

# Matrimandir

Matrimandir Journal

No. 10, Auroville, 2002

ॐ आनन्दमायि चैतन्यमायि सत्यमायि परमे  
OM anandamayi chaitanyomayi  
satyamayi parama  
Ari Anubindo

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

*"She is Mahasaraswati, the goddess of divine skill and of the works of the Spirit, and hers is the Yoga that is skill in works, yogah karmasu kausalam, and the utilities of divine knowledge and the self-application of the spirit to life and the happiness of its harmonies." <sup>1</sup>*

Mahasaraswati is the presiding personality of our age, that exceptional moment in eternal time when things long promised will be realised. It is she who is the Mother's Power of Work and her Force of perfection and order. Of the four great Powers of the Universal Mother who have guided and upheld this creation, Mahasaraswati is the last to manifest. The youngest of the four, she is also the nearest to physical nature and the material foundation is secured by her action. She is said to especially love young growing things – those that are fresh, open and responsive; wholly plastic to the magic moulding effects of her action. Her aim is nothing short of a perfect perfection and she can endure an eternity of labour as she shapes and reshapes this physical nature, minutely and totally, to achieve its conversion and transmutation into the forms of the being of tomorrow.



*“MAHASARASWATI is the Mother’s Power of Work and her spirit of perfection and order. The youngest of the Four, she is the most skilful in executive faculty and the nearest to physical Nature. Maheswari lays down the large lines of the world-forces, Mahakali drives their energy and impetus, Mahalakshmi discovers their rhythms and measures, but Mahasaraswati presides over their detail of organisation and execution, relation of parts and effective combination of forces and unfailing exactitude of result and fulfilment. The science and craft and technique of things are Mahasaraswati’s province. Always she holds in her nature and can give to those whom she has chosen the intimate and precise knowledge, the subtlety and patience, the accuracy of intuitive mind and conscious hand and discerning eye of the perfect worker. This Power is the strong, the tireless, the careful and efficient builder, organiser, administrator, technician, artisan and classifier of the worlds. When she takes up the transformation and new-building of the nature, her action is laborious and minute and often seems to our impatience slow and interminable, but it is persistent, integral and flawless. For the will in her works is scrupulous, unsleeping, indefatigable; leaning over us she notes and touches every little detail, finds out every minute defect, gap, twist or incompleteness, considers and weighs accurately all that has been done and all that remains still to be done hereafter. Nothing is too small or apparently trivial for her attention; nothing however impalpable or disguised or latent can escape her. Moulding and remoulding she labours each part till it has attained its true form, is put in its exact place in the whole and fulfils its precise purpose. In her constant and diligent arrangement and rearrangement of things her eye is on all needs at once and the way to meet them and her intuition knows what is to be chosen and what rejected and successfully determines the right instrument, the right time, the right conditions and the right process. Carelessness and negligence and indolence she abhors; all scamped and hasty and shuffling work, all clumsiness and à peu pres and misfire, all false adaptation and misuse of instruments and faculties and leaving of things undone or half done is offensive and foreign to her temper. When her work is finished, nothing has been forgotten, no part has been misplaced or omitted or left in a faulty condition; all is solid, accurate, complete, admirable. Nothing short of a perfect perfection satisfies her and she is ready to face an eternity of toil if that is needed for the fullness of her creation. Therefore of all the Mother’s powers she is the most long-suffering with man and his thousand imperfections. Kind, smiling, close and helpful, not easily turned away or discouraged, insistent even after repeated failure, her hand sustains our every step on condition that we are single in our will and straightforward and sincere; for a double mind she will not tolerate and her revealing irony is merciless to drama and histrionics*



*and self-deceit and pretence. A mother to our wants, a friend in our difficulties, a persistent and tranquil counsellor and mentor, chasing away with her radiant smile the clouds of gloom and fretfulness and depression, reminding always of the ever-present help, pointing to the eternal sunshine, she is firm, quiet and persevering in the deep and continuous urge that drives us towards the integrality of the higher nature. All the work of the other Powers leans on her for its completeness; for she assures the material foundation, elaborates the stuff of detail and erects and rivets the armour of the structure.*<sup>12</sup>

It is when the Mother of Wisdom, Maheswari, has established the broad movement of world-forces; when Mahakali, the Mother of all-Power and all-strength, drives firmly their energy and impetus; and the Mother of Harmony and Beauty, Mahalakshmi, has cast the spell of her intoxicating sweetness on their rhythms and measures, that Mahasaraswati's work arrives at its point of fruition; for all their action in the different domains of our nature as also in the manifest world leans on her for completion. Hers is the science and craft and technique which fashions detailed and perfect structures. She creates the order, precision and perfection of processes and instruments that concretizes the material base. Hers is the unfailing exactitude of result and fulfilment which in turn generates wide room for other, hitherto latent, Supramental Powers of the Mahashakti to manifest. Spirituality says Mother, is to become divine in consciousness and to live inwardly and outwardly the divine life. The Divine Shakti, the Mother, is that conscious power within us which works ever to create conditions for this total fulfilment; to convert finally and irrevocably this earthly life into a life divine.

*"The divine perfection is always there above us; but for man to become divine in consciousness and act and to live inwardly and outwardly the divine life is what is meant by spirituality; all lesser meanings given to the word are inadequate fumbings or impostures."*<sup>13</sup>



## Sri Aurobindo's Vision

We must remind ourselves at the outset that the Powers of the Mahashakti as revealed to us by Sri Aurobindo are quite other than the popular deities. Mahasaraswati has been often perceived in India as the goddess of knowledge. It is only in Sri Aurobindo that one meets Maheswari, the Mother of Wisdom, revealed in her full glory. Perhaps this is not wholly surprising, for humanity's idea of knowledge has been largely a pragmatic sense of thought-processes rather than pure thought, of skills and techniques oriented towards or placed at the disposal of that which is useful. Seldom has the race-mind fully conceived, leave alone comfortably inhabited the distant and lofty dimensions of true knowledge – the high peaks of Wisdom – from which Maheswari leans down. Therefore we must lay aside popular conceptions and prepare within ourselves the widenesses capable of holding these high-visioned idea-forces that unveil the Mahashakti in a manner rarely experienced. We may then discover the Divine Shakti in her myriad moods and Personalities, *"Naked of ignorance's protecting veil"*, clothed in inspired word-pictures that come to us from the threshold of the Supramental world.

