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New Race

Blessings

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From the editor's desk...

Dear Readers,

Darshan greetings to all!

This is a very special year – 2013...it marks the beginning of the centenary year of the first arrival of our beloved Mother to Pondicherry. March 29, 1914 – the blessed day when the Mother Earth opened herself to a new era in her evolutionary march toward the Heavens Above, when the possibility of a Divine Life on Earth took its first concrete shape, when the Mother Creatrix met with the Divine Purusha and a new beginning was made for the Yoga of the Nature.

This special issue of *New Race* marks the beginning of a year-long celebration at SACAR of the Mother's arrival and meeting with Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry. As a small gesture of our adoration and deep gratitude for all that we owe to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, we at SACAR make this humble offering at the Lotus Feet of the Mother.

"The Divine puts on an appearance of humanity, assumes the outward human nature in order to tread the path and show it to human beings, but does not cease to be the Divine" (*SABCL*, Vol. 25, p. 48). The excerpts included in this issue were selected in order to bring out what Nolini-da speaks of as the "twofold truth" of the Mother's work – Mother Divine and Mother Human. These selections highlight the deeper significance of the Mother's coming to Pondicherry, and present a broad and deeper view of the gigantic work that was taken up by the Mother to manifest the highest realisations of the Sprit in a variety of forms and expressions in Matter.

We hope our readers will appreciate the selections, and as always we welcome comments and suggestions from our readers.

Till next time....

Beloo

A SPECIAL NOTE

On reading Nolini Kanta Gupta's article titled "The Mother's Work", one is given the impression that there is a pattern of Involution and Evolution in the Mother's work. Until her arrival in Pondicherry, in 1914, it was the movement of Involution: she prepared a chosen country to receive the Golden Light on the mental, vital and physical planes.

On the mental level, the obvious choice was France, as this country is open to new ideas. On the higher vital level, it was obviously Japan, for this country's nation-soul seems to express a divine beauty in the material field. On the physical, the choice was inevitable: it was India, whose very soil is steeped in spiritual light, because of her numberless spiritual masters who were the Spirit's instruments of its expressions and manifestations.

Once the physical consciousness was touched by the Overmental consciousness in November 1926, when Sri Krishna's consciousness descended in Sri Aurobindo, the evolutionary movement began, as it were.

First, the Mother brought down the gods and goddesses of the Overmind level in the earth-atmosphere. But, as this proved not to become the basis of the Supramental creation, the attempt was stopped there.

Then, on the intellectual level, and on a strong physical basis, the Ashram School came into being.

Next, was created Auroville, as the first attempt and hope of Human Unity throughout the world, and intended by the Mother, to manifest the Supramental consciousness on the Life plane, thus bringing about a transformation of man's vital nature.

Then, of course, the seed of the Supramental sun in the physical was sown in the Matrimandir, reflecting the Mother's own work in the transformation of her body.

Indeed, on the occasion of the year-long celebration of the Mother's first coming to Pondicherry, the excerpts, in this special issue of *New Race*, beautifully express both the involutory and evolutionary movements of Her work.

Q: Do you not refer to the Mother (our Mother) in your book, "The Mother" ?

A: Yes.

Q: Is she not the "Individual" Divine Mother who has embodied "the power of these two vaster ways of her existence" — Transcendent and Universal ?

A: Yes.

Q: Has she not descended here (amongst us) into the Darkness and Falsehood and Error and Death in her deep and great love for us ?

A: Yes.

— Sri Aurobindo

THE MOTHER'S PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS



Pondicherry, March 29, 1914

O Thou whom we must know, understand, realise, absolute Consciousness, eternal Law, Thou who guidest and illumineest us, who movest and inspireest us, grant that these weak souls may be strengthened and those who fear be reassured. To Thee I entrust them, even as I entrust to Thee our entire destiny.

March 30, 1914

It matters little that there are thousands of beings plunged in the densest ignorance, He whom we saw yesterday is on earth; his presence is enough to prove that a day will come when darkness shall be transformed into light, and Thy reign shall be indeed established upon earth.

O Lord, Divine Builder of this marvel, my heart overflows with joy and gratitude when I think of it, and my hope has no bounds.

My adoration is beyond all words, my reverence is silent.

Collected Works of the Mother, Vol.1, pp.112-13

SRI AUROBINDO ON THE MOTHER



The Mother not only governs all from above but she descends into this lesser triple universe....

But personally too she has stooped to descend here into the Darkness that she may lead it to the Light, into the Falsehood and Error that she may convert it to the Truth, into this Death that she may turn it to godlike Life, into this world-pain and its obstinate sorrow and suffering that she may end it in the transforming ecstasy of her sublime Ananda. In her deep and great love for her children she has consented to put on herself the cloak of this obscurity, condescended to bear the attacks and torturing influences of the powers of the Darkness and the Falsehood, borne to pass through the portals of the birth that is a death, taken upon herself the pangs and sorrows and sufferings of the creation, since it seemed that thus alone could it be lifted to the Light and Joy and Truth and eternal Life.

Sri Aurobindo, *SABCL*, Vol.25, pp.24-5

SWEET MOTHER

The Mother, Human and Divine

Nolini Kanta Gupta

In our human frailty we regard the Divine Mother as mother only, forgetting that she is also divine. We are apt to seize exclusively the last term of the great Name and ignore the other term which is equally important. We demand from her the same reactions of motherly love as we expect from a human mother. Our love for her is human, human in the ignorant way – full of passion and craving, hunger for appropriation, considering her as nothing else than food for our egoistic desires.

She is the mother indeed, but the Divine Mother. She wishes us to come to her in the divine way and not in the human way. For it is in the divine way that we rise to our highest and deepest stature and receive her fully and integrally, enjoy the plenitude of the delight in her Grace. A human way ties us down to the littlenesses and smallnesses of the human feeling. The human approach is more often than not that of a spoiled child. If there is one drop of true love at the bottom of the heart, the amount of ignorance and turbidity in which that is sunk is colossal. The dirt smears us and is cast upon the object of our love too.

And yet she is the mother in being the Divine. She is divine not in the sense that she is afar and aloof, cold and indifferent like the transcendent Brahman. Indeed, the Divine Mother is more motherly than the human mother can be. The human mother is only a faint echo, a far-off shadow, at times a travesty of the true Mother in the archetypal world.

The Divine Mother even in being transcendent leans down to our human dimensions, becomes one of us, is within us as our own self and with us as comrade and guide. She takes us by the hand, and if we only allow it, teaches us how to transcend the little humanity we are made of and grow into her own nature and substance through the miracle of her love – if our love responds to it adequately.

It is only by remembering her twofold truth, the two arms of her love with which she enfolds us and cherishes us that we can hope to be her true children.

Collected Works of Nolini Kanta Gupta, Vol. 5, pp. 85-86

THE MOTHER – THE NATURE OF HER WORK

Nolini Kanta Gupta



It seems I am to tell you something about the Mother – a bit of her life, a bit of her activities.

Well, the first part of her life, as you all know, the Mother passed in France, she was born in France, in Paris. So, naturally it was very often pointed out to her that she was French, she was European. To this, however, she was always protesting, saying, "I am not European, I am not French." It would indeed sound somewhat strange to say that her family came in fact from Egypt. Her parents, her father and mother went to France just a year before she was born, a year only. And in Egypt, her family, it seems, belonged to a very ancient Egyptian family – perhaps even to a royal family of Egypt, the Pharaohs. So she is not European or French by blood although she was brought up as such. Strictly speaking, she would belong to the Middle East, that is to say, the portion joining east of Europe and west of Asia. It means the union of Europe and Asia, the two harmonised, and that reflects the character of Mother's life and its destiny.

As I said, she spent the first part of her life in France. But why France? There is a meaning in the choice. We know now the meaning, the fundamental meaning of her life, her mission and her work. She came to bring a new light. She wanted a new world, not the old world with its old nature and old culture, but a new world, a new human race. She brought with her the new light that is to re-create, re-shape man and the world. What was the relation between the new man and France? For the new light to come and manifest, you have first to receive it in your mind, that is to say you must see and recognise that it is a new light and ask for it. And mind is the first or the topmost receptacle in man. You may remember here the opening line of *Dhammapada* containing the epitome of Buddha's teaching: "*Manopubbangama dhamma*" – mind is the foremost of all human functions. Mind surpasses all, embraces all. Now, the light as it comes down and enters you, the first thing it touches is your head, that is, your mind: you see it, you are conscious of it. France represents today just this mind of humanity at its best, the flowering of its culture and civilisation. She was born there so that the highest mind of the human race may receive that light through her. She passed her life there in the company of the elite, the most cultured people of the time, scientists, artists, poets, all of the highest and most refined status. She was there so that through her contact and association she could bring into them the new light. With this end in view she started a society, rather a group, and the name given to it was "*Le cosmique*". Cosmic means the whole world; in other words, what she was doing, what she was giving, was for the whole world, for all men, for East and West, for everybody. Also it means a cosmic or world-embracing consciousness. She was creating a new type of the mental world, through the highest mental development, to reach a still wider mind – beyond the individual egoistic mind. As I have said, the mind, the head, being the highest part in man, it is easy for man to receive the new light through his head first of all. You may remember here, in this connection, Sri Aurobindo's poem "*The Golden Light*": how it comes from above and first enters into the head, the brain. It illumines your thoughts, develops your understanding, widens it, deepens it and sharpens it. But understanding is not sufficient, you must love it, then only you begin to possess it. So the golden light enters your heart. Then it proceeds farther down towards a more concrete and active expression, it enters into the vital region as we call it. Lastly the golden light enters your feet, that is, possesses your physical limbs, it becomes concrete materially and present, as though solidified, in your very body: it builds the body beautiful.

The Mother thus brings the golden light into the head of humanity, the top rung of his consciousness, and that work of initiation, *diksha*, into the Life Divine she started in France. From France she went to Japan for the next stage of her work. In Japan she came to the Far East. She spent five years, five long years in that country. Japan is the land of the Zen system of meditation, that is to say, a special way of entering into an inner consciousness, not a rational mental consciousness but a gaze inward into an occult and more sensitive region. The Japanese as a nation represent indeed a very sensitive vitality, an

artistic vitality that seeks order and beauty in life, in the mode of living. For the golden light to manifest and have its play in the physical world and possess its body as it were, a vitality of this kind is necessary to acquire it and hold it. The Japanese wrestlers are well-known for their vital strength, self-controlled strength; usually they possess, almost all of them, you must have noticed, in pictures at least, a big tummy, and it is, they believe, the store-house of vital strength. This does not mean that I advise you to develop a big paunch, on the contrary. However, even in physical activities, more than the mere physical strength, the vital strength is necessary. Yes, the Japanese have a vital, strong, controlled, ordered, sensitive. You may remember one or two Prayers of the Mother in her *Prières et Méditations*. She speaks of the cherry-blossom which is the emblem of the Japanese artistic sense, the feeling for beauty, a purified sense-perception: not a rough and crude and violent (lower) vital, but a fine, a pleasant intimate feeling and orderly happiness, that is what the cherry-blossom means. Mother described also a vision of hers, a beautiful picture it was, a Japanese mother and her child: it was an image of the new child that was born in humanity. A new world is thus ushered in the land of the cherry-blossom, the new vital world, for all the world.

The Mother is creative consciousness; wherever she happens to be, wherever she is called upon to be, her very presence moves for creation, creating a new world and a new dimension of being and consciousness, according to the need of time and place. And it is a whole world she creates and her creation endures, for it is an added achievement in the evolution of the human being.

To this end, a neat strong orderly vital world of which we were speaking, itself requires a competent body to support it and manifest it. The golden light must come into the feet. And that was the work she was doing here and it is for that that she created the Ashram. You all know the special emphasis she laid on physical education in order to prepare the body and senses to receive the golden light. She always said, physical education gives you the basis for the new consciousness, the new light, we must have a strong body, a beautiful body, a body that endures: for the new light is powerful, it is not merely light, it is force, one must be able to bear it and carry out its commands.

Indeed, she came here in order to give a shape, a concrete and physical form, an earthly body to this Divine Light. Now the body beautiful is not by itself an end and fulfilment; in order to secure it you must secure a beautiful vital. Not only so, for a fulfilment in the body and in the vital one must possess a mind beautiful. The physical education that the Mother has arranged for us here is to prepare us for the body beautiful. And the school that she has organised is for the cultivation of the mind. The cultivation of the mind, however, means not only storing it with information on various kinds of subjects, the study of books: it means a purification and clearance of the mind, the mental stuff itself, an elevation of consciousness to seek and recognise the new light. I have said that you are to receive the new light through the head at first, but through the

heart also, and dynamically through your vital energy. You must not only see and recognise it, but love it and be devoted to it. And here comes the Mother's central work, her special gift, her grace to us. When you love a thing, you love, as it is said, through the heart, but there is love and love and there is a heart within the heart. True love, the love that is Divine, is within this inner heart which is your soul, the real being or person in you, and the soul coming out, coming to the front as we say, is the Mother's special Grace here, her gift to all of you, to each one of you here. She has given you your soul. I have often said that it is a special privilege here for each one of us, for each one of you, to carry this being, this inner being, this intimate person, the Divine Child who is you. It is this that is building your divine personality, it is this that will give you in the end a mind beautiful, a vital beautiful, a body beautiful – all that you need, all that is perfect and flawless in your life here in this world. You may remember, many of you, the famous line of *Savitri* that you must have heard from Mother's own lips:

“Built is the golden tower, the flame-child born.”

She has built this tower of new life and the child is there: the Golden Child. This golden child is in every one of you. You must find it, recognise it, that is the goal of your life, the mission and fulfilment of all what you want to do and be on earth. Some of you surely must have felt in you the presence of this child. Some may have seen it even as the Divine Child in you. These things - visitations as they are called - usually come in dreams. At least I know of some who have seen them, who came and told me of their miraculous experience. It is a possibility for everyone and if you happen to see it you must recognise it, hold it, grasp it with all love and affection. The Mother is still living and active among us and her Presence is still there, even concretely, for each one of you has the Divine Child in you.

I end with a prayer, a prayer that I made to the Mother sometime ago, it is on behalf of the small children of our playground:

“Sweet Mother, your playground-children are angels. They have not become divine or godly, but they are angels, earthly angels. Keep them constantly under your eye, cradle them in your loving consciousness.”

That was the prayer I made on your behalf to the Mother, and I am sure Mother has responded “Yes”.

Collected Works of Nolini Kanta Gupta, Vol.6, pp.3-8

THE MOTHER'S WORK *

Rishabhchand

When Sri Aurobindo left his body more than four years ago, most of his disciples and devotees, living in the world outside, made anxious enquiries as to what would now be the fate of the Ashram and the great work of the supramental transformation which he had laboured for during the forty long years of his strenuous seclusion at Pondicherry. Sri Aurobindo had asserted time and again that the descent of the Supermind and its establishment in the earth-consciousness as a principle and power of the infinite Knowledge-Will, superseding and completing the mind of man, was inevitable, and that a divine life on earth was the crowning glory of human destiny. How was that great work going to be accomplished? Who would now be the leader of the supramental evolution? Was it not merely a lofty dream of a spiritual visionary — one of those dreams and ideals that flash for a moment across our mental skies and fade away into the light of the common day, leaving but a memory of a splendour and a sublimity never to be achieved on this petty planet of our brief habitation?

