

## **Banerjee, Anurag Prithwi Singh Nahar**

**I**ndia was a very different place in the year 1898 as compared to the present times. The country, then ruled by Queen Victoria who had celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of her reign a year earlier, was divided into 635 states and provinces. Some were loyal to the Crown but others were voicing their protests against the British Rule through the Indian National Congress founded thirteen years earlier in 1885. That was the age of the Moderates who believed in maintaining peaceful co-existence with the rulers of the undivided nation. A year earlier, Swami Vivekananda had returned to India after conquering the West which he did by preaching the glorious doctrines of Hinduism, thus, transforming the consciousness of the Westerners about India. The cultural and religious renaissance in India was still going on at the time Prithwi Singh Nahar was born.

The Nahars trace their origin from the Rajput clan of the Parmars who, along with the Pratihars, the Solankis and the Chauhans emerged from the holy fire altar when a group of Brahmins invoked Bibhavasu, the God of Light, at a yagna to help them repudiate the onslaught made by the Jains on them. As the story goes, the Goddess of Power, Shakti Devi, granted them a boon and as a result, the four Rajput clans emerged. The 35th descendent of Parmar, Ashdhar by name was brought up by a lioness; therefore, after his return amid human civilization, he could no longer inflict any harm on the animals among whom he had spent a considerable part of his childhood years; therefore he converted from Vaishnavism to Jainism and took the name “Nahar” the meaning of which is “lion”. Kharag Singh Nahar, the 78th descendant of Parmar migrated to Bengal in 1766 upon the request of Jagat Seth (the treasurer of the Nawab of undivided Bengal) and settled at Azimganj; eventually he founded his business and zamindari at Murshidabad, Dinajpur, Calcutta and other places.

The third descendant of Kharag Singh was Setab Chand, who can rightly be called the “Architect of the Nahar family”. A distinguished scholar in Sanskrit, Persian, Hindi, Gujarati and Bengali, he was also a prolific writer and the works produced by him reflected his profound knowledge and wisdom. As a reward for his immense contributions to the society (which included the establishment of “Kumar Singh Hall” at Calcutta and “Azimganj Public Hall” at Azimganj along with Dharamsala at Kashimbazaar, Palitana [Gujarat] and Pawapuri [Bihar] and regular economic help and support provided to various schools and universities to name a few) he was awarded the title of “Rai Bahadur”. He was also a district magistrate and the member of Calcutta Municipal Corporation. Since his own knowledge of English was limited, he appointed European tutors (who were brought to Ziaganj) to teach his children as he understood that it was essential to have a good knowledge and command over the English language in order to keep pace with the radical changes that the country was undergoing.

Setab Chand’s second son Puran Chand was the first Jain in Bengal to obtain his graduation degree from the Calcutta University in 1895. Born in 1875 (on 15

May), he earned his degree in Law in 1903 and received his Master's Degree in Pali in 1908. A lawyer by profession he settled in Calcutta in 1908 where he first resided at 28 Harrison Road and in 1910 moved to 48 Indian Mirror Street (eventually he also purchased five more houses at Indian Mirror Street) and in 1914, he started practicing at the Calcutta High Court. Like his father, Puran Chand too was a scholar with diversified interests in History, Archeology, Linguistics and holy scriptures. His major published works include Jaina Inscription in three volumes (the fourth volume could not be completed due to his demise), An Epitome of Jainism (the magnum opus which is still considered to be the most appropriate reference book on the said subject) and also anthologies of Prakrit poems and religious songs collected and edited by him as well as a collection of his articles published posthumously. Due to his impressive command over Hindi and Pali, he was appointed the question-setter and examiner of the answer-scripts by the Calcutta University. Chosen as the first President of the All India Oswal Jain Conference in 1932, Puran Chand was also associated with innumerable societies and organizations like Benaras Hindu University, Calcutta University, Bhandarkar Research Institute, Jain Swetambar Education Board, Asiatic Society of India, Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland to name a few.

Puran Chand fathered four sons (Keshari Singh:1895-1973, Prithwi Singh:1898-1976, Bijoy Singh:1906-1997, Bikram Singh:1910-?) and five daughters (Tara Kumari, Meena Kumari, Lachmi Kumari, Kiran Kumari and Raj Kumari). Keshari Singh was an exponent of Indian Classical Music and was also the founder of "Bengal Music Conference" along with his brother Bikram Singh. Bijoy Singh was an active politician; he became a minister in the Congress-led Government in West Bengal and also served as deputy Chief Minister for some time. Bikram Singh—an engineer by profession and eminent violinist as well—was also an actor who acted in a few Hindi and Bengali movies like President (starring Kundanlal Saigal) in which he played the second lead. He renounced the world and became a monk at a later stage of his life. For several years he remained untraceable and by the time the Nahar family could trace him after much efforts, he had left his body.

Prithwi Singh was born on 3 June 1898 at Azimganj in Murshidabad district of Bengal. Bijoy Singh remembers: "My elder brother Prithwi Singh Nahar was born in that Ayena-Mahal [a two storeyed building within the ancestral home of the Nahars at Azimganj; it was so called as the doors and the windows were adorned with a variety of coloured glass]. I remember, Dada used to go to the pathsala [a village school]. A uniformed durwan escorted the boys to and from the pathsala. A long sword hung from his waist. A servant was also sent whose job was to carry their books and cover their heads with an umbrella. A Jain scholar [Yati] was appointed to teach the boys the holy Jain scriptures."

Despite having a weak eyesight, Prithwi Singh possessed a robust health in his boyhood years which he developed even more by regular exercises. Bijoy Singh remembers Prithwi Singh punching the walls of their ancestral house as a means of exercise. But the most striking feature of his personality (which attracted

many admirers) was his exceedingly sweet behaviour towards others. Bijoy Singh recollects that once, Prithwi Singh won a prize in school for his good conduct.

At the age of ten, Prithwi Singh was admitted to “Hare School” when the Nahar family migrated to Calcutta. In 1915, when seventeen years of age, he married Suhag Kumari, the eldest daughter of Pratap Chand Sipani of Jiaganj who was fifteen years of age at the time of their wedding. Early marriages were a custom that prevailed at that period and the Nahar family was no exception. The marriage turned out to be an exceedingly blissful one and in due course of time, the couple was blessed with five sons (Dhir Singh:1917-72, Bir Singh:1918-64, Noren Singh [b:1920], Nirmal Singh [b:1922] and Abhay Singh :1924-2001) and three daughters (Sujata Nahar: 1925-2007, Sumitra Nahar [b:1928] and Suprabha Nahar [b:1930]).

In 1916, Prithwi Singh passed his matriculation examinations securing a first class; he repeated his success when he appeared for his Intermediate of Arts in 1918 from Presidency College where he also obtained his B.A. degree with Honours in English in March 1920. Among his college-mates were Soumendranath Tagore [a well-known figure of the Tagore clan] and Lord Arun Sinha [son of Lord Satyaprasanna Sinha]. However, a series of incidents took place in that year which led to an ever-lasting impact in his life. He expressed his desire to Puran Chand to go abroad to pursue higher studies. When Rabindranath Tagore, with whom Prithwi Singh enjoyed a cordial relationship, learnt about his wish, he congratulated the young man through a letter (dated January 1920) in which he wrote that until we break the bonds of customs which bind us, our nation will not be able to rise; he added that one would face grief in this process of breaking the bonds, but eventually this very grief will provide us the life to sustain as no truth can be attained without strength. And as a mark of his affection and encouragement, Tagore also sent a letter of introduction in Prithwi Singh’s name. He wrote:

“I know Prithvisingh Nahar. He is a young man of real promise. His visit to Europe will be of benefit to himself and his country. I have a genuine affection and regard for him. I hope he will win success and attain distinction.”[\[1\]](#)

But destiny had other plans. Despite being a pioneer in many fields, Puran Chand was not free from the conservative customs and religious bindings. He wrote to various eminent Jain scholars and personalities (like Kasturbhai Lalbhai of Gujarat, the owner of ‘Arvind Mills’) spread all over the undivided India inviting their views regarding the prospective journey of his son. But the majority of them replied in the negative as crossing the seven seas was still considered to be a dreadful sin. As a result, Puran Chand refused to give permission. Hence Prithwi Singh had to cancel his admission at Oxford. “It was a most shocking instance in Father’s life,” remarks Nirmal Singh, “and this resulted in the emergence of a rift in outlook between father and son.”

Years later, Prithwi Singh helped his nephew R.S.Bachawat to go abroad to pursue his further studies. In a way, he fulfilled his own dream through his nephew.

Prithwi Singh continued his further studies and got himself enrolled Master of Arts at Presidency College. After the Puja vacations, Prof. Heramba Maitro, who was a well-known brahmo [a worshipper of the formless Brahman] made certain derogatory remarks about the system of idol-worshipping and Hinduism during class hours. Prithwi Singh vehemently protested against the remarks of Prof. Maitro and also wrote to Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee, the then-Vice Chancellor of Calcutta University condemning the disparaging comments but with no result. On the contrary, Prithwi Singh was asked to apologize! Naturally he refused and left his studies as a mark of protest. Undaunted, he continued the fight and his letter to Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee, which was published in a leading newspaper of that time, created quite a stir and sensation in the society. “It was a beautiful letter”, remembers Suprabha Nahar, “but we could not trace it afterwards.” Nirmal Singh recollects: “I’ve seen the newspaper cutting which I had handed over to him but probably it got misplaced from my father’s papers and we did not find it. I myself had tried to locate it in newspapers like Amritabazar Patrika, The Statesman but in vain.”

But the closure of one avenue opened the gates of many artistic pursuits. Prithwi Singh had impressive command over European and Indian instrumental music and was an accomplished sitarist and pianist. “He played remarkably well”, remembers Noren Singh, “a recital of his was also arranged at Shantiniketan.” At the same time, he pursued his literary activities and contributed articles on Jain music, art, Indian history in magazines like Sabuj Patra, Vichitra, The Modern Review, Probashi, Parichay due to which he came closer to literary giants like Rabindranath Tagore, Pramatho Chowdhury and others. Not only was he a literary critic par excellence, but was also a collector of paintings, antiques, old coins, rare Buddhist, Jain and Hindu scriptures as well as books. He inherited his love of art from his father Puran Chand who also possessed a spectacular collection of rare coins. But the son’s knowledge over such objects surpassed that of his father. Nirmal Singh recollects:

“My father possessed a detailed knowledge about coins as well as statues. My grandfather was also a collector of coins and so was Bahadur Singh Singhi of Singhi Park who was our uncle; both of them never bought any coin without showing it to Father first. There was another gentleman with them, a Bengali—Mr.Ghose [Ajit], he too, like Grandfather and Uncle, looked upon Father for guidance. I’ve seen that neither Grandfather nor the other two gentlemen purchased any coin without Father’s prior approval.”

Later, in 1941, Prithwi Singh offered his entire collection of gold coins to the Mother. She wrote in a letter to him (dated 6 January): “The collection is indeed very well arranged and quite interesting. I am thinking of reserving a special shelf for it and then I will ask you to come and arrange the boxes on the shelf.”<sup>[2]</sup>

Sumitra Nahar writes in her article on Prithwi Singh: “Later on the coin collection was transferred to the Library and the Mother asked Sumitra to look after that. She did so for some years. Thereafter it was given to the Philatelic

Department and Noren Singh was asked by the Mother to look after that. It is still there.”

Prithwi Singh’s personal collection of art and paintings was enriched by the works of Rabindranath Tagore, Abanindranath Tagore, Gaganendranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose, Asit Haldar, Mukul Dey and others. Not only did he possess almost all the first editions of Rabindranath’s published works (“Neither Vishwabharati nor Rabindranath himself possessed those books,” remembers Nirmal Singh), but he also had in his collections, the only pottery-art made by Rabindranath. Since Prithwi Singh was close to all, whenever the artists required any financial help, they approached him and received the expected assistance. The three portraits of Sri Aurobindo made by Mukul Dey in 1919 were also bought by Prithwi Singh during his stay at Shantiniketan and with the money he received, Mukul Dey started the garden in front of his house “Chitralkha”.

But Prithwi Singh’s main interest lay elsewhere. The main goal of his life was God-realization. Bijoy Singh remembers that Prithwi Singh was deeply attracted towards spirituality right from his boyhood years. When he was in his mid-twenties, he came in contact with Ambikacharan Sarkar and Nishanath Raichowdhury; both were employees of the Nahars and disciples of Anukulchandra Thakur. Under the influence of Ambikacharan (who was an employee of Manilal Nahar, Puran Chand’s elder brother; he was a member of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation for nineteen years and was also its Commissioner for a few years in the pre-independence era), Prithwi Singh and his cousin Jauhar Singh were attracted to Anukul Thakur’s teachings and method of yoga; and under the guidance of Nishanath, in 1924, Prithwi Singh started practising yoga with his two nephews Ajay Singh and Jai Singh. Nirmal Singh remembers: “I’ve seen Father practising the yoga of Anukul Thakur ...he had a room in our house at Calcutta—he practised over there and no one was allowed to enter the room; not even my mother.” A series of spiritual experiences occurred within a short span including the awakening of the Kundalini. Suprabha Nahar recollects: “The others [Ajay and Jai Singh] did not have as much experience as Father and he regularly remitted money on a monthly basis to the widow of Nishanath till he settled at Pondicherry.”

