

Sri Aurobindo

He whom we saw yesterday is on earth. . .

The Vision

When I first began to work, in France, at the turn of the century, I had a series of visions. I knew nothing about India, just as most Europeans know nothing about it: "It's a country whose people have certain customs and religions, a confused history, where a lot of 'incredible' things are said to have happened."

In several of these visions, I saw Sri Aurobindo just as he looked physically, but glorified; that is, the same man I would see on my first visit to Pondicherry, almost thin, with that golden-bronze hue and rather sharp profile, an unruly beard and long hair, dressed in a dhoti with one end of it thrown over his shoulder, the arms and chest bare, and bare feet. At the time, I thought it was a "dress of vision"! That's how much I knew about India.

These were at once symbolic visions and spiritual facts.

In these visions I did something I had never done physically: I prostrated myself in the Hindu manner. All this without any comprehension in the little brain. I really had no idea of what I was doing or how I was doing it. I did it, and while doing it the outer person was wondering, "What on earth?!"

The Meeting

I came to Pondicherry in 1914.

Something in me wanted to meet Sri Aurobindo alone the first time. I had an appointment for the afternoon.

I climbed the stairs, and there he was, standing, waiting for me at the top of the staircase. Exactly my vision! Dressed in the same way, standing in the same position, in profile. He turned his head toward me . . . and I saw in his eyes that it was He. In a flash, the inner recognition merged with the outer, and there was a fusion, the decisive illumination.

But this was only the beginning of my vision.

It's only after a ten months' stay in Pondicherry and a series of experiences, a five-year separation to Japan, then my return to Pondicherry in 1920 and another meeting in the same house and in the same way, that the end of the vision took place.

I was standing beside him. My head wasn't exactly on his shoulder but where his shoulder was (I don't know how to explain it; physically there was hardly any contact). We were standing side by side like that, gazing out through the open window, and then *together*, at exactly the same moment, we felt: "Now the Realization will be accomplished."

I felt a massive descent within me, the certitude, that same certitude I had felt in my vision.

From that moment on, there was nothing to say, no words, nothing. We knew that was *it*.

The Silence

He saw me the next day for half an hour on the Guest-house verandah.

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I sat down. And when I got up half an hour later, he had put the silence into my head, just like that, without my even asking him – perhaps even without trying.

Before meeting Sri Aurobindo, I had achieved everything necessary to begin his yoga. It was all ready, organized, systemized – a superb mental construction . . . which he demolished in exactly five minutes.

I had tried to achieve complete mental silence – the kind of mental stillness Sri Aurobindo speaks of; when you have it anything can pass through your head without causing the least ripple – but I had never succeeded. I had tried, but I couldn't do it. I could be silent when I wanted to, but the moment I stopped my concentration, the clatter returned and everything had to be started over again.

That's all I had told him (not in great details, just in a few words).

Then I sat down beside him and he began talking with the person accompanying me. They talked about the war (he already knew, five months ahead, that the first World War would break out), yoga, the future, and all kinds of things. They talked and talked and talked – great speculations.

I wasn't in the least interested. I was simply sitting beside him on the floor, with a table in front of me, at eye level, as a sort of little protection.

I don't know how long it went on, but suddenly I felt a great Force come into me – a peace, a silence, something massive! It came in, swept everything blank in my head, descended, and stopped here in the chest.

When they finished talking, I got up and left.

Then I noticed that my mind was completely blank of thoughts. I no longer knew anything or understood anything. I was absolutely *blank*.

So I gave thanks to the Lord and thanked Sri Aurobindo in my heart.

All the mental constructions, all the mental, speculative organizations were completely gone.

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A big void. And such a peaceful, such a luminous void!

Afterward, for at least eight or ten days, I kept very still, not to disturb it. I didn't speak, and I especially refrained from thinking, holding this silence close to me and saying to myself, "Oh, make it last, make it last, make it last. . . ." From the outside, it must have looked like total lunacy.

But I was living in my inner joy. I spoke as little as possible, just mechanically.

Then gradually, as if drop by drop, something else began to emerge. But it had no limits. It was as vast as the universe, wonderfully still and luminous.