*Q: "Are the images we see of Mahasaraswati true?"*

*"Oh, Lord! (laughter) When a small child tries to make someone's portrait, does it resemble that person? It is very much like this, sometimes worse! Because the child is frank and sincere, whereas the one who makes the images of the gods is full of fixed notions and preconceived ideas, or else of all that others have said about the subject and of what has been written in the scriptures and what has been seen by people. And so he is bound by all that. At times – from time to time – there are artists who have an inner vision, a great aspiration, a great purity of soul and of vision, who have made things which are reasonably good. But this is extremely rare. And generally, I believe it is almost the opposite."*<sup>14</sup>

***“In their aspect above the Overmind, in the higher regions, the aspects of the Mother have very simple forms and don’t have multiple limbs. All the details and complication are appearances mostly added by men in order to give a symbolic expression to invisible qualities.”***<sup>5</sup>

In a letter, Sri Aurobindo speaks of Maheswari-Mahasaraswati being most active since the action of the yoga came down into the physical plane. That is to say, what acts is the combination of a wide and all-embracing wisdom which perceives the large lines of the world movement; and a minutely detailed consciousness of perfection that takes into its transforming action the least thing.

Q: *“Is it true that it is mostly the Mahasaraswati aspect of the Mother that works in our Sadhana here?”*

***“At present since the Sadhana came down to the physical consciousness – or rather it is a combination of Maheswari-Mahasaraswati forces.”***<sup>6</sup>

Q: *“What is the wisdom that brought deeper gyri in the human brain, the perfect septa in the ventricles of the heart and such other details of structure? Is it the work of Mahasaraswati?”*

***“Yes – all perfection in intricacy of detail shows the touch of Mahasaraswati.”***<sup>7</sup>

Mahasaraswati has a quite distinctive place in Sri Aurobindo’s Yoga. The Integral Yoga is a yoga that aims at transformation of the physical – her very particular domain. And it is her Force acting in and through us that can firmly establish the necessary material conditions which create the fullness of a perfect result. A most significant element to be noted at the outset is that the perfection that Sri Aurobindo and Mother speak of is not an apex, a pinnacle, a peak – it is a harmony, a balance, an equilibrium. We also need to grasp exactly what Sri Aurobindo means when he speaks of the physical nature and its transformation. A study of this last great Power of the Universal Mother sharply highlights the specificity of Sri

Aurobindo’s action and what it has brought to our species, aspiring for some truth, some solid ground in this transient and impermanent world of endlessly dissolving forms.

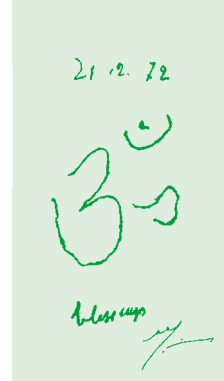
***“The physical Nature does not mean the body alone but the phrase includes the transformation of the whole physical mind, vital, material nature – not by imposing Siddhis on them, but by creating a new physical nature which is to be the habitation of the supramental being in a new evolution. ... The working of the supramental power envisaged is not an influence on the physical giving it abnormal faculties but an entrance and permeation changing it wholly into a supramentalised physical.”***<sup>8</sup>



*Mahasaraswati.*

It is Mahasaraswati in us who first awakens and then presides over all our joy in progress. She, who perseveres endlessly and meticulously to bring order and a central Will into our multitudinous, warring and dispersed personality. Her labour arrives at completion only when a solid and integral basis has been built within; when all is secure and established. Persistently and flawlessly she develops the conditions for such a security – the sole foundation upon which the equilibrium of her detailed perfection can progressively manifest. Working to secure the material base, she elaborates the stuff of detail and erects and rivets the armour of the structure upon which the new consciousness can construct its pure and crystal home in our mind and life and body. Unlike Mahakali’s action, which in one dramatic stroke may destroy all that opposes the Divine work, Mahasaraswati’s is a labour that gives everything its true place. The crooked falsehoods of human nature disappear when the perversion and distortion they express are made painstakingly straight and true – given their proper place in the totality of space and time.

Q: "All the work of the other Powers leans on her for its completeness..."  
**"Mahasaraswati. Yes, because she is... (silence) precisely the goddess of perfection. For her everything must be done down to the last detail, and done in an absolutely perfect way. And she wants, she insists that it should be done physically, totally, materially, that it should not remain in the air, you see, like a mental or vital action, but that it should be a physical realisation in all its details, and all the details be perfect, that nothing be neglected. So all that the others undertake in the other domains she concretises and brings to its material perfection."**<sup>9</sup>



Her concern is with the total manifestation and she must necessarily do her work not merely in the individual consciousness but by establishing a solid collective base; a broad terrain that can hold without shattering the power of new forces which must come flooding into materialization. Her preoccupation is therefore with creating a model and representative collectivity, one which can become the evolutionary laboratory for the manifestation of the new being.

Q: "Sweet Mother, why is Mahasaraswati the youngest of the four?"  
**"Because her work came last; so she came last. (silence) It is in this order that they manifested, in the order given here. These aspects are like the attributes of the Mother, which manifested in succession according to the necessities of the work; and the necessity of perfection was the last, so she is the youngest."**<sup>10</sup>

**"In the order of manifestation, she was the last. And in her special nature, in the quality of her vibration, she is very close to ... even a little child. She likes young people, children, things in the making, which have a long way before them to be transformed and perfected. She likes the activities of the young. She is the youngest in nature and the last to manifest."**<sup>11</sup>

In this exploration, celebrating the marvellous complexity and intricate beauty in action of this last great Power of the Universal Mother, we will attempt to explore a few significant areas touched upon by her work. We will seek to discover the many elements of a yoga of transformation, a yoga in the physical. As it is Mahasaraswati who perfects the work of the other Powers, almost every aspect of life and action falls within her domain. Because she is a Consciousness of order, her action may initially unveil the disequilibriums in our nature: the layered onion-skins of unexamined mental constructions or the crooked darknesses in the life-domains, and the myriad sometimes miniscule disorders and distortions of the physical.



Mahasaraswati's Perfection in Work

The first thing we discover when we enter into an exploration of her action is a series of paradoxes. So many questions arise: Is it necessary, we may ask ourselves, to nurture primarily an extreme intensity even anguish of effort or is it rather better to open ourselves like a flower, turned passively and blissfully to the sun of her presence? By what felicitous means can one create within oneself the wideness, the suppleness and the capacity of indefinite expansion in the being that assures the physical mould need not be broken for it to progress? How can one uncover and not suppress the dark shadows in the nature and what is the best means for their transmutation in the light? Mahasaraswati's radiant smile beckons us onto a sunlit path towards order and perfection. Is there, we may ask ourselves, a sort of 'string of Ariadne' that can lead us straight and true, through the Minotaur maze of our complex physical nature to our glorious future of Union and Harmony and Perfection?

