

# Matrimandir

Matrimandir Journal

No. 1, Auroville, 1998

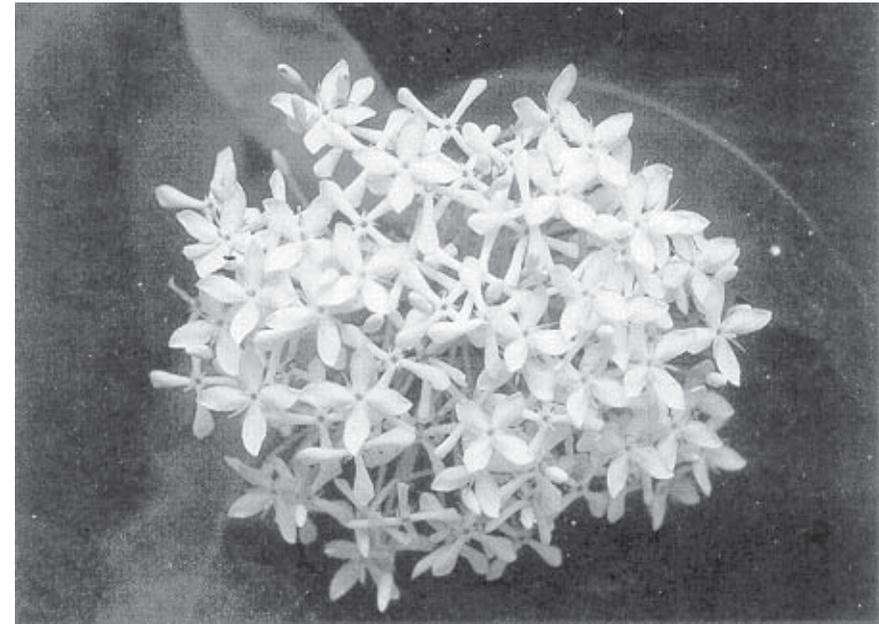
ॐ आनन्दमायि चैतन्यमायि सत्यमायि परमै  
OM anandamayī chaitanyamayī  
satyamayī parama  
Sri Anubandya

OM - She, the Delight  
She, the Countess  
She, the Truth  
She, the Supreme

This journal begins an exploration into the deeper meaning of the centre of Auroville - the area Mother called "PEACE". The city is to radiate into its manifold outward expressions from this dynamic centre.

Mother spoke of Matrimandir as "**the central Force, the force of cohesion in Auroville**". Aurovilians must find their own "**central being**" - the psychic being - and "**make it the centre of their life and action in Auroville**", while the collectivity finds the joy of being "**a willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness**" - creating what is truly a Deva Sangha. Auroville's Centre is composed of many unique elements.