There was nothing left in the head, but everything began to be seen from *above the head*.

And that has never left me. I went to Japan; I did all sorts of things, had all possible kinds of adventures, even unpleasant ones, but it never left me.

As a proof of Sri Aurobindo's power, it's incomparable!

Thirty Years

[Sri Aurobindo passes away on December 5, 1950]

During the past few days, memories of the thirty years I lived with Sri Aurobindo all came back.

Psychologically, there was no struggle, no tension, and no effort – not once. I lived in total and confident serenity.

On the material plane, there were attacks, but even these he took upon himself.

When I look back at these thirty years, I see that not for a second did I have any sense of personal responsibility, despite all the work I was doing, all the organizing and everything. He had supposedly passed on the responsibility to me, but he was standing behind – *he* was actually doing everything!

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For the first seven years he was actively working, not me. He saw people, while I looked after his personal affairs, his housekeeping, his food, his clothes, and so forth. I kept myself quietly busy with that, doing nothing else, simply looking after his material life – like a child at play. It was seven years of perfect peace.

Later on, in 1926, when he withdrew and put me in front, there was naturally a bit more activity, as well as the semblance of responsibility – but it was only a semblance. What security! There was just one setback, so to speak, when he had that accident and broke his leg in 1938.

There was a formation, an adverse force, and he wasn't taking sufficient precautions for himself, because it was directed against both of us, specially against me (it had tried once or twice to fracture my skull, things like that). He was so concentrated on keeping it from seriously touching my body that it managed to sneak in and break his leg. That was a shock.

But once again he straightened things out almost immediately. Everything fell back into place and continued like that till the end.

Not once did I have to make an effort of transformation. Whenever there was the slightest difficulty, I simply repeated, *My Lord, my Lord, my Lord . . .* I just thought of him and it went away. Physical pain – he annulled it. As to troubles hampering the body, old recurrent habits, I only had to tell him – off they went. And through me, he did the same for others. He always said that he and I were doing the Work (in fact, it was he who did it), and all that was asked of others were faith and surrender, nothing more. If they gave themselves in total trust, the Work was done automatically in them.

As for my body, it felt one in consciousness with Sri Aurobindo's presence, depending on it without the least worry. It felt that its life depended on it; its progress, its consciousness, its action, its power, all depended on it. And there were no questions.

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For the body, it was absolutely impossible that things be otherwise.

The idea that Sri Aurobindo might leave his body, that that particular way of being might come to an end was simply unthinkable. They had to put him into a box and put the box into the Samadhi for my body to realize that it had really happened. I didn't want to believe it when the doctor said, "It's over."

Nothing, no words can describe what a collapse it was for my body when Sri Aurobindo left.

It's only because his conscious will entered my body, left one body and entered the other . . . I was standing facing his body and I felt – materially felt – the friction of his will and knowledge enter into me. "You will continue and accomplish my work. One of us had to leave, but you will continue the work," he said to this body.

That's what kept me alive.

But the entire physical consciousness had its certainty and security pulled from under. The Base of absoluteness and certainty with which I carried out my work had collapsed.

Later on, I understood that this need for certainty is one of the means to spur human beings toward another condition. These needs are the seeds, the germs of evolution, as it were. They compel us to progress.

The real truth is that it projected me *directly* toward the Supreme, without intermediary. As long as I lived with Sri Aurobindo, I felt the Absolute through him. Essentially, from my experience of the Supreme through Sri Aurobindo's manifestation, I was thrust into a direct experience, without intermediary.

Indeed, all these imperative "needs" I call the seeds of evolution are there to make us realize that the *only* absolute is the Supreme, the *only* security is the Supreme, the *only* immortality is the Supreme. And the sole purpose of manifestation is to lead us *there*.

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And this became such an absorbing and absolute experience.

I felt so strongly, so intensely that there was *only* one thing to lean on, *only* one thing sure and unfailing: the Supreme.

Everything else comes and goes and disappears. The uncertainty, instability, the fleeting, inconstant character of all things – everything collapses, except the Supreme.

Only one thing does not fail: the absolute All.