What reply did the inmates of the Ashram of Sri Aurobindo give to these eager queries? What proof, what certitude did they advance against the turbid surge of facile doubts and misgivings? Stunned by the first shock of separation from One they had so profoundly loved and adored, so faithfully followed and served, they did not know what reply to give, how to convince the doubting, unbelieving minds. Their sole proof, their whole certitude, their absolute faith stood personified before them — the Mother, she who had been to them at once the path, the guide and the goal; and the solemn words of Sri Aurobindo rang in their hearts:

“A day may come when she must stand unhelped
 On a dangerous brink of the world's doom and hers, Carrying the world's
 future on her lonely breast, Carrying the human hope in a heart left sole
 To conquer or fail on a last desperate verge.
 Alone with death and close to extinction's edge,
 Her single greatness in that last dire scene,
 She must cross alone a perilous bridge in Time
 And reach an apex of world-destiny
 Where all is won or all is lost for man.
 In that tremendous silence lone and lost
 Of a deciding hour in the world's fate,
 In her soul's climbing beyond mortal time

* Mother has taken the body because a work of a physical nature (i.e. including a change in the physical world) has to be done...” —Sri Aurobindo

When she stands sole with Death or sole with God
 Apart upon a silent desperate brink,
 Alone with her self and death and destiny
 As on some verge between Time and Timelessness
 When being must end or life rebuild its base,
 Alone she-must conquer or alone must fall.
 No human aid can reach her in that hour,
 No armoured God stand shining at her side.
 Cry not to heaven, for she alone can save.
 For this the silent Force came missioned down;
 In her the conscious Will took human shape:
 She only can save herself and save the world.”¹

With the flaming ardour of a renewed loyalty and the spontaneous self-abandon of an overflowing love, they clung to the Mother in that grim hour of their life. She was there, to whom they had already surrendered all of themselves and on whose guidance they had learned to depend exclusively in all the details of their lives. She was there, who had been leading their spiritual unfold- ment from stage to stage, across many a path and bye- path, over many a gulf and chasm, many a quagmire and precipice, towards the perfection that had attracted them to the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. Their contact with Sri Aurobindo had always been through her, and they had come to realise the truth of Sri Ramakrishna’s dictum that the key to the abode of Brahman is with the Mother, and that none can enter there unless She, in her Grace, opens the door. Wearied out by the inner struggle, they had reposed and revived on her lap; battered by the blasts of life, they had taken refuge at her feet; menaced by the forces of darkness, they had clung to her bosom of boundless love and compassion. Her love had been their mainstay, their never-failing friend and protector, their healer and comforter, and the solitary leader of their spiritual journey. Her love had been, indeed, the very sap and sustenance of their lives. If they stumbled on the rugged path of Yoga, she was there to lift them up; if they were confused and clouded in their vision, her light was always there to brighten up their consciousness and show them the right way. If the path appeared long and steep and laborious, and their heart’s fire seemed to sink, her beaming eyes pointed to the distant horizons, golden with the glory of the eternal Sun. With her, they knew they were invincible; without her, they could hardly conceive of existence except as a painful illusion. To be united with her, to be her pliant and docile instruments, to fulfil her work in the world, have been the only aspiration of their hearts. So, when Sri Aurobindo left his body, they naturally looked up to her, yearning to find him in her. She assured them that he had cast off his material vesture only for a definite purpose, and not compelled by any ineluctable law of Nature; and that he was here still, in the earth atmosphere, toiling, as ever, for the fulfilment of the great work of his life—the descent of the Truth-Consciousness and the supramental

transformation of man. She assured them that he was present in their midst, not in a figurative sense or as a universal, impersonal consciousness, but as the very divine being he had been in his physical body, as the very dynamic Master they had loved and adored. Sri Aurobindo had often told them that his consciousness and the Mother's were one; and now they realised that truth more and more, in a sense more living, quickening and intimate.

A meditative silence reigned in the Ashram for twelve days after the passing of the beloved Master. Then the normal activities began, but with a striking difference. One felt a pervading Presence in the Ashram atmosphere and the Mother's Force as more sovereignly in command of the life blossoming there. There was an imperative call, a kindling inspiration, almost an irresistible pull to transcend the normal levels of human consciousness and ascend to the radiant heights of the Spirit. Concentration came easier and the need for total self-consecration became more imperious than ever. Many felt an urge, never felt in the same way before, to ferret out all that was unholy and unlovely in them, all that opposed their self-transcendence, and fling them away for ever, so that the influence of the Mother alone could enter into them and mould them in the image of their innate divinity. Besides, each successive day brought a greater contact with the world outside, resulting in a rapid expansion of the Ashram and, which is remarkable, a greater and more enthusiastic acceptance by the world of the ideal for which the Ashram stood. The expansion appeared, indeed, to exceed all expectation. The departments of the Ashram work multiplied and the energies of the sadhakas found new channels of self-expression. It is a singular, though usual, feature of the Ashram activities that they develop of themselves, as if impelled by some invisible force, without any previous plan or blue-print. A person comes and starts a new line in which he appears to be an expert, or one of the sadhakas suddenly develops a capacity of which he never suspected any trace in himself before, and it becomes the occasion for a new department. Those who live in the Ashram and have observed how the departments come into being and thrive, know well enough that their single source of inspiration is the Mother, whose supramental Will manifests itself in its inscrutable way in the various life of her children. The working of that Will now made itself felt more powerfully than ever and sought manifold ways of self-fulfilment. Streams of visitors poured in, day after day, month after month, to pay their homage to the Samadhi of Sri Aurobindo, catch a glimpse of the ideal of the Life Divine and imbibe something of the Light and Force emanating from the Mother. It seemed as if the flood-gates of a dynamic spirituality had been flung wide open to the whole world without any distinction of creed and colour. It seemed that the Mother's will and aspiration breathed by her Prayer of January 9, 1914, when she knew nothing of Sri Aurobindo and his teachings, had begun to be realised:

“O Lord, unseizable Reality, Thou who constantly escapest before our conquering advance even though it is effective, and who wilt always be

the Unknown in spite of all that we shall learn to know of Thee, in spite of all that we shall have ravished from Thy eternal mystery, we would, with a complete and constant effort, combin-ing the multiple paths which lead towards Thee, advance like a rising and indomitable flood, breaking all obstacles, crossing all barriers, lifting all veils, dispersing all clouds, piercing all darknesses, advance towards Thee, always towards Thee, with a movement so powerful, so irresist-ible, that a whole multitude will be swept on behind us, and the earth conscious of Thy new and eternal Presence will understand at last what are her true ends, and live in the harmony and peace of Thy sovereign realisation....”

It seemed that the mission of her life of which she had spoken in so many of her Prayers was going at last to be fulfilled:

“Grant that I may accomplish my mission, that I may help in Thy integral manifestation.”

“Grant, O Divine Teacher, that we may more and more, better and better, know and accomplish our mission upon the earth, that we may fully utilise all the energies that are in us, and that Thy sovereign Presence may become more and more perfectly manifested in the silent depths of our soul, in all our thoughts, all our feelings, all our actions....”² She, who had always kept herself in the background and shunned the lime-light, became now the cynosure of countless eyes and the hope and refuge of many wandering souls. Many who came to see the Ashram came again, and again, to see more, and more; for they felt that here there were more things below than on the surface; and some even came, decided to stay and enroll themselves as warriors in the great spiritual battle. Parents left their children, husbands left their wives, brothers left their sisters, whole families came and settled—all drawn by some irresistible, mysterious magne-tism. Even little children, once they came and felt a touch of the Mother’s love, refused to go back with their parents and were happy to live and grow under the Mother’s outspread wings. The Mother dislikes adver-tisement and propaga-da, particularly in the cause of spiritual institutions. She says that, if her work is the work of the Divine, workers will flock to her from all parts of the globe. And so, indeed, they have been flocking—from America and England and France, from Germany and Holland and Spain, from Sweden and Australia and China and Japan, and from almost every part of India. The stream expands as it pours in and rushes forward to bathe the Mother’s feet. Fired with the new spirit, the standard-bearers of the new Light gather round her to help fulfil her mission. Each day brings, as if by miracle, a more admiring appreciation of the Ashram and its expanding activities. Is it any wonder that men feel spontaneously drawn to one who can awaken their souls, unveil their innate harmony and happiness and lead them to the perfect fulfilment of their divine destiny?

In 1951 the Sri Aurobindo International University Centre came into existence. On the occasion of its convention the Mother said: "Sri Aurobindo is present in our midst, and with all the power of his creative genius he presides over the formation of the university centre which for years he considered as one of the best means of preparing the future humanity to receive the supramental light that will transform the elite of today into a new race manifesting upon earth the new light and force and life. In his name I open today this Con-vention meeting here with the purpose of realising one of his most cherished ideals." It is a centre where irrespective of race and clime, men can receive a harmo-nious education designed to develop and enlighten not only their mind but their whole being—soul, mind, life and body—and give them a definite lead towards a dy-namic spiritual life lived in God and devoted to the fulfilment of the divine Will in the world. It is a centre where men can learn how to achieve their perfection and fulfilment, not only on one but on all planes of their exis-tence, and express their inherent divinity which is now masked by their half-animal humanity. It is a centre where they can learn to rise beyond all artificial divisions of race and country, sex and age, caste and creed, and find themselves one with all, in peace and harmony with all—in God. It is a place where they can serve humanity best by learning to serve the Divine in humanity.

The University is growing, slowly but steadily, in the silent way things grow and flower under the benignant eye of God, when the bustling mind of man, in its arro-gant incompetence, ceases to interfere. The number of children has been increasing by leaps and bounds and, but for the extreme difficulty of accommodation, would have swollen to unmanageable proportions. It is in the flower-like faces of these children, more than anywhere else, that one can perceive the gleam of the heavenly Light the Mother has been striving to establish in the earth-consciousness, the Light about which she wrote decades ago in her Prayers and Meditations:

"A new Light shall break upon the earth, a new world shall be born: the things that were promised shall be fulfilled."

Addressing the children of the University, she said in 1951:

"There is an ascending evolution in nature which goes from the stone to the plant, from the plant to the animal, from the animal to man. Because man is, for the moment, the last rung at the summit of the ascending evolution, he considers himself as the final stage in this ascension and believes there can be nothing on earth superior to him. In that he is mistaken. In his physical nature he is yet almost wholly an animal, a thinking and speaking animal, but still an animal in his material habits and instincts. Undoubtedly, nature cannot be satisfied with such an imperfect result; she endeavours to bring out a being who will be to man what man is to the animal, a being who will

remain a man in its external form, and yet whose consciousness will rise far above the mental and its slavery to ignorance.

“Sri Aurobindo came upon earth to teach this truth to men. He told them that man is only a transitional being living in a mental consciousness, but with the possibility of acquiring a new consciousness, the Truth-Consciousness, and capable of living a life perfectly harmonious, good and beautiful, happy and fully conscious. During the whole of his life upon earth, Sri Aurobindo gave all his time to establish in himself this consciousness he called supramental, and to help those gathered around him to realise it.”

“You have the immense privilege of having come quite young to the Ashram, that is to say, still plastic and capable of being moulded according to this new ideal and thus becoming the representatives of the new race. Here, in the Ashram, you are in the most favourable conditions with regard to the environment, the influence, the teaching and the example, to awaken in you this supramental consciousness and to grow according to its law.”

“Now, all depends on your will and your sincerity. If you have the will no more to belong to ordinary hu-manity, no more to be merely evolved animals; if your will is to become men of the new race realising Sri Aurobindo’s supramental ideal living a new and higher life upon a new earth, you will find here all the necessary help to achieve your purpose; you will profit fully by your stay in the Ashram and eventually become living examples for the world.”

This, then, is the Mother’s work—to awaken in man the supramental Truth-Consciousness and help him grow according to its law. Evidently it is a signal departure from the aims and objects of traditional spirituality, which points to the Beyond as the only kingdom of per-fection and fulfilment. The Mother’s Force is directed to the radical transformation of the whole active nature of man, so that the gulf between his outer consciousness and the divine Consciousness may be bridged and that he may manifest the Divine in every movement of his individual and collective life on earth.

The Ashram of Sri Aurobindo is the Mother’s creation, and she has built it up, stone by stone, arch by arch, so that one day it may become a temple and a radiating centre of the new Light, a prism of the splendour of the Supermind. With her will united with the Will of the Divine, her unbarred vision contemplating the future more clearly than we can contemplate the immediate present, and her supramental Force creating the prin-ciples and conditions of the Truth-life upon earth, the Mother has been silently proceeding with her work, unmindful of the praise or blame of the world. What has been achieved is little by the side of what she has to achieve for God and humanity—a refounding of human life on the peace and bliss and creative harmony of the Spirit, a perfect revelation of God in Matter.³

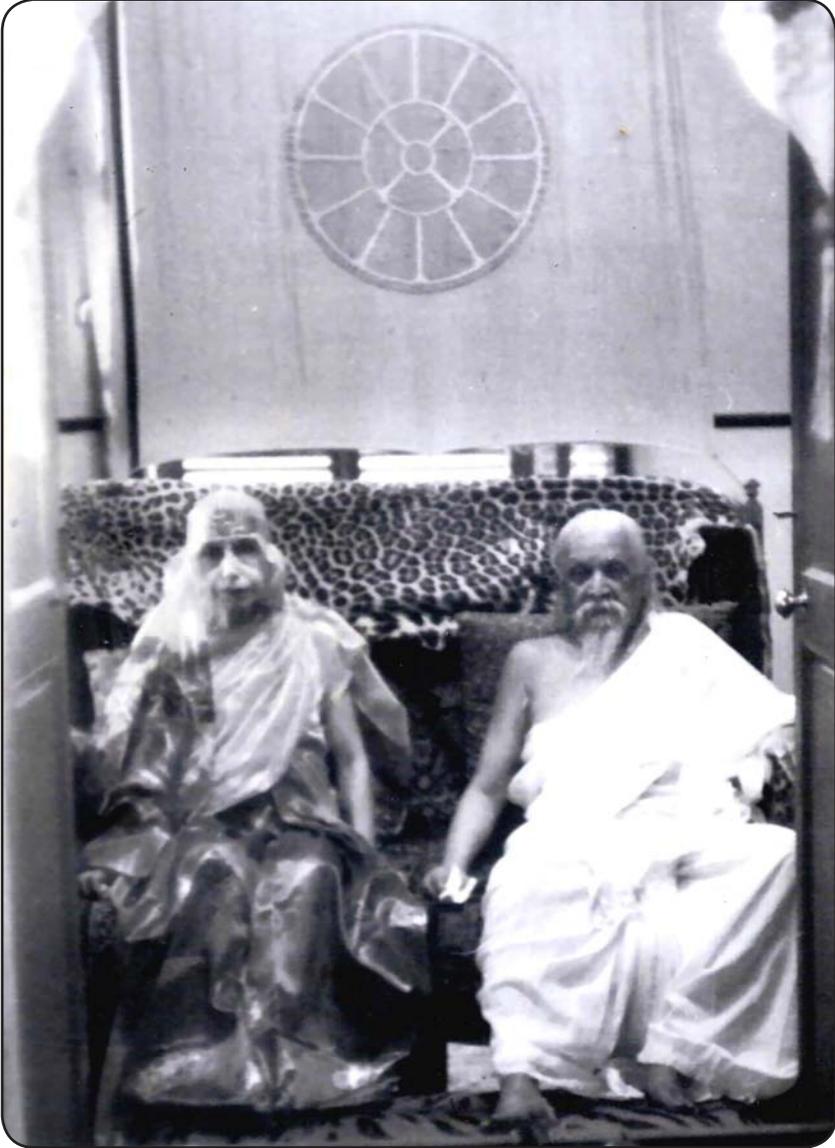
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1. *Savitri*, Book VI, Canto II
2. Both these Prayers were written by the Mother in 1914, just a few days before her meeting with Sri Aurobindo. What is particularly remarkable in them is not only the word 'manifestation', but the expression 'integral manifestation', which has always been the keyword of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga and philosophy. This insistence on the integrality of the realisation, unheard of before Sri Aurobindo, is the most conclusive evidence of the identity of their souls and their mission upon earth.
3. *Savitri*, Book III, Canto II



SELECTIONS FROM "ON THE MOTHER"

K R Srinivasa Iyengar



THE MEETING

I

On 3 March 1914, Mirra wrote: "As the day of departure draws near, I enter into a kind of self-communion."¹ A "thousand little nothings" had surrounded her all those years, and she had grown among them, basking in their companionship and friendship; and now that she was shortly to go on a voyage and would not be able to write "at this table in this calm room all charged with Thy Presence", she wondered whether those 'trifles' around her would receive from other occupants of the house the same care and solicitude, the same loving kindness, she had given them so long. Even material things are not just to be taken for granted! In after-years, as the Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, she was to admonish the sadhaks for their insensitiveness towards material things:

"Not to take care of material things which one uses is a sign of inconscience and ignorance.

