

The Mother: Some Events in Her Life

The Mother's Year of Birth

I asked Mother last night to kindly let me know the correct year of her birth. I am waiting to hear from her.

I don't see why.

22 February 1934

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The reason why I want to know the year of the Mother's birth is, for the moment, only a certain curiosity, though there may be something deeper behind.

Curiosity is hardly a proper motive — people ask these things because they want to gossip about the Mother as about all things and in the same spirit. It is this constant action from the lower human motives of the ordinary consciousness which keeps people from living within and prevents the transformation of the physical nature.

22 February 1934

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Today something deeper than curiosity has awakened in me. I long to know the year of the Mother's birth in order to keep it as a loving memory in my heart. Everything about her is dear and sweet to me.

You can have the loving memory without knowing the year. At that rate you could insist on the Mother telling you all the details of her private life so that you may have a loving memory of them.

23 February 1934

Early Visions and Experiences

When Ramakrishna was doing sadhana, Mother was on earth physically for the first eight years of her childhood, from 1878

to 1886. Did he know that Mother had come down? He must have had some vision at least of her coming, but we do not read anywhere definitely about it. And when Ramakrishna must have been intensely calling Mother, she must have felt something at that age.

In Mother's childhood's visions she saw myself whom she knew as "Krishna" — she did not see Ramakrishna.

It was not necessary that he should have a vision of her coming down as he was not thinking of the future nor consciously preparing for it. I don't think he had the idea of any incarnation of the Mother.

11 July 1935

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The Mother is not a disciple of Sri Aurobindo.¹ She has had the same realisation and experience as myself.

The Mother's sadhana started when she was very young. When she was twelve or thirteen, every evening many teachers came to her and taught her various spiritual disciplines. Among them was a dark Asiatic figure. When we first met, she immediately recognised me as the dark Asiatic figure whom she used to see a long time ago. That she should come here and work with me for a common goal was, as it were, a divine dispensation.

The Mother was an adept in the Buddhist yoga and the yoga of the Gita even before she came to India. Her yoga was moving towards a grand synthesis. After this, it was natural that she should come here. She has helped and is helping to give a concrete form to my yoga. This would not have been possible without her co-operation.

One of the two great steps in this yoga is to take refuge in the Mother.²

17 August 1941

¹ *This letter was dictated by Sri Aurobindo, who referred to himself in the third person. — Ed.*

² *When Sri Aurobindo was asked, on a later occasion, what the second great step is, he replied, "Aspiration of the sadhak for the divine life." — Ed.*

Studying Occultism with Max Théon

I should like to know something about Théon: what role has he played in this new manifestation of yours?

Théon was merely the Mother's guru in occultism — he had some idea of the aim to be achieved, but got much of it wrong. Moreover what was true came from his wife and was not originally his.

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In your letter this morning you say, "There are some who get a complete control in sleep." This sentence evoked a doubt in me: "If ordinary people — Coué's patients, for example — could make their suggestions effective and cure themselves wonderfully, why is the will of people here so weak even when the Divine is here?" My answer was that those people had only a simple objective and not the aim of a complex change of consciousness; there was no pressure from above and no consequent resistance from below.

When I spoke of some, I was thinking not of people in the Asram but of occultists who make such things their main method. The Mother herself was taught to do it by a great occultist under whom she first practised these things. As to Coué, your answer was the right one. Coué's work was on the mental and vital level and to that there is only a very minor opposition from the vital world because it does not seriously endanger their rule.

31 October 1933

Early Occult Experiences

X asked me whether Mother can materialise herself at a distance. Y seems to have said something like that.

Y probably referred to an experience in which the Mother being in Algeria appeared to a circle of friends sitting in Paris and took up a pencil and wrote a few words on a paper. Having satisfied herself that it was possible she did not develop it any farther. That was at a time when she was practising occultism

with Théon in Algeria. Materialisation is possible but it does not happen easily — it demands a very rare and difficult concentration of forces or else an occult process with vital beings behind it such as materialises objects, like the stones that were daily thrown in the Guest House when we were there. In neither case it is a miracle. But to do as you suggest, make it a common or everyday phenomenon, would be hardly practicable and spiritually not useful, as it is not a spiritual force which gives the power but an occult mental-vital force. It would turn the Yoga into a display of occultism, rather than a process of spiritual change.

