According to the law of evolution mind will evolve into the Supermind and the life will be turned into the Life Divine. This truth is expressed and explained in this book.

Sri Aurobindo had made the deep study of India's yogas. He had evolved a new yoga which he called the Integral Yoga for man. This was his priceless contribution to spirituality. He had harmonised Karmayoga, Jnanyoga and Bhaktiyoga in his book, 'The Synthesis of Yoga.' He had explained how his yoga was different from other yogas; he had elaborated how the lower nature might be transformed into the Divine Nature. Besides, three books of yogas were published.

The Mother's help is inevitable in Sri Aurobindo's yoga. Who is this Mother? How can we come into contact with her? How can we get help from her? Sri Aurobindo has answered these questions of the sadhakas in his small book 'The Mother.'

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have done profound sadhana. Sri Aurobindo has revealed his realisations in his great epic 'Savitri – a Legend and a Symbol'. The story of Savitri and Satyavan comes in the vanparva of the Mahabharat. Sri Aurobindo has turned it into the symbol of Aswapathy's yoga, Savitri's yoga and Savitri's dialogue with Death. This epic has twenty four thousand lines; it is the lengthiest epic of the world. It is an epic of Love and Hope.

Sri Aurobindo has thought sincerely on Indian culture. A foreign writer has attacked Indian culture; he has said that Indian culture is really a barbarian culture. Sri Aurobindo has replied him by writing a book – 'The Foundation of Indian Culture.' He has shown that Indian culture was the greatest culture till the middle Age. He wanted Indian youths to imbibe the secret of Indian culture and guide to the world.

Sri Aurobindo wrote a book which might be called a book on sociology, its title was, 'The Human Cycle'. In it he had said that both India and the world had entered into the age of subjectivism. He had

written a book called 'The Ideal of Human Unity'. In 1949 he published a book called 'The Manifestation of the Supermind'. These books give guidance to those who are deeply involved in studying Sri Aurobindo's literature.

Sri Aurobindo's life was great; so was his literature. K.Subbarao wrote, 'No life could be compared to Sri Aurobindo's life. Even when he took his creation of intellect, it would surpass the literatures of the world. No one had produced literatures as great as Sri Aurobindo in the world history. That is why 'Times Literary Supplement' wrote, 'Sri Aurobindo writes standing on the planet in the sky.' He had made efforts to bring down the Supermind on earth for the good of mankind.

166. Help to friendly Allies

Sri Aurobindo had withdrawn himself from the outside world; but he was fully conversant with the happenings in India and the world. His sadhana was to establish God on earth. How could he do it?

The Second World War broke in 1939. Sri Aurobindo examined it constantly. He saw an 'Asuric Shakti' behind Hitler; it was to destroy the fabrics of Indian culture. The war was between two groups. One group included England, France and America; the other group consisted of Germany, Italy and Russia. Nirodbaran wrote, 'Once Sri Aurobindo opposed the British in India. Yet he was ready to help friendly allies against Hitler. True, he was non-cooperative to the Britishers; he was the greatest enemy of British imperialism. But then the world's situation had changed. Churchill was sick, though he was fighting against Hitler. Sri Aurobindo used his spiritual power to make Churchill well and fight against Hitler. He knew that Churchill alone could fight against Hitler and other opposite forces.

Sri Aurobindo had opposed British government in India. The British government thought Sri Aurobindo to be the greatest enemy. But when the question of the saving the world appeared, Sri Aurobindo supported the British government. He contributed to the War-fund though some of the leaders of India were against it. Even some disciples did not support him. They thought Hitler and others to be the friend of India. Hitler was winning force. It was a matter of happiness. India would get freedom early. One disciple said to the Mother, 'Even the Congress does not want that we should contribute to the war fund, then why should we do it?' The Mother replied, 'Sri

Aurobindo had contributed to the war fund due to some divine reason. If you help in this matter, you are helping yourselves.’ The newspaper published Sri Aurobindo’s help to the British government. It explained, ‘Sri Aurobindo had contributed to British war fund to protect social, cultural and spiritual values.’ Yet, there was anger against Sri Aurobindo for his action. Some of his disciples did not approve it. Churchill should be defeated and Hitler should win were their desire. The Mother warned, ‘You are helping Asura to win against Devas. Stop your desire.’ A disciple asked the Mother, ‘Has not Britishers done injustice to India?’

The Mother said, ‘We have not said so; we will not say so. But this is not the question of the world today. Why don’t you understand? You see that your neighbour’s house is burning and yet you do not go to control the fire because he has done injustice to you. This understanding of yours is wrong; you are burning your own house. You do not distinguish between Asuric Power and the Power of God.’

Sri Aurobindo had to explain his disciples through many letters. In one of his letters he wrote, ‘Don’t consider this war against India; this war is to uproot higher principles established on earth.’

Sri Aurobindo himself got the news of Hitler. Nirodbaran wrote, ‘Sri Aurobindo himself has given the news of Hitler’s attack and Churchill’s declaration of war. He got the news through radio.’ One day when Nirodbaran came to Sri Aurobindo’s room, Sri Aurobindo said to him, ‘Hitler has attacked Holland. Well, we will see it.’ He had given his response succinctly. He wanted to say that he would stop Hitler moving forward.

Then Hitler shook hands with Stalin of Russia. The disciples said, ‘If there is a friendship between Hitler and Russia, then there is no hope for the world; even God will not do anything.’

‘Will God be afraid of Shaitan like Stalin?’ asked Sri Aurobindo.

Hitler was winning. So a disciple asked, ‘Oh Gurudev! Where is God? Where is He hidden? What is the use of your words?’

Sri Aurobindo answered to him, ‘Hitler is not immortal. He is followed by death.’ there was the war of Dunkark. Friendly allies were defeated; Hitler was winning. It was easy for him to capture England. Suddenly the situation changed. The sky was cloudy. The army of friendly allies moved to the original place. Hitler’s march stopped. No body knew that Sri Aurobindo had used his spiritual power for the victory of friendly allies.

The table is turned. Japan surrendered after bombardment of America. Germany was defeated. It was the spiritual power of Sri Aurobindo that defeated Germany and its allies. Sri Aurobindo subtly won this battle through spiritual consciousness; it was the unique accident of the world.

167. Effects of the Second World War on Ashram

Sri Aurobindo supported friendly allies in the Second World War. He contributed to the war fund. The leaders of India were surprised to know how the Britishers who were his sworn enemies were become his friends. Even the British government did not take his help seriously. It still believed that Ashram was the fort of enemies. It thought that Sri Aurobindo's help was only a part of a game. Some disciples of Ashram had sympathy for Hitler. They agreed to the attitude of British government towards Sri Aurobindo. They believed that any time British government could search Ashram and seize it.

There were prohibitions due to the War. So there was cut on the necessary things of Ashram. There was hardship for food grains and other things. The Ashram felt scarcity; it had fear of British government as well. There was a rumour that the air force of Japan would attack Ashram. So Ashram was kept in darkness at night. When there was the sound of siren, all switches of Ashram were put off. Then both the Mother and Sri Aurobindo were in their respective rooms to meditate. The table lamp of Sri Aurobindo was working; the Mother came and put dark paper on it. Sri Aurobindo smiled and asked, 'Will I live in darkness?'

There were many preparations in Ashram. But there was the Supreme Shakti in Ashram; so there was no possibility of any air-attack. And this came to be true. There was neither a bombardment nor any planes flew over Pondicherry in general and Ashram in particular.

During the time of War, the children of Ashramites were living far away in fear. The sadhakas requested the Mother to give shelter to the children in Ashram. The Mother accepted their request and there were children in Ashram. So far only sadhakas were there in Ashram; they maintained discipline to do sadhana. But children were not to do sadhana; their growth was to be in the free atmosphere. Children could not be deprived of education. The Mother established 'Sri Aurobindo School of Education' in December 1943. The Mother

proposed to sell out her ornaments through 'Dyuman' to maintain the expenditure of Ashram.

Dyuman was worried; he was not ready to sell the Mother's ornaments. The Mother insisted that Ashram had needed money; there was no way out. Dyuman invited local jewellers; they were ready to give comparatively less prices. So Dyuman contacted the sadhakas outside of Ashram. They offered high prices for the ornaments. This is how the Mother solved financial crisis. There was again the financial need in Ashram. The Mother gave a silver watch to be sold. Dyuman was again not ready. The Mother asked him not to be sentimental. Then Dyuman sold it to a rich sadhaka and collected Rs. 10,000.00

Ashram had financial difficulty even after the Second World War; the Mother did not inform it any one. To solve the financial problems the Mother sold all her jewellery and all her saris. This is how the Mother shouldered the responsibility of maintaining Ashram out of her kindness and grace for the sadhakas and their children.

168. Disinterested action

During the Second World War Churchill had given regional freedom to India. Sir Straford Crips came to India taking many proposals. Sri Aurobindo could see that it was the indication from the divine and so it should be accepted. He could see that it had all the feature of Purna Swaraj. Not only Sri Aurobindo accepted these proposals also recommended that other leaders of India should accept it.

Sri Aurobindo thanked Crips; he said, 'I heard on radio your advertisements. I valued much that you took great pains to evolve plans of India's freedom. Of course, I do not work in political field; my area is spirituality. Yet I welcome opportunities given to India to determine its place in the world and to be free from British slavery. I hope that the proposal would be accepted. It will be better if friendship is established between India and England and this friendship would be in the interest of the world. India will contribute much from its spirituality in improving the lives of humanity in general. Therefore I accept your proposals publicly and give support to you sincerely.' The proposals included India's freedom. India would be considered as a nation among free nations of the world. There would be friendship between England and India. Sri Aurobindo

could foresee that India would work for the unity of nations in the world with its power of spirituality. So he supported Crips' mission.

Sir Straford Crips was happy to receive the message of Sri Aurobindo. He replied, 'Your message of love has touched my heart and I am much satisfied. Now I would declare that England had given freedom to India for which it had fought so long.'

Crips was hopeful that his proposals would be accepted by the leaders of India; but he was disappointed. Gandhiji, Sardar Patel, Nehruji and others were not ready to accept his proposals. Sri Aurobindo gave a message through his special man named Shivrao to Gandhiji to accept these proposals for the good of India. But Gandhiji and others turned deaf ears to Sri Aurobindo's message. They gave slogan, 'Crips, go back to England.'

Sri Aurobindo could foresee that if Crips's proposals had been accepted India would have got freedom early. But if India turned down the proposals, then India would be surrounded by problems for a long time. Again he made efforts for the acceptance of the proposals. He sent Dorai Swami of Chennai to Delhi; but Gandhiji and other leaders did not take the message of Sri Aurobindo seriously. They criticised the message. Dorai Swami returned to Chennai disappointed.

Sri Aurobindo could foresee bloodshed and division of India into Hindustan and Pakistan clearly; the other local leaders did not. Sri Aurobindo tried the third time; he sent a telegram to Shri Rajgopalachari to accept Crips's mission; unfortunately his message was not accepted. Though Sri Aurobindo had retired from politics, India's welfare was imprinted in his heart. To avoid communal riots and bloodshed Sri Aurobindo thought that it was necessary to accept Crips proposals; but Crips proposals were not accepted. It was very unfortunate for the country. Crips returned to England disappointed. However; he had a consolation that India's leading Mahayogi had supported his mission.

When Sri Aurobindo came to know that his message was not accepted by Indian leaders, he said, 'I knew that it would fail.'

Had Crips mission been accepted there would not have been the division of India; there would not have been communalism; there would not have been Pakistan. There would have been a united India. On the golden jubilee of India's freedom it had been realised that Indian leaders had committed a great mistake in refusing to accept Crips's mission.

169. 15th August 1947

It was 75th Birth Day of Sri Aurobindo on 15th August 1947. That day his dream of making India free was realised. India became free on 15th August 1947. Ashram celebrated with various programmes this day.

The Mother hoisted India's flag on Sri Aurobindo's room in the presence of the Ashramites. In the afternoon all sadhakas of Ashram sang 'Vande Mataram'. At night, there was for the first time electric lightings in Ashram. It showed that Sri Aurobindo had withdrawn from India's freedom fighting movement; but he was related to it spiritually.

Sri Aurobindo was requested to give message on 15th August 1947. He said, '15th August 1947 is the birthday of India. Old days of the past are over; the new age has entered. We can make it an important day for the world. As a free nation we can begin a new age of social, cultural and spiritual development.'

He added, '15th August is my birthday. It is a happy event for me that this day has got a great significance. It is not an accident. The Divine power is draving to fulfil all the dreams that I had seen in my childhood. Moreover, the activities of the world I wanted to do but I could not seem to be fulfilled. Free India may contribute to many programmes. It may be the pathmaker of the world.'

Sri Aurobindo had talked about five dreams in the message. His first dream was the creation of free and united India. He could foresee a kind of union between India and Pakistan. He said, 'The development of India would be fractured due to this division; it would lose place among the people of the world and India could not do its distinctive actions without problems.'