There are so many questions, issues, topics, nuances that arise in the integrality of an all-embracing spherical action. In our quest to understand, we shall glance at some of these extremely relevant subjects. This is but the first stage of our journey of exploration in the domains of physical nature.

This Journal concludes with the most crucial aspect of Mahasaraswati's work, namely the necessity of a collective realisation and the creation of model collectivities. In the future we will focus in much greater detail on the specificity of the material transformation. We will also continue our exploration of the innumerable processes and methods that need dwelling upon in an all-encompassing progressive perfection towards a Life Divine on Earth.



## *The Purpose of Avatarhood*

What is evolution and why do things evolve?

Modern science while partially describing the physical process offers no convincing explanation as to the why of it. When children ask questions on the subject we are often left with responses that are not real answers – for indeed we do not ourselves fully know. One of the marvellous legacies we have inherited are the records of Mother's classes for the Ashram students as well as Her conversations with sadhaks. It is as if the hitherto esoteric knowledge of the world were put before us in a language comprehensible to a child. Imagine if a deliberate effort had been made to ask about all the innumerable mysteries of the Universe that are still left unexplained. Now we must ourselves ascend to the consciousness where these answers will arise from within.

In one wonderful text, Mother explains evolution, involution and the true purpose of the Avatar. It certainly demystifies a subject around which religions have loved building their roseate dreams. It also places Mahasaraswati's work in its evolutionary context.

***“The consciousness is like a ladder; at each great epoch there has been one great being capable of adding one more step to the ladder and reaching a place where the ordinary consciousness had never been. It is possible to attain a high level and get completely out of the material consciousness; but then one does not retain the ladder, whereas the great achievement of the great epochs of the universe has been the capacity to add one more step to the ladder without losing contact with the material, the capacity to reach the Highest and at the same time connect the top with the bottom instead of letting a kind of emptiness cut off all connection between the different planes. To go up and down and join the top to the bottom is the whole secret of realisation, and that is the work of the Avatar. Each time he adds one more step to the ladder there is a new creation upon earth.*”**



Stages of the Supreme



*"The step which is being added now Sri Aurobindo has called the Supramental; as a result of it, the consciousness will be able to enter the supramental world and yet retain its personal form, its individualisation and then come down to establish here a new creation. Certainly this is not the last, for there are farther ranges of being; but now we are at work to bring down the supramental, to effect a reorganisation of the world, to bring the world back to the true divine order. It is essentially a creation of order, a putting of everything in its true place; and the chief spirit or force, the Shakti active at present is Mahasaraswati, the Goddess of perfect organisation.*

*"The work of achieving a continuity which permits one to go up and down and bring into the material what is above, is done inside the consciousness. He who is meant to do it, the Avatar, even if he were shut up in a prison and saw nobody and never moved out, still would he do the work, because it is a work in the consciousness, a work of connection between the Supermind and the material being. He does not need to be recognised, he need have no outward power in order to be able to establish this conscious connection. Once, however, the connection is made, it must have its effect in the outward world in the form of a new creation, beginning with a model town and ending with a perfect world." <sup>12</sup>*



*"In the unending revolutions of the world, as the wheel of the Eternal turns mightily in its courses, the Infinite Energy, which streams forth from the Eternal and sets the wheel to work, looms up in the vision of man in various aspects and infinite forms. Each aspect creates and marks an age."*

*Sri Aurobindo*

# Sri Aurobindo's Action

Thus the Avatar is the embodiment of that Divine action which establishes a new step in evolution without breaking the continuity of the ladder. As Mother states, this is a work in the consciousness and it is a work that will be achieved whether there is recognition for it or not. But, all the same, once the primary work of consciousness is accomplished, an outer field of action must be brought into being and Mother's last sentence bears repetition, for in a nutshell it defines the *raison d'être* of the two representative collectivities, the Ashram and Auroville, meant to work out Sri Aurobindo's evolutionary vision. Significantly, the last sentence also establishes the widening and all-embracing scope of Sri Aurobindo's action: *"Once, however, the connection is made, it must have its effect in the outward world in the form of a new creation, beginning with a model town and ending with a perfect world."*

Sri Aurobindo and Mother never cared for recognition, never sought acknowledgment as leaders in the march towards the future. With our narrow, wholly self-centred judgement, perspective and values – the crystallized ego-sense with which we perceive the world – we cannot imagine what is really significant for a universalised consciousness and the evolutionary work. Mother and Sri Aurobindo personify absolute egolessness – utterly transparent energy-centres – a shadowlessness of the Supreme. This is their vibrant, living example, set before us. As evolutionary workers nothing short of this perfection is what each of us has to achieve. We are not expected to merely worship; we are asked to become.

In one very moving conversation, Mother reflects upon the work of each Avatar, and the conclusions she draws about Sri Aurobindo, his work, and even his withdrawal from the body are truly portentous.

*"Once I told you about an experience I had, I told you that every time a divine manifestation occurs (what is called an Avatar), there's always a particular 'angle of quest', in the sense of an intense NEED urging men along the road of evolution towards the Goal, the Transformation, and each avatar saw from a particular angle, believing*

*it to be THE Goal. When I had that experience, I saw it was the need for Immortality that drove the Vedic Rishis. It came back to me yesterday, and I noted it down: (Mother reads a handwritten note)*

*The Vedic Rishis thirsted for Immortality,  
Buddha wanted Permanence....*

*"Then I looked, wondering, 'And what was Christ's path?'... Basically, he always said, 'Love thy neighbour', in other words brotherhood (but that's a modern translation). For him, the idea was compassion, charity (the Christians say it's the 'law of Love', but we're not yet there – that will come much later). So I wrote:*