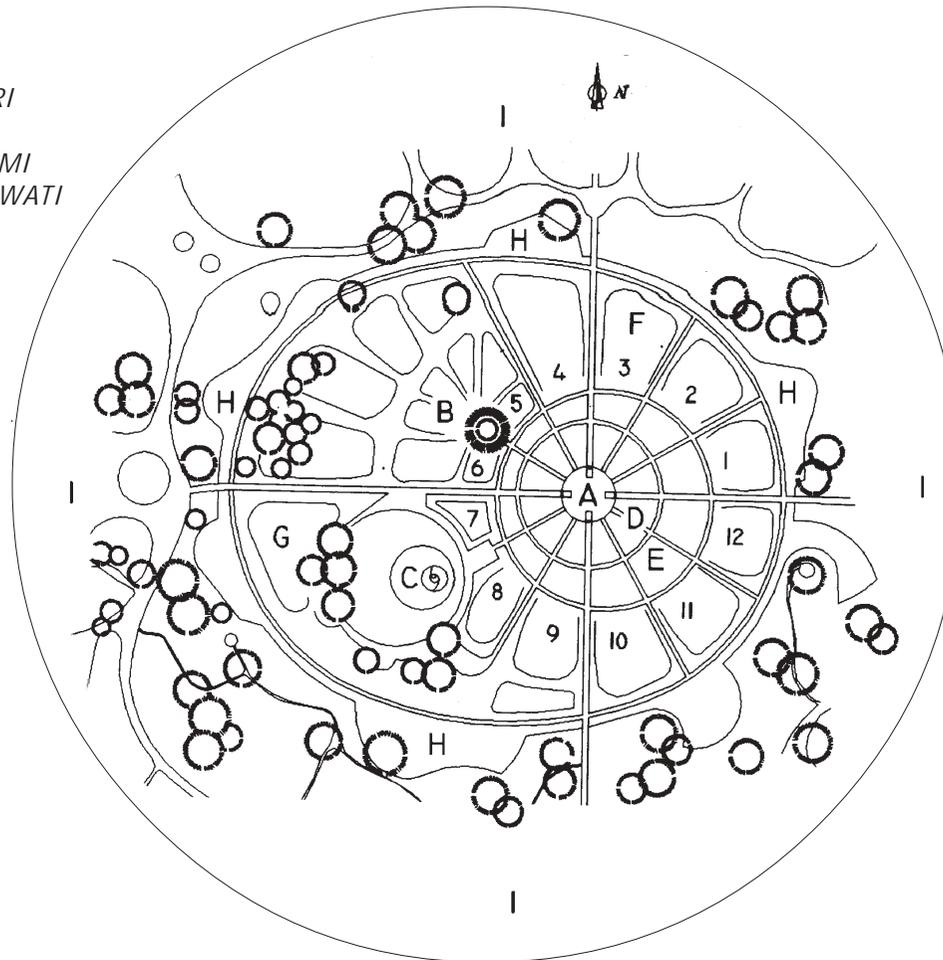
- There is, first, the Matrimandir itself, a spherical structure which houses the Inner Room.
- This is surrounded by large rising earth petals, each of which will contain one of the 12 meditation rooms whose names were given by Mother.
- The exact geographical centre of Auroville is the Banyan Tree with its Garden of Unity.



Peace in the cells

# PEACE AREA

- A *Matrimandir*  
Four pillars  
South - MAHESHWARI  
North - MAHAKALI  
East - MAHALAKSHMI  
West - MAHASARASWATI
- B *Banyan tree and 'Garden of Unity'*
- C *Urn - Amphitheatre*
- D *Meditation rooms in the large petals*  
Generosity  
Goodness  
Courage  
Progress  
Receptivity  
Aspiration  
Perseverance  
Gratitude  
Humility  
Sincerity  
Peace  
Equality



- E *Small petals*
- F *Ring of the twelve Inner Gardens*
- 1 *Existence*
- 2 *Consciousness*
- 3 *Bliss*
- 4 *Light*
- 5 *Life*
- 6 *Power*
- 7 *Wealth*
- 8 *Utility*
- 9 *Progress*
- 10 *Youth*
- 11 *Harmony*
- 12 *Perfection*
- G *Rose garden*
- H *Water channel around oval path*
- I *Park*

- The Urn which holds the soil of the earth's nations stands in the Amphitheatre and is a symbol of Human Unity.
- Then there are the 12 gardens - each representing a specific state of consciousness - considered to be "*as important as the Matrimandir itself.*"

All of these are, in turn, surrounded by a body of water and finally, a park of "*tall aspiring trees*" that acts as a green corridor and "*isolating zone*" between the city and its centre.