You have no right to use any material object whatsoever if you do not take care of it. You must take care of it not because you are attached to it, but because it manifests something of the Divine Consciousness."²

Nolini Kanta Gupta too has testified how she

"taught us to use our things with care She uses things, not merely with care but with love and affection. For, to her, material things are not simply inanimate objects, not mere lifeless implements. They are endowed with a life of their own, even a consciousness of their own, and each thing has its own individuality and character."³

There is a hint of all this in the prayer of 3 March 1914. For Mirra, material things are created by divine Love from the dark inconscience of chaos, and hence deserving of gentle and affectionate handling.

Mirra will soon be leaving her quiet and sanctified room; she will be leaving Paris itself, and her circle of friends and fellow-seekers. As for the future, she faces it with equanimity: "I would only wish that it may be the beginning of a new inner period." In the pages of the past what's writ is writ and beyond recall; the pages of the future are blank but rich with promise. Four years earlier, Paul Richard had returned from a visit to India and told her of his meetings with Sri Aurobindo Ghose at Pondicherry. During the intervening years, letters had been exchanged between the Richards and Sri Aurobindo, and lines of possible cooperative work explored. Between Mirra and Sri Aurobindo especially, there had been established occult links of deep understanding regarding their future mission on the earth. Towards the end of 1913, Paul Richard had decided that he would himself contest one of the seats from French India for the Senate and

Chamber of Deputies in Paris. This time, Mirra was to accompany him, and they decided that irrespective of the result of the ensuing election, they would stay on in Pondicherry for about two years. In fact, Mirra had to sell about one-fourth of her modest private fortune to enable the Richards to make the journey to India and to provide for a two-year stay.⁴ Richard's political and humanitarian mission and Mirra's pilgrimage of the Spirit were to coalesce in their March 1914 momentous passage to India, with results that perhaps even they could not have anticipated. But a Divinity does shape our ends, however little we may be aware of this; and in 1920, Mirra recalled in the course of a contribution to a Chandernagore paper:

"In the year 1910, my husband came alone to Pondicherry where, under very interesting and peculiar circumstances, he made the acquaintance of Sri Aurobindo. Since then we both strongly wished to return to India, the country which I had always cherished as my true mother-country. And in 1914 this joy was granted to us."⁵

II

But such encounters — however depressing in the immediate context — didn't deflect Mirra from her deeper aims, nor ruffle her inner equanimity. If she could hardly make a dent in the Presbyterian clergyman's self protective armour of Philistinism, Mirra was rather more successful, perhaps, with some of the other fellow-travellers. For example, she recorded on 25 March:

"Silent and unseen as always, but all-powerful, Thy action has made itself felt and, in these souls that seemed to be so closed, a perception of Thy divine light is awake....

O Lord, an ardent thanksgiving mounts from me towards Thee expressing the gratitude of this sorrowing humanity which Thou illuminest, transformest and glorifiest..."⁶

With this sense of fulfilment and deep thankfulness, on 27 March the Richards disembarked at Colombo. That day they remained in Ceylon, spending part of their time with a noted Buddhist monk named Dharmapala.⁷ Crossing the straits at Talaimannar and reaching Dhanushkodi, the Richards boarded the Boat Mail (as it used to be called) on 28 March.

Mirra had known throughout the long voyage the Lord's divine solicitude and protection, she had seen the writ of His law everywhere, and of course she had tried wholly to identify herself with His law and to embody it effortlessly and spontaneously. It is not surprising that Mirra was in a condition of serene acceptance and luminous understanding:

"From the time we started and every day more and more, in ail things we can see Thy divine intervention, everywhere Thy law is expressed"⁸

On 29 March, after a change at Villupuram, the train speeded towards Pondicherry. And long before she actually met Sri Aurobindo she may well have felt his aura, just as she was to experience it six years later when her boat was nearing Pondicherry.¹² And once there what possibilities lay hidden, what vast horizons stretched ahead of her! In the full conscious ness of His sovereign Presence, she turned towards the future with an undimmed vision and with unwavering faith. A passage by Sri Aurobindo about *Savitri* may be apt here:

Apparelled in her flickering-coloured robe,
 She seemed burning towards the eternal realms
 A bright moved torch of incense and of flame
 That from the sky-roofed temple-soil of earth
 A pilgrim hand lifts in an invisible shrine.⁹

III

Since 1910 Sri Aurobindo had completely surrendered himself to Yoga. He had “already realised in full two of the four great realisations on which his Yoga and his spiritual philosophy are founded.”¹⁰ In Pondicherry he had received a “programme” for his own Yoga which he described as *Sapta Chatushtaya*.¹¹ But self-realisation was not the only aim: “A distinct and central object of his Yoga was a change of life and existence.” And by the time Mirra joined him in 1914, four years of “silent Yoga” had enabled him to evolve a new instrument of spiritual discipline — *Purna Yoga* or *Integral Yoga* — comprehending and harmonising the two extreme categories of experience, Matter and Spirit, and the three classical paths, Knowledge (*Jnana*), Works (*Karma*) and Devotion (*Bhakti*). He had also been working towards the Yoga of the Future, *Supramental Yoga*. He had with him at Pondicherry a few young men, fellow-exiles from British India, all living in rather straitened circumstances. In October 1913, Sri Aurobindo moved from the small Mission Street residence to a far more spacious house — No. 41, Rue François Martin (which is now called the ‘Guest House’). Describing the house as it looked at the time Sri Aurobindo moved into it, Amrita writes:

“In the interior of the house, at one end of the verandah there was a wide staircase leading to the first floor...the house was big but it looked desolate.

The upper storey held spacious rooms and a spacious verandah... On the west, at the corner there was a wide room, adjoining which was another room and then the open terrace... The big room, the front room and the terrace — the three together being considered the best part of the house — were set apart for Sri Aurobindo.”¹²

In December 1913, attempts were made to make the place more habitable. The weeds were pulled out, electric lights were installed, some &ticks of furniture

were inducted; and “the house put on almost a gay appearance because of these much-needed changes.”¹³

It was rumoured, continues Amrita, that “two Europeans had accepted Sri Aurobindo as Guru...two persons from the topmost cultural circle of France were coming to Sri Aurobindo for practising yoga.” There was understandable excitement among the young disciples as also the revolutionaries (Subramania Bharati, V.V.S. Aiyar, Srinivasachariar, and others) who too had found political asylum in Pondicherry.

IV



On 29 March 1914, the very day they arrived in Pondicherry from France, Mirra and Paul Richard met Sri Aurobindo in the afternoon at 3.30. They were received at the top of the stairs that led up to the upstairs verandah. The moment Mirra had so ardently looked forward to had arrived at last, and there was a blaze of instantaneous recognition. Sri Aurobindo was clearly the Master of her occult life, the “Krishna” she had met so often in her dream-experiences. Their first meeting and the current of feelings that may have gone through them are echoed in these lines of *Savitri*:

Here first she met on the uncertain earth
 The one for whom her heart had come so far.
 Attracted as in heaven star by star,
 They wondered at each other and rejoiced
 And wove affinity in a silent gaze.
 A moment passed that was eternity’s ray,
 An hour began, the matrix of new Time.¹⁴

There was hardly any conversation between them; indeed, there was no need. In K.D. Sethna's words:

"Before meeting Sri Aurobindo she used to find for her various spiritual experiences and realisations a poise for life-work by giving them a mould with the enlightened mind. All kinds of powerful ideas she had for world-upliftment — ideas artistic, social, religious. At the sight of Sri Aurobindo she aspired to a total cessation of all mental moulds. She did not speak a word nor did he: she just sat at his feet and closed her eyes, keeping her mind open to him. After a while there came, from above, an infinite silence that settled in her mind. Everything was gone, all those fine and great ideas vanished and there was only a vacant imperturbable waiting for what was beyond mind."¹⁵

There is also the report by Nolini Kanta Gupta about the Mother:

"The first time Sri Aurobindo happened to describe her qualities, he said he had never seen anywhere a self-surrender so absolute and unreserved. He had added a comment that perhaps it was only women who were capable of giving themselves so entirely and with such sovereign ease. This implies a complete obliteration of the past, erasing it with its virtues and faults....

When she came here, she gave herself up to the Lord, Sri Aurobindo, with the candid simplicity of a child, after erasing from herself all her past, all her spiritual attainments, all the riches of her consciousness. Like a new born babe, she felt she possessed nothing, she was to learn everything right from the start, as if she had known or heard about nothing."¹⁶

Her own recollection of the meeting, sixteen years after, was significant:

"When I first met Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry, I was in deep concentration, seeing things in the Supermind, things that were to be but which were somehow not manifesting.

I told Sri Aurobindo what I had seen and asked him if they would manifest. He simply said, "Yes." And immediately I saw that the Supramental had touched the earth and was beginning to be realised!

This was the first time I had witnessed the power to make real what is true."¹⁷

It is probable that it was at one of the early meetings that Mirra asked her question about 'Samadhi', to which she was to refer forty years later:

"When I came here, one of my first questions to Sri Aurobindo was: "What do you think of samadhi, that state of trance one does not remember? One enters into a condition which seems blissful, but when one comes out of

it, one does not know at all what has happened." Then he looked at me, saw what I meant and told me, "It is unconsciousness." I asked him for an explanation.... He told me, "Yes, you enter into what is called samadhi when you go out of your conscious being and enter a part of your being which is completely unconscious, or rather a domain where you have no corresponding consciousness... a region where you are no longer conscious ... that is why, naturally, you remember nothing ..." So this reassured me and I said, "Well, this has never happened to me." He replied, "Nor to me."¹⁸

V

It may be presumed, then, that when Sri Aurobindo and Mirra met on 29 March 1914, what passed between them was rather more of a wordless communion than any formal or detailed conversation. Writing with the available hindsight, K.D. Sethna comments on it as follows:

"The meeting of the two represents the coming together of the necessary creative powers by whom a new age would be born. And it is to be noted that both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had been pursuing the inner life on essentially identical lines which would unite Spirit and Matter. So their joining of forces was the most natural thing. And it was not only a doubling of strengths but also a linking of complementaries. Sri Aurobindo's main movement of consciousness may be said to have been an immense Knowledge-Power from above the mind, though whatever was necessary for an integral spirituality was also there in one form or another. The Mother's chief movement may be said to have been an intense Love-Power from behind the heart, even if all else needed for an all-round Yoga was present as a ready accessory. When she and Sri Aurobindo met, they completed each other, brought fully into play the spiritual energies in both and started the work of total earth-transformation from high above and deep within."¹⁹

If Sri Aurobindo was an embodiment of the East-West synthesis and contained within himself "the multi-dimensional spiritual consciousness of India", Mirra was the finest flower of European culture with deep spiritual filiations with India and the East as also with Africa, and she incarnated "a practical genius of a rare order, with powers of wide yet precise organization." Little wonder that they completed, when they met at last as if by divine dispensation, "the entire circle of the higher human activities" and were "supremely fitted to bring the East and the West together and, blending them, lead to a common all-consummating goal."²⁰ But all this marvellous possibility was only for the yet hidden future. In the immediate context, however, the one supreme gain was the mere fact of the coming together of two rare spiritual powers and personalities, each feeling vastly strengthened by the other. The Richards returned to their hotel in a condition of calm fulfilment and with a hope of

exciting new possibilities. Mirra could withdraw into herself, assess the new turn in her life, and re dedicate herself to the Divine. Her deep-felt feelings found memorable expression in her diary-entry for 30 March 1914:

“Gradually the horizon becomes distinct, the path grows clear, and we move towards a greater and greater certitude.

It matters little that there are thousands of beings plunged in the densest ignorance, He whom we saw yesterday is on earth; his presence is enough to prove that a day will come when darkness shall be transformed into light, and Thy reign shall be indeed established upon earth.

O Lord, Divine Builder of this marvel, my heart overflows with joy and gratitude when I think of it, and my hope has no bounds.

My adoration is beyond all words, my reverence is silent.”²¹

She had found in Sri Aurobindo a being who had “attained the perfect consciousness” and become integrally one of “Thy servitors”, and it had seemed to her that she was “still far, very far from what I yearn to realize.” But she was happy that a new Dawn in her life had arrived, and would now take her to the beckoning Noon. She recorded on 1 April:

“A great joy, a deep peace reign in me, and yet all my inner constructions have vanished like a vain dream and I find myself now, before Thy immensity, without a frame or system, like a being not yet individualised. All the past in its external form seems ridiculously arbitrary to me, and yet I know it was useful in its own time.

But now all is changed: a new stage has begun.”²²

The stress is on the new — the new bearings — the new orientations — the new alignment of forces in the service of the Divine. The old is not altogether annulled or annihilated; like organic filaments, they are but to be melted and moulded into the new instruments. The day has ended, the day has begun. In my beginning is my end; in my end is my beginning! Thus Mirra in her meditation on the morning of 2 April:

“Every day, when I want to write, I am interrupted, as though the new period opening now before us were a period of expansion rather than of concentration.”²³

And on the next day:

“It seems to me that I am being born to a new life and all the methods, the habits of the past can no longer be of any use. It seems to me that what I thought were results is nothing more than a preparation.... It is as though I were stripped of my entire past, of its errors as well as its conquests, as

though all that has vanished and made room for a new-born child whose whole existence is yet to be lived....

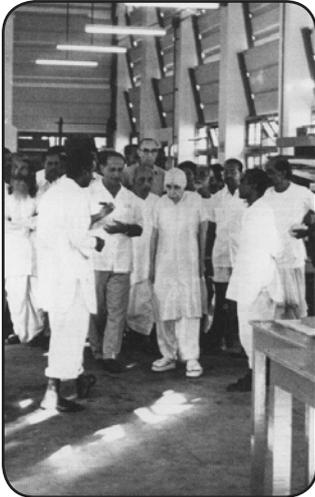
An immense gratitude rises from my heart, it seems to me that I have at last reached the threshold I sought so much."²⁴

These diary-entries only corroborate Nolini's and Sethna's remarks quoted earlier: Mirra's absolute and unreserved surrender really meant "a complete obliteration of the past", and instead "an infinite silence settled in her mind."

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FOUNDING THE ASHRAM



The Mother's Letter to a Student

Sweet Mother, Can you hear me whenever I call you?

My dear child,

Be sure that I hear you each time you call and my help and force go straight to you.

With my blessings.