*Jesus preached Compassion....*

*"Then I thought: now, Sri Aurobindo, it's quite clear; for him, the goal was Perfection. Perfection not in the sense of a summit but of an all-inclusive totality, in which everything is represented, has a place. And I saw that this Perfection would come – must come – in stages. He announced something the realization of which will stretch over thousands of years. So it must come in stages. And I saw that what I find essential, indispensable (everything is there, everything finds a place, yet there is a kind of anguish – not a personal anguish but a terrestrial anguish), is Security. A need for Security – whatever you attempt, whatever you seek, even Love, even Perfection, it needs Security. Nothing can be achieved with the feeling that all opposing forces can come and sweep everything away. We must find the point where nothing can be touched or destroyed or halted. Therefore, it's Security, the very essence of Security. So I wrote:*

*Sri Aurobindo promised Perfection  
and to attain it, the first requisite,  
what men need today,  
is Security.*



*"All the world tendencies that result in wanting to establish peace in one way or another are nothing but this: they are expressions of the quest for Security. My own experience is a supersecurity, which can be really found only in union with the Supreme – nothing, nothing, nothing in the world can give you security, except this: union, identification with the Supreme. That's what I told you: as long as Sri Aurobindo was here in his body, I had a sense of perfect Security – extraordinary, extraordinary! Nothing, nothing could damage it – nothing. So his departure was like ... like a crushing of that experience. In truth, from the supreme point of view, that may have been the cause of his departure.... Though it seems to me a very small cause for a very big event.... But since in the experience, that Security was establishing itself more and more, more and more firmly, and was spreading ... Probably the time had not come. I don't know. As I said, from a universal and everlasting (I can't say 'eternal'), everlasting point of view, it's a small cause for a big effect.... We could say it was probably ONE of the causes that made his departure necessary.*

*"Consequently, according to the experience of these last few days, the quest for Security is but a first step towards Perfection. He came to announce (I put 'promise' deliberately), to PROMISE Perfection, but between that promise and its realization, there are many steps; and in my experience, this is the first step: the quest for Security. And it corresponds fairly well to the terrestrial state of mind."*<sup>13</sup>



*"But where then is the soul's security,  
Its poise in this circling of unreal suns?"  
Savitri VI.2.442*



## Security

When we look anew at our present-day world from the standpoint of Mother's remarks we begin to perceive the root of the difficulty. The nations of the world have stockpiled an enormous collection of hugely destructive weapons, armaments, each of which represent energies that push for being used. Individuals seem seized by a madness of acquisitive greed which depletes the earth's resources and their own. All humanity seems to scurry around frantically and frenetically, endlessly attempting to fulfil obscure desires which ever remain unsatisfied and unsatisfying: acquiring money and fame; education and success and a fortune that never quite makes one fortunate. None of this brings that simple fulfilment, freedom from fear, security, for which all secretly yearn.

*"The different states of the world legitimize that destructive madness of the arms race by saying it's a way to prevent destruction through fear – that's worth nothing. As an argument, it's worth nothing, but that's the way they think. It's part of that same thirst or need for Security: nothing can be achieved except in peace, nothing can be arrived at except in peace, nothing can be realized except in peace – we need peace, individually, collectively, terrestrially. So let's make horrifying weapons of destruction so that men will be so frightened that nothing will happen – how childish! But that's the current state of mind. It is still one of those ... in English they say device, a ploy (it's not a 'ploy', it's a means – between ploy and means) to urge the human race on towards its evolutionary goal. And for that, we must catch hold of the Supreme: it's a means of catching hold of the Supreme. For there is nothing – nothing, nothing exists from the point of view of Security, except the Supreme. If we ARE the Supreme, that is to say, the supreme Consciousness, supreme Power, supreme Existence, then there is Security – outside of that, there is none. Because everything is in perpetual motion. What exists at 'one moment in time', as Sri*

*Aurobindo says (time is an unbroken succession of 'moments'), what exists at a given moment no longer exists the next, so there's no security. It's the same experience, seen from another angle, as that of Buddha, who said there is nothing permanent. And basically, the Rishis had only seen from the angle of human existence, that's why they were after Immortality. It all comes to the same thing."*<sup>14</sup>



*.... "Security, the sense of security only comes through union with the Supreme – nothing in life as it is, nothing in the world as it is, can offer the sense of security, it's impossible."*<sup>15</sup>



Exclusive turning of all movements towards the Divine

## Super Security

We should also remember that bringing into play new ideas, movements, forces or actions especially in the rigid and crystallised domains of matter has never been a smooth operation. The world seems to resist change so much that sometimes only the crushing force of circumstances can bring about the progress called for. No wonder it has been the revolutionary action of Mahakali that has been most active. Mother appears to warn us of this truth in this short note:

***"Unless your aim is the Divine Realisation upon earth, at any cost, take good care not to draw too close to the divine messengers: for their action is like a hurricane that sweeps away all established things."***<sup>16</sup>

It is very hard for the human consciousness to comprehend this, but a physically manifest Divine Centre can bring about catastrophe for all that is in opposition to it. This is what Mother has suggested in her conversation in the Agenda. The very presence of Sri Aurobindo represented a supersecurity which was like a vast centre of immutable peace in a world still too strongly governed by Falsehood. It awakened a whirl of retributive forces. The world was not ready to sustain such a centre of security. This perhaps was one reason why he withdrew.

Q: *"Last time, you said, "As that Security was establishing itself more and more, more and more firmly, and was spreading ... Do you mean that Sri Aurobindo's very presence ..?"*

*"Yes. Yes."*

Q: *"Yet, the world was in quite a turmoil?"*

***"Precisely, I mean that: the world wasn't ready, and there was ... (what shall I say?) this paradox of a centre of Security that was in total contradiction with the general world condition.***

***"He himself said it: 'The world is not ready'. So..."***

*"That's what I mean, his physical presence was the sign of Security being established, but the world wasn't ready. So, the effect of his presence kept increasing, and it brought about a greater and greater contradiction – a greater and greater OPPOSITION." 17*



*" Yes, there are happy ways near to God's sun;  
But few are they who tread the sunlit path;  
Only the pure in soul can walk in light."*

*Savitri IV.2.448*

## Sincerity

By what steps can we establish the sense of security within ourselves? Mother offers one simple prescription – absolute sincerity. If we have the courage to overcome our fear, if we can turn ourselves wholly to the Divine – it is only in such a turning leading to egolessness that we can embody total sincerity. In the Divine one can attain true Security. And then we may sense the Grace, even in the very heart of the catastrophe, cradling us and carrying us by the shortest possible route, through all the darknesses and vicissitudes of life, to the endless golden vistas of our true destiny. We may hence smile, like a child nestled as if *"in a haven of safety and splendid soft repose"*, cradled in the arms of its mother. And always we may *"drink life back in streams of honey fire"*. This is the sunlit path assured to those who can offer themselves wholly to the transmuting action of the Mother's Powers.