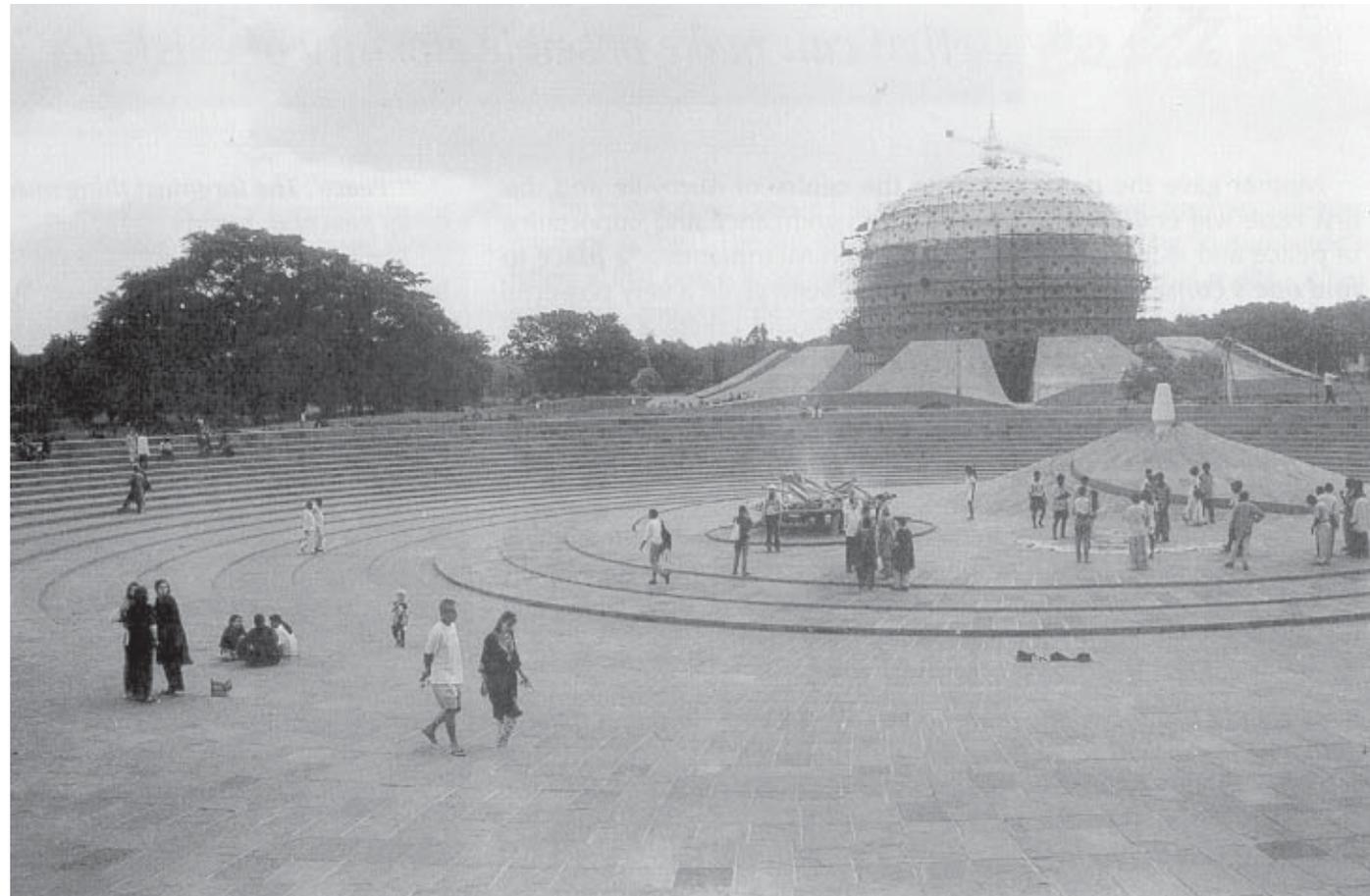
Mother saw Matrimandir as "*the living symbol of Auroville's aspiration for the Divine.*"

A greater awareness of the significance of each of the elements at the centre of Auroville might help us to activate this symbol in our individual consciousness. For, as Sri Aurobindo says, "**a spiritual symbol is only a meaningless ticket, unless the thing symbolized is realized in the spirit... A spiritual idea is a power, but only when it is both inwardly and outwardly creative.**"<sup>1</sup>

This journal will explore the inward psychological and spiritual significance of each of these elements.