20 October 1935

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You have said that the Mother's materialising herself in Paris while she was living in Algeria was not a miracle. What could be called a miracle, then?

A miracle means something without a process or law which gets done by a sort of magical power or feat — at least that is the impression given by the use of the word. This kind of manifestation is not that, it is a thing well-known at least in theory and sometimes successfully accomplished.

21 October 1935

Meeting Jnan Chakrabarti

I never met Chakrabarti personally and know nothing about Krishnaprem's Guru. Chakrabarti's father came here to see me, but even that I had forgotten till the Mother reminded me of it. I know Chakrabarti only through the Mother, but that is better than any personal acquaintance. The Mother met him in Paris when he was there once with his sons on his way to England; it was before the deluge, in pre-war days. She meditated with him and they were able inwardly to meet each other with a brief but living spiritual interchange. He told her that he had an extraordinary meditation which was entirely due to her, and she was aware of his state of consciousness and discovered in

him a remarkable spiritual realisation and a considerable insight on the inner plane. It was the realisation of the Gita or part of it which he had built up in himself, peace, equanimity, the sense of the Divine within, and the atmosphere of peace was so strongly formed and living and real in him that he could convey it to others. On the other hand, he was externally a very worldly man, accepting the not very exalted outward personal life and surroundings he had as the milieu given him and not in the least wishing to change it. It was his theory that this was the teaching of the Gita — to feel Krishna within, to have the inner spiritual life and realisation, — the rest was the Lila and could be left as it was unless or until the Divine himself in the automatic movement of his play chose to change it. This explains the double character of the impression he conveyed to others, which so much surprised you. Those who had themselves some development or aspired to it could, I suppose, feel the sadhak in him; others might see only the worldly man, able, strong, rich, social, successful, accepting, even perhaps drawing to himself enjoyment of riches and power. Others felt both sides, but could understand neither, like your friend in Geneva. Your account of him interested myself and the Mother greatly; it was so evidently the same man, even if the external facts were not there to identify the husband of Krishnaprem's Guru with the spiritual-worldly Chakrabarti of Paris. Not a complete spiritual hero, no doubt, but a remarkable sadhak all the same.

1 April 1932

Arrival in Pondicherry

In *Prayers and Meditations*, the Mother mentions her seeing you first on the 29th March 1914; in other words she met you when she first came to Pondicherry. How is it then that the 24th April 1920 is considered to be the day on which Mother saw you first?

The 24th April is the day on which Mother came from Japan to Pondicherry finally — not the day of her first seeing me. On the 29th March she came first from France, that visit lasting till February of the next year.

19 March 1936

Some Occult and Spiritual Experiences

I have been wondering whether the Mother has been able to establish a direct connection with Mars or any other far-off planet which is probably habitable and inhabited.

A long time ago Mother was going everywhere in the subtle body but she found it of a very secondary interest. Our attention must be fixed on the earth because our work is here. Besides, the earth is a concentration of all the other worlds and one can touch them by touching something corresponding in the earth-atmosphere.

13 January 1934

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Why do we feel that the Mother is experiencing this or that?
Has she still to go on experiencing?

Experiencing what? She has her own experiences in bringing down the things that have to be brought down—but what the sadhaks experience she had long ago. The Divine does the sadhana first for the world and then in others.

3 January 1935

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I am afraid I don't know much about Narad. Mother once saw him standing between the Overmind and Supermind where they join as if that was his highest station. But he has his action on the lower plane also — only I don't quite know what it is. In the Puranic tales pure love and Bhakti on the one hand and, on the other hand, a pleasure in making human beings quarrel seem to be his salient characteristics.

5 May 1935

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Yesterday evening I went to bed at 9.30. When I lay down, suddenly my heart stopped for a second and I felt a shock, as if I had fallen down from up above. Is this some kind of Yogic experience or is it due to some weakness of the heart? (I went to Dr. X, but he found nothing wrong with the heart.)

A feeling like that of the shock and the stopping of the breath for a second and as if of falling down comes to many when the consciousness for a moment or a longer time exteriorises itself (goes up out of the body); the shock comes from the going up of the consciousness or from the return into the body. The Mother used to have that hundreds of times. It is not anything physical (the Doctor, as you say, found nothing). When this movement of the consciousness is more normal, the feeling will probably disappear.