How true Sri Aurobindo is! The burning problem of Kashmir, terrorism of Punjab, communal riots in India and others are the problems due to division of India and Pakistan. Sri Aurobindo has said, 'Division must go. We hope that this event will take place naturally. If it is not so, India will not be great in future.'

Sri Aurobindo's second dream is the awakening of Asia. Now in Asia many countries are free; they are getting their places in free nations. His dream has almost been fulfilled.

His third dream is to establish UN; UN will create a suitable atmosphere for living good outer lives on earth. He wants that all

nations should be integrated to a 'world government'. Solid steps have to be taken to realise this dream of Sri Aurobindo.

His fourth dream is to spread spirituality in the world. The action in this direction has already been taken. The philosophers of the world have realised that India will take the world to the new Age through its guidance of spirituality.

His fifth dream is to take one new step further in human consciousness. Sri Aurobindo wrote, 'There are many problems to realise new consciousness. But problems are there to win and with God's help they will certainly be won. It will be done through the development of inner consciousness. If this is to be done, then India will have to take initiative.'

He added, 'I hope that my five dreams will be for the development of India and the world. How far they are going to succeed depends upon the emergence of new India.'

Sri Aurobindo has foreseen the bright future of India; but bright future of India had not emerged yet. We hope that the five dreams of the Mahayogi would be fulfilled in times to come.

170. Award of Andhra University

Andhra University had established 'Sri Cuttmanchi Ramling National Award' to attract knowledgeable persons in the university. On 12th December 1948 this award was declared for Sri Aurobindo in his absence. That time the vice-chancellor of Andhra University was C.R.Reddy. C.R. Reddy had already been appointed as Professor of English in Vadodara when Sri Aurobindo had left this position. He said, 'This award is not given to Sri Aurobindo; we put it at his feet. This is for his contribution to Indian Culture. It is a matter of pride that Sri Aurobindo has accepted it.'

He added, 'I welcome Sri Aurobindo with bhakti. He is a perfect 'bibhuti' of modern age. He is greater than the bravest persons of the nation. He is the saviour of humanity.'

He referred to the scholarship of Sri Aurobindo. He said, 'Sri Aurobindo is the combination of three things – (i) Literature (ii) Philosophy and (iii) Param sadhana. He is a wonderful ladder from earth to heaven... His place in humanity is of Mahayogi. He has received 'param prakash', highest light and he is spreading it to the world. Sri Aurobindo is the prophet of the Life Divine. The Divine Life is not merely a thought to him; it has become the subject of his

realisation. Others can also attain the life divine provided they do what Sri Aurobindo has said.’

Sri Aurobindo has written about his philosophy in a book form. That book is ‘The Life Divine.’ It covers subjects from human aspiration to Gnostic consciousness.

Sir Francis Young Husband has said, ‘The Life Divine is the best book of my time... Sri Aurobindo believed that we would reach the highest consciousness one day. The need of the time is to rise up from the limitations of mind. It will take us to a consciousness which has samata and purity. That life will be full of dialogue and anand. Men will get this consciousness at the appropriate time. That life will be free from pain and suffering; it will not have the bitterness of Death. But will this happen? Sri Aurobindo assures us, ‘Yes, there will be advent of new consciousness.’ Sri Aurobindo foresees immortality in this death-stricken life.

The Vice-chancellor C.R. Reddy reminded the audience of the new age and then declared the award to Sri Aurobindo in his absence. He said, ‘Shriman Chancellor, give this award of Andhra University to Sri Aurobindo in his absence. The phrase ‘in his absence’ is not very appropriate. Though Sri Aurobindo lives a solitary life, his name is in thousands of sadhakas everywhere in the world. Sri Aurobindo is not the man of earth. He does not mix with mankind. He lives in the sky, though sky covers all of us. Shriman Chancellor, give ‘the Kattamanchi Reddy Award’ to Sri Aurobindo and thereby make the University of Andhra and yourselves proud.’

The speech of the Vice-Chancellor made those present experience the indirect presence of Sri Aurobindo. When the Chancellor gave this award to Sri Aurobindo, the hall echoed with clapping. The award consisted of a gold medal and Rs. 1116/-. It was the only university in India that identified the uniqueness of Sri Aurobindo and made itself proud by awarding to him.

C.R. Reddy himself came to Pondicherry to give this award on 20 December 1948. He talked with Sri Aurobindo for merely half an hour. He honoured Sri Aurobindo by giving him the award. He considered him to be lucky in this respect.

That time C.R. Reddy stayed in Ashram for four days. He was touched in heart by the divine atmosphere. He wrote, ‘Some unknown power drew me to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. I spent a few days in Ashram; that time I was in divine environment. I had practically forgotten myself. Some upper consciousness had caught me. I left

Ashram but my legs were not helping me to go out. Ashram extended wonderful welcome to me, but I was not ready for it. Sri Aurobindo, in fact, was very kind to me; the Mother's love enabled me to receive that welcome. I had spent four days in Ashram and I left Pondicherry for Madras. I bid farewell to Ashram; in fact, it was only my body that was taking leave from Ashram.'

When he returned to Andhra University, he had a message of Sri Aurobindo. The message was an appeal to the people of India for building national character and bringing about national unity. It said, 'You want a message from me. Whatever I write in demand of yours... will be about the shape and field of actions of your university. Now serious decisions are taken about the nation. India's constitution is to be built according to these decisions. We must pay attention to these decisions.'

Sri Aurobindo had explained all major problems that India was confronting with. He appealed to establish unity in multiplicity. He said that freedom had come, but unity was missing. He added, 'This is the second year of Independence. India has to be awakened before various problems and dangers. If these problems and dangers are not handled wisely, they will create great problems.'

The leaders of India were celebrating freedom that India got; but the Mahayogi of Pondicherry was worried about the problems that India would face. But no leaders were aware of these fundamental problems that Sri Aurobindo identified. This Mahayogi gave warning to the people of India. Unfortunately no leaders took his warnings seriously. He wrote, 'India had many problems; some problems would arise soon. Of course, we would solve them patiently. But we should not forget one thing. It is that during slavery our life has withered. Now if we want to succeed, we have to do both inner and outer progress.' Today we see that India is surrounded by communalism, terrorism, exploitation and others. Its reason is that we have not made inner progress.

171. Creation of 'Savitri'

Sri Aurobindo started writing 'Savitri' in Vadodara. That time he was not aware that this work would be lengthier as his consciousness rises to higher levels. He gave a symbolic form to it in Pondicherry. It was the revelation of the sadhana and siddhi of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

How does Sri Aurobindo write? It is a matter of wonder. Nirodbaran wrote, 'Sri Aurobindo sat in his chair and wrote in the notebook put on the table. He worked on 'Savitri' at his bed in the afternoon. He would read all lines written before he began to add new lines. Earlier he had written ten versions of 'Savitri'. To prepare the final version of 'Savitri' he lifted passages and lines from them. In 1940 he took up the work of finalising 'Savitri'. He revealed his own sadhana through Aswapathy. He revised the cantos and prepared the final draft of this script.

Sri Aurobindo's eyesight became weak; so he told Nirodbaran to write the lines of 'Savitri'. Sri Aurobindo dictated the lines sitting in the bed and Nirodbaran wrote them sitting on the floor. It seemed as if The Mahabharat was written by Ganesha and spoken by Ved Vyas.

Sri Aurobindo took great pains to complete his epic. He used to recite lines for ten times before he put a coma. Nirodbaran wrote, 'He dictated lines after lines and told me to insert passages from the earlier draft. But these passages would be inserted in a new way. I was surprised to see it. He cared for appropriate words and symbols. He revised a passage again and again to put a coma. Hardly any poets had taken such pains. This question troubled the mind of Nirodbaran. One day he asked, 'Why do you work so hard on 'Savitri'?

Sri Aurobindo answered with great humility, 'The Supreme Levels of Consciousness do not come down easily. If it happened so, then it was not difficult to bring down the Supermind into material level. You are stupid people to believe in the rigidity of fate... One day it will happen; then I have to do preparation; I have to manage.'

'Savitri' is an epic of his Supreme Consciousness. He wrote, 'I have used 'Savitri' for my upper journey. I have started it on a mental plane. Every time I reach the higher and higher consciousness I write from there. I have not been satisfied with 'Savitri' having the best of lower nature. In fact, I have not thought of 'Savitri' to complete it. I have tried to deal with yoga from yogic consciousness and it is an experiment as a yogic epic.'

Sri Aurobindo worked on 'Savitri' till his last days. It was the outcome of Supreme Consciousness. When the Supermind starts working on earth, there will be the demand of such poem as 'Savitri'. 'Savitri' indicates the arrival of the Divine Age. It also shows the transformation of Death. It is indeed a future epic.

172. Inspiration of life

Kanaiyalal Munshi was student of Sri Aurobindo. He was influenced by Sri Aurobindo. When he grew up, he was not in touch with Sri Aurobindo. But he used to read Sri Aurobindo's literature and get inspiration from it. He had the strong desire to meet Sri Aurobindo, but he could not because he thought that the meeting would be just a formality. He did not meet Sri Aurobindo for more than forty years. In 1950 he had an earnest desire to meet Sri Aurobindo and he met him.

Munshi sought permission to meet Sri Aurobindo. The Secretary answered, 'Sri Aurobindo did not meet sadhaka on the days except the Darshan Days; but he would meet Munshi because Munshi was his student.' Munshi reached Pondicherry in July after getting permission.

Munshi was highly impressed by Sri Aurobindo. In Delhi he said, 'I saw a European type professor turning to yoga from 1904 to 1906. Under his influence, we students wanted to know more and more about yoga. That professor had become a Mahayogi. He was eager to see Sri Aurobindo. He wrote:

I met him after forty years. I could see that he had totally changed. He was an image of ananda. Around him was the atmosphere of peace. He was speaking slowly, but his words touched my heart.

Munshi spoke about Sri Aurobindo in the Convocation Address of Mumbai University. He said, 'I had seen him last in Mumbai. But then I had seen him differently. I had the darshan of a handsome personality. There had been the environment of peace around him. Sri Aurobindo was sitting on a chair. His face had a flame and was shining. I wanted to adore him. His eyes had knowledge and wisdom. He was the embodiment of light... It was the inner light of illumination.'

He added, 'Sri Aurobindo was not a professor of the past nor was he philosopher who had inspired my life. He was an image of perfection; I had explained this perfection in my writings. I had seen this perfection in my dream and imagination. I had written it in my novels ... I had seen Shakti with beauty. I had thought that Sri Aurobindo would inspire many to transform life. I experienced that Sri Aurobindo was a great inspiration.'

Munshi spoke in New Delhi on 9th July 1950, 'I have the darshan of Sri Aurobindo. From his walk and from his clothes there flowed beauty. This beauty was far greater than the beauty that we see in common men.'

Munshi told his spiritual problem. He said, 'I am completely obstructed; the world is too much with me.' Sri Aurobindo replied, 'It is not necessary to leave the world for self realisation, but you should not be impatient. I have written that I will help you and I am helping you in my own ways. You have intense emotions and light. Move in your own ways. Have faith in your natural ability. I will pay attention to your progress.' Munshi was relieved by these words of Sri Aurobindo. Then he talked about Indian culture. Sri Aurobindo said, 'Rest assured that our culture will not be destroyed.'

Munshi talked about Sri Aurobindo's views on India-Pakistan division. Sri Aurobindo said, 'I see clearly united India.' He added, 'We have to bring Pakistan in circle.' He also explained how this unity be formed, but Munshi, however had his own doubts. He wrote, 'The way I see our political leaders, I doubt what Sri Aurobindo says.' His doubts have come true. But Sri Aurobindo had foreseen India's unity. Perhaps it will materialise in some form or other in future.

Munshi returned from Pondicherry. He wrote, 'I felt humility before Sri Aurobindo. When I came out of the room after meeting him my mind was completely empty. One thing was certain and it was that Sri Aurobindo possessed something which attracted me time and again. This was the sweet image of Sri Aurobindo.'

173. Sri Aurobindo on the world events

Sri Aurobindo was a seer. He could foresee the cosmic problems. The far reaching result of the present problems was also known to him. Yogi could take part in the cosmic event in their own ways. His Evening Talks included some such things; it described the events or the results of the events which man could not see or know. The common men who lived in mental consciousness considered cosmic events as wonders of the world.

In 1918 Sri Aurobindo assured India's Independence to Ambubhai Purani. Nirodbaran wrote, 'When the warships of Japan enter the Hind Mahasagar, then India is to get freedom.' In a talk the Mother said, 'Listen to me attentively. England has not won India; but India has surrendered itself to England. Similarly, England will offer India's freedom in its own ways. And it will very soon.' The Mother's prediction came true.