“My father,” writes Sujata Nahar, “was initiated to the traditional yoga before I was born. Apart from hearing subtle sounds—as of bells and conches, etc.—and seeing lights and forms, he became familiar with the Kundalini. He frequently experienced his backbone becoming full of light as she ascended, and a white light rising straight well beyond his head and becoming stationary in the sky.”[\[3\]](#)

Prithwi Singh was always silent about his yogic experiences (“We never asked and he never revealed”—Noren Singh, Nirmal Singh and Suprabha Nahar have said) but a diary of his revealed that a number of experiences occurred within a short span of nine days (from 20 till 29 June 1924). Significant passages roughly translated from the diary are reproduced below:

’20 June 1924:’ Woke up at four in the morning...tried to meditate. Till yesterday morning, I concentrated my mind on the muladhara and then lifted it

upwards. As a result, a vibration was felt from the muladhar and it rose further. At times, upward and downward movements and expansion and distribution [of the consciousness] were felt for a long time. When the mind became still, a momentary trance-like feeling came over me; as soon as this feeling got dissolved, the sound of bells were heard. At times, a ray of light was felt manifesting from the muladhar and rising upwards till it crossed the head and stood erect like a perpendicular. It seemed that I got merged in that ray as well.” [4]

‘23 June 1924 3 a.m.: “Woke up at three in the morning. The vibrations were not felt but the ray was manifesting. Could fix the form of the Lord to some extent.” [5]

‘24 June 1924: “Stilled the mind at the muladhar. Vibrations were felt due to it. Later the ray arose from the muladhar and went up through the spine to the head where, after crossing it, stayed still. The ray was white in colour...Was able to fix the form of the Lord while in meditation. Felt bliss. At times the ray emerged from the nose-region and went far off. The sound of bells was also heard. Sometimes I felt as if I had grown tall along with the ray. The Lord too, as if became tall and got merged with me.” [6]

‘24 June 1924, evening: “...Saw various forms of sky while in meditation. Sometimes luminous, sometimes with a pale glow. At times feeling happy. At times the ray from the muladhar drowned me and I too became tall like the ray. This went on for two hours.” [7]

‘25 June 1924, 4.30 a.m.: “The mind became restrained after some vibrations. Unblemished ray was manifested. Saw spotless sky, luminous sky, ray-less sky. Became tall with the ray...Saw the form of the Lord within a huge golden frame, it grew tall before me.” [8]

‘26 June 1924: “Woke up at 2.45 in the morning. Concentrated at the muladhar. Felt mild vibrations. The next moment white rays rose through the muladhar; it crossed my head and stood erect. The ray seemed to be of a triangular shape...meditated on the form of the Lord. Suddenly I heard melodious sounds. A combination of conch, bells and drums’ sound was heard...it seemed as if an ocean of sound has arisen. Later the sounds went away. A luminous spot was revealed. Suddenly saw light similar to a powerful electric bulb shining. Later this too went away. Saw a clear sky. At times saw luminous spots...I felt as if I have become a luminous spine...The Lord got dissolved in my spine and His head got merged with my luminous head and got transformed into a luminous object.” [9]

‘28 June 1924, 5 a.m.: “Saw the full form of Lord Krishna in front of me...Krishna’s complexion was glowing blue, crown on His head, a flute in His hand, a long garland adorned His neck. The garland had white flowers, either Arabian jasmine or jissamine. The scene was beyond description.” [10]

The year 1924 also brought Prithwi Singh to the works of Sri Aurobindo, the Illumined Master who was to be his Guru and whom he was destined to meet nine years later. Though Prithwi Singh was aware of Sri Aurobindo’s evolutionary philosophy, courtesy the Arya—Sri Aurobindo’s monthly review published from 1914 to 1921— of which he was an avid reader, yet, he never thought of practising at that time the Integral Yoga developed by Sri Aurobindo. He had a particular

group of friends—Rishabhchand Samsukha,[\[11\]](#) Parichand Kothari,[\[12\]](#) Umirchand Kothari, Anil Kumar Bhattacharya[\[13\]](#)—all of them joined Sri Aurobindo Ashram later—who used to meet at “Indian Silk House”(a sari shop started by Rishabhchand) where they discussed the yoga and philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. Nirmal Singh remembers: “‘Indian Silk House’ was a partnership concern between Rishabhchand and Parichand. And that was in the early Brahma Samaj office in Cornwallis Street—the annexe. The front portion was the shop and inside there was a sitting room. Even my grandfather had gone there. I had gone with them. Dilip-da [Dilip Kumar Roy] and others used to send books and other things from Pondicherry. That was the centre. Father used to collect the books from there.” Nirmal Singh also remembers seeing Sri Aurobindo’s booklet *The Mother* in his father’s collection and it was dated 1924.

By 1928, Prithwi Singh was the proud father of seven children. He realized that the conservative environment that surrounded them would be unsuitable for their total development. So he decided to move away from Calcutta and settle at Shantiniketan with his family. On his request, Amiyo Chakravorty who was Rabindranath’s secretary, started looking for a house for Prithwi Singh and his family. In a letter dated 26 August 1929, Amiyo Chakravorty informed Prithwi Singh that he had seen a house which should be comfortable enough for Prithwi Singh and his family, so he requested Prithwi Singh to come to Shantiniketan and have a look at it. In the same letter, he also mentioned that on being informed about the prospective arrival of Prithwi Singh’s children to study, Rabindranath was elated and instructed Amiyo to make necessary arrangements. In December 1929, Prithwi Singh shifted to Shantiniketan with his family. He knew the significance of freedom in the development of the character and personality of a person as he himself was a victim of the “narrow limits of his community” when nine years earlier, he was refused the permission to go to Oxford and study. So he wanted the progress of his children not to be hindered by such narrowness. However, his decision to move away did not go well with Puran Chand who was displeased to a great extent. Shantiniketan, at that time, was the cultural hub of the country with personalities like Nandalal Bose, Dinendranath Tagore, Pandit Bidhu Shekhar Shastri, Jogadananda Roy, Khitimohan Sen, Nepal Roy and others (not to mention Rabindranath himself) adorning the ‘Abode of Peace’. Noren Singh reminisces: “He [Prithwi Singh] wanted his children to learn from all the avenues—studies, music, sports— he wanted them to be skilled in whatever they did.” And Nirmal Singh adds: “He took us away from this absolute narrow atmosphere to the open air...in order to give us open education which is now called ‘Value-based education.’”

Prithwi Singh rented the entire ‘Nichoo Bangla’ where earlier Rabindranath’s eldest brother Dwijendranath resided. He appointed Sujit Kumar Mukhopadhyay , a researcher at Vishwa Bharati as the tutor of his sons. Sujit Kumar remembers how wonder-struck he had been when he saw Prithwi Singh conducting a research on the diary of a Kali-Worshipper; he was surprised to see a Jain— a follower of ahimsavada [non-violence] researching on the works of a devotee of Goddess Kali! Eventually he helped Prithwi Singh to decipher the diary.

In his article Prithwi Singh in Shantiniketan, Sujit Kumar notes how ‘Nichoo Bunglow’ had become a seat of music during Prithwi Singh’s stay. Every month, Jiten Bhattacharya, the renowned sitarist performed over there. During his stay at Shantiniketan, Prithwi Singh befriended Nishikanto Raichowdhury who would eventually become his gurubhai (co-disciple) in 1934.

Nirmal Nahar recollects: “The entire compound [of ‘Nichoo Bunglow’] had two or three out-houses where some of the teachers and care-takers used to stay and one portion was reserved for Boroma, as we used to say, that is, Hemalata Devi who was the daughter-in-law of Dwijendranath. The rest of the building was taken over by us. Father started farming, we had our own cows— we had some two to three multani cows, not more than four at least. Up to myself all were admitted to the [Ashram] school. We used to go to the school but Abhay Singh, Sujata, Sumitra and Suprabha were too young to go to school.”

Sumitra Nahar shares a memorable incident of that time with the author: “When Rabindra Nath came to Calcutta with his troupe, because of father’s poor eye sight, he had made special arrangement for him to sit at the stage itself so that he could see the performance. As I was an obstinate child, he had to take me along with him!”

Sujata Nahar writes about her years at Shantiniketan: “From the end of 1929 up to the beginning of 1935 we spent our impressionable ages surrounded by trees. The Nichu Bangla area, where we lived, was like a big orchard with just a few small houses dotted here and there. The houses had neither electricity nor tap water. But who cared! Petromax and hurricane lanterns lighted the houses. A well provided water. Munishwar’s well, (he was Dwijendra Nath Tagore’s personal servant). Everyone was welcome to draw the water he needed. Even I insisted on drawing water for my bath— that is, I tipped the tiny bucket over my head— for I must do as my brothers did!

What wonderful times we had! So many pictures were taken by a child’s eye for the album of her adulthood. Always the shutter was clicked by a surprise or a wonder. Like walking along with Father on the narrow earthen ridges between paddy fields, my small hand grasped firmly in his strong one. I can almost smell the refreshing odour of ripening paddy, see whole fields dappled by the sun’s golden light and swaying in waves as the breeze ran gently over them...

We were a happy family. I don’t remember even one heated argument between Father and Mother! We did have our ears tweaked by Father, for none among his brood was goody-goody. So there we were. Father, mother, the five elder brothers, me and my young sister who had not yet learned to speak. Suprabha, our youngest sister, was born about a year later.

My brothers—Dhir, Bir, Noren and Nirmal—joined the school as students. Abhay, the youngest, ran wild. Agile as a monkey, he was always on the topmost branches of mango trees or guava trees, or...or chasing squirrels. He also made friends with the Santals, the local inhabitants. He went to their houses, which were always spick and span, and drank the fresh palm-juice the tribals had collected. Later, when he was old enough, he too went to school.

As was the prevailing custom, exactly at the age of five I was initiated to the world of learning by writing the first letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, my guruji was Karamchandji, a Yati that is a sannyasi with certain permissible activities. It was my father who taught me Bengali. Very soon I could read fluently. Then, instead of reading himself the Indian epics, as he used to do, he began asking me to read the books aloud to him. My mother enjoyed it. I never went to any school.”[14]

She adds: “The life we lived there was always fresh and wonderful, as though the Gandharva Loka itself, the very land of art and grace and beauty, had descended in Santiniketan. Poems were recited, the air was full of songs, and plays were staged. Celebrations of various festivals, like tree-planting or welcoming the rains, were done with simple movements and gentle steps.”[15]

And she concludes: “We children were part and parcel of an environment that was continuously evolving. Life was simple. Many teachers, including Master-Mashai [meaning Nandalal Bose], lived in thatched, mud cottages. Truly, the simple life, the open air, the affection of one and all and the sense of belonging in Santiniketan are indescribable today.”[16]

In the meantime, the political condition of India had undergone a drastic change. The days of the Moderates were gone and most of the prominent leaders of that age had either retired from politics or were dead long ago. It was the age of passive resistance, civil disobedience and extremist activities. The revolutionary political ideas formulated by Mahatma Gandhi had changed the pattern of the nationalist movement across the undivided country and the younger generation of leaders no longer craved any sort of tie-ups with the British Crown. On 26 January 1930, the demand for Purna Swaraj or complete independence (formulated by Sri Aurobindo more than two decades ago in 1905) was proclaimed and the resolutions concerned with the proclamation was distributed across the nation. While many accepted the new resolutions, others like Tej Bahadur Sapru reacted differently; they feared that the Congress had gone mad and “in its madness it is going to involve the country in disaster”[Sapru’s letter to M.A.Jinnah dated 5 January 1930]. Mahatma Gandhi too called for a nation-wide Satyagraha on 6 April—a day after he ended his famous Dandi March. A section of the elite class or the zamindars realized that it was high time that they proved their unshakable loyalty towards the British Throne. In a “strictly private and confidential “ letter to Puran Chand (dated 8 April 1930), Pradyot Kumar Tagore, the President of the Land-Holders’ Association of Bengal, expressed his anxiety as attempts are being made to wreck settled government, social order and economic stability in every part of India” and since “ the speech delivered by His Excellency [the Viceroy] ...was one which breathes sympathy and consideration for the great land-holding classes in India “, therefore the zamindars of Bengal opine “ that the Executive authorities should, under existing circumstances, be all the more strengthened ; and every loyal assistance should be rendered to the Government as becoming our paramount duty, for the adoption of every legitimate means for the establishment of peace and order in the country, especially in these days of great political upheaval.” He also added: “...we have given so many proofs of our loyal devotion to the British Throne in the past that it would be unbecoming of us not to give full

expression of our attachment to the Throne and our grateful feelings towards the Government at the present crisis...we do not share the revolutionary propaganda which has been resorted to by a certain section of men whose chief motive is to abolish the land-holding class from the face of India, and to utilize the revenues of India for their own nefarious purposes,” hence to prove “the loyalty of the zamindars of Bengal to the Throne and person of His majesty the King-Emperor”, a draft letter was enclosed which required Puran Chand’s signature denoting his approval.