*"In fact, as long as the ego is there, one cannot say that a being is perfectly sincere, even though he is striving to become sincere. One must pass beyond the ego, give oneself up totally to the divine Will, surrender without reserve and without calculation ... then one can be perfectly sincere, but not before."*



*"That does not mean that one should not make an effort to be more sincere than one is, saying to oneself, 'All right. I shall wait for my ego to disappear in order to be sincere', because one may reverse the terms and say that if you do not try sincerely your ego will never disappear."*

*Therefore, sincerity is the basis of all true realisation, it is the means, the path – and it is also the goal. Without it you are sure to make innumerable blunders and you have constantly to redress the harm you have done to yourself and to others.*

*"There is, besides, a marvellous joy in being sincere. Every act of sincerity carries in itself its own reward: the feeling of purification, of soaring upwards, of liberation one gets when one has rejected even one tiny particle of falsehood."*

*"Sincerity is the safeguard, the protection, the guide, and finally the transforming power." 18*



Perfect Path

# Suppleness and Wideness

Both Mother and Sri Aurobindo seldom encouraged talk about the details of their outer lives – the truth of their being was hardly on the surface for the ‘profane’, ordinary gaze to judge and discuss. But sometimes, here or there, in some casual reminiscence, one discovers a marvellous gem; remarks that yet shed an illuminating light on the particular requirements of this yoga. Here, Mother speaks of harbouring somewhere a sense of her own ‘mediocrity’. This from someone who, by any human measure, was accomplished in almost every domain! It seems rather the sense of achieving success, of shining forth as a brilliant example of individual achievement that appears to be in question here. Indeed what the conversation highlights is the truth that what is good for the inner work is very different from popular and prevalent ideas which seldom value the development of faculties and the growth of consciousness. If one’s aim is not merely to successfully peak in a little, somewhat fossilized human perfection, is it not sometimes better, to experiment with many things? Perhaps the secret is to nurture in one’s being an aspiration for always progressing to something truer, to seek to develop an ever greater wideness, to create a plasticity and suppleness within that can meet all circumstances equally. Then the mould will not need to be broken; for it shall be able to evolve and progress endlessly.

*“Once, very long ago, when Sri Aurobindo was telling me about himself, that is, his childhood, his formation, I put the question to him; I asked him, ‘Why am I, as an individual being, so mediocre? I can do anything; all that I have tried to do I have done, but never in a superior way; always like this.’ (gesture to an average level) Then he answered me (at that time I took it as a kindness or commiseration), ‘That’s because it gives great suppleness – a great suppleness and a vast scope; because people who have perfection in one field are concentrated and specialized.’ As I said, I took it simply as a caress to comfort a child. But now I realize that the most important thing is not to have any fixity; nothing should be*

*set, definitive, like the sense of a perfection in the realization – that means a dead stop in the march forward. The sense of incapacity (with the meaning I said of mediocrity, of something by no means exceptional) leaves you in a sort of expectation (gesture of aspiration upward) of something better. So then, the most important thing is suppleness – suppleness. Suppleness and breadth: reject nothing as useless or bad or inferior – nothing; set nothing up as really superior and beautiful – nothing. Remain ever open, ever open.*

*“The ideal is to have this suppleness and receptivity and surrender, that is, so total an acceptance of the Influence that whatever comes, naturally, spontaneously and effortlessly the instrument adapts itself instantly to express it. With everything, of course: with the plastic arts, with music, with writing. ...*

*“...It’s especially the sense of the ‘I’ that must be lost – that’s the great art in everything, for everything, anything you do: for painting, for ... (I did painting, sculpture, architecture even, I did music), for everything, but everything, if you are able to lose the sense of the ‘I’ then you open yourself to ... to the knowledge of the thing (sculpture, painting, etc.).*

*“...With everything the great secret is for the consciousness to be ... THE Consciousness – the limitless Consciousness. Then what it does is to set this [the instrument] in motion. Later – later, when the transformation takes place, when it’s total and effective, there will probably be a conscious collaboration; but now it’s only a surrender, a self-giving, and this lends itself – lends itself with enthusiasm and joy – for The Consciousness to use it.”<sup>19</sup>*



*“We are not seeking fame or reputation; we want to prepare ourselves for a Divine manifestation” The Mother*

# Breaking the Mould

It is not a perfection of the human mould that is sought in this yoga, but a transmutation of the mould itself and a new birth into another being. History is replete with examples of beings who have achieved the acme of human perfection within the areas in which they specialized. The brilliance of each representative human type can be observed in any insightful study of history. But what is there in history for those who love adventure and do not want merely to repeat in themselves past glories?

Especially for youth who rebel and seem so hopelessly unable to live unconstricted in the average patterns of advancement offered them, to discover all that Sri Aurobindo has said about Man being a transitional being, may represent the one liberating truth that energises them to strive, to seek, to grow and to widen. Perhaps what they obscurely yearn to know is the marvellous adventure of consciousness and joy that awaits them beyond merely human vistas of development. Perhaps the new generation comes imprinted with the immutable truth that man, as he is presently made up, is limited in his capacity for growth. For forms get rigid and fossilized and death intervenes almost as an obstinate habit. Perhaps only the adventure of self-transcendence can satisfy these youth. In one of his very early essays, Sri Aurobindo meditates upon the limits of Nature's human mould. So far there has always existed for her the necessity of breaking it to experiment with new forms:

***"Nature does not propose to man to work out a higher mental, moral and physical variation-type in the mould of the present human being, – the symbol we are; it proposes to break that general type altogether in order to advance to a new symbol-being which shall be supematural to present man as present man is to the animal below him. It is doubtful whether in the pure human mould Nature can go much farther than she has gone at present; that she can for instance produce a higher mental type than Newton, Shakespeare, Caesar or Napoleon, a higher moral type than Buddha, Christ or St***



***Francis, a higher physical type than the Greek athlete. ...***

***"All the accumulated discoveries and varied information of the modern scientist will not make him mentally the superior of Aristotle or Socrates; he is neither an acuter mind nor a greater mental force. ... We see therefore the limits of Nature's possibilities in the human symbol, fixed by the character of the symbol itself and recognised by her in her strivings. ...***