1-6-60

Nirodbaran, *Memorable Contacts with the Mother*, p.179

I

It is difficult if not impossible, even for those who were the privileged participants in the divine drama, to explain what precisely happened on the evening of 24 November 1926, henceforth to be known as the Siddhi Day, the Day of Realisation. Some sweet tension, like a spring being wound up, was building up for days, even for weeks — in fact, from the time of Sri Aurobindo's birthday, 15 August, three months earlier. During the evening discussion on that day, Sri Aurobindo had made a reference to the possibility of opening up "a direct connection with the world of the Gods". On 6 November, he had said that he was "trying to bring it [the world of the Gods] down into the physical." As the days passed, Jaya Devi and other sadhaks had felt that all Pondicherry was "fragrant with incense", that a great delight seemed to be at play. And on Mahashtami day, when she was granted a special permission, Jaya Devi performed a private worship in Sri Aurobindo's room. That day, she saw Sri Aurobindo looking like a radiant and golden Shiva and Mirra like Durga, verily the Divine.

With all this background, it would have been merely banal if something of seminal significance had not happened sooner or later. But what exactly did happen? The reports of the sadhaks — Purani, Rajangam, Champaklal, Jaya Devi and others — are unanimous that, when Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had withdrawn after meditation, pranam and blessings, Datta spoke some words as if visioning something in a trance or a sudden apocalyptic flash. They had all seen that there was a new lustre, a luminous glory, on Sri Aurobindo — but what had brought about that change? Like a prophetess in a temple of old speaking in an inspired moment of sudden seeing and ecstasy, Datta found the appropriate words and spoke them. But the hearers too were in a dazed condition, and although they had heard the words — perhaps repeated as in an incantation — they could not recapture them later, and each remembered somewhat differently. In 1921, Sri Aurobindo had told Purani that although the Divine Consciousness had descended, it had not yet penetrated the physical being;¹ it was precisely this that took place on 24 November 1926. In Sri Aurobindo's words:

"It was the descent of Krishna into the physical. Krishna is not the supramental Light. The descent of Krishna would mean the descent of the Overmind Godhead preparing, though not itself actually bringing, the descent of Supermind and Ananda. Krishna is the Anandamaya; he supports the evolution through the Overmind leading it towards his Ananda."²

Equally significant was the fact that now the way stood open for the evocation and establishment of the Supramental Consciousness itself on the earth. To realise this possibility, it became necessary for Sri Aurobindo to withdraw into seclusion.

II

But Sri Aurobindo's retirement was not to mean a diminution of activity; it meant the very reverse in fact. The community of sadhaks now placed under the Mother's care was to grow into a "spiritual collectivity" which Sri Aurobindo decided to put under a protective spiritual Name. It is said that he considered for three days³ — perhaps consulting the Mother before taking the final decision of naming the collective establishment "Sri Aurobindo Ashram", notwithstanding the ideas of austerity, asceticism and rejection popularly associated with an 'ashram'. But Sri Aurobindo thought of an ashram in the old Vedic sense: "The House of the Teacher where the students and disciples gather to draw inspiration from him, to learn how to find God."⁴ It was to be at once the House of the Spirit and the House of manifold but enlightened human activity. As he wrote to the Maharani of Baroda in 1930, "My aim is to create a centre of spiritual life which shall serve as a means of bringing down the higher consciousness and making it a power not merely for 'salvation' but for a divine life upon earth. It is with this object that I have withdrawn from public life and founded this Ashram..."⁵

The founding of the Ashram was also a fulfilling moment in Mirra's life of high aspiration and sustained yogic effort. As she acknowledged in the course of a conversation in May 1956:

"At the beginning of my present earthly existence I came into contact with many people who said that they had a great inner aspiration, an urge towards something deeper and truer, but that they were tied down, subjected, slaves to that brutal necessity of earning their living ... they felt imprisoned in a material necessity narrow and deadening.

I was very young at that time, and I always used to tell myself that if ever I could do it, I would try to create a little world - oh! quite a small one, but still...a small world where people would be able to live without having to be preoccupied with food and lodging and clothing and the impetrative necessities of life, so as to see whether all the energies freed by this certainty of a secure material living would turn spontaneously towards the divine life and the inner realisation.

Well, towards the middle of my life ... the means was given to me and I could realise this, that is, create such conditions of life."⁶

If the birth of the Ashram meant the realisation of one of Mirra's persistent early dreams, it also signified the materialisation of Sri Aurobindo's own hopes as expressed in his letters of 1920. In his letter to Barin, Sri Aurobindo had spoken of a Deva Sangha, and even one hundred dedicated members would, he thought, be able to form the necessary nucleus for future large-scale practical work in the field of social transformation. Writing to Motilal Roy on 2 September, Sri Aurobindo had wanted to establish "our communal system on a firm spiritual,

secondly on a firm economical foundation." The Ashram that took shape under the Mother's fostering care, benefiting at once from her genius for organisation and her infinite reserves of the Spirit, was perhaps Sri Aurobindo's old Bhavani Mandir doubled with his later concept of Deva Sangha, as also her own "typic society", a self-poised self-sufficient community turning spontaneously to the divine life and inner realisation." When the time came, the atmosphere was propitious, the instruments ready, and the twin-horses — spirit-power and economic-power - were properly yoked to the great endeavour.

This needs a little explanation and recapitulation. In his Baroda days over twenty years earlier, Sri Aurobindo had thought of establishing a Bhavani Mandir for training a band of yogins to engage in national service. That didn't come about, but something remotely resembling it was organised by his brother, Barindra, in the Manicktolla Gardens at Calcutta in 1907-08. Being mixed up with revolutionary activity, the enterprise was vitiated from the beginning, and after the Muzzaferpore bomb incident, the Manicktolla group was rounded up and rendered innocuous. Barin and some of his co-workers were sent to the Andamans after the Alipur trial (1908-09), and Sri Aurobindo himself, about a year after his acquittal, retired to Pondicherry in April 1910. After 1926, under much better auspices and under the spiritual and general direction of the Mother, the earlier Bhavani Mandir - Deva Sangha idea began to take a viable shape as Sri Aurobindo Ashram. In Sanat K. Banerji's words:

"The Ashram in Pondicherry is that temple of the living Bhawani, where her devotees, the men and Women who aspire to a new life on earth, offer Her worship, serve Her through their works, prepare themselves for receiving the new Light according to the best of their ability, so that the Light may spread and usher in a new world to take the place of the old."⁷

There was also a definite 'policy' decision. Two courses had been open to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother: first, to wait till their own Yoga of supramental transformation was complete, and then take the people forward too; and second, with whatever gains of Yoga had already accrued to them (and they were momentous enough), to get a group together, and carry whole collectivity forward. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother opted for the latter course.

Many years later, when the question was directly put to him "Why did you retire?", Sri Aurobindo answered that, if he had to do what the Mother was doing, he could hardly have found time for his own work of hastening the manifestation of the supramental consciousness. It was practically a division of labour, and the Mother herself explained that in 1926,

"Sri Aurobindo had announced to the few people who were there that he was entrusting to me the work of helping and guiding them, that I would remain in contact with him, naturally, and that through me he would do the work."⁸

That the Mother's part in the collaborative adventure of running the Ashram was all-important may be seen from Sri Aurobindo's own ready admission on 10 December 1938:

"All my realisations — Nirvana and others — would have remained theoretical, as it were, so far as the outer world was concerned. It is the Mother who showed the way to a practical form. Without her, no organised manifestation would have been possible."⁹

III

While the disciples could see that Sri Aurobindo's Siddhi on 24 November 1926 had a key importance to the Sadhana — individual and collective — and meant a decisive victory on the path generating a new fervour and ananda in the atmosphere, few of the inmates were quite prepared for what immediately followed. On the 27th morning, Jaya Devi went as usual with the tulasi garlands and returned disappointed, for she had been told that Sri Aurobindo would not come out for darshan. Having shown the previous evening for one immaculate interim the very *rupa* and charged splendour of the Delight of Existence, Sri Aurobindo had effected a sudden and determined withdrawal. No more daily darshan and pranam, no more luminous discourses and scintillating Evening Talks! The Mother was accessible of course, and she was all-radiant purity and sovereign compassion. And yet—was it the same thing as receiving benedictions from the Master himself? When somebody ventured to complain, Sri Aurobindo wrote to say that the sadhaks would henceforth receive his light and force from the Mother, and they should be guided by her in their sadhana. Even on the 24th evening, some recollected, Sri Aurobindo had blessed the disciples as it were through the Mother — the Mother being the intermediary, the interceder, the paraclete.

There were intermittent grumblings all the same. One line of argument was that, granted that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were divine collaborators, still they were two persons, weren't they? How, then, could the Mother entirely obliterate the Master, and put herself alone in the forefront? Sri Aurobindo was to make a pointed reference to this heresy in a letter to a disciple written in 1934:

"The opposition between the Mother's consciousness and my consciousness was an invention of the old days... and emerged in a time when the Mother was not fully recognised or accepted by some of those who were here at the beginning. Even after they had recognised her they persisted in this meaningless opposition and did great harm to themselves and others. The Mother's consciousness and mine are the same, the one Divine Consciousness in two, because that is necessary for the play. Nothing can be done without her knowledge and force, without her consciousness — if

anybody really feels her consciousness, he should know that I am there behind it and if he feels me it is the same with hers.”¹⁰

It was true they first met only in 1914, and her second coming was in 1920, barely six years before the Siddhi. While they had been doing Yoga before they met or knew about each other, their respective lines of sadhana had followed the same course. And when they met, there resulted the fusion of their lines of sadhana, a mutual strengthening and consolidation which presently came to be known as Sri Aurobindo’s Yoga. But it was the Mother’s Yoga as much as Sri Aurobindo’s, and he was always forthright in acknowledging his debt to the Mother’s contribution. As he once said:

“Before the Mother came all [the sadhaks] were living in the mind with only some mental realisations and experiences. The vital and everything else were unregenerated and the psychic behind the veil. I am not aware that anyone of them at that time entered the Cosmic Consciousness. At that time I was still seeking my way for the transformation and the passage to the Supramental... and acted very much on a principle of laissez faire with few Sadhaks who were there.”¹¹

It was the Mother’s coming and her eventual assumption of full responsibility that effected such a sea-change in the atmosphere.

IV



As regards the selection of the sadhaks, the work assigned to them and the system of arrangements for the smooth running of the Ashram, the principle governing these had little in common with the normal criteria of the outside world. "The moment one enters the life of the Ashram and takes up the yoga," the Mother wrote to a sadhak in January 1929, "he ceases to belong to any creed or caste or race; he is one of Sri Aurobindo's disciples and nothing else."¹² Many years later, Sri Aurobindo told Surendra Mohan Ghose that the Mother's choice of sadhaks was not exclusively governed by their spiritual advancement or intellectual brilliance: "She selects different types She wants to observe how the Divine works in different types."¹³ The Ashram was, after all, a laboratory for a spiritual and supramental Yoga, and in it humanity had to be represented in all its diversity. From the very beginning, the Ashram community had a cosmopolitan cast, and this only came to be emphasised more and more with the passage of time, for thus alone could the Ashram microcosm serve as the matrix of the future humanity.

"Since 1926 when Sri Aurobindo retired and gave me full charge of it (at that time there were only two rented houses and a handful of disciples) all has grown up and developed like the growth of a forest, and each service was created not by any artificial planning but by a living and dynamic need. This is the secret of constant growth and endless progress."¹⁴

And Sri Aurobindo too had written much the same thing in the course of a letter to a disciple in 1939:

"There has never been, at any time, a mental plan, a fixed programme or an organisation decided beforehand. The whole thing has taken birth, grown and developed as a living being by a movement of consciousness (Chit-Tapas) constantly maintained, increased and fortified. As the conscious Force descends in matter and radiates, it seeks for fit instruments to express and manifest it. It goes without saying that the more the instrument is open, receptive and plastic, the better are the results."¹⁵

The Ashram, organised not for the renunciation of the world nor for a life of meditative retirement, but for advancing the work of future-building on yogic consciousness and yoga-shakti, had to place the accent on Karma yoga which would both help the Ashram to thrive as a self-poised, self-sustained human aggregate and also advance the sadhaks' spiritual training. A few excerpts from Sri Aurobindo's letters to his disciples will make this clear:

"The work here is not intended for showing one's capacity or having position or as a means of physical nearness to the Mother, but as a field and an opportunity for the Karmayoga part of the integral yoga, for learning to work in the true yogic way, dedication through service, practical selflessness, obedience, scrupulousness, discipline, setting the Divine and

the Divine's work first and oneself last, harmony, patience, forbearance, etc."¹⁶

"The work in the Ashram ...was meant as a service to the Divine and as a field for the inner opening to the Divine, surrender to the Divine alone, rejection of ego and all the ordinary vital movements and the training in a psychic elevation, selflessness, obedience, renunciation of all mental, vital or other self-assertion of the limited personality."¹⁷

"Work is not only for work's sake, but as a field of Sadhana, for getting rid of the lower personality and its reactions and acquiring a full surrender to the Divine."¹⁸

V

Again, even as the selection of the sadhaks was governed by considerations other than the sheerly logical, not easily analysable by the mere intellect, the allocation of work to the inmates could also sometimes baffle the surface understanding. Why should a poet be asked to look after furniture? Why should an affluent businessman be asked to wash plates in the dining hall? Why should a trained physician be put in charge of nuts and screws? Why should a serious student of philosophy be asked to dust books in the library? Why should one trained for the legal profession be made to move food-carriers in a push-cart and distribute them to the different houses? On the other hand, the work — of whatever kind — attracted no wages as such. And although, as the Ashram grew and the work proliferated, there arose the necessity to have heads of the various departments that was only for convenience and despatch, and not to create masters and subordinates; all the work was still an offering to the Mother, to the Divine, and not to the departmental head. But even the grumblers had in the end to acknowledge that the work assigned, although apparently unsuitable and even uncongenial at first, had somehow grown into the sadhaks' life. Of course, things did not always work with complete precision and coordination, and this was because all the sadhaks were not equally, or at all times, ready and efficient channels of the Force and the Consciousness at work in the Ashram. In such cases, Sri Aurobindo or the Mother had to intervene, generally from behind, and set right the distortion. And sometimes the Mother made a trial of divers arrangements before deciding upon the best course.

This, then, was the difficult psychological hurdle that the sadhak had to cross silencing the insidious promptings of his 'reason' and 'common sense': that, firstly, the work assigned to him was really the Divine's work, and must be done in the right attitude of consecration; and, secondly, that the work being the Mother's, the Divine's, if the application or dedication was truly sincere and free from all egoistic distortion, the Mother herself would give the strength

and the expertise to the sadhak to see the work through. The first part was affirmed and clarified in several of Sri Aurobindo's letters:

"Remind yourself always it is Mother's work you are doing and if you do it as well as you can remembering her, the Mother's Grace will be with you."¹⁹

"Work should be done for the Mother and not for oneself, — that is how one encourages the growth of the psychic being and overcomes the ego. The test is to do the work given by the Mother without *abhimāna* or insistence or personal choice or prestige, — not getting hurt by anything that touches the pride, amour-propre or personal preference.