It is not known what was Puran Chand’s reaction; he was indecisive about the apt reply so he forwarded the letter to Prithwi Singh who answered the letter on his father’s behalf four days later:

“The tone of abject flattery flavours— if you will please excuse me the expression— of almost senile imbecility...It is my considered opinion that flattery can achieve but very little— at best it can become the recipient of a few patronising gifts in the shape of doles, but generally because of its inherent weakness it is mockingly spurned and considered at heart to be of but little worth except of course for purposes of show.”[\[17\]](#)

He further added: “We should further remember that even the Government is anxious for a round table conference and the ruling chiefs taking the lead from the Government do not disdain to come to some settlement with so-called Indian politicians. All these are signs of the time and should not be lost upon us.”

This aforesaid letter reflects Prithwi Singh’s strong, yet unknown, nationalist feelings. Though reserved by nature, he never let unjustified oppositions to overpower him; his humility eclipsed many aspects of his noble character but that did not overshadow the sun of its strength. Oppositions or obstacles which he faced from some of his gurubhais (like Navajata, who tried to eradicate the existence of the Publishing Department of the Ashram for the benefit of SABDA, a printing and distribution unit commenced by him) when he settled at Pondicherry could never daunt him; moreover, the Mother supported his activities. Nirmal Nahar remarks: “He never paid any heed to it. He moved on his own.”

Prithwi Singh was bestowed with a perfectly blissful marital life which was beautified by Suhag Kumari. Known for her kind-hearted nature and generosity, she was an ideal wife whom Prithwi Singh loved dearly. She was deeply religious and observed customary fasts with utmost devotion and sincerity and had “several visions of gods and goddesses” (Sujata Nahar). But little did anyone know that while she illuminated her household, the lamp of her own life was flickering.

“Once”, recollects Nirmal Nahar, “she fasted for seven days and drank only boiled water. In our religion and custom, there is a period in which many observe fasts. Following the conclusion of the fast, one is supposed to follow a particular pattern of eating; probably she had deviated from the pattern and that ruined her health and she fell ill. She was taken to Puri and Madhupur so that her health could improve but in vain. She was ill for three-to four years but that did not stop her from doing her household duties.” But what had exactly happened to her? “I was told that she suffered from dropsy,” recalls Suprabha Nahar, “in those days, it was difficult to detect an illness properly.” How did the end come? Nirmal Nahar

reminisces: “Before settling at Shantiniketan, we resided at 38 Indian Mirror Street. During our stay over there, that house Father had given to his nephew R.S.Bachawat [former judge of Supreme Court] for his use as residential purposes. When we returned from Shantiniketan, we wanted to shift to that house so R. S. Bachawat was requested to look for accommodation elsewhere; so when we settled in that house, we had a house-warming ceremony. Many were invited. We children were playing on the roof of the house. Dada [Dhir Singh] was flying a kite. At that moment our aunt called us downstairs. It was around 3 in the afternoon.”

Following is a translated passage from Sujata Nahar’s reminiscences: “1932.It was Bijoya Dashami ...We were playing on the second floor of our house...Suddenly I heard somebody crying. Someone called us downstairs...We went to mother’s room where we saw her lying on bed. Her face was absolutely calm— it seemed as if she was sleeping. We offered our last pranams to her. That was the last time I saw her. Suprabha was taken away by Grandmother. And our aunt took Sumitra and me to her house at Lansdowne Road.”[\[18\]](#)

Noren, Nirmal and Abhay Singh were sent to Puran Chand’s house. Dhir and Bir Singh attended Suhag Kumari’s funeral.

Suhag Kumari’s untimely death on 7 October 1932 devastated Prithwi Singh. His love for his wife was beyond anyone’s estimation. But how can such love be consonant with one’s spiritual consciousness? Sri Aurobindo has answered it in Savitri :

“Love must not cease to live upon the earth;  
For Love is the bright link twixt earth and heaven,  
Love is the far Transcendent’ s angel here;  
Love is man’s lien on the Absolute.”  
And has Prithwi Singh himself not written about love:  
“Love is the soul-pressed wine of God on earth.  
It is the passion linking human souls  
Through long vicissitudes of death and birth  
In oneness of Harmony’s diviner goals.  
A golden stream in the Mother’s breast it rolls:  
But though no earthly love can dare surpass  
The prism-clouds of ego’s magic glass,  
Its fairy touch transforms life’s meagre doles.  
Love symbolises immortality.  
Descended from supernal worlds of bliss,  
It flames above the serpent’s crawl and hiss  
And pours itself in selfless service free.  
Let human love lead on to Love divine  
Beyond the foaming seas incarnadine. [\[19\]](#)

Rabindranath Tagore wrote to Prithwi Singh soon after Suhag Kumari’s demise: “The heart refuses to be ready to accept death even if it awaits at the doorstep for a long time. Despite being evident, our soul protests. But we have to accept defeat. After the acceptance of defeat, the thought occurs to us that death does not necessarily abduct, death is the foreword to life. We do not see many

wealth of life in its own light, but it becomes illumined on death's dark canvas. The value of those whom we never paid any importance to becomes evident, whatever was thought to be petty, no longer appears to be so. Then we make our obeisance to Life-God by saying that your gifts of every moment have honoured me, when we grieve following the separation, through this we prove how dear they were. At the same time it should be remembered that nothing was in vain, what was true in it, still exists. Let's not magnify the loss, the fact that we had received is more important, it remains above all losses. No words of consolation can overcome the grief of separation, because this grief is our tribute to those whom we found in life and acknowledged the attainment in death.”[\[20\]](#)

Prithwi Singh was only thirty four years of age when he became a widower. “My father,” writes Sujata Nahar, “who had built his world around her, suddenly found himself without a base.”[\[21\]](#) He was asked repeatedly by Puran Chand and his relatives to remarry but nothing could compel him. His quest for God-realization that had been dormant within him for a long time re-emerged with infinite intensity. He started to travel all over India with the desire to find someone who would reveal to him the mission of his life and help him to accomplish it. He started seeking a Guru— a spiritual guide at whose feet he could surrender his grief-stricken heart and seeking soul.

Sujata Nahar writes: “It must have been sometime in 1933 that I saw my father reading a book several times. He then passed it on to me, saying, “Read it.” It was a Bengali book written by Rabindranath Tagore, and entitled: Aurobindo Ghose. That was my first acquaintance with Sri Aurobindo, if my memory serves me right, for I was only running eight, and we were living in Santiniketan. I can't say that I understood all I read (!), but I did understand that Rabindranath was addressing Aurobindo Ghose as a Rishi. The childish impression persisted for long years in my life, and I took him as I found him: a Rishi. It never occurred to me that before becoming a full-fledged Rishi, he too was once a child like the rest of us! Frankly, I was quite ignorant about the passage of time. When my father wanted to get me admitted to Kalabhavan, the Registrar asked him, “What is her age?” “Seven,” replied Father. After that whenever I was asked my age my invariable reply was, “Seven.” Till one day when I was brought up short by a sneering girl of my own age: “You are always seven, aren't you!” Only then did I come to know that each passing year adds to our age. But in my inner heart I continued to live in some ageless time.”[\[22\]](#)

In 1933, Prithwi Singh went on a pilgrimage to South India with a servant named Firengi whose father Baidyanath had served Puran Chand. On his way back from Rameshwaram, he halted at Pondicherry in November. At that time, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother gave Darshans only thrice a year: 21 February (the Mother's birthday), 15 August (Sri Aurobindo's birthday) and 24 November (Sri Aurobindo's Siddhi Day). Prithwi Singh had read the major works of Sri Aurobindo that were published serially in the Arya and since it was the month of the Darshan, the opportunity to stand in front of Sri Aurobindo (although for a few minutes or so) was something no one wanted to lose. Nor did Prithwi Singh. He had his first Darshan of Sri Aurobindo with the Mother sitting on his right on 24

November. He made his obeisance to them and received the divine touch of the dual-Avatars on his head. After the Darshan, he realized that his search for his Guru had come to an end. In Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, he found the Guides he was seeking. His mind, which knew no peace following the demise of his wife, found EVERYTHING in them. He made up his mind to settle at Pondicherry permanently.

“Even while he stood on being’s naked edge  
And all the passion and seeking of his soul  
Faced their extinction in some featureless Vast,  
The Presence he yearned for suddenly drew close.  
Across the silence of the ultimate Calm,  
Out of a marvellous Transcendence’ core,  
A body of wonder and translucency  
As if a sweet mystic summary of her self  
Escaping into the original Bliss  
Had come enlarged out of eternity,  
Someone came infinite and absolute.  
A being of wisdom, power and delight,  
Even as a mother draws her child to her arms,  
Took to her breast Nature and world and soul.  
Abolishing the signless emptiness,  
Breaking the vacancy and voiceless hush,  
Piercing the limitless Unknowable,  
Into the liberty of the motionless depths  
A beautiful and felicitous lustre stole.  
The Power, the Light, the Bliss no word can speak  
Imaged itself in a surprising beam  
And built a golden passage to his heart  
Touching through him all longing sentient things.”[\[23\]](#)

During his first stay at Pondicherry (where he stayed till 5 December 1933), Prithwi Singh expressed his desire to work for the Ashram. Considering “all life is yoga”, he offered his services to the Master. In his very first letter to his Guru, he wrote: “I will be able to do good copying work, both in English and Bengali. Also I know typewriting a little, I can do general work also as an assistant to somebody if I have not to go about from place to place which is difficult on account of my weak eyesight...I will gladly undertake any work you may choose for me.” Sri Aurobindo replied that since Prithwi Singh was staying for only a week, so it “would be difficult to arrange anything.”[\[24\]](#)

Sujit Kumar Mukhopadhyay remembers: “One day I went to Prithwi Singh’s house in Calcutta; I saw that there was a flood of happiness flowing in the house. I would never forget Nahar Babu’s face; it seemed as if the entire body was radiating bliss. He told me, ‘Sujit Babu, I am off to Pondicherry. Sri Aurobindo has accepted me.’”[\[25\]](#)

Noren Singh recalls: “Father wanted to renounce everything and settle down in the Ashram right from the very beginning. The Mother told him to wait for

sometime as his children were still young; then Dada [Dhir Singh] got married in 1935— after that he became more free. He visited the Ashram regularly and then he settled permanently here with Sujata in 1938. The Mother had told him earlier, ‘You belong to this place’”.

An important data should be provided at this juncture that from 1935, Prithwi Singh started composing remarkable pieces of poetry in Bengali. He was a prolific critic of art and several articles penned by him were published in various magazines but verse-composition was something which he never dabbled in but once he started, exquisite poems with impeccable sense of rhythm flowed out of his pen. And his poems were appreciated by Sri Aurobindo who made remarks like: “Very fine”, “It is a very fine sonnet, very beautiful; also very well-built in its structure and admirable in idea”, “It is very beautiful”, “It is a fine and strong sonnet”, “It is a beautiful poem”, “The sonnet is a fine one and the words are all right”.

During his first stay at Pondicherry, Prithwi Singh had befriended Dilip Kumar Roy, Sahana Devi, Nirodbaran, Yogananda[26] and other disciples of his Guru. Whenever they required anything that were unavailable in Pondicherry, they approached Prithwi Singh who arranged the necessary objects with utmost delight; be it Pakhwaz [a musical instrument] or carbon copying pen of steel or books for Dilip Roy; icing syringe, fancy pastry cutters, tin cake moulds, pastry board & rollers, glass cake covers, cooking stove and cooking recipe books for Sahana Devi. He also provided money to Sahana Devi (till he finally settled in the Ashram in 1938) which enabled her to prepare cakes and biscuits for the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. He also typed out copies of books written by Sri Aurobindo (for instance, *The Synthesis of Yoga*) for his other gurubhais.