When formulating the Charter of Auroville, Mother remarked that the meaning of the Matrimandir was that it "**represented the Divine Consciousness.**" It becomes important, as the outer structure that houses the Inner Room nears completion, that the whole area of "PEACE" is dynamised in our consciousness to better serve that power which is both inwardly and outwardly creative.



# Peace

*"It is only immutable peace that can make possible eternity of existence." <sup>2</sup>*

Mother gave the name peace to the centre of Auroville and this first issue will endeavor to discover the significance and importance of peace and its particular connection with Matrimandir, *"a place to find one's consciousness"*. Auroville has been given a very powerful symbol for its centre. All that is to come should create a wonderful energy field that radiates a positive peace to the city that surrounds it and beyond, something that Mother describes as *"an active peace, contagious, powerful, which controls and calms, which puts everything in order, organizes...."*<sup>3</sup>

A search for its deepest meaning will take us to the many remarks and clarifications Mother and Sri Aurobindo made, particularly in their letters to and conversations with disciples. We offer these to our readers and hope they will find them as enlightening as we have.

In this context She gave two separate messages:

*"I should like the whole place to be called 'Peace' and that peace, actual peace should reign there not only between the occupants but with the whole of Auroville, present and future." (1969)*

*"'Peace'. The foremost thing must be Peace. Whatever you do must be by peaceful means.*

*The second thing necessary is Harmony, not only general harmony but also between the individuals living there. You must begin to look for the harmony in each individual and not dwell on the disharmony. The disharmony exists everywhere but you must reject that and allow the harmony to enter.*

*There must be a sense of Order. Each individual must have a sense of Self-discipline and actually practice it.*

*PEACE, HARMONY, ORDER, SELF-DISCIPLINE." (9.01.1969)*

These two quotes suggest the importance Mother attached both to *"actual peace"* being established at the centre as well as to doing things *"by peaceful means"*. What, we asked ourselves, are we to understand by 'peace' - a word used so commonly. In ordinary terms it is used to mean an absence of war or strife. It is evident from the second quote that peace, both in inner consciousness and outer action, is the basis for other attributes necessary for community life. Peace becomes a dynamic quality of life as manifested through Harmony, Order and Self-discipline.





## The aims of Auroville



## Peace upon earth -

The question we pose in this journal is whether peace assumes a deeper meaning in Yoga? The first thing we discover when reading Sri Aurobindo's letters is that peace is not merely an idea - it has a material reality - it is a substance, and one that represents the very foundation of the yogic status...

*"Every thing is a 'substance' - even peace, consciousness, Ananda, - only there are different orders of substance."*<sup>4</sup>

*"Equanimity and peace in all conditions, in all parts of the being, is the first foundation of the yogic status."*<sup>5</sup>

Mother spoke of Matrimandir as representing the Divine Consciousness and in her conversation of 16.12.1971 she says, *"The first sign of the divine presence in the being is peace."* Peace, calm, quietude and silence are states and conditions the being can have. In his letters, Sri Aurobindo defines very precisely their shades of meaning:

*"Calm is a positive tranquillity which can exist inspite of superficial disturbances."*

*Peace is a calm deepened into something that is very positive amounting almost to a tranquil waveless Ananda."*<sup>6</sup>

*"Stone calm the body is a pedestal  
Supporting a figure of eternal peace." <sup>7</sup> Savitri*

*"Peace is a deep quietude where no disturbance can come - a quietude with a sense of established security and release.*

*In complete silence there are either no thoughts or thoughts come, but they are felt as something coming from outside and not disturbing the silence.*

*Silence of the mind, peace or calm in the mind are three things that are very close together and bring each other." <sup>8</sup>*

*"It is on Silence behind the cosmos that all the movement of the universe is supported.*

*It is from the Silence that the peace comes; when the peace deepens and deepens, it becomes more and more the Silence. In a more outward sense the word silence is applied to the condition in which*