It is a high and great ideal that is put before the Sadhak through work it is not possible to realise it suddenly, but to grow steadily into it is possible...."²⁰

As regards the second part, it was axiomatic that when one did the Divine's work, the Divine must lend a helping hand. This too was reiterated in Sri Aurobindo's letters:

"If the mind and the vital get the habit of opening to the Mother's Force, they are then supported by the Force, and may even be fully filled with it — the Force does the work and the body feels no strain or fatigue before or after."²¹

The intellectual and poet, K.D. Sethna, was first asked to take charge of Ashram's stock of furniture. This brought him daily in contact with the Mother to take her signature on the requisition slips. "There was no other job, I suppose," he reminisced, "open at that time which could bring me in touch with her so much," and he added the revealing comment:

"But I realised that the Mother, when she gives any work, gives two things also with it: first, the Ananda of the thing because without that joy you couldn't carry on at all, and, secondly, the capacity — to some extent at least!"²²

More pointedly, the Mother once told Champaklal, and this was more than a month before the founding of the Ashram:

"Do you think that you are working? No, your Mother is working."

Then, two days later:

"You know, only one Purusha is working in the whole world."²³

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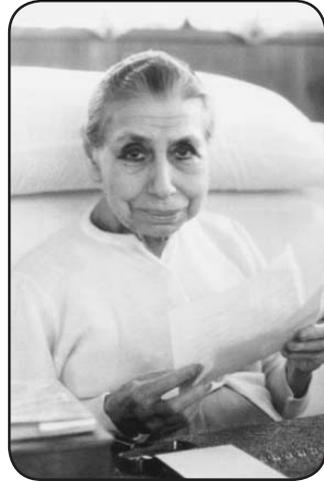
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Inauguration of the Ashram Swimming Pool

The construction of our lovely swimming pool in the Sportsground had been complete and was thrown open to all the Groups of Physical Education. At last, I thought, some pleasant innocent exercise when I had given up all other games. But alas, soon I began to feel uneasy after the dip, even a bit out of sorts. One night I had the vision of Sri Aurobindo's right arm stretched out across the entrance to the Sportsground. The indication was quite clear that I should stop my innocent pastime. I asked the Mother if swimming was harmful for me. She answered, "No, you can go for swimming." But when I told her about my dream, she said, "Then you should not go." This is how the Guru guides us in every little detail!

Nirodbaran, *Memorable Contacts with the Mother*, p.78

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE



I

In the Ashram's collective adventure of moving towards a New Life, a divine life, the Mother assigned (as we have seen) a central role almost to education. A school had been founded for children on 2 December 1943, but in the course of the seven years they had grown up in age and abilities and spread and depth of consciousness, and were now ripe for higher education. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had definite views about the future, and about the role of education in hastening that future. The Mother accordingly felt that the time was opportune for calling a Sri Aurobindo Memorial Convention, which met in the Ashram Tennis Ground on 24 and 25 April 1951.

Appropriately enough, on the 24th morning, the school-children and sadhaks in their uniform for physical education classes lined up in their respective group formations on the street outside the Mother's balcony, and as she appeared at seven, they gave the salute to her and then marched into the Ashram and formed a square around the Samadhi. The Mother too joined them, and the children gave their salute to her and Sri Aurobindo "in a complete and enthralling silence".¹

The Convention itself was a representative and distinguished gathering of intellectuals and educationists of India who felt concerned about the future. In her inaugural message, the Mother said:

"Sri Aurobindo is present in our midst, and with all the power of his creative genius he presides over the formation of the University Centre which for years he considered as one of the best means of preparing the future humanity to receive the supramental light that will transform the elite of today into a new race manifesting upon earth the new light and force and life".²

In the course of his presidential address, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee remarked that Indians had lost track of their real culture and seem to have opted for "a base hedonistic view of life". In that bleak situation, the establishment of a university "where the eternal verities of life will be taught and re-taught to a stricken people" was of paramount relevance. "I am sure", he concluded, "the proposed University will symbolise the world's urge for a new spiritual rebirth; it will stand out as an oasis amidst the barren tracts that breed jealousies, suspicions and petty conflicts." The question had been posed earlier when the idea of the Convention was mooted whether, after all, a memorial to Sri Aurobindo should not take the form of a Yoga Institute "carried on under the guidance of great Indian Yogis" instead of a modern University. But clearly Sri Aurobindo himself had discussed the university idea with the Mother, and had also once told Surendra Mohan Ghose that it was intended to develop the School and the Ashram into a university that was as large as life, and comprehended the past, present and the future. Where else except in an Ashram of the Vedic type could boys and girls receive the blessings of an

integral education? And such an Ashram being already there in Pondicherry — a sanctified spot with its roots supposedly in the Vedic past — that was also the right place for the location of the proposed university. Another speaker, Somnath Maitra, affirmed:

“The new university will be informed by the spirit of our great Master, the spirit of the Life Divine. It will not only arrange for the study and propagation of his teachings and take steps to bring humanity nearer to the realisation of his supreme ideal of the perfectly integrated life, but it will also be invisibly fashioned and moulded at every turn by a sense of his deathless Presence”.

Dr. Kalidas Nag, after reviewing the different phases of Sri Aurobindo’s career devoted respectively to the political liberation of Asia, the intellectual liberation of his epoch and the spiritual liberation of the world, concluded his brilliant address with the peroration:

“Thus, Sri Aurobindo is the University pointing to a radically new conception of the term. It should not be a mere copy of any of the universities of India or abroad. Sri Aurobindo University should aspire to provide the training ground for youths who would build up a new personality in a new universe”.

The Convention concluded on 25 April. The consensus was that the emphasis in the proposed university should be on quality, not quantity in terms of size and numbers; that, of the two kinds of knowledge — that obtained by an approach from the outside through the intellect and that obtained from within by spiritual realisation — the proposed university should restore to the latter its rightful place and help the pupils to receive integral rather than piecemeal education; and, finally, that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother — their thought, their personality, their influence, their yogic direction — should give the needed dynamism and creative unity to the forthcoming university. As if anticipating this consensus, Salvador de Madariaga had said in his message to the Convention:

“The analytical age is coming to its close...The age of synthesis is about to begin. And how could it begin if no high centre of perspective were provided for all the parts to fall in into harmony”?

And Nolini Kanta Gupta, Secretary of the Ashram, laid the right stress when he said that the ideal before the sponsors of the University would be “nothing less than the founding of a new mankind upon earth - with a new life and a new consciousness”.³

It may be added that there was no reference to the proposed University in the Mother’s talks in the Playground. It was as though she had convened the Memorial Conference more as a concession to the traditional way of doing

such things than because she expected spectacular results from the meeting or the resolutions. Unless institutions were built from within, and reared on the foundations of the Spirit, they would be pitiful edifices indeed. Besides, even as not walls but men make a city, so too not buildings nor brave speeches make a university but boys and girls and their teachers. And the Mother found the nucleus of her vision of a university in her evening Playground audiences, and she was content.

II

The proposed International University Centre was visualised from the very beginning as an extension, a heightening and a deepening, of the Ashram School itself; an organic growth, in fact, and the soul's progressive self-finding in the fullness of time. The athletics and sports of July-August were followed by the eighth anniversary of the School which began on 1 December 1951, and the celebrations included recitations of Sri Aurobindo's *Hymn to Durga* and from the Mother's *Prayers*, as also a dance-rendering of her "Radha's Prayer". Then came the 5th December, and the interim from 5th to 9th, recalling the time of Sri Aurobindo's body lying in state a year earlier and the *mahasamadhi*. His Presence, for all that it was unseen, was a felt beneficent power. Sadhaks, children, visitors — the Mother herself — enacted their paean of gratitude to the Master who had "willed all, attempted all, prepared, achieved all" for present and future humanity. Around the Samadhi under the Service Tree, the unceasing procession of devotees seemed to affirm unconsciously the sentiments in J. Vijayatunga's apostrophe wrung from him soon after the Master's passing on 5 December 1950:

"Are we sad today? Is the earth dark without light?
Nay, Master, Thou didst not live in vain,
Thy life sublime and austere was not spent
For nought...Holding to the hem
Of Thy garment we shall raise ourselves
To High Heaven, by Thy Grace..."

For the New Year, 1952, the Mother distributed an apposite message:

"O Lord, Thou hast decided to test the quality of our faith and to pass our sincerity on Thy touchstone. Grant that we come out greater and purer from the ordeal".⁴

Faith, sincerity — without these nothing great, nothing noble, could be attempted or attained. The Mother had issued the call for support to the International University idea, but the response from the outside world was pitifully lukewarm. People still weighed the Mother's idea in the balance of mentalised categories, and found it wanting. While she was for a bold leap

into the future, the timid majority were slaves of the present and the past. This adventure into the infinitudes of the future was certainly going to be difficult, but with faith and sincerity, the pioneers— the barrier-breakers — could safely come through, whatever the intervening trials and ordeals.

The Mother accordingly lost no time and inaugurated the International University Centre on 6 January 1952. On that day the pupils were given a prayer that was also an inspired definition of the true goal of education:

“Make of us the hero warriors we aspire to become. May we fight successfully the great battle of the future that is to be born, against the past that seeks to endure; so that the new things may manifest and we be ready to receive them”.⁵

In other words, perfect the human instrument into a harmony of structure, aim and function; win the battle of the future so that the New may manifest without hindrance, and so that the children of today may prove to be the pioneers and pathfinders of the future. It is not simply a question of acquiring a skill or qualifying for a degree or a diploma; it is rather an adventure to be undertaken, a battle to be fought, so that the future may be won. For the hero warriors, however, it will be both an outer struggle with the protagonists of the past and an inner battle of knowledge to win the new consciousness and achieve self-transformation. Everyone has to wrestle, late or soon, with the ego’s propensity to separativity, selfishness, narrowness, stupidity and fear, put the miserable ego in its place, and bring into the forefront the now behind-the-scenes psychic being which alone is touched with the elemental power of the Spirit. It is thus that the psychic being should be awakened and invoked and installed as “the leader of the march set in our front”.

III

Not long after the inauguration of the University Centre, K. M. Munshi paid his second visit to the Ashram on 12 March 1952. He had seen and conversed with the Mother during his earlier visit in July 1950, but at that time he was rather more engrossed with the sublime Master. Now he came closer to the Mother, and watched her with reverent attention, and also conversed freely with her. As he wrote later, recalling his impressions:

“A tennis-playing, silk-garmented lady of seventy-five, carrying a tenuous veil and saluting the Ashramites at the march past day after day was not exactly a symbol of spirituality to the normal Indian mind. Was she a miracle-worker or just an artist? Was she carrying forward the Master’s work? Was this how it should be carried on”?⁶

At the Playground, where she sat on a high-backed chair, her feet resting on a footstool, Munshi found her eyes “transparent, almost clear as crystal”. Of

particular significance was the Spiritual Map of India, done in bas-relief in green on the wall of the Playground, with the Mother's symbol at the centre. Transcending the political divisions, the geographical contours of the map — comprising undivided India, Nepal, Burma and Ceylon — boldly projected the spiritual entity that was — and is — and will always be the real India with her divine role. As the Mother sat with this map for a backdrop, her very presence was an inspiration. And what if she played tennis and received the salute at the march past? The right answer came to him at last:

“We ourselves put on silks, eat machine-ground flour, play tennis; but for our spiritual uplift we want only ways considered acceptable five thousand years ago...

If the spirit has to permeate and transform life, it must be through life as we live it; and that is perhaps the Ashram's speciality”.⁷

In the course of their conversation, when the talk turned on Sri Aurobindo's vision of India's role in the future, the Mother said with strident emphasis:

“Sri Aurobindo is still alive, as living as ever and will continue to live... We are determined — he and I — to complete the work he lived for... India must maintain the spiritual leadership of the world. If she does not, she will collapse, and with her will go the whole world”.

Everything he saw, everything he heard, duly impressed him, and he found the Ashram “a unique experiment... which enabled people to live a self-contained community life”, and he seems to have told a friend, Charupada: “If the world were to be drowned in a flood again, you needn't have a Noah's Ark, if the Ashram is saved. It would be sufficient to set up the world again”.⁸

As regards the University Centre, the Mother confided to Munshi that she was building up “slowly, step by step, but firmly”. For one thing, the entire adventure of education from Kindergarten to the Higher Course was a single spectrum; and the whole arc, from physical to spiritual, was in integral whole. If in May 1951, she had opened the Sports Ground, now on 24 April 1952, she opened a section of the University Centre which was to house the temporary library and music and dance room and some additional classrooms. Then she opened the weight-lifting and body-building sections of the gymnasium at the Playground.⁹ The divers limbs of the new International Centre thus started taking their significant shapes and performing their allotted functions. The Mother herself had at no time any doubt whatsoever regarding the crucial role the International Centre was expected to play in the fulfilment of Sri Aurobindo's vision of the future man. As she wrote a year hence to Surendra Nath Jauhar:

“I am perfectly sure, I am quite confident, there is not the slightest doubt in my mind, that this University, which is being established here, will be the greatest seat of knowledge upon earth.

It may take fifty years, it may take a hundred years, and you may doubt about my being there; I may be there or not, but these children of mine will be there to carry out my work.

And those who collaborate in this divine work today will have the joy and pride of having participated in such an exceptional achievement”.¹⁰

A new seed, the seed of integral knowledge, was being sown; and the time of sprouting and foliage and flowering would come, and the harvesting too — in good time — of the New Life, the supramental manifestation upon the earth and the transfiguration of humanity.

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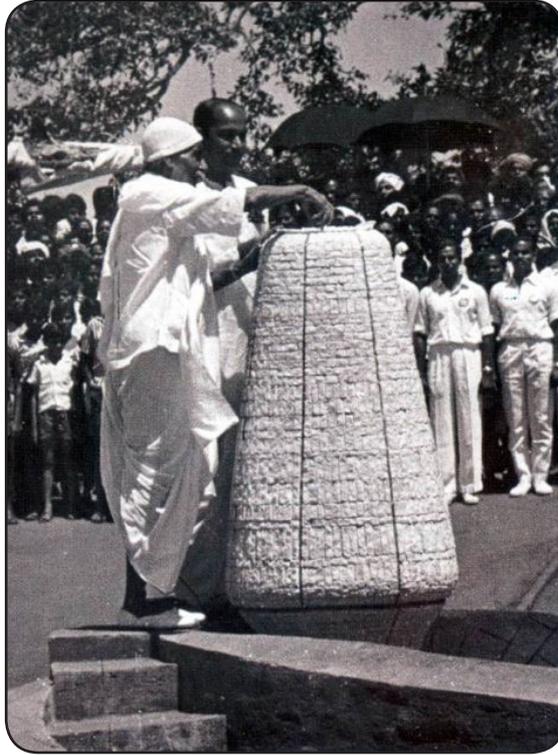
Regarding ‘Compulsion’ in Physical Education

Mother: Compulsion is necessary.

If you want to remain in the Group, you have to obey the Group discipline. That is quite reasonable. I will tell you one thing: without discipline, strict discipline, no progress can be made in life. No yoga is possible without it. You can't take one step forward without strict discipline. You may utter a mantra for a hundred years, but without discipline you won't be able to see beyond the tip of your nose.

Nirodbaran, *Memorable Contacts with the Mother*, pp.83-4

YEAR OF WONDERS



I

It was to be a year of wonders, 1968, and the Mother's New Year message was a radiant exhortation:

"Remain young, never stop striving towards perfection".