Although Prithwi Singh stayed outside the Ashram, but that did not move him away from the Grace of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. In this context, let’s quote what the Mother had told Dilip Kumar Roy about him: “He need not come here at once to be acted upon by us, we can act on him all right from this distance as we are acting on so many.” Sri Aurobindo too, on his part, assured him through letters about the guidance he would always receive from him. When Prithwi Singh expressed his concern about the sexual thoughts that came up in his dreams which made him doubt his own sincerity, Sri Aurobindo replied (13th May 1934): “In any case what you experience is not due to any badness in the nature or accumulation of past evil, but is the normal course taken in the elimination of the impulse from the nature. There is no ground therefore for discouragement. You have only to get the habit of asserting your will in the moments after sleep and, if possible put a will into the subconscious which will act automatically in sleep as well as in waking to discourage the coming up of the sex impulse whether in the form of dream or any other.”[27]

Now that Prithwi Singh was accepted by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, the time had come for him to gradually wind up all worldly responsibilities. He had certain duties which he could not afford to neglect, yet he started the procedure of gradual withdrawal. In a letter to Dr. Gerta Calmann penned in early 1934, he wrote: “I am also leaving Santiniketan. In August I intend to go and pass days of

contemplation in Shri Aurobindo's Ashram in Pondicherry, which I already visited last winter. After that I shall make arrangements for my stay in Calcutta. My eldest son will be married next year and his wife will help in looking after the household. Things are changing quickly enough but the realities of soul's experience remain unchanged.”[28]

That year when he visited Pondicherry, Prithwi Singh expressed his desire to work for the Ashram. He wrote to Sri Aurobindo: “While I am here I should like to do some sort of work. I can take up the work of the classification of books in the library according to the method of Dr. Dewey whose book I have brought with me. A sort of arrangement in cards is also necessary. If you approve I can explain the method to Nolini Babu[ Nolini Kanta Gupta] and if he thinks it is not too complicated for the average user I can take up the work quite gladly. In any case I shall try faithfully to perform any work that you may be pleased to give me.”[29]

In his reply, Sri Aurobindo gave his consent and told Prithwi Singh to arrange it with Nolini Kanta Gupta.

In response to another letter of Prithwi Singh [dated September 1934], Sri Aurobindo explained the occult reality in hearing various sounds which Prithwi Singh had heard: “The sounds of bells and the seeing of lights and colours are signs of the opening of the inner consciousness which brings with it an opening also to sights and sounds of other planes than the physical. Some of these things, like the sound of bells, crickets etc. seem even to help the opening. The Upanishad speaks of them as brahmavyaktikarani yoge. The lights represent forces— or sometimes a formed light like that you saw may be the Light of a being of the supraphysical planes.”[30]

In another letter dated 14 September 1934, Sri Aurobindo wrote to him: “The colours or lights you see are forces from various planes and each colour indicates a special force...The Mother finds that you have made considerable progress since you came here this time and that the opening in you is widening very much. The little difficulties and details you speak of are of very little importance. Let the consciousness grow within you as it is growing and the opening of the consciousness grow entirely wide.”[31]

Fifteen days later, on 29 September, Prithwi Singh was formally accepted as a permanent member of Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Sri Aurobindo wrote to him: “The Mother accepts in principle your coming here as a permanent member of the Asram. She would like you indeed to consider yourself, from now on as a member...The question remains about the time of your coming here not to return. Here the Mother is inclined to think that it would be more satisfactory to settle the affairs of the estate definitely, and then permanently come. There would in that case be some delay, but it would have this advantage of leaving little chance of a call or pull from over there to create any vibrations in the sadhana. The second date proposed by you would then have to be adopted.”[32]

In January 1935, Prithwi Singh gave up his residence at Shantiniketan and moved to Calcutta. But the memories of all those years of extreme peace and bliss made him “listless”. Soon after, he wrote to Sri Aurobindo informing him about his arrival to Pondicherry with his children Sujata and Abhay during the February

Darshan. Sri Aurobindo replied on 27 January: “You can certainly come in February for the darshan, we shall be very glad to see you here and the two children can also come...I hope that you will soon get out of the listlessness or have already got out of it. It must have been due to the going out of this atmosphere into another which was not helpful to the new consciousness in you. But this is a first result which is not likely to last. Whatever the distance or surroundings, call confidently to the Mother and you will pass unshaken through all inner or outer difficulties.”[\[33\]](#)

Sujata Nahar writes about her first visit to the Ashram: “It was on the occasion of Mother’s birth anniversary on 21 February 1935. That was one of the three days in a year when Sri Aurobindo gave Darshan. From Calcutta we, that is Father, my brother Abhay and I, went to Pondicherry. In those days young children were rarely permitted to visit the Ashram. But for some reason, unknown to me, we two were granted permission, although I had barely completed nine and Abhay was twenty months older than me. We reached a few days before Mother’s birthday.

We always saw Mother dressed in a sari, with her head covered. Every morning Mother would come down the stairs to the ground-floor meditation hall, sit in a low chair set against the wall, give a meditation, which was followed by Pranam. One by one people made their Pranam, each according to his or her liking. I always put my head on her lap, and she would lay her palm on my head, and a sense of well-being would flood my body and soul. Then, from a dish kept near her, she would take flowers and put them in my hands, as she did with others. Each flower had a meaning given by Mother.

In the evenings, there was a meditation, and—oh, joy! —we two could attend it. Mother would come down one flight of steps, pause a moment on the landing, and take three or four steps down, turn to her right to face the people sitting in the hall. She herself meditated standing, with her hands resting lightly on the banister. Once she had taken her position all the lights were switched off, except a dim one which was left burning in the upper flight of the staircase. A pale light could be seen through a square aperture on the wall just behind where Mother stood. The meditation lasted, I presume, from twenty to thirty minutes. But I did not fidget. Something held my attention and I watched with interest: a light around Mother’s head. Coloured. My eyes would remain glued on the light—open eyes, of course!—and each day the colour would be different. I always thought that it was a fanciful electrician who changed the bulbs. Then, ages later, one day when I was talking to the electrician, I asked, “Bulada[\[34\]](#), why did you stop changing the bulbs during the evening meditations?” For, I never again saw those coloured lights around Mother’s head. He was so astonished. “But it was always the same electric bulb!” He was quite taken aback. “I never, ever put any coloured bulb there.” That taught me something, I can tell you. The next time I saw Mother with light around her, I did not make the same stupid mistake, I assure you.”[\[35\]](#)

In December 1935, Sri Aurobindo gave Prithwi Singh the responsibility of selling the three houses owned by Dilip Kumar Roy. The thought of being a property-holder was bothering Dilip Kumar, so he wanted to sell them off and

offer the sale proceeds to the Mother. That was done, through Prithwi Singh's help, and the money obtained was spent in the construction of Golconde [the oldest Ashram guest house]. Meanwhile, Prithwi Singh donated his entire collection of the Arya to the Ashram and also bore the expenses related to the publication of Sri Aurobindo's collection of letters *The Bases of Yoga*.

On 31 May 1936, Puran Chand aged sixty-two breathed his last. His death was deeply mourned by all his admirers who realized the significance of the loss. In a meeting organized by the Asiatic Society, Suniti Kumar Chattopadhyay said: "The death of Puranchand Nahar which took place on May 31, 1936, at the comparatively early age of 62, has removed from the learned world of Calcutta and India one of its well-known personalities which was that of a fine scholar and antiquarian, a man of wide culture and a true gentleman...Mr. Nahar was a perfect gentleman whose charm of manner and innate goodness and sincerity and desire to serve and help others made him win the esteem and affection of all...His loss is keenly felt as a personal one..."

Deeply saddened by his grandfather's demise, young Abhay Singh put a question to Sri Aurobindo as to what happens to the soul after it leaves the body; Sri Aurobindo conveyed his answer through Nolini Kanta Gupta: "After death the soul leaves the earth immediately or in a short time to enter what is called vital worlds. It stays there for some time, then when the time comes it leaves that too. In this way, finally it enters what is called the psychic world — here it takes rest. It remains there till the time comes to take a new birth."[\[36\]](#)

Nirmal Nahar reminisces about his grandfather: "When we used to come to Calcutta from Shantiniketan, we had to sit with him after lunch and in the morning he took us to the temple after which we were allowed to have breakfast. He observed the religious duties which had become a part of our tradition. Father too did it in his childhood...Grandfather taught us how to cut wrappers and envelopes so that we may avoid wastage. All this happened before 1935. He collected and pasted the covers of magazines published in Bengali in albums— it was a unique collection. ..His collection included the likes of *Probashi*, *Bharatbarsha*. He also had a collection of match-boxes— the detailed picture of an era could be attained from it."

By 1938, Prithwi Singh was ready to take the final plunge. His eldest son was married by that time and his daughter-in-law Rajsena took over the responsibilities of the household management. Now he was free to lead the life for which he aspired. On 29 May 1938, he settled in Pondicherry permanently with Sujata Nahar, then aged twelve, who writes: "In Sri Aurobindo and Mother he found the Guides he was seeking. And, as is natural with fathers, he wanted his children also to meet Sri Aurobindo and Mother. That is how we brothers and sisters came into contact with Them. Finally, one by one, we chose to stay under the wing of Mother and Sri Aurobindo."[\[37\]](#)

Gradually the other children of Prithwi Singh also joined the Ashram. Noren Singh joined in 1939, followed by Abhay Singh in 1940; in 1941 Rajsena joined and was followed by Sumitra, Suprabha and Dhir Singh's children; then Nirmal Singh joined in 1942. Bir Singh who was a Flying Officer in the Royal Air Force

joined the Ashram in 1945. Nirmal Nahar remembers: “Though Father had become a sadhak by the time we went to the Ashram, yet, we had to send our photos and horoscopes to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for their approval. It was only after the Second World War, the starting of the Ashram School and the partition which resulted in the arrival of the refugees, that this system was relaxed. After 1947, there was universal acceptance.” He adds: “During our stay at Shantiniketan, our photographs were taken but they were of a poor quality. So we came to Calcutta where our photos were taken at the ‘Elysium Studio’. Those photographs were sent to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo.”

As soon as he arrived in the Ashram, Prithwi Singh— a Karmayogi by nature— took over the work of arranging the Library. He wrote in a letter addressed to his Guru:

“Regarding library work I am now giving 1 ½ to 2 hours in the morning and about 3 to 4 hours during day-time. Parichand has agreed to work one hour with me in the morning from 8:30 to 9:30 and for the rest I am trying to do everything myself. Altogether about 2925 books have been arranged, labelled and classified and there would be another 500 volumes or so of English books still left to be done...

At present I am working irregularly from 5 to 6 hours because I am still feeling a little tired physically, but I intend to devote a little more time— 7 hours regularly. Which I pray will have your approval. Only it is not possible to work at night for it may strain the eyes and there is also no proper lighting arrangement in the library.”

Sri Aurobindo approved it provided “there is no strain. Otherwise 5 to 6 hours is enough”.[\[38\]](#)

Suprabha Nahar remembers: “Father was extremely learned. He had a variety of books in his personal library and all were read— it’s not that the books were just kept for show. When the Mother gave him the work [of organizing the Library]— before that he did a course on librarianship at Calcutta and after settling over here, he modernized it and on the basis of the modernized system, the Library was set up and organized.”

Even before he settled in the Ashram, Prithwi Singh had a number of spiritual experiences. While practising the yoga under Nishanath Raichaudhury, he had experienced the awakening of the Kundalini. On 2 October 1934, he woke up and felt “a power coming from over the head reaching up to the waist.” In his own words: “I felt a very joyful sensation as it enveloped me in its sweet fold. There was very slight trembling and the bell-sound was continuously ringing in the right ear. I was calling Mother, Mother, and I felt your near presence and soothing caress. Gradually it passed away and after some time I again fell asleep.”

Sri Aurobindo wrote to him:“...it was the beginning of the descent of the Mother’s force and the Mother’s enveloping presence.”[\[39\]](#)

In answer to a query regarding another experience of Prithwi Singh, Sri Aurobindo wrote: “The force which you felt must evidently have been a rising of the Kundalini ascending to join the Force above and bring down the energy needed to ease the depression and then again rising to enforce the connection between the

Above and the lower centres. The seeming expansion of the head is due to the joining of the mind with the consciousness of the Self or Divine above. That consciousness is wide and illimitable and when one rises into it the individual consciousness also breaks its limits and feels wide and illimitable. At such times one often feels as if there were no head and no body but all were a wide self and its consciousness, or else the head or the body is only a circumstance in that. The body or the physical mind are sometimes startled or alarmed at these experiences because they are abnormal to it; but there is no ground for alarm..."[16 April 1936].[\[40\]](#)

And again: "Most of these visions are the result of your getting into contact with a certain field of forces in the vital world which are at present creating the pressure for war and revolution and all catastrophic things in Europe."[13 September 1936][\[41\]](#)

On 21 December 1936, Prithwi Singh informed Sri Aurobindo: "This morning I felt, in dream I suppose, I was in an out of the way place where a Tantrik was sitting wrapped in meditation and there were some disciples around him, some perhaps assisting in the ceremonial which was rather vaguely felt than perceived clearly. Suddenly a call came from somewhere to the Yogi to succour India whose children were undergoing great torture. But he was absolutely unmoved in his work of concentration though all others left except one, but it was felt by me not without his approval. Then I changed my position and was looking at a woman's face her eyes rigidly held in trance with a far far-away look while the disciple (the one who remained) was reciting some incantations. But fixed and unmoved she was to all external things. I looked boldly and full at the face and with that an energy radiated or I could draw an energy with which my consciousness rose and came back and rose again. I was feeling much joy in rising while all the time very consciously and without the least element of fear calling you[r] name, Mother. Though the swinging movement was at the back primarily the whole body was throbbing with the vibrations and at those moments when the consciousness would return into the body I could even hear the sounds distinctly made in the adjacent bathroom by Nolini as he was taking his bath. And as I was willing I was rising again and again drawing energy by looking at the eyes of the trance-held face. Strangely I was not in the least moved by anything, the only desire or aspiration was to rise and rise, to experience the swinging movement again and again. After some time it slowly became normal."