1 October 1935

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If some things are easier to do in samadhi, then is not samadhi a very good state even for this Yoga? But some months ago when I spoke of samadhi, you said something like, “It is not samadhi that is needed but a new consciousness.”

Certainly, samadhi is not barred from this Yoga. The fact that the Mother was always entering into it is proof enough of that. What I said then was not a general statement that samadhi is never needed and never helpful, but referred to your then need. Particular statements must not be converted by the mind into exclusive and absolute laws.

10 June 1936

The Mother's Illness in 1931 and Her Temporary Retirement

In the first place why on earth do you put any belief in the “reports circulated in the Asram” and, in the second, why on earth do you allow them to depress you? I thought you knew the value or rather the entire absence of value of this kind of gossip and rumour? What about the “scepticism” which makes you unwilling to believe everything people tell you — why not make a useful use of it in refusing to believe these things? That would be better than to make a useless use of it in doubting the experiences of your own inner being which are a thousand times more reliable than this imaginative chit-chat built upon nothing. If the Mother makes you a communication when you are in your inner consciousness, why not put your faith in that

and not in all this external noise and blather? And who, by the way, told you that the Mother is seeing those for whom she has love and confidence and that for others, like yourself, she has no love and confidence? The Mother has been “seeing” nobody and even now and for some time to come all visits and talk must be refused until she is stronger. Certain people come here for their usual work, or to do necessary things, or to bring food or letters etc. (dealt with by me, not by the Mother!), but the Mother has not been wasting her strength in receiving them or in chatting with anybody, I can assure you. I do not think I need say more about all that you have built on what “*they say*”; you ought to see that the foundation is unsubstantial mist and that therefore the structure you have built on it has no right to exist. As for my not answering questions, I have naturally been too busy all these days, but I thought everyone would easily understand that; I did not expect that a theory would be built on it that I was “disappointed”, had turned tail and was running away from my work. At any rate, since *they say* so, please reassure them and tell them that such is not the case. For yourself, cheer up and throw sadness to the dogs. How can you be sad when you have such beautiful dreams and messages from the Mother?

2 November 1931

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As for all the rest you write, you should realise that the Mother has had a very severe attack and that she must absolutely husband her forces in view of the strain the 24th November will mean for her. It is quite out of the question for her to begin seeing everybody and receiving them meanwhile — a single morning of that kind of thing would exhaust her altogether. You must remember that for her a physical contact of this kind with others is not a mere social or domestic meeting with a few superficial movements which make no great difference one way or the other. It means for her an interchange, a pouring out of her forces and a receiving of things good, bad and mixed from them which often involves a great labour of adjustment and elimination and, in many cases though not in all, a severe strain on the body. If it

had been only a question of two or three people, it would have been a different matter; but there is the whole Asram here ready to enforce each one his claim the moment she opens her doors. You surely do not want to put all that upon her before she has recovered her health and strength! In the interests of the work itself — the Mother has never cared in the least for her body or her health for its own sake and that indifference has been one reason, though only an outward one, for the damage done — I must insist on her going slowly in the resumption of the work and doing only so much at first as her health can bear. It seems to me that all who care for her ought to feel in the way I do.

12 November 1931

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I had hoped to write shortly, but I have not been able to do so. Therefore, for the moment, since I have promised you this letter in the morning, I can only repeat, on the other matter, that I have not said that you in any degree or the sadhaks generally were the cause of the Mother's illness. To another who wrote something of the kind from the same personal standpoint, I replied that the Mother's illness was due to a strife with universal forces which far overpassed the scope of any individual or group of individuals. What I wrote about the strain thrown on the Mother by the physical contacts was in connection with her resumption of work — and it concerns the conditions under which the work can best be done, so that these forces may not in future have the advantage. Conditions have been particularly arduous in the past owing to the perhaps inevitable development of things, for which I do not hold anyone responsible; but now that the sadhana has come down to the most material plane on which blows can still be given by the adverse forces, it is necessary to make a change which can best be done by a change in the inner attitude of the sadhaks; for that alone now can make — until the decisive descent of the supramental Light and Force — the external conditions easier. But of this I cannot write at the tail end of a letter.

