

# *The Mother*

BIRTH

*February 21, 1878*

ARRIVAL IN INDIA

*March 29, 1914*

MAHASAMADHI

*November 17, 1973*

CENTENARY

*February 21, 1978*



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quite a commonplace materialist if he does not receive his inspiration from a higher state. It is the mind which makes little categories, this is more convenient for it, but that does not resemble the truth very much.

*You have said that Wagner had an intuition of the occult and that to have spiritual power one must conquer sexuality. In fact, Wagner had the intuition of this victory to be achieved, for in "The Ring of the Nibelungen" there is a treasure hidden at the bottom of a river. Three nymphs guard the treasure and to take it one must renounce all desire for love and woman.*

This is an old tradition in Nordic countries. But in his story it ends badly: the one who had to renounce the love of woman is drowned and it ends with the twilight of the gods.

14 April 1951

Mother reads a question asked during her talk in 1929:

*"Is not surrender the same as sacrifice?"*

*Questions and Answers 1929 (4 August)*

Who is going to answer? What is the difference?

*Surrender comes spontaneously.*

I congratulate those whose surrender is spontaneous! It is not so easy. No, that is not the difference.

*Sacrifice diminishes the being.*

That is true, but why? One thing is so, so simple — it is the very meaning of the word. To sacrifice means to give up something to which one clings. To sacrifice one's life is to give up one's life to which one clings; otherwise it would not be a sacrifice, it would be a gift. If you use the word "sacrifice", it means it is something which makes you suffer when you give it up. The word "sacrifice" is used at random, that is understood, but I am speaking of the true sense. One can sacrifice only what one holds dear. If one does not cling to it, it is not a sacrifice, it is a gift with all the joy of the giving. Surrender has no value if it is painful, if it is a sacrifice. Surrender must be truly a joyous offering (I am using the word *soumission* in the sense of surrender, but it is not quite surrender — surrender is between *soumission* and *abandon*). One gives up something, surrenders oneself, but without sacrifice.

*"In our Yoga there is no room for sacrifice. But*

*everything depends on the meaning you put in the word. In its pure sense it means a consecrated giving, a making sacred to the Divine. But in the significance that it now bears, sacrifice is something that works for destruction; it carries about it an atmosphere of negation. This kind of sacrifice is not fulfilment; it is a deprivation, a self-immolation.... When you do anything with the sense of a compression of your being, be sure that you are doing it in the wrong way."*

*Ibid.*

*Why does sacrifice have such a great value in religion?*

Many religions are founded upon the idea of sacrifice; for instance, all the Chaldean religions. The reforms of the Muslim religion also had a very strong tendency towards sacrifice. All the first adepts, the first faithful, paid with their life for changing their religion. In Persia, they were persecuted beyond all telling. There are even many writings in which the joys of sacrifice are praised highly — that is a Chaldean idea. But you should be on your guard; all depends upon the meaning given to the word. It is obvious that for him who sacrifices himself willingly, that is, who gives up his life voluntarily and with joy, it is no longer a sacrifice, by the very definition we have given to the word.

We also speak of the "sacrifice" of the Divine. But I have noticed that this is called "sacrifice" when one understands that if obliged to do it oneself it would be very difficult! it would give you much pain, it would be very hard (*laughing*) so one speaks of sacrifice, but it is probable that for the Divine it was not painful and he did it willingly, with all the joy of self-giving.

I knew Abdul Baha very well, the successor of Baha Ullah, founder of the Bahai religion; Abdul Baha was his son. He was born in prison and lived in prison till he was forty, I believe. When he came out of prison his father was dead and he began

to preach his father's religion. He told me his story and what had happened in Persia at the beginning of the religion. And I remember him telling me with what intense joy, what a sense of the divine Presence, of the divine Force, these people went to the sacrifice — it can't be called "sacrifice", it was a very joyful gift of their life.... He always spoke to me of someone who was, it appears, a very great poet and who had been arrested as a heretic because he followed the Bahai religion. They wanted to take him away to kill him — or burn or hang or crucify him, I don't know what, the manner of death in vogue at the time — and, because he expressed his faith and said he would be happy to suffer anything for his faith and his God, people devised the plan of fixing small lighted candle-ends on his body, his arms, his shoulders. Naturally the candles melted with the hot wax all over, till the wick of the candle burnt the skin. It seems Abdul Baha was there when this man was tortured and as they came to the spot where he was to be killed, Abdul Baha went up to speak to him affectionately — and he was in an ecstasy of joy. Abdul Baha spoke to him of his sufferings; he replied, "Suffer! it is one of the most beautiful hours of my life...." This cannot be called a sacrifice, can it?

Generally, all those who have suffered tortures for their faith, that is, for their highest thought, their most sublime ideal, have always felt a kind of divine grace helping them and keeping them from suffering. Of course, outsiders call this a "sacrifice" (that is understandable, they have sacrificed their life), but one cannot use the word for what personally concerns them, because for them it was not a sacrifice, it was a joy. All depends on the inner attitude. Now, if for a single moment during the torture they had had the least idea, "Why am I being tortured?" they would have undergone unbearable suffering. A single passing thought suffices.

Almost all events — at least all the important circumstances of human life — may be looked at from two sides: from below or from above. If you see them from below, with the feel-