Sri Aurobindo replied: "In this dream certain forces seem to have taken symbolic bodies, e.g., Yoga-force in the Yogi and the power of concentration in the woman. It was rather a dream-experience than a dream proper."

In the same letter, Prithwi Singh added: "Two days back it was. I imagined I was in a house where my children were but soon I discovered I was sleeping outside the house which was looking very fine in a brilliant night-light (for queerly enough there was no moon-light). It was an empty house peopled with unseen presences, though the atmosphere was charming unlike the sensation of a haunted house. But I felt like leaving the house and with the stretcher-like thing on which I was sleeping I slowly moved out automatically into the street and then the

ascending and descending movements began several times. After that the consciousness became normalized.”

Sri Aurobindo answered: “In this other experience the house seems to be a symbol of the mind— and you had to go out in order to be no more confined in the Mind and its constructions.”[\[42\]](#)

On 8 February 1937, Sri Aurobindo informed Prithwi Singh: “You have made certainly much progress since you came.”[\[43\]](#)

A few days after the February Darshan, Prithwi Singh wrote to Sri Aurobindo: “Yesterday during evening meditation I felt a pressure on the head which made my thoughts still and this was repeated once more when along with calm I experienced a sense of release as if something heavy and obstructing has been removed.”

Sri Aurobindo replied: “This means that the lid above is being removed and the Higher Consciousness is pressing on the lower— its first touch being that of silence and peace.”[\[44\]](#)

In another letter to Prithwi Singh dated 24 May 1937, Sri Aurobindo wrote (Prithwi Singh’s letter could not be traced): “As for the two dreams you wrote about in your shorter letter of the 1st May, the one about the horse is not so clear as the other about the white calf. But the horse is always the symbol of Power; it must be then a Power which you were trying to catch and make your own while sometimes it was trying to come up with you, perhaps to use you. This is what happens in the vital where there are these uncertain and elusive movements. The high platform was evidently the level of a higher Consciousness which stilled this fluctuating movement and made control of the Power more possible, as it became still and near.

The white calf is the sign of a pure and clear consciousness,— the cow or calf being the symbol of Light in the Consciousness, something psychic or spiritual that you felt natural and intimate to you and inseparable.”[\[45\]](#)

As mentioned earlier, the first work assigned to Prithwi Singh was the task of re-organizing the Ashram Library. This led him to start the Publication Department as he wanted the whole world to receive the priceless treasure bequeathed by Sri Aurobindo through his literary works. The best source of knowledge regarding Prithwi Singh’s contribution towards the Publication Department is an extremely informative article titled Prithwi Singh and the Publication Department penned by his daughter Sumitra Nahar. Let’s quote a significant portion of this precious article:

“As far as I know the present Publication Department was originally a part of the first Ashram Library set up by Premananda[\[46\]](#) under the Mother’s direction...For the classification [of books in the Library] he [Prithwi Singh] did as he had written to the Mother in 1934 by using the Dewey System – a decimal system of classification. He had got labels printed for that purpose and used to get paste from Harikant’s[\[47\]](#) Binding Department situated also at the main Ashram building. A small label was pasted outside the book giving its reference number and a bigger one inside giving more details...The Library then comprised of the present Reading Room and the first part of the present P.D. till the first door that

gives [way] to the courtyard. A partition separated the second part which also opened on the same courtyard. The third part was the adjoining room. These last two were used as class rooms...English books and perhaps French ones too were kept in the present Reading Room then called the Library. Premananda looked after that part, he used to issue all the books and was extremely strict for their return on the exact date. Sometimes if a book was misplaced he would call Sumitra who somehow had a gift of finding out the missing one very fast. Sadashiv[48] and later on Vasanti[49] also worked with him.

The first part where father worked used to house all the vernacular books. There were many Bengali ones— story books, novels, magazines etc.— offered mainly by Sadhaks and Sadhikas. There was a constant supply of books from Kolkata from the Arya Publishing House...

Prithwi Singh used to type out Sri Aurobindo's manuscripts, arrange books, sweep floors and did some other works too...

Iladi[50], Ranidi[51], and others helped father temporarily in arranging Bengali books. Sumitra and later on Nirmal Singh (for a few months or so) used to help pasting labels on the books. Prithwi Singh had taught Sumitra how to arrange books in the cupboards by aligning them with the help of a scale. Leenadi[52]— Rose and Anju's mother— worked equally with him for many years. Piloo or better known as Sutapa[53], also helped him specially for the typing, making bills and keeping account. Neel also was there for some time. Later on Suprabha, Shova[54], Jaleswarji[55], Sukhveerji[56], Mounnou[57], to name a few, worked with Prithwi Singh."

The month of November 1938 was an important month in the history of the Ashram. Since November was a month of the Darshan, all the devotees and followers of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother looked forward to it after the August Darshan. An atmosphere of silent festivity prevailed in the Ashram. But on the night before the Darshan, Sri Aurobindo stumbled over a tiger skin kept in his room and fractured his knee. As a result, the Darshan did not take place (although the Mother gave a Darshan to all in the evening); it was only after six months that Sri Aurobindo gave Darshan with the Mother on 24 April 1939. But as a result of the accident, all correspondence between Sri Aurobindo and his disciples ceased with the exception of Amal Kiran and Dilip Kumar Roy who wrote to him till the very end.

From 1939, Sri Aurobindo started revising his major works published in the Arya and the first book he took up was The Life Divine. Nirodbaran writes in his Twelve Years with Sri Aurobindo: "The first to see the light of the day was the first volume of his magnum opus, The Life Divine...The two other volumes came out on the heels of the first one and were extensively rewritten. He composed many sonnets also. We used to see his pen indefatigably writing away page after page. We could not know what was being written, because, except for the sonnets, he passed everything to the Mother. She received it as a gift from God and sent it on to Prithwi Singh for typing. Though his eyesight was bad, his typing was so neat and clean, done with such minute care, that Sri Aurobindo was very pleased with his work." [58]

Noren Singh recollects: “When *The Life Divine* was published, Father typed the entire book thrice without mistake. Once the typing was done, Sri Aurobindo corrected and sent it back to him. Thus the final press copy was prepared for publication. The Mother used to say: ‘He does perfect work.’”

Suprabha Nahar adds: “While we type using all the fingers, Father typed with the help of three fingers only.”

Later, in 1949 when *The Life Divine* was published in the U.S.A. Prithwi Singh prepared the glossary index of the book. Sumitra Nahar remembers that Sri Aurobindo had remarked about him: “Without Prithwi Singh there would be no *Life Divine*.”

India gained her much awaited independence on 15 August 1947. “At the stroke of the midnight hour” India arose to “life and freedom”. But as Pondicherry was still under the French Rule, it became difficult to procure books from outside. Therefore the need to have a Sales Department was felt. Prithwi Singh created the Ashram Books Sales Department with the Mother’s blessings and he was appointed in-charge as well. He also suggested that the Ashram must have a press of its own to meet the ever-increasing demand for the books of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother; so a year later the Ashram Press commenced its operation.

Let’s read what Sujata Nahar has written about the Ashram Press: “Those were the early days of the Ashram Press. It did not then have all the sophisticated machinery that a modern press has. This printing press was started in October 1945 just after the Second World War was finally over.”[\[59\]](#)

She adds in the footnote of the same page: “As far as I know, the setting up of the Press was largely made possible by Sir Akbar Hydari, the grandfather of my friend Bilkees, wife of Air Vice-Marshall I. H. Latiff, retired Chief of the Indian Air Force. Along with the letterpress and other machinery from the Hyderabad Government Press, he sent its manager to teach the basics of running a printing press. Sir Akbar was the then Dewan of Hyderabad State, under whose stewardship the state had become prosperous.”

She continues: “Mother’s aim in setting it up was to publish Sri Aurobindo’s writings, to print unpublished materials and reprint books that were out of print. My father, himself a literary man, had an abiding interest in all of Sri Aurobindo’s writings. Father was also the one who had built up the Ashram’s Book Sales Department from scratch, so he was one of the foremost disciples to put to Mother the great number of books that were out of print and the popular demand for them, as well as the need to bring out the wealth of material lying unpublished. We may note that Father typed many of Sri Aurobindo’s manuscripts, including *The Life Divine* three times, after Sri Aurobindo’s corrections—all with three fingers and on a portable typewriter!

Mother’s idea in setting up the printing press was that it would be run, if not entirely at least to the greatest extent possible, by Ashram inmates with a minimum of paid workers. She therefore encouraged us all, young and not so young, to go and work there. Thus we were a medley lot, two or three generations working together.

It was March or April 1946, and as I was saying, the Press did not then have all the sophisticated machines; there was no folding machine, for example. We did folding, and stitching too, by hand. The Darshan of 24 April was approaching...there we were, about twenty of us, going full stream with the folding of a new book of poems by Sri Aurobindo, Poems Past and Present. While our elders meditated or gossiped as they went on folding, some of us young ones began to learn the poems by heart, without in the least slackening our folding speed. By the time all the forms were folded (it took several days as there were one thousand copies) some of us knew all the seven poems by heart! What a joy it was. And imagine how unbounded my joy became when Mother handed me a copy of the Poems Past and Present with Sri Aurobindo's signature and, in his handwriting, "To Sujata with blessings."[\[60\]](#)

Let's come back to Sumitra Nahar's article once again: "During Darshan times Prithwi Singh and Sumitra used to insert a paper inside [ the books of Sri Aurobindo] with the names of the buyers and Prithwi Singh sent those to Sri Aurobindo for His autograph and Blessings. The next day the books were returned and distributed to the buyers. If my memory serves me right, in the beginning Sri Aurobindo used to write the names but not later on when the number had increased enormously as well as our Lord's other works."

Regarding Prithwi Singh's mode of working, Sumitra Nahar writes: "As far as I remember he used to read all the proofs of Sri Aurobindo's books. Ranjuda[\[61\]](#) also helped him in this task. Later on Sumitra would read out from Savitri, Life Divine etc. and Prithwi Singh would choose sentences from those for the New Year Diary which was printed in our Ashram Press."

She also adds: "As Prithwi Singh was extremely well read and very proficient in English whenever any letter came to Sri Aurobindo asking Him about a particular turn of phrase or expression used by Him He would often send the question to Prithwi Singh who found out from dictionaries and encyclopaedias (which were offered by him and kept in cupboards in the Reception Room) similar usages by earlier famous writers or poets. As his eyesight was poor he would ask Sumitra to read out to him and inevitably he would find what he was looking for and then send his answer to Sri Aurobindo. I think it was via Nolinida.

In the course of his proofreading of The Life Divine, he too had put a few questions to Sri Aurobindo regarding some rare or newly coined words and received His answer in detail.

As Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's works spread Prithwi Singh would receive many letters enquiring about business, about books, about the Ashram as well as questions regarding Sadhana etc. Prithwi Singh would generally send this last type of letters to the Mother who would go through them and return them after replying mostly in the margin or at the bottom if there was place. Prithwi Singh would then dictate the replies incorporating Mother's answer and these were mostly typed by Suprabha who worked with him for quite many years. For the Bengali letters he answered mostly in English so that they too could be typed.

Prithwi Singh used to order books from England. He was so well-known for his truthfulness and honesty that the English Firms would supply books even before any payment was made.

In 1949 he had started to make a glossary of Sanskrit terms from the complete works of Sri Aurobindo. He wrote to the Lord that he thought that it may yet take one more year to complete it. I do not remember when that was done.”

Regarding the glossary of Sanskrit terms, Prithwi Singh wrote to Sri Aurobindo on 12 October 1949: “I have fixed the meaning in the majority of cases in your own words, and as this is a sort of lexicon, I have freely given different shades of meaning wherever necessary, even explanatory definitions, so that the reader Indian or Western may find no difficulty in understanding these terms wherever they may occur...”[62]

Came 1950; the year which shook the world of the Aurobindonian followers across the globe. A year earlier, Sri Aurobindo had faced some trouble with the prostate gland but by using his spiritual powers, he cured it. In November 1950, however the symptoms reappeared but this time Sri Aurobindo did not use his powers. On the contrary, he used it as a means to descend into death for the purpose of conquering it. To the attendants who served him, he made it very clear that he wanted to “make haste with certain things”, including the completion of Savitri.