16 November 1931

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I really don't know, my dear X, why you read into what I have written such extravagant things which I certainly never intended to be there. I was trying to explain in one letter why, practically, the Mother could not see anyone until she was strong enough; why should you deduce from it a *principle* intended to govern her action for all the future? I did not at all mean that you were henceforth to be confounded in the mass and never see the Mother in private! I have not, I think, anywhere insisted on a "silent expressionless love" and I cannot even remember having used the phrase. On the contrary, I thought I had made it clear, first, that divine love and psychic love both needed a complete *expression* and that vital and physical love were their necessary complements and were both a part of that complete expression. At any rate, if that was not clear in my letter, I want to make it clear now, — as also that physical darshan etc. are quite legitimate means of expression of the psychic love itself and, *a fortiori*, of the complete love which embraces all the parts of the nature. Therefore, you were never asked to stop seeing the Mother and to give up all personal private contact with her; on the contrary when from some misunderstanding you made the proposal, both the Mother and myself strongly objected and said it would be a wrong movement. How then can you imagine that I wanted you to do anything of the kind? As for killing the vital, that would be in absolute contradiction to the whole principle of the sadhana and we would never dream of asking anybody to do such a thing. We have always said that the vital was absolutely indispensable to any realisation and without it nothing, — neither the Divine nor anything else — could be established in life. All that I ventured to suggest was that the vital movements which lead to trouble and suffering and disturbance should be eliminated or transformed as soon as possible, and even this I would not have stressed in your case if you had not had these violent fits of misery and despondency and what seemed to me unnecessary suffering. You can surely understand that I do not like to see you suffer and, knowing from long experience that it is the cravings and imaginations of the lower vital consciousness that cause men needlessly to torture themselves, wanted you to get free from the

cause. It was not the joy of seeing and talking with the Mother that I wanted you to suppress but this contrary element in you that makes you think she does not love you, does not want to see you or to smile on you, prefers others to yourself, etc., etc. However, I will not insist; I will wait for these disturbances to pass away from you in the due course of the Yoga, as the inner being develops and takes charge of the lower vital nature. . . .

Finally, I will call your attention to what I have said very plainly that you have *in no degree* contributed to bring about the Mother's illness; why then persist in thinking that you have done so or may do it? As for my dark hints about the necessity of a radical change in the sadhana — I spoke, in fact, of a needed change in the *inner* attitude of the *sadhaks*, — it was not a reference to you, but to much that had been going wrong within the atmosphere. You yourself speak of certain persons shaping funnily before the eyes of all, especially during the Mother's illness; there is nothing unreasonable in our wanting to make the inner mistakes to cease which cause such funny shapings to be possible. There is nothing in that that touches you or need alarm you.

I have not yet said anything about the Mother's illness³ because to do so would have needed a long consideration of what those who are at the centre of a work like this have to be, what they have to take upon themselves of human or terrestrial nature and its limitations and how much they have to bear of the difficulties of the transformation. All that is not only difficult in itself for the mind to understand but difficult for me to write in such a way as to bring it home to those who have not our consciousness or our experience. I suppose it has to be written, but I have not yet found the necessary form or the necessary leisure.

19 November 1931

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There will always be doubts, upsettings and confusion of the physical mind and vital, so long as the vital approaches the

³ About your dream I think I have already intimated that you could accept it as true.

Mother from the wrong standpoint, — e.g. if it insists on judging her by her response to its demands and ideas of what she ought to give it. Not to impose one's mind or vital will on the Divine but to receive the Divine's Will and follow it, is the true attitude of sadhana. Not to say "This is my right, want, claim, need, requirement, why do I not get it?", but to give oneself, to surrender and to receive with joy whatever the Divine gives, not grieving or revolting, is the right way. Then what one receives will be the right thing for one. All this you know very well; why do you constantly allow your outer vital to forget it and drag you back towards the old wrong attitude?

As for the Mother drawing back from the old course, routine etc. of her action with regard to the sadhaks, it was a sheer necessity of the work and the sadhana. Everything had got into a wrong groove, was full of mixed movements and a mistaken attitude — and consequently things were going on in the same rajaso-tamasic round without any chance of issue, like a squirrel in a cage. The Mother's illness was an emphatic warning that this could not be allowed to go on any longer. A new basis of action and relations has to be built up in which no further sanction will ever seem to be given to the past mistaken movements of the sadhaks which were standing in the way of the descent of the Truth into the physical (material) nature. The basis cannot be built in a day, but the Mother had to stand back, otherwise to build it at all would be impossible.