In her message for her ninetieth birthday on 21 February, she elaborated her idea of 'youth' and 'age':

"It is not the number of years you have lived that makes you grow old. You become old when you stop progressing...

be done, when you see the future like an attractive sun shining with the innumerable possibilities yet to be achieved, then you are young...young and rich with all the realisations of tomorrow".¹

The Future — the joy of youth and of perpetual buoyancy — and the movement towards Truth and Perfection were always in the Mother's consciousness. We

have seen how in one of her plays, *Towards the Future*, there is a clairvoyant leap into coming possibilities in human relationships; how in another, *The Great Secret*, seven men in a boat, miraculously saved when they are adrift on the sea, resolve to live integrally the new secret revealed to them; and how in a third, *The Ascent to the Truth*, a group of pilgrims go up a mountain till only the Aspirants reach the summit ready to live the New Life. Again, when asked to identify the central aim of the Ashram journal, *Mother India*, she had said: "Why and How to live for the Future, in the Future." The entire Auroville conception itself was a stupendous offering to the Future, and her letters and talks during 1967 often revealed her profound concern for the Future. Of Auroville she said that it would be a place where at last one would be able to think of the future only. Again: "Auroville is the shelter built for all those who want to hasten towards a future of Knowledge, Peace and Unity."²

...In 1968, what was going to be witnessed was the birth of Auroville, the City of Dawn; Auroville where the world's choicest youth could find a safe harbourage; Auroville where humanity could take bold steps to march towards Perfection. Since so much was at stake, awakened humanity should feel young enough to embark upon this massive adventure into the Future. Tamas, inertia, defeatism, lack of faith, failure of nerve would be fatal to the adventure. Hence the Mother's pressing call: *Remain young, never stop striving towards perfection.*

II



The inauguration of Auroville took place in the forenoon of 28 February 1968, a week after the Mother's birthday. Almost every Nation, big or small, and all the States of the Indian Union were represented. The inspiring idea behind the

dedication ceremony was that children from the different Nations and States should bring a handful of earth from their respective region and deposit it in the lotus-shaped urn at the centre of the Auroville site, to mix there and mingle with the others so as to symbolise the unity, solidarity and common destiny of the earth and its inhabitants. The Government of Pondicherry declared a public holiday to enable its citizens to participate in the unique festive ceremony of the birth of the City of Dawn. For several days previously, the Ashram and Pondicherry had become the centre of attraction, and thousands had come to witness the historic occasion. A newly made road led to the amphitheatre in the heart of Auroville where the vast concourse of humanity gathered on the 28th morning in exemplary silence in a mood of prayerful expectancy.

The dedication ceremony itself was memorably distinctive in its grand simplicity and symbolic sufficiency. There were no speeches, there was no visible presiding dignitary. But many were conscious of an invisible Presence that brooded with outspread protective wings over the mass of humanity as if nurturing their hope for the future. At last, at 10.30, the words of the Mother's message of welcome came with resonant vibration, transmitted from her room in the Ashram six miles away:

"Greetings from Auroville to all men of good will.

Are invited to Auroville all those who thirst for progress and aspire to a higher and truer life."³

Then as the Mother read the French version of the Auroville charter, two children of the Ashram, one carrying the Mother's flag, the other some earth from the Samadhi (the Mother had herself given them this sacred soil in a bowl) along with the charter in a stainless steel container, placed them at the bottom of the tall urn shaped like a lotus-bud. Following them, other children in groups of two, one holding the flag of the respective Nation or State blazoning its name, walked up to the urn carrying bowlfuls of the consecrated earth of their homelands, and deposited them likewise in the urn. As the children were advancing to the urn, the charter was read out in sixteen other languages: Tamil first, then Sanskrit, then English, followed by thirteen languages of the world in their alphabetical order: Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, German, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Norwegian, Russian, Spanish, Swedish and Tibetan. It was really the same song of human aspiration though coming in different notes, and the reiteration in the languages of the world was but the ringing peal of the coming global symphony. Here is the English text of the charter, a simple statement of the aims and hopes of Tomorrow's World:

- Auroville belongs to nobody in particular. Auroville belongs to humanity as a whole. But to live in Auroville one must be the willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness.

- Auroville will be the place of an unending education, of constant progress, and a youth that never ages.
- Auroville wants to be the bridge between the past and the future. Taking advantage of all discoveries from without and from within, Auroville will boldly spring towards future realisations.
- Auroville will be a site of material and spiritual researches for a living embodiment of an actual human unity.⁴

Throughout the ceremony, which took about seventy-five minutes, the words of the charter rumbled in the rhythms of one language or another along the unseen corridors of the collective consciousness of the silently participating congregation comprising tens of thousands of aspiring humanity. In all, 124 Nations of the world and 23 States of the Indian Union — comprising the big and the small, the far and the near, the affluent and the underdeveloped — took part in the dedication ceremony, and the all-important common denominator was the universal human concern and aspiration for the future. After the accredited children from these Nations and States had fulfilled their appointed roles, some of the soil of Auroville also was added to the mingled earth, and Nolini Kanta Gupta went up last and sealed the urn, thereby bringing the ceremony of inauguration to an auspicious close.

That hour of dedication was also one of the Hours of God, and the ceremony was a solemn splendour of affirmation, a great gesture of beckoning that showed the way to the approaching Dawn and the future Noons of Fulfilment. In that year of the crossroads of human history, the Mother's supreme act of faith in launching Auroville into the uncertain Future was in some measure also a means of shaping that future towards the ultimate realisation of the noblest of human aspirations: the reign of "God, Light, Freedom, Immortality", and the "flowering of a new race, the race of the Sons of God". Indeed, the birth of Auroville was like the coming of a beam of shining light to an otherwise bleak and murky world.

It was a splendid beginning, indeed, under the happiest auspices. The children of the world, the soil of the earth in which all lands became one, the Mother's benedictions — the conjunction of these betokened the birth of Auroville, the Dawn City. If Marx once gave the strident call "Proletariat of all Nations, unite!", the Aurovilian call may be phrased: "Children of all Nations, unite! You have nothing to lose except fear insecurity, inequality-and waste; and you have everything to gain!" Children the world over are endowed with the qualities of innocence, generosity, humour, plasticity, curiosity, adventurousness and mysticism — a Franciscan mysticism that burns away the dross of self-defeating egoism or *ahankāra* and soul-destroying hatred or *dveśa*. Didn't Christ say that one must be verily like a child to enter the Kingdom of Heaven? Certainly, one must be like a child to acquire and deserve the rights of citizenship in Auroville, the city that could one day house a planetary society governed and sustained by the True or Divine Consciousness.

III

The day after the dedication of Auroville was the third leap-year anniversary of the Supramental Manifestation — the Golden Day, the Day of the Lord. “Truth alone,” ran the Mother’s message, “can give to the world the power of receiving and manifesting the Divine’s Love”.⁵ There was the distribution of symbols in the evening, and for the rest the programme was similar to that on the 90th birthday eight days earlier: meditation before Sri Aurobindo’s Samadhi in the morning and Darshan from the Terrace in the evening. The entire period from 21 to 29 February was thus an extended festival for the Ashram, and the two Darshans were attended by over 5000 sadhaks, disciples and admirers. On 25 February, the New Age Association held a seminar on a subject given by the Mother: “What we expect from the Mother.” For a start the Mother herself was asked a series of questions, and pat came the answers:

“What is the right thing that we should expect from You?”

Everything.

What have You been expecting from us and from humanity in general for the accomplishment of Your Work upon earth?

Nothing.

From Your long experience of over sixty years, have You found that Your expectation from us and from humanity has been sufficiently fulfilled?

As I am expecting nothing I cannot answer this question.

Does the success of Your Work for us and for humanity depend in any way upon the fulfilment of Your expectation from us and from humanity?

Happily not”.

The real point of the questions and answers is that essentially the Mother symbolised Grace, and Grace could — and often did — act irrespective of our work, our aspiration, or even our cry for help. Grace is Grace, but Faith is important too; “faith is miracle, creator of miracles,” said the Mother. And one’s love for the Mother — for the Divine — should be pure of all selfish claims and desires for Grace to act without any interference or distortion.

References

1. *Collected Works of the Mother*, Vol. 12, p. 123
2. *ibid.*, Vol. 13, p. 198
3. *ibid.*, p. 45
4. *ibid.*, p. 199
5. *ibid.*, pp. 199-200
6. *ibid.*, Vol.13, p.210 (cf.202)

MATRIMANDIR



I

In the Sweet Year of 1971, the year of man's hoped for "leap towards the Future", as if divinely insuring that Future, the foundation stone of Matrimandir was laid at Auroville by Nolini Kanta Gupta. It was the Mother's ninety-third birthday, and her message for the day was: "A life consecrated to union with the Divine is the only life worth living." In 1970, the Mother had said that "Auroville aspires for union",¹ and in August she had made another significant statement about Auroville:

"The Matrimandir wants to be the symbol of the Divine's answer to man's aspiration for perfection.

Union with the Divine manifesting in a progressive human unity".

Yet another had come in November 1970:

"The Matrimandir will be the soul of Auroville.

The sooner the soul is there, the better it will be for everybody and especially for the Aurovilians".²

Auroville was to be a prominent part of the world's future — the living and transformed Next Future — and Matrimandir was to be the soul of Auroville. In the place of the agelong tragic divorce between body and soul, earth and heaven, there must now occur a meeting, a union and a transfiguration fulfilling the prophecy in *Savitri*:

A divine harmony shall be earth's law,
 Beauty and joy remould her way to live:
 Even the body shall remember God,...
 The supermind shall claim the world for Light
 And thrill with love of God the enamoured heart
 And place Light's crown on Nature's lifted head
 And found Light's reign on her unshaking base.³

The Matrimandir foundation ceremony was a poem of consecration and all present were touched at the deeper levels of the spirit. "It was the hour before the Gods awake." As the Mother's children proceeded towards the chosen spot, it was still dark except for the light burning on the top of Ganesa's temple at the entrance of Auroville, and for the stars 'shining bright as diamonds'. As one of the eye-witnesses, Anu, recalls the event:

"There were twelve red pillars which formed a circle... The pillar in front of us was less than half a foot. But then gradually... [they] rose in height till the last two were about ten feet high. In the circle lay dry wood and hay... Bob put his torch to the dry wood and at once the flames shot up...creation too must have started in the same way — thousands of sparks coming out of the original fire. Along with the flames rose music composed by Sunil Bhattacharyajee. I could hear new footsteps in this music, thousands of feet marching joyously towards a new adventure. We heard the Mother's voice: "Let the Matrimandir be the living Symbol of Auroville's aspiration for the Divine."

...as I looked at the flames I felt as if Rishis from the invisible world had stood around this new sacrificial fire and chanted mantras.

Over us the moon had become pale and in the east were waves of light. As the flames died down the music too ended. The chief architect Mr. Anger came to Nolini and escorted him to the site. As I turned I saw that a similar fire was burning near the banyan tree and the lotus-shaped jar [Kumbha] where the foundation of Auroville was laid. Mr. Anger brought us to the site which was a deeply-dug-up square. Nolini, Navajata, Mr. Anger and Auroville's first citizen Aurofilio, a child of about 5, went down the square. We saw another deeper square inside this square. This was the place for laying the foundation-stone...

...According to the Mother's instructions at six-thirty Nolini and Aurofilio laid the foundation-stone in its place. The stone was black and Sri Aurobindo's symbol was engraved on it...

The presence of the three fires can be explained, according to Nolini, in two ways: in the Vedic times they represented Heaven, Self and Earth; in our times they may be taken to represent the mind, the vital being and the body.⁴

II

Thus was the divine seed cast on Auroville's sacred soil on the Mother's birthday. As conveyed to Mr. Anger, Matrimandir was ultimately to dominate the prospect as a golden globe suspended in space, the light filtering from top to bottom, — an architectural lyric, a materialised meditation, a brazier of Aspiration from below being met by the downpour of Grace from Above. When Matrimandir took final shape, it was expected to suggest symbolically the emergence of "the golden sphere of consciousness out of the earth crater", the whole epic climb of life in its dynamic versatility being reflected in the dance of the movement on the golden discs exposed to the sun's rays. But Matrimandir was to be no architectural marvel merely, something to gaze at and admire and indite poems about; it was to be verily a theatre of inner psychological exploration, self-discovery and self-realisation. Following one of the four pathways, the pilgrim would pass above the crater and make for the sun-world, reach the central dodecagon, and go beyond it to a large meditation chamber illumined by a descending ray of sunlight. This would be the transforming chamber, the spiritual cyclotron; the Mind of Night hot-linked with the Mind of Light: one complete spectrum from the inconscient to the superconscient: the way up also being the way down, the whole *mysterium tremendum* of the cosmic dance-drama. The pilgrim, when he had charged and changed himself enough, enough for the time being, could now go out to the Garden of Unity, the Banyan Tree and the mythic Lotus or Lotus-shaped 'solid mandala'.

Matrimandir, — Auroville's Power-house of the Spirit, — was planned to be taken up in twelve stages spread over three or more years, and when completed, it would be a symbol-dream in architecture, a marvel of beauty and harmony, the ensouled image of a mighty aspiration and its theatre of progressive realisation. The whole complex of Matrimandir and its environs — even when one merely looked at the plans and at the model — might seem a three-dimensional translation of the nectarean insights of Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga* and above all *Savitri*:

O Sun-Word, thou shall raise the earth-soul to Light
 And bring down God into the lives of men;
 Earth shall be my work-chamber and my house,
 My garden of life to plant a seed divine.

Was it Savitri on whom the divine command was laid, — or was the “blissful cry” addressed rather to the Savitri in the Mother?

When all thy work in human time is done
 The mind of earth shall be a home of light,
 The life of earth a tree growing towards heaven,
 The body of earth a tabernacle of God.⁵

After the laying of the foundation stone of Matrimandir, for many months the work was hard and obscure. Aurovilians, Ashramites, local villagers started digging, digging, digging with crow-bars, picks and shovels...it was like wrestling with the infinitudes of the Inconscient, such packed density, such fierce resistance, such a desert of defiance. But there was the certainty of waters gushing forth one day, and life sprouting, and gardens growing...

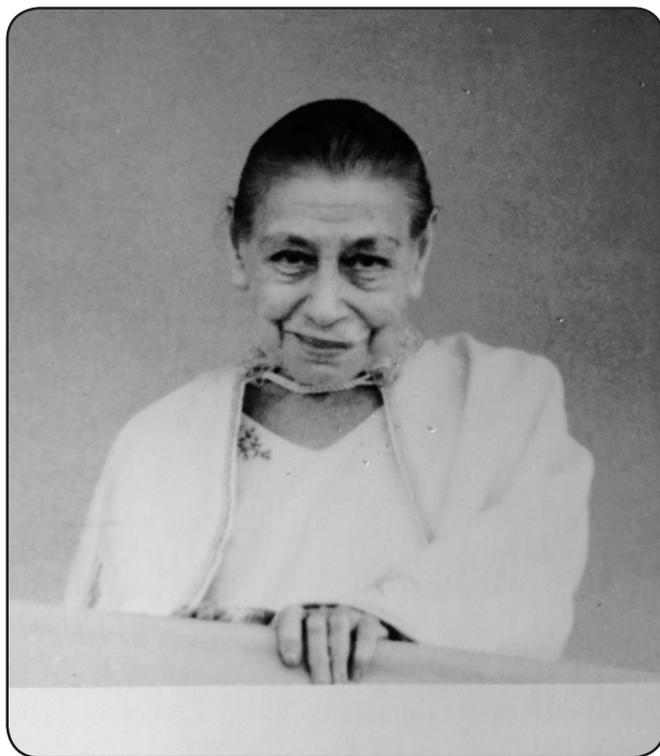
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2. *Savitri*, Sri Aurobindo, revised edition, 1993, p. 707
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The Inner Chamber : Matrimandir

THE PURPOSE OF HER EMBODIMENT



Her embodiment is a chance for the earth-consciousness to receive the Supramental into it and to undergo first the transformation necessary for that to be possible. Afterwards there will be a further transformation by the Supramental, but the whole earth-consciousness will not be supramentalised — there will be first a new race representing the Supermind, as man represents the mind.