Nirmal Nahar remembers: “In August [1950] I had come to Calcutta from Pondicherry. On the 20th or 21st of November, an urge from within came to visit Pondicherry. On that very day I told everyone that I’m leaving for Pondicherry. I reached the place on the 23rd. On the 24th, during the Darshan, I found that the Darshan was being halted from time to time. I asked Nolinida what had happened. He replied that Sri Aurobindo was ill; at that time I did not know about the prostate problems. From that time onwards I made regular inquiries about his health. However there were no changes in the outer life of the Ashram. Father’s cousin Uday Singh used to visit Sri Aurobindo’s room once a week to wind the clocks, he also kept me informed. Then there was Puraniji, Dr. Satyendra who loved me deeply. Though he [Sri Aurobindo] did not give any indication of leaving his body, but it was known to some that he was ill. Puraniji remarked that his condition was not good.

On that fateful day, I went to sleep at around 12 o’clock. At 3:30-4:00a.m.my neighbour Venkatraman[63] woke me up and gave me the news [of Sri Aurobindo’s departure]. I rushed to the Ashram from Trésor House (where I was staying at the ground-floor) bare-footed and had his Darshan. Then I went to Nolinida to ask him whether the news could be made public [Nirmal Singh was a special correspondent of P.T.I.; Sri Aurobindo himself had permitted him to join the job]. Nolinida replied, “Yes, of course. I have told Sisir [Kumar Mitra] to inform you, did he not do it?” I replied, “No”. He said that I can give the news. I came out of the Ashram and took the cycle of a student of the Ashram school who was about to enter the Ashram and went to the house of the Consul General from where I phoned up Madras and informed P.T.I. I was asked the details of his life which I told to collect from Duraiswami who was at that time residing at Madras.

...Whenever I went to have Sri Aurobindo's Darshan— I went four-to-five times a day—there was no sign of death in him. A ray was emanating, it seemed as if he was sleeping.”

The burial service finally took place on 9th December at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. Noren Singh was one of the persons who carried Sri Aurobindo's body in a rosewood coffin.

How did Prithwi Singh accept the departure of Sri Aurobindo ( who had given him an indication a few days earlier in a dream-vision in which Sri Aurobindo had said: “I am going down, but I am soon coming up in a radiant form” but he could not grasp its significance at that time)? It is not known whether he spoke of it or not but in his diary he wrote: “The passing of Sri Aurobindo is an event of such deep significance for the earth evolution and shrouded in such sublime mystery that it is impossible for the mere mind to pierce through its veils, to see the pulsations of a greater life behind the apparent triumph of Death...”[\[64\]](#)

Regarding Sri Aurobindo's descent into death, Prithwi Singh wrote:

“...Thy passing a mystery of a trembling night:  
Although the midnight's hour had rolled away,  
The black-cowled Darkness still hid light's doorway;—  
Then Matter's base was struck by a golden Light  
Leaping out from Thy body's million cells.  
The tremendous impact broke the guarded seals  
Of the chamber where in trance awaits the soul  
A new Dawn's hour to rise with Victory's bells.  
And now shall roll no more the Inconscient's wheels,  
The Path is hewn for the supramental goal.”[\[65\]](#)

And

“O Lord! What sight burst forth upon our gaze  
As we saw Thee laid in state upon Thy bed!  
A Form that lived and glowed and its splendours shed  
Of calm gold light, a miracle of wonder-ways!  
A throb of pain benumbed our weeping hearts;  
Overborne, we could not feel Thy grandiose Will,  
We saw Thee like a god asleep in still  
Repose, withdrawn from the play of his earthly parts.  
A Matter's mould that housed Thy Soul Divine,  
Transfigured by Thy mighty Yoga-trance,  
Revealed a greater Beauty's lingering glance  
Through nerve and cell and body's every line.  
Who shall grieve for Thee? O Lord of Light and Love!  
Thou art here with us, within, around, above.” [\[66\]](#)

In a letter published in the July issue of Mother India (1951), Prithwi Singh writes:

“The face of Sri Aurobindo with his eyes closed as if in some deep Yogic trance may evoke different emotions in different people. To most of us as we saw that majestic form that had housed the Divine Soul with the golden supramental

light radiating from it almost visible to the physical eye it seemed like the God Shiva asleep in Samadhi after he had drunk the poison that would destroy the worlds. In the bosom of this mighty peace the whole universe could find shelter. Infinity was there in that august form, rugged and austere, that might create perhaps, if looked at from a certain angle, an impression of suffering. But I'll speak no more. The more one gazed at it in quiet concentration, things hidden were revealed to one and tears came to the eyes as one contemplated all that he had done for us and how unworthy we had been!

Now I would like to say something to you about our Mother very frankly. It may be especially important for those who have been doing the sadhana from outside and have not had the opportunity of visiting the Ashram. It is our Master who taught us not to make any distinction between himself and the Mother. "It is the same Consciousness divided into two for purpose of the play." And so we always look upon our Mother, following her guidance and her wishes as our poor limited human capacity would allow. And today, when Sri Aurobindo is no more in his body, we realise more than ever the profound significance of his words. Because of the Mother the Ashram has not disintegrated. She alone has the secret of transformation and the change that has to take place upon this earth, as Sri Aurobindo has said, and he has by his "supreme sacrifice" opened the way for its rapid descent. We feel no depression in our sadhana because the Mother is upholding us with her tremendous spiritual Power. And if "our Lord has sacrificed himself totally for us" for reasons too sublime for the human mind to understand, we feel that the sacrifice of the Mother is, if anything, perhaps greater. For she has consented to remain on the material plane without him! And if she has consented to do so, it is out of infinite compassion for the "unreceptive earth and man" and to carry on his work to its triumphant fulfilment. Our hearts bow down to her in infinite gratitude and we pray Victory to her! Very truly indeed you say that "the Divine never bungles, and that is why he enjoined on the Mother to remain here among us, for that is the certitude for the fulfilment of all that he saw and laboured and shaped to bring to birth. When the supramental Will stands on earth and takes complete possession of body and Matter, then will his dominion be truly established.

I have written to you at length that you may know that Mother is our sole Guru now, and those who would follow this path have to look to her for guidance and transformation which cannot come by any human tapasya, however severe. We love her dearly, as we have always loved her, and pray to our Lord from the depth of our souls that she remain with us till her work is fully done and the supramental evolution accomplished.

Indeed the Mother's burden is heavy, the earth being unreceptive and the disciples who form part of the earth-consciousness being what they are, but our World-Mother upbears everything and with a forward pace which nothing can stop she moves steadily towards her goal. But for her we would have drooped like flowers torn from their roots, waiting for our days to end that we might come again with the Divine for his work.

You have asked if anything needs more emphasising at this hour. “The Supramental is a Truth and its descent is, in the nature of things, inevitable.” That is the thing that needs to be said now, with all emphasis and a faith unshaken by appearances. Sri Aurobindo’s decision to leave his own body does not invalidate the truth of his teachings. We accept it as the working out of a terrible Divine Wisdom whose logic is unknowable to us, and we bow down before it in deep reverence! His last act of Grace was to keep his body intact for several days so that all his disciples may have the chance to come from distant places in India for his last Darshan.”

Very few disciples of Sri Aurobindo truly realized the tremendous sacrifice made by him and Prithwi Singh was one of them. He understood that

“...To end our human suffering’s ancient role  
Thou flungst Thy body into the burning pit  
Where hisses the Snake and gnomes and goblins flit  
Blasting the Ocean-heart unaided, sole.” [\[67\]](#)

And

“Thou hast not left abandoned to its fate  
This earth and human life with its passion-play,  
The dream of Love to conquer strife and hate,  
The spirit’s venture in the heart of clay.  
For Thou art He who comes from age to age  
To raise the earth to ever greater heights  
By trampling down the Asura’s mighty rage,  
And open the doors to Wisdom’s wonder sights.  
The earth Thou guardest still with arms of love  
Like a brooding angel over a sleeping child,  
Thy exit veils Thy scheme that seems too wild  
To bring the transforming light from the Vast above.  
Winning all for man Thou wilt return once more,  
Nothing can hold Thee to its limit’s shore.” [\[68\]](#)

Therefore

“As touches Thy Light the grim inconscient cave,—  
The regions built of Night’s tremendous soil,—  
The Horrors of the Deep assailed, uncoil  
Like shadowy terrors rising from the grave.  
Desperate, knowing their end is come at last  
The creatures of the Dark their venoms pour,  
Drowning the earth with their passions’ magic roar,  
And rousing in the hearts of men the beast.  
In Thy supernal Wisdom, Love and Grace  
Thou knewest the dangers to the lives of men—  
Averse to Light in their dark and narrow den—  
And didst arrange the steps their shafts to face.  
For a swifter Victory Thou hast paid the price,  
O Lord, in Thy body’s total sacrifice!” [\[69\]](#)

Now that Sri Aurobindo was gone from the physical plane, all eyes turned towards the Mother who carried on the Yoga of Transformation. But many of the followers were disillusioned following Sri Aurobindo's departure as they had expected him to divinize his body. Some of them left the Ashram and Nirodbaran writes in his Twelve Years with Sri Aurobindo: "After Sri Aurobindo's passing, it was feared in some quarters that the Ashram would collapse, at least decline." But the Mother proved all apprehensions wrong and came forth like a lioness; in 1952 she started the Sri Aurobindo International University Centre which was renamed Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education in 1959 and also continued the Work she had started with Sri Aurobindo.

Sri Aurobindo's physical departure did not change Prithwi Singh's relationship with the Mother. A child of hers will always remain her child. Moreover, Sri Aurobindo had "entered into her with all the supramental force he had accumulated in his cells...and in the coming years she would often tell how intimately both their personalities had melted into each other and how concretely Sri Aurobindo was present in her."(Georges Van Vrekhem: Beyond Man) Prithwi Singh was one of the few Sadhaks who truly realized this fact and therefore he could proclaim:

"Thou art in Her, in Her Thy Force supreme  
Shall build for Thee on earth Thy golden dream."[\[70\]](#)

Suprabha Nahar says: "He considered both the Mother and Sri Aurobindo as Gods...and everytime he wrote to her, he ended the letter with the words, 'with deep devotion'. He was surrender and faith personified. Sometimes the Mother contradicted in her teachings; she said something once and then said something completely different a couple of years later because of a changed circumstance or for some other reason. He would never even imagine 'Mother, you are contradicting'; he would say, 'Mother, I am unable to understand.' His devotion towards the Mother was profound."

Suprabha Nahar recounts an incident: "It happened when I still worked with Father. Someone had translated the Message of Gita written by Anilbaran Roy and corrected by Sri Aurobindo into Hindi. The Mother had given her verbal consent and Father conveyed it to the translator accordingly. At that time, Anilbaran had already left the Ashram. At the time of the signing of the agreement, someone reminded the Mother that the book was written by Anilbaran. Then the Mother refused and said: "No". But she was not informed that Sri Aurobindo himself had corrected it. Since the Mother had refused, the translator was informed that his work will not be published. He wrote an abusive letter to Father but not even once did Father say that the Mother refused despite giving her consent, he took all the blame on himself. I liked Father's gesture very much."

Between 1952 and 1961, Prithwi Singh had several spiritual experiences, some of them are quoted below in his own words followed by the Mother's explanations.

1952: " Last January— it was on the 3rd, I remember— when I was laid up with an acute attack of filarial fever attended with severe pain and shivering, suddenly in the midst of calling your name and the attempt to bear the suffering as

quietly as possible, the consciousness separated itself entirely from the body. The detachment was almost complete and after the first moments of bewilderment I realised what a wonderful thing it was. I was observing the pain of the body, in sympathy with it for its sufferings, but not touched by it. For the first time I had this experience of the witnessing consciousness and what a tremendous release it is, Mother!

The same night I had a dream-experience, almost a waking vision. I saw two beings whose faces I could not see, two tall and sturdily built persons wearing what seemed to be heavy fur coats( later I thought they may be carrying on their backs a heavy load of herbs, as some light was gleaming out at times) approached me and looked at me. I had no fear at all, but simply said, “If you have come from the Mother, you can do what you like, if not I have nothing to do with you whoever you may be. I firmly withdraw from your influence and you cannot touch a hair of me.” With that I was quietly taking your name and withdrew to myself. They talked a while with each other, I suspected they smiled at my remarks. Drew something from behind their backs as the light gleamed. But other details I could not follow. Then they slowly left and I was fully awake.”

Prithwi Singh asked the Mother who the two beings were; the Mother replied: “They might have been the Aswins, the twin riders, the healers.”[\[71\]](#)

10 November 1952: “Last night with the experience of the rising of Kundalini I saw near the heart centre a large serenely luminous crescent for quite a long while. The experience filled the being with strength and joy and a feeling of deep restful repose.”

The Mother wrote to him: “This is a very good experience, the luminous crescent meaning spiritual progress.”[\[72\]](#)

1953: “Yesterday, for the first time I had the experience of the ascent of Kundalini in the waking state, while I was sitting on the chair, meditating at 11:30 or so in the night. Long had been my aspiration for it, but however hard I might try I had never succeeded before. The Force was ascending from the heart centre to the head and it continued three times, each time as I concentrated at the heart. I could see somewhat the inside of the body, though it was very vague and opaque. In between I saw the open pen and the paper also on the table.