***"In order to establish genius in the human system, Nature is compelled to disturb and partially break the normality of that system, because she is introducing into it an element that is alien as it is superior to the type which it enriches. Genius is not the perfect evolution of that new and divine element; it is only a beginning or at the highest an approximation in certain directions. ...***

***"Sometimes there is an element in the divine intruder which lays its hand on the mould and sustains it, so that it does not break at all, nor is flawed; or if there is a disturbance, it is slight and negligible. Such an element there was in Caesar, in Shakespeare, in Goethe. Sometimes also a force appears to which we can no longer apply the description of genius without being hopelessly inadequate in our terminology. Then those who have eyes to see, bow down and confess the Avatar. For it is often the work of the Avatar to typify already, partly or on the whole, what Nature has not yet effected in the mass or even in the individual, so that his passing may stamp it on the material ether in which we live." <sup>20</sup>***

Once the Avatar has stamped onto the 'material ether' the pattern, the future evolutionary template, we have little excuse for ignorance. All those who aspire for the highest progress can perceive it expressed in material form. We have then only to become what we have seen. With our faculty for self-consciousness, has the unique privilege to participate in its own self-transcendence. Man, the transitional being, can yet consciously give himself for a willed mutation by opening his entire being to the forces of the future.

To create the condition in which nature's method of ever breaking the mould is no longer compelling, the first necessity is for the psychic, the divine spark within us, to be brought to the front. It has to be made the central being. It is the psychic being alone, – that crystal-clear, wholly sincere, mystic fire within us – which can generate the conditions for unbroken progress towards that perfection, that balance and that equilibrium which may adapt the mould continually without resorting to breakage, disorder, disturbance or disharmony.



*"We are not aiming at success – our aim is perfection."*

*The Mother*

## *Perfection: Equilibrium*

In this evolving universe the proper method for growth becomes a yoga aimed at a progressive perfection – the yoga in and of the physical. Mahasaraswati's action calls for the awakening of very particular qualities in our being to create the conditions for a yoga that wants to transmute the outer planes of mind and life and body into their divine truth. The first essential is the capacity for an unflinching and unflagging sense of progress. This sense of always learning, always growing can only be held if the being has a great suppleness, wideness, plasticity and humility. The perfection aimed at is not an apex or a peak but rather an equilibrium and a balance, where one's receptivity and speed of development can match the quality and quantity of the force that wants to manifest. Arriving at such a progressive perfection is both the aim and the process of this yoga. Some of Mother's remarks during a class with the Ashram students, in which a definition for perfection was sought, are most illuminating and ought definitely to dispel many of our preconceptions.

*"What is perfection? Some people put perfection at the apex. It is generally thought that perfection is the maximum one can do. But I say that perfection is not the apex, it is not an extreme. There is no extreme – whatever you may do, there is always the possibility of something better, and it is exactly the possibility of something better which is the very meaning of progress. Since there is no extreme, how can we attain perfection?"*

Q: *"If we make some progress, could it be said that we are going towards perfection?"*

*"You are mixing up perfection and progress. You do not necessarily progress towards perfection, in progress there is perhaps a certain perfection but it can't be said that progress is perfection. Progress is rather an ascent.*

*"Perfection is a harmony, an equilibrium. ...*

*"...It is always said that when a creation reaches its maximum possibility, this is perfection; but it is not that! And it is exactly against this idea that I protest. All this is only a rung in the progress. That is, Nature goes to the extreme limit of what she has, and when she sees that she can go no further, can no longer stir, she destroys everything and begins again. This can't be called a perfection, for perfection cannot be demolished. Perfection will come only when Nature can no longer undo what she has begun. For the moment there is no instance where she has not successively undone what she had begun, believing that it was not enough or it was not that which she wanted to do. Hence it cannot be said that she has attained perfection in her creation. It would be the maximum only if she had no need to undo what she has done."*

Q: *"You say that we do not seek success, but is not success a sort of perfection?"*

*"For the ordinary human mentality success is perhaps a perfection, but not for us."*

*"Perfection is not a static state, it is equilibrium. But a progressive, dynamic equilibrium. One may go from perfection to perfection. There can come a state from which it would not be necessary to descend to a lower rung in order to go farther; at the moment the march of Nature is like that, but in this new state, instead of being obliged to go back to be able to start again, one can walk always forward, without ever stopping. As things are, one comes to a certain point and, as human beings as they are at present cannot progress indefinitely, one must pass to a higher species or leave the present species and create another. The human being as he is at the moment cannot attain perfection unless he gets out of himself – man is a transitional being. In ordinary language it may be said: 'Oh, this man is perfect', but that is a 'literary' figure. The maximum a human being can attain just now is an equilibrium which is not progressive. He may attain perhaps a static equilibrium but all that is static can be broken for lack of progress."*



Q: "Is not perfection the fulfilment of the Divine in all the parts of the being?"

"No, what you are thinking of is again a rung in progress and not perfection.

"Now we are going to try to find a definition which can fit all instances, that is the individual, the collectivity, the earth and the universe.

"We may say that perfection will be attained in the individual, the collectivity, on the earth and in the universe, when at every moment, the receptivity will be equal in quality and quantity to the Force which wants to manifest.

"That is the supreme equilibrium.

"Hence, there must be a perfect equilibrium between what comes from above and what answers from below, and when the two meet, that is perfect equilibrium, which is the Realisation – a realisation in constant progress." <sup>21</sup>

*"Surely a big stride will have been taken when man will naturally turn to perfect himself instead of waiting to find perfection in others. ... This reversal is the very basis of all true progress. The first human instinct: 'It is the fault of circumstances, the fault of people, the fault ... this one is like this, that one is like that, the other one...' And this goes on indefinitely. The first step, the very first step is to say: 'If I were as I ought to be or if the body were as it ought to be, all would be perfectly all right for it.' If in order to progress, you were to wait for others to progress; you would have to wait indefinitely. That is the very first thing that is to be circulated everywhere. Never put the blame on others or on circumstances, because whatever the circumstances, even those that appear the worst, if you keep the true attitude and have the true consciousness, they will have no importance at all for your inner progress, no importance – I say this and I include even death.*

*"Indeed, that seems to be the first lesson to learn." <sup>22</sup>*



Constant Progress in Matter



*"The result of the creation is a detailed multiplication of consciousness.*

*When the vision of the whole and the vision of all the details are united in a single active consciousness, the creation will have attained its progressive perfection."* <sup>23</sup>

## *The Instruments of Manifestation*

One of the preconceived ideas that Mother was constantly working to change was the thought that some things are spiritual and others, on the contrary, are ordinary. Repeatedly, She sought by word and example to show that every least thing must be perfected, spiritualized. There are two elements – consciousness and the instruments through which this consciousness expresses itself. In this yoga both are given equal importance. Yes, primarily the consciousness must be developed, but its progressive growth must continually translate into a development of the instrumental nature. Every yoga up till now has left these parts of the being in their unregenerate, unilluminated, ignorant state; siddhis have been achieved either in the mind or in some other region. This yoga takes up the instrumental nature in its totality – the external nature of the human being, the habits, the character, the ordinary movement of life – and seeks to transform each into their true divine characteristics.