Sri Aurobindo supported the British government. He supported Crips's mission; though many other leaders rejected it. He was aware

of India's problems in future. Had other leaders been awakened such as Sri Aurobindo India's position would have been leading in the world.

Some time Sri Aurobindo interfered to change the direction of cosmic events. When there was a Korean problem, he gave his opinion in favour of UN. There considerate people had gathered to oppose unjust attack. If UN had not interfered in Korea matter, there would have been the Third World War.

In 1950 Northern Korea attacked South Korea. In 'Mother India' Sri Aurobindo noted that it was a communist plan. Accordingly there would be attack on Tibet. These notes were shown to America's President Canady. Then Canady said, 'There is a typing mistake in it. In it was written 1950; really it should have been 1960. Do you want to say that communist China had said so in 1950?'

Sri Aurobindo talked about the friendship of Russia and China with Surendramohan Ghose. He said that this friendship would be broken and Russia would be isolated. And it happened so. He could foresee China as emerging a big power. He said that we had to fear China and not Russia. His prediction came true. In 1962 China attacked India.

Sri Aurobindo also predicted that communism would be deteriorated. He wrote in 'The Ideal of Human Unity', 'If an army is within the control of central power it would end the individual freedom. In it education, economics, sociology, knowledge, religion and others have to be same types. In doing so, it suppresses individual and regional institutions. Such progress is impossible. There would be a clash between the disciple of army and individual freedom. After communism perfect freedom would be established on natural collective freedom.' Communism disintegrated as Sri Aurobindo had predicted. Russia was divided into many free states. Poland, East Germany, Rumania, Hungary and others discarded communism. There was a movement for individual freedom in China.

'The Ideal of Human Unity' was published in 1919. Its corrected version was published in 1950. On page no. 91 Sri Aurobindo wrote, 'Europe has initiated for free and united states.' In 1950 united Europe came into being. Europe has unity between one country and another.

Sri Aurobindo desired an association of Asia. SAARC was the first step in this direction. This association would be stronger; disputes between these countries would disappear. Besides this, Sri Aurobindo told Munshi that India would be united. The emergence of Bangladesh

proved that Pakistan was formed on a wrong foundation. Of course, there are many who doubt about the unity of India and Pakistan. But the words of Mahayogi will come true in times to come.

Sri Aurobindo dreams of human unity. He talks of the world government. Today it will appear to be a distant dream. But Sri Aurobindo's aspiration will come true. He wrote, 'The human unity will not be only a successful ideal; it will be implemented. Human unity will be in the hands of united humanity.'

174. Conscious Samadhi

Sri Aurobindo went to solitary room in order to enlighten physical consciousness in 1926. The period from 1926 to 1938 was exclusively for him. Only the Mother and Champaklal could enter his room. He did tapasya for twelve continuous years. Then there was a break because of an accident to Sri Aurobindo. A few more sadhakas came near to Sri Aurobindo. He became well within six months, but he could not dissociate the disciples who had served him unconditionally. He was in touch with disciples who provided him external news. But in this period Sri Aurobindo continued to do yoga for the Supermind. Of course, this yoga for the Supermind was known only to him and the Mother. The disciples observed how Sri Aurobindo did his works. This observation was really the suggestion of yoga.

Sri Aurobindo used to read the daily named 'Hindu' from 9 to 10 in the morning. He rested from 3 to 4 in the afternoon. He was alone during this period. Some time he drank a glass of water. What did Sri Aurobindo do during this long period of the rest? The Mother informed, 'He was doing yogic works; but the disciples did not know. They could see their guru sitting in samadhi for hours. Some time his eyes flickered and then were fixed on the wall. Though they were fixed on the wall, it seemed that they were fixed in some other regions. His face was shining with smile. He was lost in samadhi and yet he was conscious of his living relationship with the sadhakas. It was his conscious samadhi. He demanded the things that he needed. He meditated with open eyes. Though his eyes were open they did not see external things. The Mother brought a glass of water. When Sri Aurobindo was in Samadhi, she used to stand and wait till Sri Aurobindo came out of Samadhi. Sri Aurobindo was annoyed to see the Mother in that position. He would say, 'Are, Are.' After drinking water he would again go to meditation. He meditated for hours. That

time the disciples did the works allotted to them. Their works, however, did not distract Sri Aurobindo. Sometime the disciples became restless because they spoke loudly. But some disciples were familiar with Sri Aurobindo's concentration. They would say, 'Do you believe that your small talk will disturb him?' He has climbed to the Supreme plane of consciousness. There even the explosion of bombs is not heard.'

Sri Aurobindo did the sadhana of the descent of the Supermind for days together. Even the Nature could not dare to disturb him. Once there was a cyclone in Pondicherry. Sri Aurobindo was alone in his room. The Mother thought that the windows of Sri Aurobindo's room were open; so things in the room would be scattered. She went to close the windows. To her surprise she found utter peace in the room and Sri Aurobindo was concentrating. Neither wind nor rain could enter Sri Aurobindo's room. Indeed, neither man nor Nature could disturb Sri Aurobindo's concentration.

What did Aurobindo do in this conscious Samadhi? Sri Aurobindo wrote to Nirodbaran, 'When I have to do some special works I go for concentration.' These special works were to make yogic efforts to bring down the Supramental Consciousness, to work on the cosmic level and to help the sadhakas in their sadhana. Nirodbaran wrote, 'We know only the surface life of Sri Aurobindo. We do not know about his inner life. I have not 'the divine eye' as Arjuna had. Yet sometimes we could see his divinity. Sometimes his peace and shakti descended into the disciples; so the disciples knew his shakti. They felt that they were living in some divine world. This was the effect of living with Sri Aurobindo.'

175. Expression of Love

The disciples of Aurobindo had many limitations. True, Sri Aurobindo himself was an incarnation. Yet he accepted the disciples with limitations. He never snubbed the disciples nor did he spoke them with raised voices. He was neutral with his disciples. He had accepted all sadhakas in his consciousness. If he needed a thing, he would not name it. Yet there flowed divinity from his personality; nobody liked to go away from him.

Sadhakas had the privilege to have darshan of Sri Aurobindo on the Darshan Days and Birth-days. During this time they put their heads at the feet of Sri Aurobindo and Sri Aurobindo blessed them

with the golden fingers of his hands. He looked at the sadhakas and bestowed upon them his blessings. He touched them with divine love which liberated them from the limitations of humanity. He expressed his love for the sadhakas selflessly.

Once Satyendra wanted to use scent at Sri Aurobindo's hand on his birthday. He sought and got the permission of Sri Aurobindo. Satyendra used scent at Sri Aurobindo's hands with delicate touch. He was overjoyed. Sri Aurobindo might have been in the Supreme Consciousness, yet he came down to receive human love of a sadhaka.

Champaklal aspired to draw Sri Aurobindo's feet. But he did not want to give trouble to Sri Aurobindo. He thought of a plan. He put a piece of wood and covered it with paper. He requested Sri Aurobindo to put his feet on the paper so that he could draw. Sri Aurobindo agreed to oblige Champaklal. He also wrote his name and gave him his blessings.

Sri Aurobindo was open to all who had true heart. In 1949 Ustad Allauddin Khau came to Ashram; he strongly desired that Sri Aurobindo should hear his music. He put his request to Sri Aurobindo through a disciple. Allauddin played music from the room in front of Sri Aurobindo's room and Sri Aurobindo heard it pleasantly. Allauddin felt that his art of music was a great success.

Sri Aurobindo used to help sadhaka who did not live in Ashram. One such disciple requested him to help in court case. It was a false case, but he was a victim. He was to be imprisoned. Sri Aurobindo gave advices on the case and encouraged him. He was proved to be innocent.

Sri Aurobindo received thousand of complaints from outside men and women daily and answered them sincerely. He loved entire humanity because it was the embodiment of God.

176. Photographer in Ashram

Henry Kartiyar Bransau, a French photographer, came to Pondicherry to have his darshan on 24th April, 1950. He requested the Mother and Sri Aurobindo to allow him to have a photograph of darshan. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were against photography. For twenty five years not a single photograph of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo had been taken.

Once a photographer had a photo. The disciples told him that the Mother would be very angry. He was repentant; he went to the Mother

and said sorry to her because he had a photo without her permission. For twenty five years this rule was observed strictly in Ashram; no photograph would be taken.

The French photographer was an exception; he was allowed to have a photograph. All Ashramites were happy. The photograph was just a part of the divine plan. It gave information about the surface life of Sri Aurobindo.

Next day the Mother went to Sri Aurobindo and asked for taking some more photographs. Sri Aurobindo agreed. He would take some time to get ready.

‘How much time will he take?’ the Mother asked a disciple.

‘It will be nine,’ said the disciple.

‘Only half photo is to be taken; only the upper part of the body,’ said the Mother.

‘If the photo is to be drawn, then why not the complete photo,’ said Champaklal.

‘If Aurobindo says so.’ said the Mother.

‘The Mother, if you aspired, then Sri Aurobindo would not say ‘no’,’ said the disciple.

‘Yet, you ask Aurobindo,’ said the Mother.

The photograph was taken; it gave the impression of a divine yogi. However, the devoted sadhakas told that the photographs did not give the picture of golden colour of Sri Aurobindo. Yet the photographs give us the ideas of Sri Aurobindo’s personality which has become gold with tap and sadhana. Had these photographs been not taken, the visitors would have been deprived of seeing a yogi. In God’s plan nothing remained incomplete.

177. Decision of Sri Aurobindo

Sri Aurobindo practised yoga to transform physical consciousness directly. Due to his sadhana the physical consciousness was open to the Supermind but it could not possess and transform. It was a material consciousness. Matter opposed the Supramental Consciousness. Sri Aurobindo wanted some foundation at the material level to receive new consciousness. And that foundation was to have an able body. He gave up his material body so that he could get an able body that would receive the Supramental Consciousness.

In 1949, he said to the Mother, ‘One of us must go. Only then the work will be accelerated.’

The Mother said, 'I will go. Now I desire to give up my body.'

'No. You have not to go. I'll go. You continue to do my works.'

The Mother insisted on giving up her body. Again Sri Aurobindo said, 'No, you have not to go. You alone will be able to complete these materialist works.'

The Mother accepted Sri Aurobindo's 'adesh'. She said, 'I have used all my powers that he should not leave his body but he suffered a lot due to this. He had decided to go. The Supreme God had decided. Why? I had asked this question many times; but I was helpless before Sri Aurobindo's decision.' Sri Aurobindo said, 'You are totally rejected to leave your body. You have to be here. Your body is necessary for the act of transformation. Transformation is not possible without your body.'

Sri Aurobindo had taken decision about his body two years before. He said to Nirodbaran, 'I have conquered disease and death. Only poison would bring an end to my life. Poison was not possible for him in Ashram. So he used his 'wish' for this purpose. Had he desired to live he would certainly have lived for hundred years of life. But he had taken the decision to leave his body.'

There was no disease in the Supramental Consciousness. Sri Aurobindo had cured himself many times with spiritual power. He had also cured others. Amal Kiran wrote, 'The transforming power of the Supermind was active even in the cells of his body. It had a power not only to work on the mental plane but also on physical plane.' His disciples had experienced this power of transformation. The telegram offices were the moot witnesses how Sri Aurobindo cured the diseases of the visitors. He was consulted even for those diseases which the doctors had said that they could not be cured. Sri Aurobindo had received many telegrams of 'thank'.

Sri Aurobindo was the yogi of the Supermind. The Supramental Consciousness is not only to bring down in the inner consciousness of the sadhaka but also in his outer consciousness. The Supramental Consciousness was, in fact, above the cosmic consciousness; it brings down in earth consciousness to divinise material life.

Sri Aurobindo had decided to leave his body, so he did not care for his body. As a result there was a problem of prostate gland. Since Aurobindo did not use his Shakti it became acute.

Sri Aurobindo first removed this disease with yogic power. Then he had again the problem of prostate gland. This time Dr. Sanyal of Kolkata was in Ashram. Sri Aurobindo knew all details of this disease

from him. He controlled this disease with his spiritual power. So when Dr. Sanyal came next time he could say that he was well.

But Sri Aurobindo became indifferent to worldly things. No disciples or sadhakas could touch him. He did not talk even a few words with his beloved disciples. He was disinterested even in the Mother. The disciples could not understand Sri Aurobindo's behaviours. How could they? Sri Aurobindo had taken firm decision to leave his body.

178. Haste in completion of works

Each action of Sri Aurobindo was an expression of perfect consciousness. He never did a work in haste. He worked in eternity. His disciples had not seen him work at random. Suddenly he had started completing his works in hurry.

To begin with, he took up the work of revisions of 'Savitri'. He revised one after another canto of three books and gave them for publication.

The writing and publication were done simultaneously. Sri Aurobindo dictated 400/500 hundred lines of 'The Everlasting Day' daily. The work of revision was very fast. Everybody in Ashram asked, 'How much is left in 'Savitri'?'