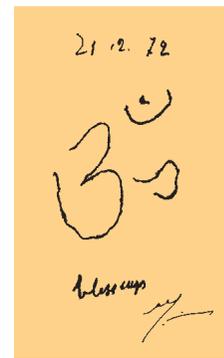
*there is no movement of thought or feeling etc., only a great stillness of the mind.*

*But there can be an action in the Silence, undisturbed even as the universal action goes on in cosmic Silence." <sup>9</sup>*

The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo is not an escape to beatific summits of consciousness; the work is to transform the habits, the inertia and the ignorance of the external nature. The body is the base and the pedestal upon which all must be built.

*"The descent of Peace, the descent of Force or Power, the descent of Light, the descent of Ananda, these are the four things that transform the nature." <sup>10</sup>*





*"His being lay down in bright immobile peace  
And bathed in wells of pure spiritual light".<sup>11</sup>*

Savitri

*"The first thing to do in the sadhana is to get a settled peace and silence in the mind... It is in the silent mind that the true consciousness can be built."<sup>12</sup>*

While each person must find his own approach to the growth of consciousness there appear to be certain substances that greatly accelerate the process. It is as if one were building a strong house: one could hardly neglect the foundation. The physical *adhar* needs to remain grounded in the vast solidity that comes naturally only to the psychic being. This brings us back to the Matrimandir which stands in relation to the collectivity as the psychic being stands in relation to the individual. And, while each individual creates his own path, the descent of peace appears necessary for all.

*"It is true that through whatever is strongest in him a sadhak can more easily open to the Divine. But... peace is necessary for all; without peace and an increasing purity, even if one opens, one cannot receive perfectly all that comes down through the opening."<sup>13</sup>*

*"For the self-realization peace and silence of the mind are the first condition."<sup>14</sup>*

*"When the mind is silent there is peace and in peace all things that are divine can come."<sup>15</sup>*

*"Peace helps to purity - since in peace disturbing influences cease and the essence of purity is to respond only to the Divine Influence and not to have an affinity with other movements."<sup>16</sup>*

*"Yes certainly - the peace starts in the inner being - it is spiritual and psychic but it overflows the outer being. When it is there in the activity, it means either that the ordinary restless mind, vital, physical have been submerged by the flood of the inner peace or, at a more advanced stage, they have been partially or wholly changed into thoughts, forces, emotions, sensations which have in their very stuff an essence of inner silence and peace. ..."<sup>17</sup>*

Contentment and peace are a state of the inner being which do not depend on external circumstances. But in the yoga, what is described in *Savitri* as the "*inner Witness's moveless peace*" has to be brought, almost as a necessity, into the outer nature.

*"When the peace is fully established everywhere in the being, these things (reactions of the lower vital) will not be able to shake it. They may come first as ripples on the surface, then only as suggestions which*

*one looks at or does not care to look at but in either case they don't get inside, affect or disturb at all.*

*It is difficult to explain but it is something like a mountain at which one may throw stones - if conscious all through the mountain may feel the touch of the stones but the thing would be so slight and superficial that it would not be in the least affected.*<sup>18</sup>

*If the peace or silence is once absolutely established no amount of movements on the surface can impair or abolish it. It can bear all the movements of the universe and yet be the same."*<sup>19</sup>

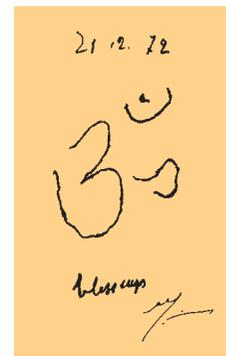
*"It is not a fact that one ought not to pray or aspire for peace or spiritual joy. Peace is the very basis of siddhi in the yoga and why should not one pray or aspire for foundation in the yoga?... it cannot remain in the system so long as the system has not been prepared for it... the condition of this permanence is that one should have the constant contact or indwelling of the Divine and this comes naturally not to the outer mind or vital but to the inner soul or psychic being."*<sup>20</sup>



In one conversation Mother uses the analogy of a prism to explain the psychic conversion in the being. Just as light passing through a prism is broken and divided, so in the life of the ordinary consciousness the inner light is broken and fissured. The psychic conversion represents a restoration of the white light. It brings with it an incredible, joyous reordering of existence.

