

Significance of Birthdays

Birth of the Soul



Sri Aurobindo

Even through the tangled anarchy called Fate
And through the bitterness of death and fall
An outstretched Hand is felt upon our lives.
It is near us in unnumbered bodies and births;
In its unslackening grasp it keeps for us safe
 The one inevitable supreme result
No will can take away and no doom change,
 The crown of conscious Immortality,
The godhead promised to our struggling souls
When first man's heart dared death and suffered life.
One who has shaped this world is ever its lord:

Our errors are his steps upon the way;
He works through the fierce vicissitudes of our lives,
He works through the hard breath of battle and toil,
He works through our sins and sorrows and our tears,
His knowledge overrules our nescience;
Whatever the appearance we must bear,
Whatever our strong ills and present fate,
When nothing we can see but drift and bale,
A mighty Guidance leads us still through all.
After we have served this great divided world
God's bliss and oneness are our inborn right.
A date is fixed in the calendar of the Unknown,
An anniversary of the Birth sublime:
Our soul shall justify its chequered walk,
All will come near that now is naught or far.
These calm and distant Might's shall act at last.
Immovably ready for their destined task,
The ever-wise compassionate Brilliances
Await the sound of the Incarnate's voice
To leap and bridge the chasms of Ignorance
And heal the hollow yearning gulfs of Life
And fill the abyss that is the universe.

From Savitri

Words of the Mother

Significance of Birthdays

(A spoken comment of the Mother which was noted down from memory by the sadhak and later read to the Mother.)

It is your birthday tomorrow?

Sadhak: Yes, Mother.

How old will you be?

Sadhak: Twenty-six, Mother.

I shall see you tomorrow and give you something special. will see, I am not speaking of anything material—that, I shall give you a card and all that—but of something ... You will see, tomorrow, now go home and prepare yourself quietly so that you may be ready to receive it.

Sadhak: Yes, Mother.

You know, my child, what “Bonne Fete” signifies, that is, the birthday we wish here?

Sadhak: Like that, I know what it means, Mother, but not the special significance You want to tell me.

Yes, it is truly a special day in one’s life. It is one of those days in the year when the Supreme descends into us—or when we are face to face with the Eternal—one of those days when our soul in contact with the Eternal and, if we remain a little conscious, we can feel His Presence within us. If we make a little effort on this day, we accomplish the work of many lives as in a lightning flash. That is why I give so much importance to the birthday—because what one in one day is truly something incomparable. And it is for this that I also work to open the consciousness a little towards what is above so that one may come before the Eternal. My child, it is a very very special day, for it is the day of decision, the day one can unite with the Supreme Consciousness. For the Lord lifts us on this day to the highest region possible so that our soul which is a portion of that Eternal Flame, may be united and identified with its Origin.

This day is truly an opportunity in life. One is so open and so receptive that one can assimilate all that is given. I can do many things, that is why it is important.

It is one of those days when the Lord Himself opens the doors wide for us. It is as though He were inviting us to rekindle more powerfully the flame of aspiration. It is one of those days which He gives us. We too, by our personal effort, could attain to this, but it would be long, hard and not so easy. And this—this is a real chance in life—the day of the Grace.

It is an occult phenomenon that occurs invariably, without our knowledge, on this particular day of the year. The soul leaves behind the body and journeys up and up till it merges into the Source in order to replenish itself and absorb from the Supreme Its Power, Light and Ananda and comes down charged for a whole year to pass. Then again and again ... it continues like this year after year.

Q: How should one spend... one's birthday?

...in finding out the purpose of life.

The Mother, 13 December 1969

Q: Today is my birthday. I want this day to be the beginning of a more spiritual life and therefore something has to be done. Please tell me what I must do.

It is not with the mind that one should decide what has to be done. It should be a spontaneous movement taking place in a sincere and constant aspiration.

The Mother, 22 May 1939

Q: What is the meaning of one's birthday, apart from its commemorative character? How can one take advantage of this occasion?

Because of the rhythm of the universal forces, a person is supposed to have a special receptivity on his birthday each year.

He can therefore take advantage of this receptivity by making good resolutions and fresh progress on the path of his integral development.

The Mother, 25 November 1964

Rhythms of Time

*[Mother reads from Sri Aurobindo's The Synthesis of Yoga, "The Four Aids".
Then a sadhak asks a question:]*

*Q: Sweet Mother, here: "Last comes the instrumentality of Time, Kāla; for in all things there is a cycle of their action and a period of the divine movement...."
What is this period of the divine movement?*

For each thing it is different.

For each activity, each realisation, each movement, there is a definite period of time, which differs. There are countless periods of time which are entangled; but each thing is regulated by a kind of rhythm which is this thing's own rhythm.

You see, for the facility of their outer existence, men have divided time more or less arbitrarily into years, months, weeks, days, hours, minutes, seconds, etc... it is a rhythm that's more or less arbitrary, because it has been created by man, but it has in itself a certain reality, for it corresponds to universal movements... as far as possible. And that is why, by the way, we celebrate the birthday, for example: because there is a certain rhythm in each one's existence which is established by this regular return of circumstances analogous to those in which he was born.

And all movements—when you observe them, you become aware that they have a certain rhythm—the movements of inner consciousness, for example, not only from the point of view of understanding but that of personal reactions, of the ups and downs in progress; of a fairly regular periodic return, at once of advancing and recoiling, of difficulties and of helps. But if each person is attentive he realises that his own rhythm is absolutely particular to him; it is not the same rhythm as his neighbour's. But even as the seasons follow a certain rhythm, regular enough on the whole, so the individual life has its seasons. And when one studies oneself attentively, one finds out that there are even certain repetitions of analogous circumstances at regular intervals. Even, very sensitive people become aware that there are certain days of the week or certain hours of the day when they can do things more easily. Some of them have particular difficulties on particular days and at particular hours; some on the contrary have better inspirations at particular moments—but every one has to find this out in himself by observation. Naturally it

is far from being absolute, it is not strict, and if it is troublesome, it can be eliminated very easily simply by a little effort of resolute will. But if it helps, one can make use of it.

And all this, each thing having its own rhythm, well, it makes an extremely complicated criss-crossing of rhythms, which results in what we see: something which seems to have none—because it is too complicated, it is too complex.

Q: How can we make use of it, Sweet Mother?

Well, if... let us say, you know... we are speaking of yoga... if you observe in yourself a certain repetition of conditions, for example, that at a particular hour, a certain time of day, in certain circumstances, it is easier for you to concentrate or meditate, well, you make use of that by doing it at that time.

Naturally, you must not become its slave; one can use it but it must not become a necessity so that if the hour has gone by one can't meditate then. But if it is a good help, one uses the help; it's all a matter of observation.

If you study yourself you can become aware that in the year certain periods come due not only to personal conditions but more general ones—conditions of Nature in general. There are times when you meet more difficulties in the sadhana; there are times, on the contrary, when you feel in yourself a greater push for the growth of knowledge and consciousness. This helps you in the sense that, if at a given time you find yourself in the midst of special difficulties or something that seems like a stoppage, instead of lamenting you tell yourself, “Why, it's the usual time; it's because we are at this particular time of the year.” And you wait with patience for the time to pass; or do what you can, but without being discouraged and saying, “Ah, look, I am not getting on, I am not making any progress.” It helps you to be reasonable.

And naturally one can take one more step and take precautions in such a way... inner precautions to be independent of these external influences. But this comes much later, when one begins to be the conscious master of one's sadhana. That comes afterwards.

The Mother, 19 October 1955