Besides 'Savitri', he had many other works to do. For example, it was to see the editorials of the magazines of Ashram, to read essays, articles, poems and to correct the books of the sadhakas. He had also many letters to write to the distant visitors as well as to the Ashramites. But he had wonderful strength. If somebody read an article, he would ask, 'Have you not read it out before?'

'No, Sir.'

'Are you sure?'

'Because, this article has come from today's post.'

'But it seems to me that I have heard word by word.'

Sri Aurobindo's consciousness was vast; it gained the knowledge by complete identity.

Sri Aurobindo did much hard work to finalise 'Savitri'. When his tables were open, lines after lines and passages after passages of 'Savitri' were there. Even the note books and open pages had lines of 'Savitri'. It showed how hard Sri Aurobindo had worked to prepare the final draft of 'Savitri'. As it is, it may be described as an overhead poetry or as an epic of the soul.

In the meanwhile there was a fresh demand for a book from the press. Sri Aurobindo prepared 'The Future Poetry'. After this he turned back to 'Savitri'. He complained, 'I have no time for my fundamental work.' Nirodbaran asked, 'Gurudev, which is your fundamental work?'

Sri Aurobindo replied, 'Take up the work of 'Savitri'. I want to complete it soon.'

Nirodbaran was taken aback. There was no haste in Sri Aurobindo's work. Today he found his gurudev in different mood. He was surprised.

Ultimately, 'Savitri' was completed. Sri Aurobindo said, 'Ah, is it over?' He felt tiredness. He asked, 'Now what remains?'

'The Canto of Death and Conclusion.'

'Oh! We will see them later.'

But that time never came. These two cantos were not revised. They were taken from earlier drafts. The epic of 'Savitri' was completed in the month of November; other writings were over in the same month. Then Sri Aurobindo turned into utter silence.

179. Profound silence

The disease of Sri Aurobindo came serious after the completion of 'Savitri'. There was trouble in urination. Sri Aurobindo became silent. Of course, the disciples tried to bring him out to talk but he answered only in 'yes' or 'no'. His silence made the disciples restless. One day Satyendra asked courageously, 'Why are you so serious?'

He answered, 'Time is much serious.' Then no one had the courage to ask any more questions.

In his urine albymine and acetone were detected; they were dangerous. When it was informed him, he said, 'Inform Mother.' It showed that he had little interest in his body. There were 10 days to 24th November Darshan Day. Dr. Satyavrat Sen, F.R.C.S. of London, had come to Ashram. He was consulted. He advised operation as a cure; but he knew that Sri Aurobindo would not give consent to operation.

One night Sri Aurobindo's urination was stopped. Dr. Nirodbaran went to Dr. Sanyal, Sri Aurobindo urinated normally. Sri Aurobindo asked 'Why did he go to Dr. Sanyal? Has his mind whirled?'

When Dr. Sen came, Sri Aurobindo said, 'See, I have a dream. I have urinated well in it. Trouble started when I was awake. Otherwise

I have no trouble.’ Nirodbaran was a doctor. He knew how painful it was!

Next day the Mother said, ‘You have spent these many years with Sri Aurobindo. Why are you upset then?’

They said, ‘What should we do? Are we treating an ordinary man? This is Sri Aurobindo.’

‘That is why you should not be perturbed. You don’t know. His divine power is always with him; it helps him and specially those who serve Sri Aurobindo.’ The Mother made the disciples fearless and ready to face the situation.

The day of 24th November was very near. Sri Aurobindo was to sit for hours that day. Doctors advised not to give trouble to Sri Aurobindo and stop the Darshan Day. But devotees, disciples and sadhakas wanted Sri Aurobindo to give his blessings before he departed. Sri Aurobindo declared that he would give darshan without caring for his physical troubles. All Ashramites were happy; they thought that the health of their Gurudev was improving.’ They started waiting for darshan.

Finally, it was 24 November. Sri Aurobindo gave darshan to all Ashramites and visitors. He blessed all. Thought from higher consciousness descended in them. They saw a divine body free of any diseases. They were very grateful to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. There was an aura of light around Sri Aurobindo. He lifted his hand to bless them; it was as if he was pouring divine consciousness in them. No one realised that it was the last darshan of their guru.

The darshan was over; Sri Aurobindo returned to his room. Then the disease leaped over him. There was obstruction in urination. Catheter was used. Then, fever came to his delicate body. The disciples and the doctors were confused. The Mother sent a telegram to Dr. Sanyal to come immediately from Kolkata.

All doctors were worried. They sought permission of the Mother to use antibiotics on Sri Aurobindo. The Mother said, ‘Antibiotics are high power medicines. It may harm Sri Aurobindo. He himself is capable of curing his disease. Give him some simple medicines.’ The Mother knew that Sri Aurobindo had not taken medicines for fifty years. If more medicines were given to him, they would harm. Sri Aurobindo’s body was made from five cosmic elements. It was not a simple body; it was a shining body. Nirodbaran wrote, ‘When he dictated me, his shining face, his delicate fingers and his arms were illumined. Every part of his body was representing as if it was god.’ In

such a body he was able to remove disease; he did not need any external treatments. Yet the disease captured his whole body. The doctors and disciples were confused over Sri Aurobindo's illness. They asked, 'Why do you not use divine power to cure your disease?'

'No, I will not.'

It was an emphatic 'no'. All were silent. But a disciple had courage to ask him, 'But why?'

'I will not be able to make you understand and you will never understand.' It showed that Sri Aurobindo had already decided to leave his body. Sri Aurobindo, in fact, accepted the problems raised by the laws of the Inconscient and the Supramental Consciousness to transform it. The Mother said, 'One day I went to Sri Aurobindo's room, then I saw the Supermind in his room.'

Sri Aurobindo had offered himself to complete the works given to him by God; it was the divinisation of the earth. He was busy with that work; he almost remained silent thereafter. But nobody except the Mother knew this reason.

180. In service of Gurudeva

Dr. Sanyal was taking rest after the day's works. Then he received the Mother's telegram, 'Come immediately by plane.' He was stunned. He thought, 'What has happened? Is Sri Aurobindo not well?' When he was in Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo himself had said that his health was o.k. and he had no disease. Then what had happened?' He was worried. But he had no time to think.

Next day he flew from Kolkata to Chennai and reached the playground in Pondicherry to meet the Mother. It was the day of 30 November 1950. The Mother welcomed him with a smile. She said, 'I guessed that you would come to Pondicherry on that day.' She talked of Sri Aurobindo's sickness. She said that she would come after completing the works of children on the playground.

Dr. Sanyal collected information from Dr. Nirodbaran and came to Sri Aurobindo's room. He did 'pranam' to him. He wrote, 'My divine patient was half sleeping in the bed. His eyes were closed. It seemed as if he had no problems. I felt that an image was sleeping in deep peace.'

'Gurudev, see; who has come?' said Champaklal.

Sri Aurobindo flickered his eyes and then closed them. Again Champaklal said, 'Gurudev, see, Dr. Sanyal has come.'

The lotus-eyes of Sri Aurobindo were open. He smiled happily. Dr. Sanyal was overjoyed by seeing this scene. He wrote, 'How otherworldly was his smile? How beautiful was it? He had a divine ananda. I did pranam to him and he blessed me. He touched my head thrice. All my thoughts ceased. A profound peace and firmness surrounded him.'

Sri Aurobindo closed his lotus-eyes. Only his breathing was heard. Champaklal said, 'Gurudev has given you darshan and smile.'

'Yes, it was really a blessing. I had no words to express it.'

Dr. Sanyal received the blessings of Sri Aurobindo. He was supposed to examine Sri Aurobindo. He asked:

'What is your problem?'

'Problem! I have no problem.'

'But you have a urine problem?'

'Yes, it is. Some problems I have. But I have solved them?'

Dr. Sanyal gathered the report on Sri Aurobindo's disease. He examined the urine report. It had some albumins and some sugar. He had some infection too. He wanted to give antibiotics to cure this disease.

Next day on the First December Sri Aurobindo's health was ok. There was no fever. He had some refreshment in the evening. Dr. Sanyal was massaging his head. He asked, 'Do you like this massage?' Sri Aurobindo said in fun, 'Yes, you went to England on fellowship; where do you learn this massage?' Dr. Sanyal performed his duty carefully. He said, 'Let us examine your blood for biochemical details.' Sri Aurobindo replied, 'You doctors think only diseases and medicines; but there is upper knowledge over your medicines. I do not need to test anything.' All were happy thinking that Sri Aurobindo would cure himself by yoga. There was a proof to this fact. Sri Aurobindo had removed the disease of a far-off living old man's sister in the North. The doctors gave up the case; then Sri Aurobindo cured her with his spiritual power at the request of the old man. He was getting information of the patient daily. In the meanwhile the information was stopped. He complained that he could not cure the patient if the information did not come to him daily. So information was given to him daily; he cured the patient. So the sadhakas were hopeful that Sri Aurobindo would cure himself as well.

Next day there was an increase of temperature of just one degree. That day there was the celebration of Ashram's school. There were programmes on the playground. More than two hundred sadhakas had

participated into them. The Mother had taken part in this programme to encourage young sadhakas. All were enjoying the programmes on the playground; but a cruel drama was being played in Sri Aurobindo's room. Nobody knew about this drama; only the Mother was aware of it.

The celebration was over; the news was given to Sri Aurobindo. He said, 'Oh! It is over.' As if all were over; this was the emotion on his face. The Mother came to Sri Aurobindo's room after the programmes on the playground. She was very serious. Dr. Sanyal said to use antibiotics on Sri Aurobindo; but the Mother denied because they would give much pain to Sri Aurobindo's body. Dr. Sanyal was only to give simple medicines for small symptoms.

Sri Aurobindo's health was ok. on the third day. Temperature had come down. He drank the juice of fruit in the morning. Dr. Sanyal said, 'Sri Aurobindo's health is improving. If you permit, I'll go to Kolkata. The Mother became very serious. She stared at him. He started trembling. He felt pain inside; it was not the proper request. He immediately said, 'The Mother, I will postpone my going to Kolkata for a few days.' The Mother smiled and said that it was o.k.

The Mother stopped Dr. Sanyal thus and saved him from lifelong repentance. He came to know that after two days Sri Aurobindo ended his physical life. Dr. Sanyal was stopped to participate in Sri Aurobindo's last days.

181. Condition of deep Samadhi

Sri Aurobindo had control over his body to see the completion of 'Savitri', 'Darshan Day, and Ashram school's celebration. When the celebration was over and the news was given to him, he lifted his control and allowed the body to perform its natural dharma. Then disease attacked his body with full speed.

On the third December temperature reached 101degree. There was trouble in breathing. The Mother came in Sri Aurobindo's room at 12.00 noon and started examining Sri Aurobindo. The disciples requested her to do something. She had a spoonful of fruit juice and put it to Sri Aurobindo's lips. She took the doctors in the adjacent

rooms and said, 'Sri Aurobindo is completely conscious, but he has lost interest in himself.'

No doctor could understand what the Mother said. Dr.Satyavrat said, 'But we must provide adequate medicines to him. Otherwise, how would pain be removed? 'Much depended upon Sri Aurobindo,' said the Mother. Sri Aurobindo's health was not good. So the Mother did not go to the playground. The disciples were much worried. But the divine patient was trying to bring down the Supreme Consciousness into his body. He had no interest in physical pain or trouble. He used to drink some fruit juice, but mostly he was in Samadhi. He never complained of his pain. This is how the third day passed.

The Mother went to Sri Aurobindo's room at 11.00 p.m. She put a glass of fruit juice to him and he drank it like an obedient boy. Then he took rest. There was no sign of decreasing his pain.

The Mother took the doctors to the adjacent room and said, 'Now Sri Aurobindo had no interest in himself.' Dr.Sanyal pleaded her to give intravenous medicine to Sri Aurobindo from next day. Again the Mother said, 'Sri Aurobindo had no interest in himself.' All were restless listening to the Mother.

Night passed. Nirod and Champaklal were standing near Sri Aurobindo. His lips flickered; perhaps Sri Aurobindo needed water to drink. The two disciples were ready with water. In fact, they took all care of Sri Aurobindo and spent night without sleep.

The Mother came at 9.00 a.m.; she talked to the doctors in the adjacent room, 'Sri Aurobindo is in blissful mood and he takes interest in all.'

No disciples understood the Mother. They still thought that Sri Aurobindo would cure himself with his own spiritual power. Sri Aurobindo seemed a little better. So Dr.Sanyal asked, 'How do you feel?'

'Very well', said Sri Aurobindo. Then he inquired, 'What is happening in Bengal?' Dr.Sanyal explained the situation in Bengal. He asked, 'Will God not help Bengal?' Sri Aurobindo answered, 'Yes, if Bengal needs it.' He closed his eyes and became peaceful.