It was not a new experience, but what elated me was that it came in the full waking state. A feeling of strength, restfulness and an inner quietude still continues.”[\[73\]](#)

The Mother assured him that this experience will “surely have excellent results even on the condition of your body.”

1953, 23 February [from Prithwi Singh’s diary]: “Yesterday I had two remarkable experiences. I saw a woman come close to me and I embraced her. She began to laugh in a derisive manner, but I severely told her, “You see not a hair of my body shivers. This is Tantra Yoga. I care not for your derision.” With a surprised air she slowly went away. And then I saw another woman trying to choke my throat and kill me. I felt almost suffocating. It was painful, but there was no fear. In absolute fearlessness, without screaming, I tried to strike back, to get free from the terrible pressure that was to squeeze my life out. I could not raise my arm,

it was paralysed, held by a force that could not be repelled by ordinary force. Then with a tremendous concentration that seemed to increase with the increasing pressure of that hostile Power, I called repeatedly the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. And with the call came the help. The being seemed to be surcharged with a superhuman energy and the heat that flowed from it began to sap the strength of the Adversary. Then I was free and master of myself and nothing could touch me. With gratitude and thankfulness I began to utter the name of the Mother and Lord. Then in the place of the woman I saw the Mother's divine Face looking at me with her compassionate eyes of Love and joy, showering her blessings." [74]

1954, 18 May: "About 4 or 5 days back during an experience of the ascending and descending force of Kundalini, I felt or rather saw a strong pressure of light pushing through the eye nerves to clean them as it were..." [75]

1957, 9 June: "...about an experience I had on three occasions during meditation on the Playground. After some half-sleep unconscious state, suddenly as the consciousness became fully awake and alert, there was an exquisitely fine feeling or rather acute perception that every cell of the body was throbbing with a Force of Light in a vibrant stillness of the whole being. It was different from the experience of total silence I once had. It was, though lasting for a minute or two at the most, an awareness for the first time of the innumerable cells of the body and the action of your Force in them, pouring in them a stillness so luminous and thrilling that words cannot describe it."

The Mother replied: "It is the experience I am giving during the meditation. So this also is quite correct and I am glad you were conscious of it." [76]

1960, 3 June [when he had gone to see the Mother on his birthday]: "...I had a most strange feeling— I could not see Your Face, but I could see at least something of the form and the wonderful pose in which You were sitting. It was awe-inspiring, yet full of compassion and love. It was then that I felt strongly the Presence of Sri Aurobindo. Also when You caressed my head with Your fingers just before I came away, I had the same feeling that it was Sri Aurobindo's hands with the added sweetness of the Mother-touch. Even now, as I recall the experience, I am overwhelmed with feelings of gratitude. I do not know if it was a purely mental imagination or if there was an iota of truth in it. It was an experience I cannot forget..."

The Mother replied: "Your experience, on your birthday, was concretely true. Sri Aurobindo was there to bless you and I am glad you have been aware of it." [77]

1962, 16 February: "On my last birthday, June 3, 1961, when The Mother had so sweetly given me meditation, I had the experience that I was completely immersed in fire. The fire was of a pinkish colour and it seemed to me somewhat like the roseate fire of which I had read in Savitri. It was so vivid that even when I opened my eyes I saw that the whole room was full of this fire. It was as if I was inside a sea of fire. This continued for a pretty long time. Afterwards when I thought of it somehow the feeling came that this was a tremendous act of Grace. My whole physical being, nerves and cells, the very pores of the body, were being cleansed by this purifying fire..." [78]

In a personal communication to the author, Sumitra Nahar writes: “Due to his spiritual experiences his body radiated a kind of light. He also wrote beautiful poems on Sri Aurobindo and The Mother both in English and Bengali. And all the time his consciousness was turned to Them and whoever approached him was encouraged and led, in whatever way possible, towards Them. Whenever his correspondents, Indian or foreign, asked him questions on spirituality etc. he would first refer these to the Mother and then only answer them...His was always “Mother Sri Aurobindo, Mother Sri Aurobindo...”

In 1954, Prithwi Singh’s collection of poems in English titled *The Winds of Silence* was published. It should be noted that though he had written poems in Bengali which were appreciated by Sri Aurobindo, he never tried his hand in writing poems in English until 1950. Most of the poems were written on the Mother and Sri Aurobindo but what was really interesting was the Foreword of the book which itself would reveal a strange phenomenon; a significant portion of it is quoted below:

“He has many Names and Forms.” Referring to Sri Aurobindo the Mother spoke these words to somebody. They were repeated to me, almost casually, by a friend, a brother disciple, and at once they began to vibrate in my heart like the potent words of a Mantra. They stirred me to the depths. Renewed memories of all that the Master has been to us,— his divine tolerance of our thousand trivialities and errors, his supreme Love and Compassion that have become a part of our soul-stuff, his words of wisdom calling us to live on the heights, in the lap of the Mother who alone could protect us against the assailing darkness all around, and his clear voice proclaiming the transcendent Divinity of the Mother by whose holocaust and not by any human effort would become possible the work of transformation and new-creation,— rose like a surge drowning me in a deep psychic sorrow. I meditated day after day on her words. Then, with a sudden unexpectedness, these words in conjunction with others began to form themselves into lines of rhythmic measure, and a desire arose in me to put them down in writing. In this way the first poem came to be written...

Then I discovered that I could write poems in English. In a flash, as it were, the first secrets of rhythm and versification, the manipulation of words of varying lengths in a foot and their subtle movements and variation, were revealed to me. It is well known to us how Sri Aurobindo and the Mother used to send their Force through letters for the development of the poetic faculty— as for other arts— not only to those who wrote in English, but to others as well who wrote in their own tongues. The comments that Sri Aurobindo made on the poems were not only helpful as illuminative guidance in the mental way, but carried in them effective power for the development of newer faculties by opening the consciousness to deeper and higher sources of inspiration. Without such aid the phenomenon in my case is all the more remarkable. But it does not mean that I became overnight a flawless writer of verse. What is significant that an opening has been made for the receptivity of the poetic thought and movement. But the labour of the brain has still to continue; for inspirations are often mixed up, attenuated in transit, sometimes even lost leaving nothing but a half-memory or a faint echo of the original; and

until the higher intuitive faculty is fully developed and in action, the work of the discriminating mind cannot be totally dispensed with. The Grace, the help is there in the background, working invisibly all the time and waiting until it can effect an opening of the consciousness to the higher planes of Beauty and Delight by a direct contact.”

Prithwi Singh also developed, along with his poetic skills, a liking for music as well. Sumitra Nahar informs the author: “Towards the end Father loved songs very much and used to hear songs on a cassette-player that was given to him. He himself used to start and stop it only by feeling with his fingers. He used to say “gan amar pran” (song is my life).” And whose songs did he prefer? Rabindranath Tagore, of course.

Although Prithwi Singh possessed good health in his childhood, gradually he lost the robustness he enjoyed when he was in his late thirties due to the intake of water from a well when he had visited Bihar Sarif which resulted in an attack of filaria for which no cure existed at that time. Some of his ailments were contracted illnesses while some were hereditary. He was aware of the fact that his illnesses recurred due to the lack of receptivity in the body and he knew that “if the attacks continue at frequent intervals the body will go to tatters”, so he depended more on the Grace of the Mother than medicines. The Mother too was concerned a great deal about his health and her letters to him (for instance, “Is there anything to eat that you would find helpful? More milk? or some fruits? I ask you to answer very frankly,” or “The fourth slice of bread is fully approved, but it seems to me that you ought to take it without discontinuing the extra milk as I am convinced that the milk is helping in making your body stronger”.) reflected the cautious eye of constant care she had on him. Once Prithwi Singh told a friend of his, “I have all the diseases in my body but the Mother once told me, ‘Prithwi Singh, you are my laboratory for experiments. One day I will cure you of all the diseases.’”

Years went by. Gradually the old guards of the Ashram who had spent thirty-to-forty years of their lives in Pondicherry with the Mother and Sri Aurobindo began to leave their bodies. Suresh Chakravorty (Moni) had left his body soon after Sri Aurobindo’s mahasamadhi in April 1951 followed by Kapali Sastry in 1953. Purani left his body in 1965 and was followed by Amrita and Pavitra in 1969 and Satyakarma in 1970.

A few deaths in the family too pained Prithwi Singh. In 1965, his second son Bir Singh who was a Flying Officer in Royal Air Force passed away on 9 June. When he was in the Air Force, he had met with an accident which caused some damage to his brain from which he never recovered fully. He joined the Ashram in 1945 but had to leave it in the 1950s when his illness began to recur and that ruined his health. He came to stay in Calcutta where he was treated but in vain. On 14 June 1972, Prithwi Singh’s eldest son Dhir Singh passed away at New Delhi where he was undergoing treatment. Though Prithwi Singh could accept the death of Bir Singh as he was mentally prepared for it, but the death of his eldest son shocked him deeply. When Nirmal Singh met his father after Dhir Singh’s demise, Prithwi Singh told him: “I had expected that Dhir Singh would come here in August but he left in June.”

In the Mother's Agenda too, we find the reference of Dhir Singh's death. On 18 June 1972, the Mother consoled Sujata Nahar:

"What has to be done for each one is done. Our consciousness is limited (microscopic gesture), it sees only a little part. The divine Consciousness is ... (gesture) it sees.

What has to be done for each one is done.

If someone has given himself to the Divine and trusts the Divine, the Divine looks after him. And ... (how to explain?) for instance, all that has to be done for you is being done every minute, and if you in turn ask the Divine to look after someone, that too is done. And done for the best. But their best is as the Divine sees it.

You must be at peace. The peace of absolute trust.

Peace has the power to annul the obstacles." [79]

Before Prithwi Singh could recover from the shock of his eldest son's death, his cousin Uday Singh who was also a devotee of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo and whose daughter "Sweet" was very dear to the Mother died a few days after Sri Aurobindo's birth centenary. His own health too suffered a great deal. He was operated of prostate but did not take care and rest as advised by the surgeon. He had a bad fall in 1972 which disturbed his speech to some extent. His eyesight which was always feeble deteriorated and he was on the verge of blindness. He was operated successfully of cataract by Dr. Venkataswami of Madurai but somehow he could not see very well. Towards the end, he had to use a wheel-chair for his movements because the doctor at Jipmer had cut his vein by mistake. He was admitted there after his fall by his grandson Pratip.

On 17 November 1973, some of the Ashramites had experienced an unusual gloominess in the atmosphere. Some were waiting around the Samadhi hoping to receive some news about the Mother's health. When André Morisset, the Mother's son came downstairs from her room after 7.30 in the evening, Sumitra Nahar asked him about her health but he did not inform what had happened in the Mother's room on the second floor of the main Ashram building. On the next day, the Ashramites opened their eyes only to learn that the Mother had left her body on the day before at 7.25 p.m. Abhay Singh was one of the first sadhaks who came to know about the news, except of course those who were involved and were near her.

The Mother's body was kept in the Meditation Hall for the next two days for Darshan; on 20 November, at 8.15 in the morning, the burial service took place. She joined the Samadhi where the physical body of Sri Aurobindo was kept to rest in 1950.

Prithwi Singh's will to live departed with the Mother. On several occasions he had said: "My soul has gone with the Mother."

Indeed, for to Prithwi Singh the Mother was ALL and EVERYTHING, about whom he has written:

"A glorious face of wondrous calm delight,  
In beauty absolute, of love divine,  
Has dawned upon this earth for Truth's new line

To lift her up from jaws of Death and Night.  
The gods know not Thy love's intensity  
That dares to plunge itself in Matter's knot  
To wipe away the inconscient's primal blot  
And found here supernature's eternity.  
With silent prayer all Nature bows to Thee;  
It is Thy part and Thou the mystic whole;  
Beyond creation's range Thou dwell'st, All-Soul!  
In Sun-worlds of splendour Thou playest openly.  
Reveal Thy Form of light and truth and bliss,  
Seize Thy adorer's heart with infinity's kiss."[\[80\]](#)

And

"...Mother Divine! Let Thy pure white flaming Feet  
Press on this earthly life till there arise  
Sun-bathed, the blue and gold of the upper skies  
For thy many-hued playfulness a passive seat.  
O Mother dear! Compel my future's course  
To Thy appointed ways by trampling Fate,  
By turning Godward all the senses' gate  
Till they respond to Thy supernal Force.  
Thy boundless Love spreads out like an infinite sea,  
Let my body and mind and soul be drowned in Thee."[\[81\]](#)

When the much-awaited manifestation of the Supramental took place,  
Prithwi Singh's heart sang out:

"The vast Truth-Light for which the Ages toiled  
Thou hast brought down into this Matter's base,  
The Light sovran and free and ever unsoiled,  
To end the black Inconscient's nether haze.  
O infinite Mother of the universe!  
Thou hast fulfilled Creation's argent dream:  
The last menacing shadows shall disperse,  
O saviour in human form! O Grace supreme!  
Thou hast thrown open the gates of Heaven to man,  
And Knowledge and Love and Power in Oneness wed  
To seize the heart of strife in Thy miracle plan,  
O Trampler of Death! Night's hounds from Thee have fled.  
Thy sun-gold Victory shall here unroll  
Thy willed God-action's supramental scroll."[\[82\]](#)

The following poem too (though a bit lengthy )is worth quoting as it reveals  
the profound love Prithwi Singh had for the Mother; it is titled The Mother and the  
Crowd on the Staircase During Blessing Time (June 3, 1952):

"I saw a stream of people run  
Towards Thy Temple of Delight;  
For them it was such lovely fun  
To feed their vital appetite.