*"This is known to everyone who has had a taste of the joy of liberation, that it contains an eternal power of calm. And that profound tranquillity can remain in the very heart of action, can persevere in the most violent motion of forces... The calm of the liberated man is not an indolence, incapacity, insensibility, inertia; it is full of immortal power, capable of all action attuned to deepest delight, open to profoundest love and compassion and to every manner of intensest Ananda"*<sup>21</sup>





*“The voice that only by speech can move the mind  
Became a silent knowledge in the soul:  
The strength that only in action feels its truth  
Was lodged now in a mute omnipotent peace.”<sup>22</sup>*

Savitri

A most marvelous passage is to be found in the concluding cantos of Savitri. Death has been vanquished and the Supreme Lord stands revealed. Savitri is faced with her final test - a choice to return to *“happy extinction”*, a sublime cessation in a *“nameless wordless naught”*. She refuses but asks instead for boons for *“the magnificent soul of man on earth”*, the very first of which is the gift of peace, *“a boon within to keep/Amid the roar and ruin of wild time.”* Peace is not necessarily an immediate realization when one begins the process of inner askesis. Many *“undesirable things”* must first be converted to their divine equivalents.

*“All undesirable things are a mistranslation in the Ignorance of something that on a higher plane is or might be desirable. Inertia, tamas, is the mistranslation of divine Shama, rest, quietude, peace... It is only when the lower perversions are got rid of that the higher things in their truth can reign.”<sup>23</sup>*

*“Tamas is to be transformed into Sama, the peace and rest of the higher Prakriti, and then filled with tapas and jyoti.”<sup>24</sup>*



Peace, Sri Aurobindo says, *“is the very basis of siddhi in yoga”* but does this make it any easier to achieve? The fact that Auroville’s centre is named ‘Peace’ in no way obviates the necessity of treading the path to establish peace within and around oneself. When one looks at the condition of the world an easy optimism is hardly possible. The word ‘peace’ has been bruited endlessly in world fora, turned into a political slogan and reduced to something merely trite and meaningless. This century has seen more death, war and destruction than any in human history. How then can one act *“by peaceful means”*? Sri Aurobindo and Mother both insist first on looking at existence as it really is without romanticizing:

*“...because unless we have the honesty and courage to look existence straight in the face, we shall never arrive at an effective solution to its discords and oppositions. We must see first what life and the world are; afterwards, we can better set about finding the right way to transform them into what they should be.”<sup>25</sup>*

1945

The earth will enjoy a lasting and living peace only when men understand that they must be truthful even in their international dealings.

O Lord, it is for this perfect truthfulness that we aspire



*"No real peace can be till the heart of man deserves peace; the law of Vishnu cannot prevail till the debt to Rudra is paid. To turn aside then and preach to a still unevolved mankind the law of love and oneness? Teachers of the law of love and oneness there must be, for by that way must come the ultimate salvation. But not till the Time-Spirit in man is ready, can the inner and ultimate prevail over the outer and immediate reality. Christ and Buddha have come and gone, but it is Rudra who still holds the world in the hollow of his hand."*<sup>26</sup>

It is interesting to note that the above passage from Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita* was given out by Mother for distribution during the Indo-Pakistan conflict in 1965. There is also a very striking message of Hers dating from 1930:

*"We have come not for peace but for Victory, because in a world governed by hostile forces Victory must come before peace."*<sup>27</sup>

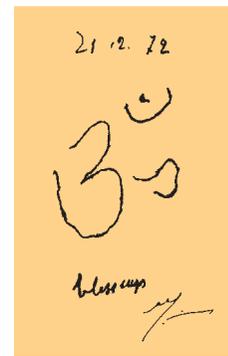


But, however one views things, by naming Auroville's centre "*Peace*", Mother has indeed made it "*the foremost thing*." In one of her conversations She creates the following perspective on the power and action of peace:

*"Quietude is a very positive state; there is a positive peace which is not the opposite of conflict — an active peace, contagious, powerful, which controls and calms, which puts everything in order, organizes. ... True quietude is a very great force, a very great strength... all those who are really strong, powerful, are always very calm. It is only the weak who are very agitated, as soon as one becomes truly strong, one is peaceful, calm, quiet, and one has the power of endurance to face the adverse waves which come rushing from outside in the hope of disturbing one. This true quietude is always a sign of force. Calmness belongs to the strong."*<sup>28</sup>

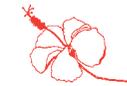
*"... There is the same difference between static and dynamic power as between a game of defense and a game of attack... static power is something which can withstand everything, nothing can act upon it, nothing can touch it, nothing can shake it - it is immobile, but it is invincible. Dynamic power is something in action, which at times goes forth and may at times receive blows. That is to say, if you want your dynamic power to be always victorious, it must be supported by considerable static power, an unshakable base.*

*"I know what you want to say... a human being becomes aware of power only when it is dynamic; a human being does not consider it a power except when it acts; if it does not act he does not even notice it, he does not realize the tremendous force which is behind this inaction - at times, even frequently, a force more formidable than the power which acts. But you may try it out in yourself."*<sup>29</sup>



*A poised serenity of tranquil strength  
A wide unshaken look on Time's unrest  
Faced all experience with unaltered peace.*<sup>30</sup>

*Savitri*



The rishis of the Veda seemed to recognize that without this one gift of the Gods - peace, all other states of consciousness would remain without a sure base. To have a sense of peace within oneself and share peace with all beings was seen as the foundation on which all siddhis are built. This is humorously echoed by Sri Aurobindo in one of his letters.

*"I don't think the peace descent is in the habit of waiting for companions - more often it likes at first to be all by itself and then call down its friends with the message, 'Come along, I have made the place all ready for you!'"*<sup>31</sup>

Thus in Vedic times invocations to the gods included a Shanti Mantra. These seers called for peace not only in the human heart but on earth and in heaven and amongst all creatures.

*"Om Dyauh shantih antariksham shantih prithivi shantih apah shantih oshadhayah shantih vanaspatayah shantih vishve devah shantih brahma shantih sarvam shantih shantih eva shantih sa ma shantih edhi."*

*"Peace is in the heavens, the sky and the earth, in the waters, the herbs and the woods, Peace is in the Gods, Brahman is all peace, all is peace and peace alone, may that peace be also mine." (Yajur Veda)*

*"Thy peace O Lord, a boon within to keep  
Amid the roar and ruin of wild time  
For the magnificent soul of man on earth.  
Thy calm, O Lord that bears thy hands of joy".<sup>32</sup>  
Savitri*

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This first issue has been made possible by a donor.

The next issue takes up Mother's message: "The Matrimandir wants to be the symbol of the Universal Mother according to Sri Aurobindo's teaching".

Early in 1970, The Mother had a vision of the Inner Chamber of the Matrimandir which She described in detail. She also spoke at length about the "most beautiful gardens" that were to surround the Matrimandir, in an area of silence called "Peace".

Since then, people of goodwill from all over the world have been working to translate Her vision into matter, and it is through individual donations that the Matrimandir, along with its gardens, has been and is being built.

A lot of work remains to be done and financial support is needed.

If you wish to collaborate in this effort, and to receive this journal or more information on various aspects of the work, please write to MATRIMANDIR, AUROVILLE 605 101, Tamil Nadu, India.

Contributions to Matrimandir are exempt under sec. 80-G or 35(1)(ii) of the Indian Income Tax Act. Cheques, drafts or money orders may be made payable to "Matrimandir" and sent to the address given below.

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