But this situation did not last. The story of improvement proved false. His breathing trouble had started from the noon. Temperature had reached 102°F. Pain increased, but Sri Aurobindo tolerated it. The Mother came to Sri Aurobindo's room at noon and stood examining

Sri Aurobindo. Then she took Dr.Sanyal to adjacent room and said, 'Sri Aurobindo is pulling his life.'

Sri Aurobindo was unconscious. But when something was given to drink, he came to consciousness. He sipped two/three spoons and wiped out his face with his own handkerchief. Again he became unconscious. Dr.Sanyal wrote, 'Sri Aurobindo has fainted quite a long time. I have not seen such a patient in my life; he has fainted for two hours; then he comes to consciousness. Again he faints. This fainting was quite different.'

It seemed that a consciousness comes to Sri Aurobindo and makes him well. When that consciousness goes away from the body, then Sri Aurobindo feels pain and trembles. Of course, Sri Aurobindo seems not to be in a body.

Pain increased; the doctors wanted to test his blood. Though Sri Aurobindo did not like it, he gave permission to test his blood for the satisfaction of disciples. Hope is to be made in the body; it is very painful. There is kidney failure. Doctors gave some medicines but Sri Aurobindo was in samadhi.

Sri Aurobindo was comparatively well at 5.00 p.m. on that day. He was completely awake. He expressed his desire to sit in the chair. He sat in the chair and became a different man. He was firm, peaceful and full of ananda. Disciples said, 'Ah! Today gurudev looks very handsome!'

He was in this condition for some time. Then again he felt restlessness. He was made to sleep in the bed. Breathing increased; urine was practically stopped; pain increased. His body was caught with pain. Dr.Sanyal, Nirod and Champaklal were constantly observing him. From external point of view he was unconscious; internally he was very much conscious.

Sri Aurobindo came to consciousness. He embraced his devoted Champaklal, kissed him and again was lost to samadhi. He again and again embraced and kissed Champaklal coming intermittently from samadhi. Champaklal did not expect it; he wanted to touch him only once. But his gurudev satisfied his aspiration for more than one time. Sri Aurobindo embraced Dr.Sanyal and Dr.Nirod too. It was the same Aurobindo who had not named his disciples and who had not shown his love for them. But at his last time he gave emotional satisfaction to all of them.

He expressed his sense of gratitude eight hours before he departed for ever. Disciples had not thought of this thing particularly at the

time of crisis. He had trouble in breathing. How delicate was the heart of gurudev! It was full of love for the disciples. And disciples were all happy with this limitless love. Sri Aurobindo lastly went into deep samadhi.

182. Serious condition

He was not well on fourth day. Yet the Mother had gone to the playground. She had not gone to the playground on the previous day. The children and disciples were disappointed. Since the Mother was absent; everybody thought that Sri Aurobindo's condition might have been very serious. One disciple wrote, 'We could not imagine the seriousness of condition. The Mother was peaceful and indifferent. When on third December she did not come, we thought that we were thrown into night. When she came on the fourth December, we thought that the evil dream had passed.' However, no sadhakas knew the crisis that Sri Aurobindo was confronting with.

The Mother returned to Ashram and put the garland given by disciple at his feet. He looked at Sri Aurobindo with very kind eyes. Dr. Sanyal was moved to see the Mother. He went to adjacent room; the Mother also went there. She was informed that Dr. Satyendra had given glucose to Sri Aurobindo. She said, 'Aurobindo is withdrawing himself; he has no interest in his self.' She went to her room. But disciples and doctors were with Sri Aurobindo. They thought, 'Why did he not take interest in his self? He could cure his disease if he wanted. Why did he not do?' Nirodbaran wrote, 'I knew that signs of bringing end to his life, but I could not believe that Sri Aurobindo would leave us so soon.'

He added, 'We were hoping against hope. We were thinking that there would be some miracles. We also knew that he had no faith in miracles. If he had wanted to save himself, he would not have allowed diseases to grow. But we lived in illusion and it was natural to be in illusion.'

Again a cold night started. Sri Aurobindo was in his samadhi. The Mother came at 11.00 p.m. and made Sri Aurobindo drink a half glass of tomato juice. Dr.Sanyal wrote, 'It was a unique scene. The body was restless. Suddenly a consciousness entered into it and the body became peaceful. Sri Aurobindo came to consciousness; he had then no disease. He drank juice. The consciousness withdrew from him; again the body had caught pain.' Sri Aurobindo went to samadhi.

The Mother came to Sri Aurobindo's room at midnight. She looked at him constantly. He looked at the Mother. Their eyesight met; both talked 'something' which was difficult to decipher for the sadhakas. The Mother told disciples through her eyesight. She said, 'He informed me through his look that he would withdraw from his body. But he never wanted to leave the body in my presence. So I was not to be present.' The Mother accepted Sri Aurobindo's 'adesh' without any protest and went to her room.

Midnight was over; it was 1.00 a.m. on 5th December. The Mother came to Sri Aurobindo's room; she stood for some time near his bed. Then she sent for Dr. Sanyal and asked him, 'What do you think? Could I be spared for one o'clock?'

Dr.Sanyal was perplexed. He knew that when the Mother withdrew, she was roaming in subtle worlds. This time no body could go to her room to disturb. This was the strict rule. It was difficult to say when the Mother was needed to be there. Dr. Sanyal replied with anxiety, 'The Mother, I cannot say it.'

Then the Mother said, 'Call me when the times come.' She returned to her room.

183. At the time of departure

There was the darkness of Night. The Mother had withdrawn to her room. Dr. Sanyal, Dr. Nirod and Champaklal were sitting near Sri Aurobindo. Dr. Sanyal was combing the hair of Sri Aurobindo. Dr. Nirod and Champaklal were touching the feet of Sri Aurobindo. All the three concentrated on their 'gurudev'. After the Mother left, Sri Aurobindo came to consciousness and asked, 'What is time?' Then he said, 'Nirod, give me some water.' He had not named 'Nirod' before. Nirod expressed his gratitude; it made him happy. Norod wrote, 'Those words were carved on my heart. Obviously they were mere words. We worship the Mother and Sri Aurobindo as 'avatars'. One touch or one word was a precious gift to us. Especially to me, it was the 'sound' of the word that told that Sri Aurobindo had not forgotten me even at his last time. It assured that he would not leave me. Of course, I had not adequate qualification to serve him.'

He drank cold water and went to samadhi. Dr.Sanyal wrote: 'Any thing can happen at any time. Only a miracle can save us and the world.' Then I saw 'something' in Sri Aurobindo's body. Sri Aurobindo took his hand up. He put his one hand on the heart. Then

came Death; Sri Aurobindo's breathing was stopped. I called Nirod to send for the Mother. Then it was 1.20 a.m.

The Mother came soon to Sri Aurobindo's room. She stood at the feet of Sri Aurobindo. There was serious expression on her face. Dr. Sanyal wrote, 'I could not see at her eyes. I examined Sri Aurobindo at 1.26 a.m. he was no more with us. Champaklal could not face this situation. He cried, 'The Mother, tell that the doctor is telling lies. Sri Aurobindo is alive. The Mother looked at Champaklal; he was calm down. The Mother stood there for more than half an hour.'

Dr.Sanyal had put his hand on the forehead of Sri Aurobindo; but where was Sri Aurobindo? He had become the man of the past. Was he really not there? There was the flow of ideas in Dr. Sanyal. He looked at the Mother; the Mother understood his pain. She put her hands on his head. Dr.Sanyal's all thoughts subsided; his pain had gone. Then he asked, 'What is to be done?'

The Mother said quietly, 'We will give samadhi near that service tree. The place of samadhi has been decided beforehand. Every thing is ready in divine consciousness. The Mother prepared all to face the situation.

184. Divine Body

Sri Aurobindo was no more with us. His darshan was divine. His face with beard, big forehead, nose like Garuna, and smile were sweet. Who could tell that Sri Aurobindo was no more? A flame was pervading through that body. But his disciples who served Gurudev for twelve years were surprised with this accident. The Mother said to them, 'To express shocks for him is to insult Sri Aurobindo. He is with us in our life and consciousness.' Then she reminded them of the rites to be performed. She said, 'First we have to get the certificate of death from the French doctor. Then we have to inform Ashramites and other publics. Nalinikant, Pavitra and Amrita came there as soon as they got the news. Pavitra was weeping loudly.

Dr.Sukumaran from Government Hospital came. He and Dr.Sanyal signed the certificate. The photographers of Ashram were permitted to have photos of the divine body.' The Ashramites were informed; they gathered in the courtyard of Ashram. One Ashramite had written, 'We were told to come out of our houses in the morning and we gathered. Many of us did not know why we had gathered. Yet we had felt that something extraordinary might have happened.'

He added, 'We entered at two o'clock into the Ashram. There was the environs of sadness. We went to Sri Aurobindo's room. But Sri Aurobindo was not there. There was different atmosphere.'

'Was it a last darshan? We felt that we had to reach perfect perfection. We saw that the body had not withered; it was shining with light; it was indescribable. We did pranam to the body and left.'

As information of Sri Aurobindo's sad demise was known, people flowed to Pondicherry. Besides Ashramites, there were doctors, advocates, rich people, poor people, labourers and others. They wanted to give their glowing tributes to 'Gurudev.'

The fifth December was over. Dr.Sanyal came to Sri Aurobindo's room. He wrote, 'What a wonderful shape it was! How beautiful! There was no sign of death on him. There was no change in the body.' The Mother said to him, 'As long as the Supramental light is in his body, the body will not show any sign of death. The Supramental light may be for a day or for many days.'

'The Mother, you say and I see that light', said Dr.Sanyal. The Mother showed him golden light around Sri Aurobindo; she also showed it to Champaklal. Sri Aurobindo had departed from body to bring down this Supramental light. There was no body, no life, no mind, and no heart; he was all light. The Mother had said, 'Humanity did not know how great sacrifice Sri Aurobindo had made. If the earth was a little more receptive, Sri Aurobindo would not have to leave his body. This had created a possibility of the soul with Supramental Consciousness in earthly body.'

Dr.Nirod wrote, 'I saw the entire body wrapped with golden light. The body was fresh and wonderful. Its darshan removed sadness within me.' When the Mother returned to go to her room, I said, 'The Mother, will not Aurobindo come in this body?'

'No, if he is to come in this body he would not have left it. Till his body has the Supramental light we will not be able to give samadhi.'

Doctors say that if the body is left with disease it becomes black; much deterioration in the body is there. But two days have passed; Sri Aurobindo's body is fresh and full of light. The French surgeon also has certified that Sri Aurobindo's body has no signs of death.

An Ashramite has written his experiences of the third day, 'Hours and hours were passing, and we saw that the body was fresh and full of light... There was no change in the golden colour of his body.'

Fifth day came. It was Saturday. All were informed to have last darshan in the afternoon. Thousand of people had his darshan with

tears. Then light withdrew because there was no peace in the gathering. Only after one hundred and eleven hours, Sri Aurobindo's body was prepared for samadhi.

A box of rosewood was made. In it the bottom was with pillow. His body was wrapped into golden embroidered clothes. Then the body was laid into the box. On the box was carved Sri Aurobindo's symbol. The box was closed. Samadhi was given.

It was the evening of 9th December. Thousands of people were standing there. But there was complete silence. The Mother in white dress was observing the whole thing from the upper window. She instructed Champaklal to pour first soil in samadhi. There was no mantra; there was no rite. In utter silence his body was given samadhi.

That samadhi spread the rays of Supramental Consciousness in the world. All sadhakas and visitors experienced profound peace there. The Mother got carved the following prayer on the Samadhi.

O divine cover that our guru had taken
We are grateful to you with infinite bhava
And Oh Guru! Pranam to your feet
You have done many things for us!
You started work, fought battle, suffered wounds,
Had hopes; did tapasya.
Oh Guru, you resolved to get all siddhis
Began to realise those hopes
And realised all Siddhis for us.
Pranam to you, and I pray.
We shall not forget our debt to you
Even for a moment.

Those who visit the Samadhi realise this prayer. Because Sri Aurobindo is sleeping there for ever.

185. Sri Aurobindo Ashram

Sri Aurobindo Ashram is quite different. Its foundation is never laid. It grows on its own for the manifestation of divine consciousness. In 1910 when Sri Aurobindo came to Pondicherry, there were four/five youths to do yoga with him. Slowly the numbers increased. Sri Aurobindo kept some disciples with him and others were accommodated in rented houses. On 24 November 1926 there

was the descent of Overmind in Sri Aurobindo's body as well as in earth consciousness. Sri Aurobindo withdrew in solitariness. Then there were 24 sadhakas. The Mother took the responsibility of their external sadhanas. Perhaps that was the beginning of Ashram.