*

There is one divine Force which acts in the universe and in the individual and is also beyond the individual and the universe. The Mother stands for all these, but she is working here in the body to bring down something not yet expressed in this material world so as to transform life here — it is so that you should regard her as the Divine Shakti working here for that purpose. She is that in the body, but in her whole consciousness she is also identified with all the other aspects of the Divine.

Sri Aurobindo, *SABCL*, Vol.25, p.49

TOWARDS THE TRANSFORMED BODY

Kireet Joshi

A momentous stage was reached. An irreversible stage was reached. The whole work, the real work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, was to open up the consciousness of the cells by fixing the supramental consciousness in the body-consciousness. This work was done; the rest was a secondary consequence. As Mother said: 'It must be "worked out" as one says, it has to be realised in all details, but the change IS DONE—the change is done.... The physical is CAPABLE of receiving the Superior Light, the Truth, the true consciousness and to manifest it.' Again, as Mother said: 'Still one must struggle, one must have patience, courage, will, confidence,—but it is no longer "like that". It is the old thing which tries to cling—hideous! Hideous. But... it is no longer like that. It is no longer like that.... And everything— everything, all circumstances are as catastrophic as they can be: problems, complications, difficulties, everything—everything is dead set against it like that, like ferocious beasts, but... it is over. The body KNOWS that it is over. It may take centuries, but it is over. To disappear, it might take centuries, but it is over.'

Mother said that it might take centuries to 'work out' in all its details; Sri Aurobindo had said that it would take at least three hundred years. But the supramental consciousness imparts to the evolutionary movement an unimaginable acceleration to the process of transformation. It does not stop anywhere, it moves on as rapidly as possible towards the point where the transformation would be instantaneous.

The onward journey of the Mother was towards the total transformation of the body, so that even the residue of the old would undergo the change. In this process, Mother will make many new discoveries, she will pass through a hell of resistances of the old world,— even after building up in her body a new body of the awakened cells where there is no 'life' and 'death' but <overlife>. A perilous journey it was—and we shall describe here in Mother's own words some of these resistances and discoveries.

Let us begin with Mother's experience of 19th November, 1969, where she gives us the essential equations of the supramental consciousness as experienced by her body-consciousness.

19 November 1969

This morning at about eight o'clock, I would have been able to tell you a number of things....

Because there was a day when a number of problems were posed as a result of something which had occurred... then this morning (at the end of the night), I have had the experience which was the explanation. And for two hours,

I lived in an absolutely clear perception (not a thought: a clear perception) of... the why and how of the creation. It was so luminous! so clear! it was irrefutable. And this lasted at least four to five hours, and then there was a decantation; little by little, the experience diminished in intensity and clarity... And since then I have seen a lot of people pie, so... it's difficult to explain now.

But everything had become so limp! All the contrary theories, all that could be found there below (*Mother looks from above*), and all the explanations, all that Sri Aurobindo has said, and also certain things that Theon had said, all that, as a consequence of the experience: each thing in its place and absolutely clear. At that moment, I could have told you, now it's going to be a little difficult.

Indeed, many things that Sri Aurobindo had said have remained... in spite of all that one has read, and all the theories and all the explanations, there was something which had remained (how to say?) difficult to explain (it's not 'explaining', that, it's so small). For example, suffering and the will to inflict suffering, this aspect of the Manifestation. There was a sort of prevision of the original identity of hate and love, because this went to the extremes, but for all the rest, it was difficult. Today, it was so luminously simple, that's it! So evident!... (*Mother looks at a note which she had written*). Words are nothing. And then I had written with a pencil which writes badly...

I do not know if you can see these words. They represented something very exact for me; now, they are nothing but words....

It's not I who write, that is to say, it's not the ordinary consciousness, and the pencil.... I do not know any more what I have put.

(Mother tries to read but in vain)

It was the vision of the creation: the vision, the comprehension, the why, the how, the goal, all was there, all together, and clear—clear—clear.... You know, I was in a golden glory—luminous, dazzling.

Indeed, there was the earth as the representative centre of the creation, and in that case it was the identity of the inertia of the stone (like something most inert), and besides... (*Mother tries again to read*).

I do not know if it will come.

I remember that around 7.30 in the morning (it was at that moment that I wrote), I called you in thought, because I said: 'If you were here, I could say it to you.' It was the VISION.

(Mother remains concentrated for a long time)

One could say it like this (for the facility of expression, I will say: the 'Supreme' and the 'creation'). In the Supreme, there is a unity which contains all the possibilities perfectly united, without differentiation. The creation, is, so to say, the projection of all that constitutes that unity, by dividing the opposites, that is to say by separating (this is what was understood by him who has said that

the creation was the separation), by separating: for example, day and night, white and black, evil and good, etc. (All that, it's our explanation). All that, all that taken together, is a perfect unity, immutable and... indissoluble. The creation, it is the separation of all which 'constitutes' that unity—one could call it the division of the consciousness—the division of the consciousness, which then goes from the unity conscious of its unity, to arrive at the conscious unity which is conscious of its multiplicity IN UNITY.

And then, this is the journey which, for us—for the fragments—, is translated by space and time.

And for us such as we are, each point of this Consciousness has the possibility of becoming conscious of itself AND conscious of the original Unity. And that, that's the work which is being accomplished, that is to say each infinitesimal element of that Consciousness is in the process of rediscovering the original total consciousness, while keeping that state of consciousness—and the result is the original Consciousness conscious of its Unity AND conscious of the whole play: all the innumerable elements of that Unity. So, for us, this translates itself by the sense of time: to go from the Inconscient to that state of consciousness. And the Inconscient is the projection of the original Unity (if one can say so: all these words are altogether idiotic), of the essential unity which is only conscious of its Unity—this is the Inconscient. And . that Inconscient becomes more and more conscious in those beings who are conscious of their infinitesimal existence AND AT THE SAME TIME—through what we call progress or evolution or transformation,—who succeed in becoming conscious of the original Unity.

And this, as it was seen, it explained everything,

Words are nothing.

All—all, from the most material to the most ethereal thing, All was included into it, clear—clear—clear: a vision.

And evil, that which we call 'evil', has its INDISPENSABLE place in the totality. And it would no more be felt as evil from the minute one becomes conscious of That—necessarily. Evil is that infinitesimal element which looks at its infinitesimal consciousness; but because consciousness is essentially ONE, it takes it up again, it regains the Consciousness of the Unity—both together. And it's that, IT'S THAT which is to be realised. It's that marvellous thing. I have had the vision: at that moment there was the vision of THAT.... And from the very beginnings (is it beginnings?), what one calls in English *outskirts* [periphery], that which is most remote from the central realisation, that becomes the multiplicity of things, and the multiplicity also of sensations, of sentiments, of all—the multiplicity of the consciousness. And it's that action of separation which has created, which creates the world constantly, and which at the same time creates all; suffering, happiness, all—all—all which is created, by its... what one could call 'diffusion'; but it's absurd, it's not a diffusion—we

ourselves live with the sense of space, so we say diffusion and concentration, but it's nothing of the sort...

If stability and the process of transformation could be continuously maintained in a state of equilibrium, death could not occur, or else there would be no necessity of death, and death could occur only by a voluntary will to terminate a given individual form. In a transformed body, there would be perpetual equilibrium, and therefore there would be the immortality of the body or a continuous renewal of the body preserving the individual form or changing that form according to the will. Mother's body was rapidly moving towards that state of the transformed body. And the process was a 'methodical' work in which one part after the other and all the parts and all the groups of cells would learn the real life or 'superlife'.

Mother called this work a colossal work. There were moments when the body felt immeasurable force, and there were moments when the body could not even keep itself standing. And this was for a reason that was not physical, for the body no more obeyed the same laws that keep us on our feet.¹ In a conversation with Satprem on 9th May, 1970, Mother saw in her subtle physical her new body, how it would be! It was a body not very different but extremely refined, and it had an orange colour. The body was vibrant, and it had a kind of luminosity. The skin was 'efflorescent'.

As she said:

And it was that: no sex, neither man or woman—no sex. It was a form like that (*Mother draws a silhouette in space, very slender*)...²

Gradually, one part of Mother's body began to form within itself a new body. But the process was extremely painful. During August 1970, her body fought with death. It was a repetition of the turning points of 1962 and 1968. In conversations with Satprem on 2nd and 5th September, 1970, she said:

... the little body is like a point, but it has the feeling of being the expression of a FORMIDABLE power. And it's... like that: no capacity, no expression, nothing—and rather... rather miserable. And yet... there is like a condensation—condensation—, like a condensation of a FORMIDABLE power!... Sometimes it even has trouble withstanding it, you know...

It's as though all the experiences have increased a hundredfold....

And besides my legs hurt...

That's what is tiring... It's twenty-four hours a day, you see, and no... no possibility to really rest....

If I let myself go, I would scream....

Terrible.... And then that night, I was saying to myself: yes, this is what hell is like.

Terrible—it's terrible.

I don't know why I had to go through this.... Because it meant that death wasn't a solution, you see. That, it was frightening....

It's so horrible... I am tempted to say: pray for me.³

Then she recovered. But five months later, the second blow fell. It was a paralysis of the leg. For at least three weeks, there was constant pain, night and day, twenty four hours a day, without any fluctuation whatsoever. The right leg also was being caught. When this happened, she concentrated tremendously, and she walked for a long, long time to keep it from being caught also. She overcame after several weeks. Gradually, the leg was not in pain, and it came back to normal.

Mother could always exteriorise herself from her body, but for some special reason there was an inner order that prohibited her during this period of physical sadhana to exteriorise herself. It was perhaps an inner insistence so that the solution to the problem of transformation could be found in the body itself. As Mother had once said: 'Salvation is physical.'

During this entire process of transformation of the physical, Mother often said that while the total physical transformation is certain, there was no definitiveness or assurance as to whether it would be in the near future or much later.⁴ Actually, Mother had, several times, said that the process would take three centuries, and that there would be several intermediate stages or intermediate bodies.

* * *

Mother's body had become a veritable battlefield in which there were rapid oscillations and transitions from one side to the other, from one stage to the other. Mother has described these oscillations and transitions in her conversations with Satprem. We may refer, in particular, to the following:

A strange experience. It's a strange experience. The body feels it no longer belongs to the old way of being, but it knows that it is not yet in the new one and that it is.... It is no longer mortal and it is not yet immortal. It's quite strange. Very strange. And sometimes, I go from the most dreadful discomfort to... a marvel—it's strange. An unutterable bliss. It's no longer this, and it's not yet that. Well. Bizarre (*Mother nods her head*).

There is a sort of promise of an overwhelming Power, and at the same time signs of such weakness—not weakness: disorganization. Disorganization, and at the same time the sense of an overwhelming Power. So the two are like this (*gesture of being in a precarious balance*). It's a disorganization in the sense that if I don't pay attention, I can't eat, for instance. I have to pay attention, I have to be concentrated all the time, concentrated in order to do things. Sometimes, not a word in my head, nothing; sometimes I see and know what is happening everywhere.

It's like this (*same gesture as on a ridge*).

I have to be careful when I am with people, otherwise they would think I am going crazy! (*laughter*)

It's really peculiar. A sort of total impotence and an overwhelming power side by side. And the results of the overwhelming power are sometimes visible in people here and there: all of a sudden, miraculous things happen. But at the same time... sometimes I can't even eat. It's strange.⁵

It's really interesting, it's as if my body were a battlefield between what obstinately wants to stay and what wants to take its place. There are such marvellous moments—glorious moments—and then, a second later, a minute later, such a violent attack! It's like that. And my body is.... For food, for instance, there are times when I eat without even noticing I am eating, except that everything tastes delicious; and then a second later, I can't swallow a thing! It's like this (*gesture of tugging from one side or the other*). So the only solution I have is to be as QUIET as possible. As soon as I am quiet, it feels better. It's as if.... All of a sudden you have the impression that you are about to die, and a minute later, it's... it's eternity. Really an extraordinary experience. Extraordinary. Sometimes everything, everything seems so foggy, dark—there's no hope, no possibility of seeing clearly—and a minute later, everything becomes clear.⁶

* * *

You see, the consciousness is still like this (*gesture of oscillating from one side to the other*). Both are there. So.... But then I can't find a way to make myself understood, because new words would have to be invented.

That's increasing from day to day.

It's like at night: I don't sleep and I am not awake.... And I don't know how to describe what it is. And when it's normal, it could... it can last indefinitely, there's no sense of time or fatigue or duration. When the old consciousness comes back, there's almost unbearable suffering: I am suffocating or I can't breathe, or it's too cold or too hot, all sorts of things... which are aggravated by a consciousness which shouldn't be there anymore. So quite naturally and effortlessly, I am in the new state, but if I am drawn into the old consciousness by circumstances, it becomes almost unbearable. You see. And it results in pains in the body or... a body malfunction. But when I enter the new consciousness, everything takes place quite... without my even noticing it and without any effort.

That's all I can say for the moment.

You see, my body is full of pains and malfunctions, but as soon as I go into that state (*vast, peaceful gesture*) everything is done—time doesn't exist anymore. Time is endless in the old consciousness, while it doesn't exist in this one. I don't know how to describe it.

(silence)

Being flowery, I would say: the old consciousness is like... it's death, it's as if you were going to die any minute: you suffer, you... it's the consciousness that leads to death. And the other one (*vast, immutable, smiling gesture*) is life... peaceful life, eternal life. Yes, that's it.⁷

Now, the body has the conviction that only death can stop its transformation. So it's impossible. Only some kind of violent death, an accident (well...) could stop the transformation, otherwise the work is being done regularly, regularly (*gesture of irresistible advance*). It's like that, the body is convinced of it now, that only violence could stop it—but then if that happens, it's certainly because it had to happen, you see, for some reason... which it has no desire to know, it doesn't care a button. But otherwise, as long as it's here, it knows that the work will go on and on and on... in spite of everything. That's it.⁸

* * *

I heard (yesterday, I think, or the day before) a letter of Sri Aurobindo's in which he said that for the Supermind to be fixed here (he had noticed that the Supermind came into him and withdrew, came back and withdrew—it wasn't stable), so he said: to become stable, it has to enter and settle in the physical mind.⁹ And that's just the work being done in me for months now: the mind had been removed, and the physical mind is taking its place, and for some time I had noticed that it was... (I told you that it was seeing everything in a different way, that its relationship with things was different), I have been noticing these past few days; that the physical mind, the mind that is in the body, was becoming vast, its visions were comprehensive, and its whole way of seeing was absolutely different (*Mother extends her arms in at immense, quiet gesture*). I saw, that's it: the Supermind is working there. And I spend extraordinary hours.

What is left is just the things that resist—you feel (I told you this) that it's as if every minute (and it's getting more and more pronounced), every minute: do you want life, do you want death; do you want life, do you want death?... That's how it is. And life is union with the Supreme. And consciousness, a COMPLETELY new consciousness is coming. That's how it is, like this (*Mother makes a gesture of swinging from one side to the other*). But yesterday or the day before, I don't know, all of a sudden the body said, 'No! I am through—I want life, I don't want anything else.' And since then I've felt better.

Oh, it would take volumes to narrate what is happening. It's... remarkably interesting, and ENTIRELY new. Entirely new.¹⁰

I have the impression that I am on the way to discovering... the illusion that must be destroyed so that physical life can be uninterrupted—

discovering that death comes from a... a distortion of consciousness. That's it.

It's this close, you know (*Mother makes a gesture as if she were about to grasp the secret*).