7 December 1931

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If it is the same part of the vital that was on the right side and has now turned against the Mother, the explanation is very obvious. It gave its adhesion formerly because it thought that by its adhesion it could make her satisfy its desires; finding its desires not indulged, it turns against her. That is the usual vital movement in ordinary man and in ordinary life, and it has no true place in Yoga. It was just the introduction of this attitude into Yoga by the sadhaks and its persistence which has at last made it necessary for the Mother to draw back as she has done. What you have to do is to get these lower parts to understand

that they exist not for themselves but for the Divine and to give their adhesion, without claim or *arrière-pensée* or subterfuge. It is the whole issue at the present moment in the sadhana; for it is only if this is done that the physical consciousness can change and become fit for the descent. Otherwise there will always be these ups and downs in some part of the being at least, delay, confusion and disorder. This is the only true basis for fixity in the true consciousness and for a smooth course in the sadhana.

14 December 1931

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For the rest, it is not a fact that the Mother is retiring more and more or that she has any intention of going inside entirely like me. Your remarks about the privileged few are incomprehensible to me; we are not confiding in a few at the expense of others or telling them what is happening while keeping silent to you. I have, I think, written more to you than to anybody else about these matters and the Mother has not been confiding to anybody anything in that field which has been held back from you. This — about the privileged few — is an old complaint of yours and it has no foundation. If anybody claims to have the special confidence of the Mother, he is making an egoistic claim which is not justifiable. Your real point seems to be about the Mother's not taking up the soup and its accompaniments again. I have told you already why she was compelled by the experience of her illness to stand back from the old routine — which had become for most of the sadhaks a sort of semi-ecclesiastical routine and nothing more. It was because of the mistaken attitude of the sadhaks which had brought about an atmosphere full of movements contrary to the Yoga and likely to lead to disaster — as it had already begun to do. To resume the soup on the old footing would be to bring back the old conditions and end in a repetition of the same round of wrong movements and the same results. The Mother has been slowly and carefully taking steps to renew on another footing her control of things after her illness, but she can take no step which will allow the old dark movements to return — movements of some of which I think

you yourself were beginning to take notice. The next step is for the sadhaks themselves to take; they must make it possible (by their change of attitude, by their resolution to rise on the lower vital and physical plane into the true consciousness) for a union with the Mother on that plane *in the right way and with the right result* to become possible. More I cannot say just now; but I fully intend to be more explicit hereafter — so far as I can without special reference to individuals; for these are things personal to people's Yoga that can often be spoken of only to themselves and not to others.

As for your other questions I shall consider them in another letter; it is too late tonight. It is already 3.30 a.m. I will only say that what happens is for the "best" in this sense only that the end will be a divine victory in spite of all difficulties — that has been and always will be my seeing, my faith and my assurance — if you are willing to accept it from me. But that does not mean that your sadness and depression are necessary to the movement! The sooner they disappear never to recur again, the more joyously the Mother and I will advance on the steep road to the summits, and the easier it will be for you to realise what you want, the complete Bhakti and Ananda.

28 December 1931

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You will say, "But at present the Mother has drawn back and it is the supramental that is to blame, because it is in order to bring down the supramental into matter that she retires." The supramental is not to blame; the supramental could very well have come down into matter under former conditions, if the means created by the Mother for the physical and vital contact had not been vitiated by the wrong attitude, the wrong reactions in the Asram atmosphere. It was not the direct supramental Force that was acting, but an intermediate and preparatory force that carried in it a modified Light derived from the supramental; but this would have been sufficient for the work of opening the way for the highest action, if it had not been for the irruption of these wrong forces on the yet unconquered lower (physical) vital and material plane. The interference was creating

adverse possibilities which could not be allowed to continue. The Mother would not have retired otherwise; and even as it is it is not meant as an abandonment of the field but is only (to borrow a now current phrase from a more external enterprise) a temporary strategic retirement, *reculer pour mieux sauter*. The supramental is therefore not responsible; on the contrary, it is the descent of the supramental that would end all the difficulty.

12 January 1932