Before the Mother came to Pondicherry, she had met some people of spiritual aspiration. They expressed their aspiration for realising the Divine. But they could not materialise their aspiration because they had to earn money to sustain life. They wasted their lives in doing small things. The Mother used to think that if God gave her an opportunity she would create a new world in which these who love God would not worry for eating, drinking and fulfilling the necessary things of life. They would be free to do sadhana for the realisation of God. Her dream had played a greater role in the foundation of Ashram. God gave her an opportunity and she created a new world in which Ashramites had not to worry for material things. The Mother took the responsibility of satisfying inner and outer needs of those sadhakas who had come to do the sadhana under her guidance. Here freedom was given to the collective lives. The sadhakas were practising the Integral yoga. In this yoga there was no initiation, no rites, and no individual pooja. There was to realise God living in the world. After realisation of God sadhakas had to manifest Him in lives. Life had to be lived from new consciousness so that there was perfect manifestation of God. This is the mantra on which Ashram has been working.

There are very few rules in Ashram. But each has to change his external nature in the light of inner consciousness according to his own swabhava and Shakti. Here is no difference between man and woman. All have equality. Of course, there is prohibition to smoking, intoxication and sex.

There is a unique environs in the Ashram. It is full of peace and ananda. The reason is the sadhana of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Every work is to be done as an offering to God. Therefore, the work is done there in the best possible manner. The Mother had said, 'To work is to pray with body.' No work is small; no work is great. Every Ashramite does a work as an offering to the Mother, as a prayer to God. The Mother had told us, 'You make a progress in mediation; but you make ten times progress while you do a work.'

Sri Aurobindo did not believe in publicity nor did he want to be a guru of indifferent people. He encouraged those enlightened men and women who were open to God and who wanted to realise God in their

lives. Such people came to Pondicherry to seek guidance of spirituality from Sri Aurobindo. They were Hindu, Muslim, Christian and of other religions. America's President Wilson's daughter had read Sri Aurobindo's 'Essays on the Gita' and came to Pondicherry to have Sri Aurobindo's darshan. She wrote 'Neither my father nor me has thought of things to have happened; how could Aurobindo foresee them sitting in the corner of the world.' Scientists, professors, professionals, scholars of various subjects, politicians and others came to Pondicherry on their own to do sadhana.

The Mother gave permission to the children of those who lived in war affected areas. The Second World War was over; yet children did not go to their houses. The Mother created an atmosphere in Ashram for children's development. She started schools for children. There were many programmes for children. So far only the grown up people were Ashramites; then the children came in. Ashram's life became perhaps more conscious; there were many activities.

The Mother entrusted works to the Ashramites according to their interest and inner consciousness. For example, the doctors were to count pieces of woods; famous poets were given the works of filling up tiffins; and the famous scientists were encouraged to clean vessels. Ashramites did the works for the pleasure of the Mother. Sri Aurobindo said, 'We have to do works without expecting its fruits. But this is not enough. We should not have attachments to works. No work is small; no work is big.'

Ashram needed money. The Ashramites gave their material properties to Ashram. Ashram also gets income from its various departments. People from outside offer to Ashram unconditionally. This is how money comes and the works of Ashram are carried out. The Mother has said, 'Necessary money will come for divine works.' Ashram has to face financial problems during the Second World War. Then the Mother had to provide necessary money by selling her jewellery and saris.

Sri Aurobindo Ashram is unique from the point of view of the place. Samadhi, meditation hall, kitchen etc are not in a compound. Sri Aurobindo Ashram was not pre-planned. It grew according to the needs of the Sadhakas and Ashram. Houses were bought throughout Pondicherry to accommodate the Ashramites.

There were only two houses in the beginning. In one house Sri Aurobindo was living; it was called the library. In the other house Sri Aurobindo used to live in the past. The number of houses had

increased. Today there are nearly four hundred houses. There are more than fifteen hundred Ashramites approximately. Ashram activities are mostly done by Ashram people. There are many activities in Ashram. Ashram runs schools, colleges, kitchen, bakery, laundry, handicrafts, industries, workshops and others. It has electrical department, furniture department, paper mill, hospital, guesthouses, gardens, farms, dairy and the like. Almost all works are done to realise the divinity in man.

The house is comparatively big in which Sri Aurobindo, the Mother and some devoted disciples were living. Its courtyard has the samadhi of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. This is the main building of Ashram. Samadhi is decorated with flowers. It is open for darshan from 5.00 a.m. to 11.00 p.m. Sadhakas and visitors come to Samadhi for darshan. Ashram provides agarbatti free of charge to offer to the samadhi. Sadhakas can sit for meditation near samadhi. Complete peace is maintained there. Collective meditation is performed on fixed days; visitors can participate in it. Everyone feels divine environ near the samadhi. Darshan days are very special; on these days one is allowed to go into Sri Aurobindo's room. Of course, he has to take a pass for it.

Three things attract our attention in Ashram – (1) Peace, (2) Arrangement of flowers and (3) the photos of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Here the question is, 'Why these many photos?' The answer is very simple. It is not merely to worship them. It is to feel living relationship with Sri Aurobindo and the Mother; it is to get guidance and grace from them. Arrangement of flowers is the symbol of spirituality in Ashram.

The flowers are very important in Ashram. Every flower has been given a spiritual name; it has a particular quality. The Mother generally gives a flower to a sadhaka; he has to develop its quality. Suppose a sunflower is given to a sadhaka; it is the symbol of opening to the Divine. Ashram kitchen manages about two thousand guests and sadhakas daily. The farms of Ashram and dairy provide grain, vegetables, fruits and milk. Rice, dal, bread, milk, curd, lemon and fruits are the things of diet. The Mother has given permission to start canteen to Ganapatram. He sells sweets, idalis, dosas and others. The Mother is very practical in yogic sadhana.

The Mother asked to start 'Honesty Stores' to sell necessary things of life at fair prices. Ashramites and people of Pondicherry took advantages of this store. Even business has a place in the Integral

Yoga. Paper, cloth, furniture etc. are sold. It has a leading press. More than twelve languages are used to print.

There is a balmandir for children. There is an International School of Higher Education. There they teach according to the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. The Mother has said that Sanskrit should be the language of India. Different states should teach in regional languages. English should be used for the international relationship. Children upto 10 to 12 years have to learn French, English, Sanskrit, their own language and Tamil. The visitors get surprised to see children speaking five languages. There are no examinations; only certificates are given. The students of Ashram have excelled in management, business, industries, medicines, education and others in the world.

Physical education is the important component of education. It is given prime importance in Ashram. There are playgrounds, swimming pools, tennis courts etc. in Ashram. For the Integral Yoga the physical education is given central place. It is not only for students but also for grown up sadhakas to do exercises. A person of 70 years or so takes part in march-past. The Mother herself has played tennis even though she was 70 years old.

The Mother took keen interest in education. She used to teach students French and Sri Aurobindo's literature. She encouraged students to participate in sports. She wrote dramas and made students perform them. She was a wonderful painter and a magnificent musician. The cassettes of her organ music are played during meditations. Dancing is also taught in Ashram.

Ashram has many guest houses. Samarpan is the guest house for Gujarat. There is the facility of reservation in the guest houses. Dinning room charges are nominal for the outside visitors. Many people think that Aurobindo Ashram is a religious place; they visit to Ashram with these views. They are disappointed. The Ashramites and Ashram departments maintain disciplines and times; the visitors might feel uncomfortable.

Ashram is really a living laboratory. The Mother has gathered all sorts of men to transform. It is not that Ashram has only noble sadhakas; it has idle and aggressive sadhakas too. The Mother wants transformation. So it is quite possible that a casual visitor might misunderstand a sadhaka of Ashrama. Here, external things are not to be seen. Two thousand sadhakas are doing sadhana peacefully. It is to be felt divine consciousness in the peaceful environs of Ashram.

Acharya Vinoba Bhave came to Ashram in 1956. He saw bakery of Ashram; he also saw the wall constructed on the seashore. He said that three institutes must be seen by the foreigners – (1) Gandhi Ashram, (2) Shantiniketan and (3) Sri Aurobindo Ashram. They are working for humanity. Thus Vinobaji was also influenced by Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

Ashram is the first step towards divine consciousness. The Mother has started the second step by building a new township called 'Auroville'.

Thus the Mother is in the centre of Ashram. Sri Aurobindo has rightly said, 'Ashram is the Mother's creation. Without her it is not possible.' The works of Ashram are not limited to Pondicherry; they spread all over the world. A communist country like Russia has love for Sri Aurobindo. About three lakhs books of Sri Aurobindo are sold there. People from England, America, France, German, Italy, Japan and others have started coming to Ashram for darshan. Humanity has realised that present problems cannot be solved by present mental consciousness. Mental consciousness has to rise to a higher consciousness. We have to be aware of this truth. It is heartening to know that the number of visitors to Pondicherry Ashram has increased year by year.

186. Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo

There are many philosophers in India. They have presented their philosophies after their own realisations. India has six philosophies. Buddha has shown the middle path. Shankaracharya has advaita philosophy. Swami Dayanand has reinterpreted Vedas and has given the philosophy of 'Arya Samaj'. Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is unique. He believes in the descent of the Supermind in mind, life and body. He has presented this philosophy for humanity.

There are five components of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. They are as follows:

- (1) Evolution of consciousness
- (2) Rising to Divine consciousness and its descent
- (3) Transformation of life into the Divine Life
- (4) The Divine Life
- (5) The Integral Yoga to achieve the Divine Life

To take the first component first. It is said that in the beginning of creation only the Supreme pervaded. It desired to create matter and matter was evolved. This matter was lifeless; in fact, it has the Supreme in itself. Life, mind and Supermind are already concealed in matter. The matter becomes delicate after one lakh years; then life evolves. First Amibae are created; then there is the creation of vegetables. The life becomes delicate. Then mind evolves after lakhs of years. The power of mind is more forceful; so its shapes have changed. Human beings are created out of animals, particularly apes. We have progressed from matter and have reached of higher consciousness.

Science believes only in this truth. It says that man is evolved as a Supreme creation. Scientific evolution is from external point of view. Sri Aurobindo gives spiritual dimension to evolution. He says that the Supreme has descended into the Inconscient and manifested Matter. Nature has manifested life and mind from the Inconscient as well. Its movement is not stopped here; it is going to move to the Supermind. Just as life and mind have manifested after millions of years, similarly the Supermind will reveal to humanity and in Matter. It is quite possible that a new body will be formed. It will be free from disease, deterioration and death. It will be the last stage of ascent. The Supermind will descend on earth to transform earthly life into the Life Divine. Nature will take thousands of years to manifest the Supermind. But avatars can reduce these thousands years through their sadhana. Sri Aurobindo did this work for humanity.

The Supermind is thus most important word in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. It is the central point. The Supramental Consciousness is the perfect consciousness of 'Paramatma'. Our rishis have said it 'Vignanamaya Consciousness' or 'ritchana'. Sri Aurobindo says, 'The Supermind is not a complex concept; it is a direct 'ritchana'. It is a direct power. To put it in simple language it is direct and perfect power of Paramatma. It is Knowledge, Truth and Invisible. It is Knowledge and Power at the same time. The Mother has pointed out two postulates of the Supramental Consciousness. One is the Knowledge by identification. The second is equanimity and vastness of consciousness.

Now many lives in mental consciousness. But mind is of lower nature. It only sees partial truths. There are four stages of higher mind. They are higher mind, illumined mind, intuitive mind and Overmind. Above the Overmind is the Supermind. There is no part of mind in the Supermind. Light, Ananda, Beauty, and Perfection are the signs of the

Supermind. A sadhaka who rises to this state gets all these powers. His life is radically transformed.

Ascent to the Divine Consciousness and Descent to earthly consciousness are the third step of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. Here Sri Aurobindo is different from traditional yogis. A sadhana from human consciousness to the Divine consciousness has been in India. Ascent to the Divine is the goal of life; it is called 'moksha', salvation. But to realise God is only the first step of Sri Aurobindo's yoga; then there must be the descent of God. Thus the Integral Yoga includes the processes of ascent and descent. When this process is carried out, only then lower nature will be transformed into the Divine Nature and there will be an end to the pain of humanity.

Through this ascent and descent the divinisation of earth is possible. When man has realised God and God descends in mind, life and body of man only then this divinisation is to be fulfilled. It is human aspiration for the descent of the Supermind. Now mind, life and body are the instruments of ignorant lower nature. When the Supermind descends through mind, life and body the lower nature becomes free. It will be, in fact, of divine nature. This is the process of transformation. The soul must come in front and guide mind, life and body.

There are three steps in this transformation. First, it is the psychic transformation of consciousness. It is possible when there is the awakening of the soul. It is the soul that leads the process of transformation.

Second, it is the spiritual transformation of consciousness. Now the spirit comes into contact with Cosmic Consciousness. Individual consciousness disappears into Universal Consciousness. Then there is no separate existence between the individual and the universal.