And as I told you, sometimes I feel that the great number of years makes the work somewhat more difficult, but taken on the whole, it is a GREAT help—I understood that were I young, I could never have done what I am doing. And when I am in the true consciousness, the moment I am in the true consciousness, the number of years is nothing!—The body feels so young, so full of... something else than young (for it, young is *immature* and ignorant, it's not that), it's... you're in communion with 'something'... which changes according to the need.

Our language (or our consciousness) is... inadequate. Later I'll be able to say.

Something IS HAPPENING—that's all I can say...¹¹

There was a gradual expansion of the body of the awakened cells in Mother's gross body, and organ by organ or part by part was being transferred to the rule of the Supermind. There was still the residue of coarse matter, where the battle was being fought. There was already transformed matter in Mother's body—the matter which had a different air and a different manner of being, the matter which had uninterrupted life and which can be physically visible to the physical eyes which have a different way of seeing. 'My body is no more mortal and yet not immortal,'¹² Mother said towards the end of 1971. Three months later, she said:

If you like, I could say that at each minute you feel you can either live eternally or die (*gesture of a slight tilt from one side to the other*). Every minute is like that. And the difference [between the two] is so slight that you can't say: Do this and you'll be on this side, do that and you'll be on the other—not possible. It's a way of being almost beyond description.¹³

* * *

Summarising the entire path that she had followed, Mother said in a conversation with Satprem towards the close of 1971:

The fastest way for me was... (how shall I put it?) the growing sense of my own nonentity—nonexistence. To feel I could do nothing, knew nothing, wanted nothing; but then the WHOLE being filled with... it's not even an aspiration now, it's like this (*gesture of surrender, hands open*), an inescapable fact: 'Without the Divine, nothing, nothing—I am nothing, I understand nothing, I can do nothing. Without the Divine, nothing.' To be like this (*same gesture, hands open*). And then... a Peace... a luminous Peace... and so powerful!....

But first there must be an absolute sincerity, that is, a CONVICTION: I am nothing, nothing, nothing—I can do nothing, I know nothing, I have absolutely NOTHING... (*Mother raises an index finger*) except the Divine. Then it's all right...

Only, there is no place for fear—if you're afraid, it becomes dreadful. Fortunately my body is not afraid.¹⁴

Mother went on and on, and where's the end? 1972 and 1973 were the last two years of her physical and visible life, and they, too, showed the same curve of transitions and difficulties of the process of physical transformation. But her body sensitivity had become so excessive that her body had the need to be protected from all that came from outside—as though it had to work within, like in a protective egg.

* * *

On 24th March, 1972, Mother had a second vision of the 'new body'.

Yes, I WAS like that. It was me; I didn't look at myself in a mirror, I say myself like this (*Mother bends her head to look at her body*), I was... I just was like that.

... It was around four in the morning, I think. And perfectly natural—I mean, I didn't look in a mirror, it felt perfectly natural. I only remember what I saw (*gesture from the chest to the waist*). I was covered only with veils, so I only saw.... What was very different was the torso, from the chest to the waist: it was neither male nor female.

But it was lovely, my form was extremely svelte and slim—slim but not thin. And the skin was very white, just like my skin. A lovely form. And no sex—you couldn't tell: neither male nor female. The sex had disappeared. The same here (*Mother points to her chest*), all that was flat. I don't know how to explain it. There was an outline reminiscent of what is now, but with no forms (*Mother touches her chest*), not even as much as man's. A very white skin, very smooth. Practically no abdomen to speak of. And no stomach. All that was slim.

I didn't pay any special attention, you see, because I was it felt perfectly natural to me....

But this form is in the subtle physical, isn't it?

It must be already like that in the subtle physical.

But how will it pass into the physical?

That's the question I don't know.... I don't know.

I don't know.

Also, clearly, there was none of the complex digestion we have now, or the kind of elimination we have now. It didn't work that way.

But how?... Food is already obviously very different and becoming more and more so—glucose, for instance, or substances that don't require

an elaborate digestion. But how will the body itself change?... That I don't know. I don't know.

You see, I didn't look to see how it worked, for it was completely natural to me, so I can't describe it in detail. Simply, it was neither a woman's body nor a man's—that much is certain. And the outline was fairly similar to that of a very young person. There was a faint suggestion of a human form (*Mother draws a form in the air*) with a shoulder and a waist. Just a hint of it.

I see it but.... I saw it exactly as you see yourself, I didn't even look at myself in the mirror. And I had a sort of veil, which I wore to cover myself. It was my way of being (there was nothing surprising in it), my natural way of being.

That must be how it is in the subtle physical.

But what's mysterious is the transition from one to the other.

Yes—how?

But it's the same mystery as the transition from chimpanzee to man.

Oh, no, Mother! It's more colossal than that! It's more colossal for, after all, there isn't that much difference between a chimpanzee and a man.

But there wasn't such a difference in the appearance either (*Mother draws a form in the air*) there were shoulders, arms, legs, a body, a waist. Similar to ours. There was only....

Yes, but I mean the way a chimpanzee functions and the way a man functions are the same.

They are the same.

Well, yes! They digest the same, breathe the same....

Whereas here....

No, but here too there must have been breathing. The shoulders were strikingly broad (*gesture*), in contrast. That's important. But the chest was neither feminine nor even masculine: only reminiscent of it. And all that—stomach, abdomen and the rest—was simply an outline, a very slender and harmonious form, which certainly wasn't used for the purpose we now use our bodies.

The two different things—totally different—were procreation, which was no longer possible, and food. Though even our present food is manifestly not the same as that of chimpanzees or even the first humans; it's quite different. So now, it seems we have to find a food that doesn't require all this digesting.... Not exactly liquid, but not solid either.

And there's also the question of the mouth—I don't know about that—and the teeth? Naturally, chewing should no longer be necessary, and therefore teeth wouldn't be either.... But there has to be something to replace them. I haven't the slightest idea what the face looked like. But it didn't seem too, too unlike what it is now.

What will change a great deal, of course—it had acquired a prominent role—is breathing. That being depended much on it.

Yes, he probably absorbs energies directly.

Yes. There will probably be intermediary beings who won't last, you see, just as there were intermediary beings between the chimpanzee and man.

But I don't know, something has to happen that has never before happened.¹⁵

On 15th July, 1972, she said:

I have a feeling I am becoming another person.

No, not just that: I am entering ANOTHER world, another way of being... which might be called a dangerous way of being (in terms of the ordinary consciousness). As if...

Dangerous, but wonderful—how to express it?

First, the [body's] subconscious is in the process of changing, and that is long, arduous and painful... but marvellous as well. The feeling of... (*gesture as if standing on a ridge*).

... The feeling that the relation between what we call 'life' and what we call 'death' is becoming more and more different—yes different (*Mother nods her head*), completely different.

Not that death disappears, mind you (death as we see it, as we know it and in relation to life as we know it): that's not it, not it a all. BOTH are changing... into something we don't yet know, which seems at once extremely dangerous and absolutely marvellous. Dangerous: the least mistake has catastrophic consequences. And marvellous.

It is the consciousness, the true consciousness of immortality not 'immortality' as we understand it, something else. Something else.

Our natural tendency is to want certain things to be true (those we deem favourable) and other things to disappear—but that's not it! It isn't like that. EVERYTHING is different.

Different.

From time to time, for a moment (a brief moment): a marvel. But the very next minute: the feeling of... a dangerous unknown. There you are. That's how I spend my time.¹⁶

On the 19th May, 1973, Satprem had many questions to ask when he went to Mother. Mother asked him:

And you [no questions]?

I was thinking about something Sri Aurobindo wrote.... In 'Savitri', he clearly says, 'Almighty powers are shut in Nature's cells.' [IV.III.370]

... Ohh!. Oh, that is interesting!

ALMIGHTY powers.

... But, you see, my physical, my body, is deteriorating very rapidly—what could stop it from deteriorating?

Mother, I do NOT believe it is deterioration—it's not. My feeling is that you are physically being led to a point of such complete powerlessness that the most complete Power will be forced to awaken....

Ah!... you're right.

... I was told the beginning would take place when I am a hundred; but that's a long way off!

No, Mother, I don't think it will take that long. I don't think so. I really don't think so. Another type of functioning is going to set in. But the end of the old has to be reached, and that end is the terrible part!

Oh.... I really don't want to say (*Mother shakes her head*), I don't want to insist, but... truly... (*Mother speaks with her eyes closed, all the pain of the world is in the shake of her head*).

... The consciousness is clearer, stronger than it has ever been, and I look like an old...¹⁷

This happened to be the last meeting of Satprem with Mother. Thereafter, he had no further interview with her. On 15th August, 1973, Mother appeared on her balcony. This was Sri Aurobindo's 101st birthday. She remained on the balcony for a few minutes. A big crowd of people had gathered below in the street to have her *Darshan*. A vast peace reigned there over the crowd. Then, slowly, very slowly, she disappeared into her room.

Kireet Joshi, *Sri Aurobindo and The Mother*, pp.207-30

References

1. *Mother's Agenda*, Vol. 11, 18.4.1970.
2. *Ibid.*, 9.5.1970.
3. *Ibid*; 2.9.1970 and 5.9.1970.
4. See *Mother's Agenda*, Vol. 12, p. 87—where Mother says: 'For me, Victory is certain, but I don't know if it's tomorrow or (*gesture into the distance*).

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 246-7.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 298.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 302.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 323.
9. Actually, Mother means the bodily mind.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 343-4.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 348-9.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 341.
13. *Ibid.* p. 351.
14. This last sentence was intended for those who were all ears and were not supposed to be listening.
15. Mother may have used this term in its original Greek root meaning: 'Strengthless nerves'. Unless she meant 'neuralgia' in its broader sense.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 399.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 417-20.

Transition between the Human and the Supramental Consciousness

Oh! it's very strange. It's very strange. Since my childhood all my effort has been to (how can I put it?) achieve a total indifference - neither annoying nor pleasant. Since my childhood, I remember a consciousness which tried... That was what Sri Aurobindo meant - an indifference. Oh! it's strange. Now I realise why he said that I was the one who could attempt to effect the transition between the human and the supramental consciousness. He said so. He told me, and he says it, it is recorded in Nirod's thing. And I understand why...

Ah! I understand. Yes, I understand.

Nirodbaran, Memorable Contacts with the Mother, p.141

Sri Aurobindo is an emanation of the Supreme

"Sri Aurobindo is an emanation of the Supreme who came on earth to announce the manifestation of a new race and a new world: the Supramental. Let us prepare for it in sincerity and eagerness."

"There is no essential difference, but the Lord is all and Sri Aurobindo is a part but conscious of the Supreme of whom he is an emanation." (Then, is he not all?" I queried.)

"Voyons," she replied, a bit testily, "the Lord is every- where. Is Sri Aurobindo everywhere? He has a body by which he is confined to a place, but his consciousness is everywhere."

Ibid., p.149

I AM WITH YOU...

The Mother

I am with you because I am you or you are I.

I am with you, that signifies a world of things because I am with you on all levels, in all planes, from the supreme consciousness down to the most physical. Here, at Pondicherry, you cannot breathe without breathing my consciousness. It saturates the atmosphere almost materially, in the subtle physical and extends to the Lake, 10 kilometres from here. Farther, my consciousness can be felt in the material vital, then on the mental plane and other higher planes, everywhere. When I came here for the first time, I felt the atmosphere of Sri Aurobindo, felt materially, at a distance of ten miles, ten nautical miles, not kilometres. It was very sudden, very concrete an atmosphere pure, luminous, light, light that lifts you up.

It is now long since Sri Aurobindo had this reminder put up everywhere in the Ashram that you all know: "Always behave as if the Mother was looking at you; because she is, indeed, always present." This is not a mere phrase, not simply words, it is a fact. I am with you in a very concrete manner and they who have a subtle vision can see me.

In a general way my Force is there constantly at work, constantly shifting the psychological elements of your being to put them in new relations, defining to yourself the different facets of your nature so that you may see what should be changed, developed, rejected.

But that apart, there is a special personal tie between you and me, between all who have turned to Sri Aurobindo's and my teaching, — it is well understood, distance does not count here, you may be in France, you may be at the other end of the world or at Pondicherry, the tie is always true and living. And each time there comes a call, each time there is a need for me to know so that I may send out a force, an inspiration, protection or any other thing, a sort of message comes to me all of a sudden and I do the needful. These communications reach me evidently at any moment, and you must have seen me more than once stop suddenly in the middle of a sentence or work; it is because something comes to me, a communication and I concentrate.

With those whom I have accepted as disciples, to whom I have said "yes", there is more than a tie, there is an emanation of me. This emanation warns me whenever it is necessary and tells me what is happening. Indeed I receive intimations constantly, but all are not recorded in my active memory, I would be flooded; the physical consciousness acts like a filter. Things are recorded in a subtle plane, they are there in a latent state, something like a piece of music that is recorded without being played. When I need to know with my physical consciousness, I make the contact with the subtle physical plane and the disc begins to turn. Then I see how things are, their development in time, the actual result.

And if for some reason or other, you write to me asking for my help and I answer "I am with you", it means that the communication with you becomes active, you come in my active consciousness for a time, for the time necessary.

And this tie between you and me is never cut. There are people who have long ago left the Ashram, in a state of revolt, and yet I keep myself informed of them, I attend to them. You are never abandoned.

In fact I hold myself responsible for everyone, even for those whom I have met only for one second in my life.

Now remember one thing. Sri Aurobindo and myself are one and the same consciousness, one and the same person. Only, when this force or this presence, which is the same, passes through your individual consciousness, it puts on a form, an appearance which differs according to your temperament, your aspiration, your need, the particular turn of your being. Your individual consciousness is like a filter, a pointer, if I may say so, it makes a choice, fixes one possibility out of the infinity of divine possibilities. In reality, the Divine gives to each individual exactly what he expects of Him. If you believe that the Divine is far and cruel, He will be far and cruel, because it will be necessary for your ultimate good that you feel the wrath of God; He will be Kali for the worshippers of Kali, and Beatitude for the Bhakta. And He will be the All- Knowledge of the seekers of Knowledge, the transcendent Impersonal of the illusionists; He will be atheist with the atheist and the love of the lover. He will be brotherly and close, a friend always faithful, always ready to succour those who feel Him as the inner guide in each movement, at every moment. And if you believe that He can wipe away everything, He will wipe away all your faults, all your errors tirelessly, and at every moment you can feel His infinite Grace. The Divine is indeed what you expect of Him in your deepest aspiration.

And when you enter into this consciousness where you see all things in a single look, the infinite multitude of relations between the Divine and men, you see how wonderful all that is, in all details. You can look at the history of mankind and see how much the Divine has evolved according to what men have understood, desired, hoped, dreamed and how He was materialistic with the materialist and how He grows every day and becomes nearer, more luminous according as human consciousness widens itself. Everyone is free to choose. The perfection of this endless variety of relations of man with God through- out the history of the world is an ineffable marvel. And all that together is only one second of the total manifestation of the Divine.

The Divine is with you according to your aspiration. Naturally that does not mean that He bends to the caprices of your outer nature, — I speak here of the truth of your being. And yet, sometimes He does fashion Himself according to your outer aspirations, and if, like the devotees, you live alternately in separation and union, ecstasy and despair, the Divine also will separate from you and unite with you, according as you believe. The attitude is thus very important, even the outer attitude. People do not know how important is faith, how faith is miracle, creator of miracles. If you expect every moment to be lifted up and pulled towards the Divine, He will come to lift you and He will be there, quite close, closer, ever closer.

The Mother

(Bulletin, February 1958)