***"There are two things to be considered: consciousness and the instruments through which consciousness manifests. Let us take the instruments: there is the mental being which produces thoughts, the emotional being which produces feeling, the vital being which produces the power of action and the physical being that acts.***

***"The man of genius may use anything at all and make something beautiful because he has genius; but give this genius a perfect instrument and he will make something wonderful. Take a great musician; well, even with a wretched piano and missing notes, he will produce something beautiful; but give him a good piano, well-tuned,***

***and he will do something still more beautiful. The consciousness is the same in either case but for expression it needs a good instrument – a body with mental, vital, psychic and physical capacities.***

***"If physically you are badly built, badly set up, it will be difficult for you, even with a good training, to do gymnastics as well as one with a beautiful well-built body. It is the same with the mind – one who has a well-organised mind, complex, complete, refined, will express himself much better than one who has a rather mediocre or badly organised mind. First of all, you must educate your consciousness, become conscious of yourself, organise your consciousness according to your ideal, but at the same time do not neglect the instruments which are in your body. ...***

***"If you have opposite you someone who knows only the technique of the game but has no conscious aspiration, while you are in a fully conscious state, evidently it is you who will defeat him because the quality of consciousness is superior to the quality of technique. But one cannot replace the other. The one which is superior is more important, granted, but you must also have nerves which respond quickly, spontaneous movements; you must know all the secrets of the game to be able to play perfectly. You must have both the things. What is higher is the consciousness which enables you to make the right movement at the right moment but it is not exclusive. When you seek perfection, you must not neglect the one under the pretext that you have the other."* <sup>24</sup>**

As Sri Aurobindo clarifies in the following letter, Mahasaraswati's work of putting things in order, giving each element its right place, is in the totality of the physical nature. It also follows, that this Consciousness of order, which is a Truth-Consciousness, might first unveil the artificial onion skins and overlays that the mental consciousness creates in us. Mahasaraswati painstakingly makes straight the many crookednesses of the life domains and illumines every nook and cranny and dark corner of the physical nature to achieve a total and integral transformation of the outer being. No domain may be left out of the scope of her work and it is for this reason she is the Shakti most active in the present age.



*"Our Yoga can succeed only if the External man too changes, but that is the most difficult of all things. It is only by a change of the physical nature that it can be done, by a descent of the highest light into this lowest part of Nature. It is here that the struggle is going on. The internal being of most of the Sadhaks here, however imperfect still, is still different from that of the ordinary man, but the external still clings to its old ways, manners, habits. Many do not seem to even have awakened to the necessity of the change. It is when this is realised and done, that the Yoga will produce its full results in the Ashram itself, and not before."* <sup>25</sup>



Order



*"Mahasaraswati's mission is to awaken the world to the need of perfection: but perfection itself belongs to the Supreme Lord alone; no one else can even know what it is."* <sup>26</sup>

## Progressive Perfection

*"In time and space no two human beings have the same consciousness, and the sum of all these consciousnesses is but a partial and diminished manifestation of the Divine Consciousness."*

*"That is why I said 'progressive perfection', because the manifestation of the consciousness of detail is infinite and unending."* <sup>27</sup>

Spirituality, Mother has said, is for man to become divine in consciousness and in action and to live inwardly and outwardly the divine life. She calls any lesser definition an imposture! But the most common understanding of spirituality remains otherworldly; creates a separation, even an antagonism, between that which is temporal and earthly and that which is Godward and spiritual. Accepting the idea of a Life Divine realised upon earth can banish the attractions of Illusionism – the joy of the Nihil. Once and for all one may admit that becoming the king of a Nought is not as inspiring as turning this material world into a Tabernacle of Divinity. There may have been a time when the idea of supraterrrestrial or otherworldly solutions carried force, but today, the spirit of the time seeks more comprehensive, inclusive solutions.

A harmony of ideas can be established once we consciously recognize that the universe is progressive. If we then allow that solutions cannot lie in higher siddhis or in otherworldly Nirvanas, – even the Buddha is said to have turned back at the threshold of the fathomless Zero; choosing to remain in the world till all beings were redeemed from Ignorance, – but in converting every least material thing into an expression of divinity, then life can become a wonder full of joy, meaning and purpose, and Mahasaraswati's work may proceed victoriously.

*"But once we admit this principle that the universe is progressive, the unfolding progressive, that instead of seeing everything together and all at once, our perception is progressive, then everything takes its right place within it. And inevitably, the future perfection must be felt as something higher than what was there before. The realisation towards which we are moving must necessarily seem superior to the one which was accomplished before. And this opens the door to everything – to all possibilities.*

*"Sri Aurobindo often said this: what appeared beautiful, good, even perfect, and marvellous and divine at a given moment in the universe, can no longer appear so now. And what now seems to us beautiful, marvellous, divine and perfect will be an obscurity after some time. And in the same way, the gods who were all-powerful at a certain period belong to a lower reality than the gods who will manifest tomorrow.*

*"And that is a sign that the universe is progressive.*

*"This has been said, this has been repeated, but people don't understand, when it concerns all those great ages, that they are like a reduction of the universal progress to the human measure.*

*"That is why if one enters the state in which everything, as it is, appears perfectly divine one necessarily goes out of the universal movement at the same time. That is what people like Buddha or Shankara had understood. They expressed in their own way that if you could realise the state in which everything appears to you perfectly divine or perfectly perfect, you necessarily go out of the universal movement and enter the Unmanifest.*

*"This is correct. It is like that.*

*"They were sufficiently dissatisfied with life as it was and had very little hope that it could become better; so for them this was the ideal solution. I call it escaping, but still ... It is not so easy! But for them it was the ideal solution – up to a certain point, for ... there is perhaps one more step to take.*