Thirdly, it is the Supramental Transformation. It is 'Vignan' Consciousness. Here everything is transformed into the Supramental Consciousness. When we reach that Consciousness, the process of the transformation of mind, life and body begins.

In Sri Aurobindo's yoga we have to ascend various states of consciousness. And we have to be one with 'Paramatma'. But that is not all. Then one has to descend the consciousness of 'Paramatma' into mind, life and body. Only then the new life begins.

This new life is really the Life Divine envisioned by Sri Aurobindo. The Life Divine is the realisation of the Divine in life on earth. Here is the transformation of physical life into a divine life. At present our life is dominated by ego. But when it is led by the Soul, it will be the

beginning of divine life on earth. Realised self will take the shape of God. There will be oneness with the Divine. All works will be done for the ananda of the soul. Paramatma will guide all works and He will be linked with all consciously. There will be Ananda, Love, Harmony, and Intuitive Knowledge in life. That will be perhaps the last stage of human life. Sri Aurobindo has worked for the descent of this Supramental Consciousness. So man is entitled to transform his life through the Integral Yoga.

The Integral Yoga is quite a new yoga by Sri Aurobindo. It is to make man God. It is the yoga of the Supermind. Its aim is to realise God on earthly life; it is to bring down Ananda, Light and Shakti to transform the material life. In traditional yoga, to realise God is inevitable; the world is rejected as mithya, illusion, whereas Sri Aurobindo's yoga considers the world as the manifestation of God.

There are four components of Sri Aurobindo's yoga. First, it is the acceptance of life; the growth of consciousness. The human consciousness is to rise to the divine consciousness. Sadhana is to be done living life here and now. There is no place for a sanyasi. Control of vital and harmony of the body with God are very important in this yoga. Detachments, the control of the soul over the vital and making body a vehicle of the divine consciousness are broadly the sum of the Integral Yoga.

In fact, all life is yoga; every moment of life should become sadhana. Nothing can be neglected; nothing can be left. All life has to be made a sadhana of the Divine; it is to be the sadhana of God.

Transformation of human life into the divine life is the second step of the Integral Yoga. The third step is to rise to the divine consciousness and to bring it down into mind, life and body. The fourth step is both individual and collective. Sri Aurobindo has informed that this yoga is not for a few people alone, not for a few nations; it is for entire mankind. We may realise differently; but there should be environs of oneness; environs are created by collective sadhana. Sri Aurobindo's yoga is to transform not only the individual life, but also the entire material life. Till this transformation is achieved there is no perfection. Perfect perfection is to be realised only when there is the Supramentalisation of earthly life.

187. Beginning of the Integral Yoga

Generally we think of yoga as leaving the house and going to the Himalayas for sadhana. It includes difficult rules, hours of meditation and samadhi. Yoga is meant for sanyasins; worldly people have no space in it. Sri Aurobindo has a different vision. He says that all life is yoga; sadhana has to be done living in life. Yoga means to cultivate oneness with God while living daily life. This oneness has to be realised in life itself.

Since all life is yoga, every activity of life has to be accepted. Sri Aurobindo has said, 'We do not want to leave anything of this world. Politics, industries, society, poetry, literature, art and others would remain in life; however, we have to give them new soul, new shape.' Thus nothing is to be lost in this yoga; we have to do all works with right consciousness.

While doing works in life a sadhaka has to acquire equanimity, peace, detachment and spirituality. It is quite possible to concentrate on forest or on mountains, but when one returns to the people, peace is disturbed because outer environs have not changed. To realise peace and equanimity in life is very difficult. But once it is attained it lasts longer. That is why in this yoga life is accepted and nature is to be transformed.

How to begin this yoga? This is the question that arises in the mind of aspirants. It has no mantras, no karmakanda, no fasting or japa. One has to begin this yoga according to one's nature. Self-realisation is the first steps in this yoga; it is the door to spirituality. In fact, every sadhaka has to make three efforts – aspiration, rejection and surrender. In his very important book 'The Mother' Sri Aurobindo says, 'There are two powers; if they meet, then they are capable of realising our great and different aim. One is the conscious aspiration and second is its answer from higher realm by the divine grace.'

The sadhakas of this yoga must know that sadhana is not possible by self-efforts alone. We need the help of Divine Grace for success. To achieve the Divine Grace intense aspiration is needed. There should be aspiration for God alone in life and not for anything else. Aspiration does not need fixed space or time or condition. In any time or in any place or in any condition aspiration is possible; one can establish relationship with God then and there. Conscious aspiration opens the closed doors of heart. Self-light possesses him. Self light, in fact, leads towards Purna yoga.

Surrender is the easiest way to the Integral Yoga. Surrender is to offer our entire being into the hands of the Divine. God alone leads him on

the path of sadhana. There is no problem or difficulty on the path of surrender.

There are two ways of yoga. One is the way of Tapasya and second is the way of self-surrender. The way of Tapasya is difficult; the way of self-surrender is safe. Ramkrishna Paramhansa explains both the ways of yoga by giving the examples of the monkey's baby and cat's baby. The monkey's baby catches the mother; he has to hold tightly; whereas the cat's baby is caught by the mother herself. The cat's baby has no anxiety. The mother catches him and moves him around. The way of the monkey's baby is the way of Tapasya; the way of the cat's baby is the way of self-surrender.

It is to be remembered that surrender must be active, not passive. Sri Aurobindo explains active surrender, 'You link your will power with the divine shakti of God. You reject ardently what is against God. You accept what comes from the Divine. If you leave everything to God and say that you will do what He wants, that is passive surrender. In it you act according to your lower nature.' If the passive surrender is there, then 'tamasa' will increase. That is not suitable for yoga sadhana or divine transformation. True surrender is selfless; it has no demands.

Rejection is the third important component of this yoga. We have to reject our false desires, selfishness, ego, greed, jealousy, etc. of our lower nature.

Besides, the sadhakas have to develop peace and patience, firmness and resilience within themselves. They have to have unflinching faith. Meditation and concentration are also of great help. It is the common experience that a sadhaka has to pass much of his time in meditation. As the meditation grows, so the sadhana grows. Meditation for a longer time is not necessary for the success of yoga; it will not transform consciousness. The Mother says, 'I know some people who spend much of their time in meditation. If there is a little interruption in meditation they become very angry. In anger they would abuse every one; it seems that they have not done meditation at all. They are more restless than any other common men.' Such mechanical meditation gives little results.

The Mother advises a very simple method of meditation. A man has to sit in peace; it is not to control thoughts. Thoughts are to be observed; slowly mind dissociates from the thoughts and becomes peaceful.

The Integral Yoga aims at the transformation Nature. For this transformation selfless work is necessary. Meditation is linked with inner consciousness; it has nothing to do with outer consciousness. To

develop inner consciousness unconditional works have to be done because works manifest outer consciousness. The work must be done with right attitude and true consciousness. If a work is done with right attitude it is equally fruitful as meditation is.

If in the beginning of sadhana there is some experience one has not to narrate it; one has to move forward without mentioning it. If there be a need, seek guidance from a senior sadhaka. If attention is paid to some success attained, it is quite possible that one may turn to be egoist and there is possibility of someone being caught by lower nature. Therefore, when one attains siddhis and shaktis, one has to be very careful and very conscious. Sadhana is to develop through intense aspiration. Of course, there are difficulties on the path of sadhana. We can remove these difficulties by reading Sri Aurobindo's literatures and getting guidance from them.

The hidden Divine gets manifested through this sadhana. That life is real life which is lived for God; it is full of Ananda, Love, Power and Consciousness. The Mother says, 'This alone is to be done in life. From my own experience I tell that to make an effort is to do the work for the Divine. There is no other interesting thing in the world.'

We achieve the success of our life. How? We have to enter into yoga and live our life for the Divine. We have to manifest the Divine every moment. We will attain every thing by living life for the Divine.

188. Continuation of Sri Aurobindo's works by the Mother

Sri Aurobindo brought down the Supermind in his body; but this descent was not an end to Sri Aurobindo's works. It was the first step in the transformation of physical life; much of the path of sadhana remained to be traveled yet. For example each cell of the body was to be opened to the Supramental Power; it has to be activated yet. Till there was the Supramentalisation of each cell, the problem of Death remains to be solved. This Supramentalisation of the body is to be done by the Mother; Sri Aurobindo has entrusted it to her.' The Mother said to the disciples, 'My body is given to transformation. Sri Aurobindo has told me and I am doing.'

The Mother began sadhana of transforming physical matter. It was the most difficult sadhana. Even rishis had not attempted it. It was like making path in dense forest. Besides, she had to bear all responsibilities of Ashram; she had to fulfil the outer and the inner needs of the sadhakas. And she had to do all these things alone.

The Mother succeeded in making the descent of the Supermind into physical consciousness on 24 February 1956. Ashramites were doing meditation at the playground in the evening of that day. Then the Mother saw herself bigger than the universe; she was of golden colour. She had a big golden gate in front of hers. The door of the gate separated the universe from 'Paramatma'. That time she heard Sri Aurobindo's words, 'The time has come.' Then she resolved to break that door. She took a heavy golden hammer and knocked the door with it. With one knock the door was completely broken. Then the Supramental Light flowed continuously on earth. Later the Mother said, 'This light flowed for twenty minutes or it might be said that I saw this light flowing on earth in my meditation for twenty minutes. After twenty minutes I stopped meditation. I had to come into outer consciousness. I could not speak. This event was known to two persons in Ashram and three persons outside of Ashram.'

The Supramental Light flowed to earthly consciousness; but it did not know how to work with it. So the Mother had to face many physical difficulties.

This new light, the Supramental Light, began to descend into the cells of the Mother's body. The Mother said, 'This is the most powerful shakti. It is golden. The most powerful it is; but it is not physical. It works directly. It is full of kindness and humility; it is a shakti of Ananda.'

If this shakti works in the body the 'tamas' of the body will disappear. The body will be very delicate; the strength of the body will increase many times. It also will expand the life-span of man. However, it is very difficult to work in the cells. The first difficulty is that human body is not open to the Divine Power; it works with the powers of mind and life; it obeys them. New shakti will work only when the body is free from mind and life. The Mother said, 'Mind and life are the dictator of the body. The mind exploits by its thought and the life by its sensation. However, mind and life are only instruments; there will be another condition of consciousness in times to come.'

The second difficulty is that the body is made of the stuff which is not 'param consciousness'. When param consciousness does not descend in the body, the stiffness and impurity of the body corrupt it. As a result the new consciousness cannot work; so we have to purify our body.

The Mother experienced the 'ignorance' of the body while doing sadhana. She realised that the body was full of untruth and ignorance; it

did not like to work. The cells of the body had tamasa. Even if the divine light came into the cells it did not know how to work with them.

Then habits of the body obstruct the divinisation of cells. The body works according to habits. The Mother says that death is the habit of the body. Man may be great or small but his body is not free from habits. The Mother's body does receive the Supramental Consciousness; yet it was not completely free from habits; she has to fight tooth and nail with these habits. She says to a disciple, 'The habits are still there; they imagine difficulties to come. To give up habits is a very difficult task. It is a minute to minute fight. The Mother has to fight this battle to pave the way for humanity.'

The Mother realised mental consciousness in the process of divinisation of the cells of the body. This mental consciousness was scattered; it had just started to learn to be peaceful. The Mother calls this mind as a physical mind, 'the mind of cells.' When this mind gets perfect perfection, then it will receive the Supramental Light.

The Mother also realised the true nature of physical matter. Though physical matter appeared heavy, it was not like that. She said to a disciple, 'When you go down lower in the state of cells, then the constitutions of cells are soft and weightless. The heaviness of the cells disappears. The physical matter seems to be moving.' The Mother's realisation is now supported by the scientists who affirm that physical matter has enormous strength of life.

The knowledge of cells has great difficulty. It has its own power of determination. When the Supramental Power works on it, the power of determination stops and becomes insane. Further, there is a blank place between the cells and the Supramental Power. The knowledge of cells does not know how to work. It has to adjust with new power of the Supermind. It is very difficult to achieve. Besides, on physical plane the cells of the body are nearer to the Inconscient. When the divine power descends into it, it is very painful due to its reaction. The Mother has to pass through this agony. M.P. Pandit writes, 'This is not physical illness; I have seen her physically ill many times. Her body has passed through transition period of transformation. It is shining with Light. Her eyes penetrate deep within. Her body becomes weak because it is passing through the process of transformation. It is painful to adjust with new consciousness.'

The Mother had to do the transformation of entire material consciousness; it was not merely the question of her body. Her body was the representative of material consciousness. Therefore all

difficulties of physical nature gathered in her body. The Mother wrote, 'I observe them through all nights shakti goes deeper and deeper. But human unconsciousness cries that it is not now; it is not now...' Because physical consciousness is not ready to be changed; it opposes new power. As a result, the Mother's body has to undergo pain and suffering.