Nothing they cared for Thee they loved,  
 Thy Touch too sweet to be forborne;  
 To give Thee rest they were not moved,  
 Thy gifts to snatch they were all sworn.  
 Such is our human passion's flame,  
 A love that's but a love of self;  
 For ego's gifts disguise its claim  
 Whether it be from God or elf.  
 And then I saw Thy Presence sweet  
 In Supernature's light aureoled;  
 All darknessess went beneath Thy Feet,  
 Compelled to leave their safety's fold.  
 The wonders that were there displayed  
 No human eye can ever see;  
 The heights and depths together swayed,  
 A marvel of Infinity.  
 White star-bloom-rays of Thy lucent Smile,  
 Calm, Silence, Peace around Thee tread;  
 Like birds of a celestial isle  
 Their wings of harmony they spread.  
 The shadows pass, but flickers not  
 The Light—Thy splendour burns undimmed;  
 By Grace earth-nature's change is sought,  
 By mystic force of Love unrimmed.  
 In this last lap of Ignorance,  
 Must even Thy body's cells then bear  
 The thunder shock, the maddening dance  
 Of all that thrives in nether air?  
 With bended knees I bow to Thee!  
 O Mother, Thou alone canst stand  
 In revealing Thy Eternity  
 The touch of man's defiling hand.”[\[83\]](#)

How can we enumerate his relationship with the Mother? No ordinary words can describe or explain it, so let's take help from Savitri:

“All he had done was to prepare a field...  
 For all that he had been must now new-shape  
 In him her joy to embody, to enshrine  
 Her beauty and greatness in his house of life...  
 Her light, her bliss he asked for earth and men...  
 A vast surrender was his only strength.”[\[84\]](#)

Prithwi Singh sincerely expected the return of Sri Aurobindo in the first ‘radiant body’ which would be built in the supramental way by ‘his own Yoga-shakti’. He also had the firm faith that the Mother would bring him ‘into birth’ by the divine powers she possessed. Thus the New Age would arise from the ‘present universal decomposition’. And he had expected that the Mother would manifest the

supramental Light and Truth and Sri Aurobindo would return as the 'Leader of the New Evolution'. He says: "Thus will be established that occult process by which other advanced souls can also return once more to their earthly field if they want to participate in the work of a progressively greater divine manifestation in the Knowledge, without having to undergo the natural animal mode of birth which imposes the law of the Inconscience."

And to the surprised and doubtful minds he says: "What seems fantastic to the imagination of today becomes the heritage of the future." (Foreword: The Winds of Silence)

On 11 April 1976, Prithwi Singh attended his office for the last time. He was helped by a sadhak who worked with him right from the very beginning. But then he fell seriously ill with heavy congestion in the chest. Sumitra Nahar writes in a personal communication to the author: "He had such tremendous will power that except for the last two days when he was bed ridden, he had attended office in spite of not being physically at all well. Towards the end he had difficulty in breathing but was very much conscious."

Suprabha Nahar recounts: "At that time I was not working with him. I was informed that he was not eating anything. I went to him and made him eat. He was coughing profusely; someone came to pump out the cough. Hearing the news of Father's illness, Uncle [Bijoy Singh] had left for Pondicherry. On that day too Sumitra teased Father by saying, 'Aren't you happy? Uncle is coming.' He responded. I spent the night [of 12th April] at his place."

Nirmal Nahar remembers: "On 12 April Abhay Singh rang me up and told me to come to Pondicherry as Father was ill. I informed Uncle [Bijoy Singh] who also said: 'I'll also go.' On reaching Chennai, we were informed that Father has left his body."

On the evening of 13 April 1976, Tuesday, Prithwi Singh left his body in the presence of Sujata and Sumitra Nahar and Noren Singh. Suprabha Nahar remembers: "Father's face resembled Sri Aurobindo's to a great extent. When he left his body, we saw that his face had become just like the face of the Mother! We called Vasudha [the Mother's attendant since long] whom we addressed as 'Akka' [meaning 'elder sister']. She too supported what we had seen."

Bijoy Singh reached Pondicherry on the night of 13 April. The next day when Sujata Nahar went to Prithwi Singh's room, Bijoy Singh asked her: "What have you applied on your father's body?" Sujata Nahar, with utter astonishment, answered: "Nothing. But why?" Bijoy Singh replied: "His body is emanating light." She went inside her father's room and saw that what Bijoy Singh had said was true. The entire room was illumined. She wrote much later: "I had applied the sandalwood water that was used by the Mother on him. But the ray that radiated from his body was the ray of his psychic being—the luminous form."

Nirmal Singh remembers that the light stayed even on 14 April; it subsided a few hours before the mortal body of Prithwi Singh was taken to the crematorium after a circumambulation around the Samadhi of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. "With the end of the [Bengali] year, his life too came to an end," he says.

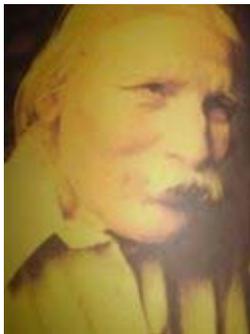
Was it finished? No— not in the ordinary sense as we understand. Prithwi Singh Nahar, the Karma Yogi, left this world to work for and with his Masters in the World of Light. With the cessation of all physical sufferings, the child took his final refuge in the lap of the Mother. In the words of Savitri, we can describe Prithwi Singh:

“Only he longed to draw her presence and power  
Into his heart and mind and breathing frame;  
Only he yearned to call for ever down  
Her healing touch of love and truth and joy  
Into the darkness of the suffering world.  
His soul was freed and given to her alone.”[\[85\]](#)

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Prithwi Singh with the Mother



Prithwi Singh Nahar



Prithwi Singh Nahar with A.B. Purani and Anuben Purani

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### Reference and Notes:

[1] Nirmal Nahar (ed.): Jyotirmoy Prithwi Singh Nahar, p.

[2] Sri Aurobindo and Mother to Prithwi Singh, p. 126

[3] Mother's Chronicles, Volume VI, p. 327

[4] Jyotirmoy Prithwi Singh Nahar, p. 29

[5] Ibid., p. 30

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., p. 31

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., p. 33

[11] Rishabhchand Samsuka (3.12.1900-25.4.1970) was a scholar and businessman who founded the Indian Silk House in 1926. He was the first Jain to join the Ashram in 1931. He looked after House Maintenance Service and Furniture Department. His notable books include Sri Aurobindo: His Life Unique, The Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and In the Mother's Light.

[12] Parichand Kothari (30.10.1904—27.8.1991), a Jain by birth who joined the Ashram in November 1934. He was in charge of the "Garden Service" formed by the Mother in 1938 and his gardening career lasted for the next fifty years (from 1938 to 1988).

[13] Anil Kumar, better known as Anil Bhatt was from Murshidabad, West Bengal. He was a fine artist who also played tabla and mridanga well and accompanied Dilip Kumar Roy during his musical soirees.

[14] Mother's Chronicles, Volume II, pp. 11-13

[15] Ibid., p. 54

[16] Ibid., pp. 55-56

[17] Jyotirmoy Prithwi Singh Nahar, p. 154

[18] Ibid., p. 316

[19] Prithwi Singh Nahar, The Winds of Silence, p. 54

[20] Jyotirmoy Prithwi Singh Nahar, p. 145

[21] Mother's Chronicles, Volume I, p. 10

[22] Mother's chronicles, Volume IV, pp. 172-173

[23] Sri Aurobindo, Savitri, Book III, Canto II, p. 312

[24] Sri Aurobindo and Mother to Prithwi Singh, p. 11

[25] Jyotirmoy Prithwi Singh Nahar, p. 286

[26] Yogananda (17.8.1898-14.3.1991) was born as Jotindra. He had taken initiation from Bharat Brahmachari in April 1918 who gave him the name of Jogdananda. He was arrested by the British police, accusing him of being anarchist and leader of a secret society in January 1919 and was released in January or February 1920. He came to Pondicherry on 11 August 1932 and had the darshan of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on the 15th. He was accepted as a disciple on 16th, a day before his thirty-fourth birthday and given the name of Yogananda by Sri Aurobindo. He worked in several departments which included Building Service, Reception Service, the Swimming Pool and Sports Ground and 'Sri Aurobindo's Action where delivered magazines to subscribers. His last job was getting 'Jules House' built.

[27] Sri Aurobindo and Mother to Prithwi Singh, p. 13

[28] Jyotirmoy Prithwi Singh Nahar, p. 194

[29] Sri Aurobindo and Mother to Prithwi Singh, p. 17

[30] Ibid., p. 20

[31] Ibid., pp. 27-28

[32] Ibid., pp. 28-30

[33] Ibid., pp. 49-50

[34] Bula or Charu Chandra Mukherjee (9.9.1899-28.4.1986) was the son of Amiya Devi, Sahana Devi's sister. He came to the Ashram in September 1930 and settled in July 1934. He looked after the Electric Department and was also a caretaker of the Ashram Main Building.

[35] Mother's Chronicles, Volume V, pp. 155-156

[36] Mother and Abhay, p. 25

[37] Mother's Chronicles, Volume I, p. 11

[38] Sri Aurobindo and Mother to Prithwi Singh, p. 111

[39] Ibid., p. 32

[40] Ibid., pp. 67-68

[41] Ibid., p. 73

[42] Ibid., pp. 86-88

[43] Ibid., p. 97

[44] Ibid., p. 98

[45] Ibid., p. 105

[46] Premananda was a senior sadhak of the Ashram who founded the Ashram Library. He also distributed letters to the sadhaks.

[47] Harikant Patel joined the Ashram when he was very young. He was the son of Chottabhai Patel. He became the Managing Trustee after the demise of P. Counouma in 1991. He died in April 2002.

[48] Sadashiv was a sadhak who assisted Prithwi Singh in his work.

[49] Vasanti Rao. She worked with M.P. Pandit as well. She is a noted vocalist.

[50] Ila Sen, wife of Nolini Sen and mother of Chitra and Amita Sen. She taught Bengali in the Ashram School and worked in the Samadhi as well.

[51] Rani Maitro, wife of Somnath Maitro, brother of S.K. Maitro.

[52] Leena was a senior sadhika who was Prithwi Singh's assistant.

[53] Sutapa was a Parsi sadhika.

[54] Shoba Mitra was born in 1933. She came to the Ashram in 1942 and settled in 1951. The Mother had asked her to teach French in the Ashram School. She looks after the Music Section of SAICE.

[55] Jaleshwar was a sadhak from Bihar. He worked in the Dining Room and assisted Prithwi Singh. Till the end he was in the Book Sales Department, presently the Publication Department.

[56] Sukhveer was Prithwi Singh's assistant for a brief period of time.

[57] Mounnou is Rishabhchand's granddaughter.

[58] Nirodbaran, Twelve Years with Sri Aurobindo, p. 36

[59] Mother's Chronicles, Volume IV, p. 198

[60] Ibid., pp. 198-199

[61] Ranjuda means Samir Kanta Gupta, eldest son of Nolini Kanta Gupta; he is an author of several books.

[62] Sri Aurobindo and Mother to Prithwi Singh, p. 146

[63] K.S. Venkatraman was one of the earliest sadhaks of the Ashram. He was a good singer of Carnatic music. He left the Ashram after Sri Aurobindo's passing and joined a daily newspaper of Madras as an assistant news editor. Eventually he returned to the Ashram where he left his body.

[64] Sri Aurobindo and Mother to Prithwi Singh, p. 151

[65] Prithwi Singh Nahar, The Winds of Silence, p. 10

[66] Ibid., p. 34

[67] Ibid., p. 7

[68] Ibid., p. 17

[69] Ibid., p. 20

[70] Ibid., p. 45

[71] Sri Aurobindo and Mother to Prithwi Singh, p. 155

[72] Ibid., pp. 155-156

[73] Ibid., p. 156

[74] Ibid., pp. 157-158

[75] Ibid., p. 160

[76] Ibid., p. 163

[77] Ibid., pp. 164-165

[78] Ibid., p. 166

[79] Mother's Agenda, Volume XIII, p. 138

[80] The Winds of Silence, p. 66

[81] Ibid., p. 44

[82] Ibid., p. 51

[83] Ibid., pp. 87-88

[84] Savitri, Book III, Canto II, p. 315

[85] Ibid., p. 316