For the descent of new power the body has to be delicate; but the body is stiff. The Mother said, 'Here everything is full of Inconscient and Ignorance. The original 'param' consciousness is lost. To get back that consciousness we have to give individual shape to the matter. Otherwise one body will mix with other and there would be great difficulty. Therefore, the fixed shape is given to the individual. The matter is fixed; and this is a great difficulty in the descents of the Supramental Consciousness. The fixity of the matter must go; it has to be delicate. However, it should not use its original shape. Only then the body would attain its limit.'

Moreover, when new power descends, the cells feel fear. They seem to believe that nothing is like before. The ordinary consciousness becomes restless. At that time 'samata' has to be maintained.

The Mother has informed three necessary things for the transformation of the cells. First, aspiration is to be awakened into the cells. The cells should sustain new power. For this the Mother has given mantra; 'Om Namō Bhagavate' to recite. If this mantra is recited; then the cells have no difficulty in adjusting with 'new power.'

Second, it is unflinching faith. Whatever may happen, the body will tolerate; this faith must be there.

Third, it is the limitless power of suffering. The body has to pass through many processes. Inner consciousness must be ready to allow them. The Mother said, 'You are wounded; you are tired; yet you have to suffer, you have to tolerate.' Before it the body will disappear. If the sadhana in mind and life disappears, they will remain in subtle mind and subtle life. But if sadhana in physical cells is destroyed, there is the destruction of the cells. That is why we have to undergo the transformation of the cells of the body.

The Mother said to a disciple, 'It was the most wonderful moment. I had not seen such beautiful thing as it was. This experience continued for hours. It had the happiness of fifty one years on earth, though it did not know about it... It was 'param liberation' and 'param shakti'. It was all, indivisible. It was the lila of the Consciousness.'

When the Supramental Consciousness acts in the body, then the mental rules or laws do not work on it. The Supramental Consciousness is, in reality, the Divine's perfect shakti. Therefore, even the rules of Prakriti will be transformed. Since the body follows the Divine's laws it is of different nature. It is full of shakti. It directly derives strength from cosmic power. This new body is free to death. It means that the 'atman' is free to give up the body as and when it desires. The Divine Body will not follow the laws of Death.

The Divine Body will be different from human body. Just as the animal body is different from man's body, so the Supramental Body will be different from human body. The stuff and the shape of the Supramental body will be entirely changed.

The Mother has pointed out four characteristics of the Divine Body. First, it would be light. It will not have 'tamasa', unconsciousness and weight as it has them today. It will fly into air. Such will be the experience of the Divine Body.

Second, it is adoption. The Divine body will adopt anything on its own because it has perfect consciousness within.

Third, it will be very delicate. Due to its delicacy the opposite powers will be weak. It will not have even one thing that will affect it.

Fourth, it will be full of flame. Each cell of the body will have the Supramental power. Hence each cell of the body will be full of light. This power will remain; it will not be destroyed. So this body will be free from death. Of course, 'Atman' can give up this body as it demands or aspires.

Such divine body is the last step of evolution. Man is an animal in transition. He is to reach the last stage yet. Then he will be perfect man. From Nature's point of view, man will take the evolution of more than one lakh years to attain the divine body and divine transformation. The Mother said, 'There is only one path; it is to contact 'param' consciousness and identity with it and wait for.' Because this work is beyond human capacity. No human power can effect this transformation. In the beginning 'aspiration' to contact the Supramental consciousness is very intense. Once contact is made, the 'param' consciousness will do sadhana.

The Mother said, 'There should not be least ego. The removal of ego is absolutely necessary in this sadhana. Even a little ego in it is an obstacle to 'contact'. This is why Sri Aurobindo considers 'atmasakshatkar' as the first step in sadhana. The sadhana of transformation begins only after that process. In this sadhana, mind, life

and body are to be transformed to be divine. So this yoga is called the Integral Yoga.

The Mother said, 'The sadhana of mind and life for becoming divine is age old in spirituality. There is nothing new in them. Now the body is to be considered. One has to aspire to make body divine. This is something new. Every cell is crying – make divine; this is a new thing.'

The Mother did the sadhana of twenty three years continuously after Sri Aurobindo's withdrawal from physical life in 1950. She had awakened consciousness into the cells; in fact, she liberated the cells from the clutches of mind and life. She prepared the ground for the descent of the Supramental Light into the mind, life and body. She said, 'I do not know how long are the way and how much time the transformation will take. The way, however, is clear. Her body has ananda, freedom, vastness in the descent of the Supramental Light. So all bodies will have similar experience as the Mother had. The Mother has paved the way.'

The Mother inspired to build 'Auroville' as the symbol of global unity. Mankind is one. Man with right aspiration of the soul works with the manifestation of the soul. Such men gather together for a common cause; the cause is to seek the Divine. The Mother started 'Auroville' on 28 February 1968 as a day of world unity. In its foundation the children of 122 countries spread the soil. The Mother said, 'There should be a space on this earth over which there would not be any control of any countries; it should be a place where world citizens should live for only God with aspiration and enthusiasm.'

The rules of the soul, the world citizens and global unity are in the foundation of 'Auroville'. The Mother has said:

- (1) 'Auroville' does not belong to any one person or one country; it belongs to entire humanity. Those who desire to live in it must aspire for divine consciousness.
- (2) 'Auroville' would be the place of ceaseless education, continuous development and eternal youth.
- (3) 'Auroville' desires to be a bridge between the past and the future. Utilising the external researches it will leap into the future to attain success.
- (4) 'Auroville' will be a place of living embodiment of human unity and spiritual research.

Moreover, the Mother has said inviting all men to spirituality on 28 February 1968:

Salutation to Auroville, to all good wishing men,
Invitation is to all,
Who have the thirst for development,
Or who have aspiration for higher life
and truthful life.

Any man aspiring for the Divine can be the citizen of 'Auroville'. 'Auroville's central place is the Matrimandir; it is almost ready for people. 'Matrimandir' is really a space that makes us experience the divine life.

Sri Aurobindo's yoga is the yoga of collective consciousness. In it there is the rise of individual consciousness, along with rise of collective consciousness to the Higher Consciousness. In Sri Aurobindo Ashram there are the sadhakas drawn from the world. The Mother has developed Sri Aurobindo's yoga on physical level after Sri Aurobindo's ceased to be in 1950. She has started Sri Aurobindo society that organises the centres of the world for the evolution of consciousness.

The Mother has done sadhana on the individual and cosmic level; it is peerless. As a result there is the possibility of death free life on earth. However, she has never talked of her greatness. She says, 'Let people talk of my past life; this body has no desire to speak itself. It wants to be peaceful and neglected.' She further said to a disciple, 'Don't ask questions regarding the physical existence of the body; it has no significance and it draws no attention.'

The Mother further said, 'I am what the Divine wanted me to be in my entire life. I have done what the Divine wanted me to do. And that is significant.' Her life's aim was to do what the Divine had decided her to do. She worked in a place called Pondicherry; but she had added fourth dimension to the Supermind. So the future of the world seemed very bright.

The Mother recited this mantra for ninety five years, 'Praphu, victory is thy desire'. She lived according to the will of God throughout her life and finally handed her body to God. Sadhana had revealed her that the body followed the traditional rules and so it would go as tradition demanded. If it was transformed entirely, only then the body could get immortality. But the old body could not be Supramentalised completely.' The Mother said to a disciple, 'It is not possible to

Supramentalise the body naturally at this stage.’ The Mother offered her old body to God and prayed, ‘O Lord, if this body is to die, then you order for the disintegration of its cells.’ She could not give up her body without the desire of God. Because she had surrendered her life to Him. She had embraced God like a child. She gave up her body at 7.25 p.m. on 17th November 1973 and entered into her subtle body of light.

Her lifeless body was now given samadhi on 19th November 1973. In samadhi ‘parambrahman’ and ‘shakti’ became one. The ‘dwaita’ merged into ‘adwaita’. Now Samadhi was illuminating the soul of all who came there for enlightenment.

189. Bright future as outlined by Sri Aurobindo

Sri Aurobindo prepared a ground for the advent of ‘New Age’ through his hard tapasya. He saw the seeds of new humanity into the subtle entity. The unmanifested Supermind descended into the atoms of matter so that neglected physical consciousness could become the light of God. As a result the destiny of death-dominated humanity is to be changed. The Mother said, ‘He came. He invited earth to be ready for brilliant future.’

Sri Aurobindo came to earth to make it the torch of light from its dark shape. He descended the Supermind in his body and paved the way for the divine transformation of human nature. He built the foundation of ‘New World’ in subtle space. He assured that the New World was not just a tall talk; it was reality. The Mother said, ‘Sri Aurobindo has come to introduce us the beauty of ‘new world’; he does not come to give us only hope. In fact, he has come to make us know that the world is moving towards divinity. He has assured the world that ‘new light’ had descended into his mind, life and body through his sadhana.’

The Mother also has informed that Sri Aurobindo is related to future time. He has come to expedite the descent of Supermind into mind, life and body. He has given the message of ‘new humanity’ to the world. He has shown new way of light to human consciousness. He has prepared material consciousness for divine consciousness facing the onslaught of Ignorant powers in his body. He has identified the light in the Atman of man to the consciousness of ‘param’. As a result, ‘human prakriti’ will be ‘divine prakriti’ and man’s consciousness will manifest the vast divine consciousness.

Now the world is suffering from materialism. This is not enough. Sri Aurobindo has opened the door to ‘new light’. But mind of man is so

confused that it cannot see this door. In spite of this the door has been opened and it works in the environs of earth. The Mother said, 'You are born on the earth; so you take the Supramental Shakti, whether you are conscious or unconscious, whether you need or not. If you take a decisive step, it will manifest in you.'

Due to sadhana of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother the transformation is not only possible but also it is simple for man. Because there is the flow of the Supramental Consciousness and it is working in the physical consciousness.

The world is passing through great transformation. 'New Power' has started working over Ignorance and Darkness. The Powers of Ignorance are restless; they cannot tolerate 'new light'; they oppose it; they do not want to be transformed. Therefore we see violence, terror, enmity and like in the world. Of course, these forces are passing through the phase of transition. When the period of transition is over, 'new light' will transform the world radically. Right now the powers of Ignorance are in the hand of 'New Light'; so they are restless. Here is the fear of anarchy in the world. But if we observe closely we will find that auspicious events are also taking place in the world. In fact, the world is moving towards 'oneness'; such wonderful events are taking place as our mind will not like to believe. New inventions are made; in the midst of pain and ignorance there are the flames of ananda, love and beauty. When the Supramental power works completely on earth, only then Sri Aurobindo's works will be over. Sri Aurobindo's vision of making earth heaven will be fulfilled; man will get perfect perfection and there will be the beginning of new era.

What will be the nature of this new era? How will be the new world of divine humanity? Sri Aurobindo has seen this new world in his meditation and vision and has expressed it in his lifelong work 'Savitri'. In the new era there will be God's kingdom and divine prakriti will work. All works will be expressions of the soul. Man's all works and thoughts would manifest inner consciousness. There would be the kingdom of Truth everywhere. Ignorance will be turned into knowledge; darkness will be turned into light; hatred and jealousy will be transformed into love. Due to the descent of the Supermind our common prakriti will be divine. Prakriti, in fact, will manifest Paramatman. 'Param' will express His own Ananda in life. The movement of life will be from truth to truth, from light to light and from immortality to immortality. This is the Divine Life.

Humanity will be grateful to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for getting the boon of divinity for man through their sadhana and unconditional surrender to the Divine and for giving him the vision of 'All life is yoga.'

The Publisher's Note on Translation

'Mahayogi Sri Aurobindo' written by Jyotiben Thanki in Gujarati is a very meaningful book especially for the youths of Gujarat. But its limitation is that it is in Gujarati; those who do not know Gujarati cannot benefit from it. So I have decided to publish it in English for sadhaks and youths who do not know Gujarati. I hope that this free translation would satisfy the target readers sincerely.

I invited D.S. Mishra of Vallabh Vidyanagar to translate this book in English. He has taken pains to translate it freely. With the Mother's grace he completed it.

I am happy. I pray to the Mother to bestow Her grace on him. May Sri Aurobindo and the Mother help him in the best possible way.

Vasantbhai Patel

Translator's Note

I have enjoyed translating Mahayogi Sri Aurobindo written by Jyotibahen Thanki. Of course, the task is not simple; there are practically no equivalences to spiritual terms used in English. Nevertheless, the Mother's grace has helped me complete the work satisfactorily. The Mother has inspired me at every step in translation. It is the free translation; its aim is to lead the sadhaks and readers in English to the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. The translator has prayed day and night for inspiration from the Mother.

Shri Kalpan Suthar has read the script carefully, typed it correctly and proofread it sincerely. I have no words to thank him. May the Mother's blessing be bestowed on him.

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