*"But it is a fact. If one wants to remain in the universe, one must admit the principle of progress, for this is a progressive universe. If you want to realise a static perfection, well, you will inevitably*

*be thrown out of the universe, for you will no longer belong to its principle.*

*"It is a choice.*

*"Only, Sri Aurobindo often used to say: people who choose the exit forget that at the same time they will lose the consciousness with which they could congratulate themselves on their choice! They forget that." <sup>28</sup>*



Thirst for Perfection

---

# A Spherical Action

*“Transformation demands a total and integral consecration. But isn't this the aspiration of all sincere sadhaks?”*

*“Total means vertically in all the states of being, from the most material to the most subtle.*

*“Integral means horizontally in all the different and often contradictory parts which constitute the outer being, physical, vital and mental.”<sup>29</sup>*

This yoga is termed the Integral yoga because its action is both vertically in all the planes of being as also horizontally on the material plane; for it seeks ever to widen the individual *adhar* till it can contain the very world within its consciousness. It is not by human effort alone that this can be achieved. The integrality and the progressive perfection aimed at can only be attained through the action of the Conscious-Force within us. Sri Aurobindo repeatedly stresses the best method: opening oneself, preferably in the heart centre, to the action of this Force and this Presence within us, and allowing it to act in its own ineffable wisdom. Mother describes a spherical path while answering a question on whether there is a difference in the experience when one attains the Impersonal by one's own effort and when one attains it by surrendering to the Mother:

*“Yes, there is a difference. (silence)”*

*“There would not be a difference, perhaps, if the goal to be reached was the impersonal Divine and if one wanted to be identified and united with the impersonal Divine and dissolve in that. I think that in this case there wouldn't be any difference. But if the aspiration is to realise what is beyond, we said, what Sri Aurobindo has called the supramental Reality, then here there is a difference, not only a difference in the path, for that's quite evident (it depends on different temperaments, besides), but if someone can truly know what surrender is and total trust, then it is infinitely*



---

*easier, three-fourths of the worry and the difficulties are over. ...*

*“If you like it may be compared to the difference between something linear which terminates in a point and a spherical path with terminates in a totality; a totality, that is, nothing would be excluded from the totality. Each one, individually, can reach the Origin and the utmost of his being; the origin and utmost of his being are one with the Eternal, Infinite and Supreme. Therefore, if you reach this origin, you reach the Supreme. But you reach there by a line (don't take my words for an adequate description, you know, it's only to make myself understood). It is a linear realisation which ends in a point, and this point is united with the Supreme – your utmost possibility. By the other path it is a realisation which may be called spherical, because that gives best the idea of something containing all, and the realisation is no longer a point but a totality from which nothing is excluded.*

*“...It is like saying that a perfect identification with one drop of water would make you know what the ocean is and what a perfect identification not only with the ocean but with all possible oceans. And yet with a perfect identification with one drop of water one could know the ocean in its essence, and in the other way one could know the ocean not only in its essence but in its totality.”<sup>30</sup>*



*“As if honey could taste itself and all its drops together and all its drops could taste each other and each the whole honeycomb as itself...”*

*Sri Aurobindo.*

# A Transmutation of Life

But achieving this progressive transmutation of mind, life and body is the most difficult of all things. It is not for nothing that all other great paths to divinity have seen it as impossible and chosen rather to escape to other-worldly perfections. Human nature has been compared to a dog's tail – straighten it ever so much as you will, it returns to its original curl. But it is this curl, this return to type that Sri Aurobindo and Mother want to reverse once and for all. They never minimise the difficulty of the task. There is a conversation in 1956 where Mother has chosen a passage from *The Synthesis of Yoga* which describes this nature of man. Seldom does one find Her making demands, but here there is a certain poignancy in Her wish that everyone who wants to follow this path attempts to be at least convinced of the absolute truth and reality of what Sri Aurobindo is describing. For indeed it is only when one has NO ILLUSIONS about the inconscient roots and darkness of terrestrial existence, of which every being in a body necessarily partakes, that one can actually be ready to wholly offer one's nature to the Divine. But the fact is, even when one turns to the yoga, one equivocates, one continues to give the outer consciousness the right to rule, guide and organise so many aspects of life. This ignorant consciousness with its little concerns continues to remain the fulcrum upon which life is organised. We somersault upon our initial centre of gravity and then wonder why we are unable to make real change.

*"A principle of dark and dull inertia is at its base; all are tied down by the body and its needs and desires to a trivial mind, petty desires and emotions, an insignificant repetition of small worthless functionings, needs, cares, occupations, pains, pleasures that lead to nothing beyond themselves and bear the stamp of an ignorance that knows not its own why and whither. This physical mind of inertia believes in no divinity other than its own small earth-gods; it aspires perhaps to a greater comfort, order, pleasure, but asks for no uplifting and no spiritual deliverance. At the centre we meet a stronger Will of life with a greater gusto, but it is a blinded*

*Daemon, a perverted spirit and exults in the very elements that make of life a striving turmoil and an unhappy imbroglia. It is a soul of human or Titanic desire clinging to the garish colour, disordered poetry, violent tragedy or stirring melodrama of this mixed flux of good and evil, joy and sorrow, light and darkness, heady rapture and bitter torture. It loves these things and would have more and more of them or, even when it suffers and cries out against them, can accept or joy in nothing else; it hates and revolts against higher things and in its fury would trample, tear or crucify any diviner Power that has the presumption to offer to make life pure, luminous and happy and snatch from its lips the fiery brew of that exciting mixture. Another Will-in-Life there is that is ready to follow the ameliorating ideal Mind and is allured by its offer to extract some harmony, beauty, light, nobler order out of life, but this is a smaller part of the vital nature and can be easily overpowered by its more violent or darker duller yoke-comrades; nor does it readily lend itself to a call higher than that of the Mind unless that call defeats itself, as Religion usually does, by lowering its demand to conditions more intelligible to our obscure vital nature. All these forces the spiritual seeker grows aware of in himself and finds all around him and has to struggle and combat incessantly to be rid of their grip and dislodge the long-entrenched mastery they have exercised over his own being as over the envioning human existence. The difficulty is great; for their hold is so strong, so apparently invincible that it justifies the disdainful dictum which compares human nature to a dog's tail, – for, straighten it never so much by force of ethics, religion, reason or any other redemptive effort, it returns in the end always to the crooked curl of Nature. And so great is the vim, the clutch of that more agitated Life-Will, so immense the peril of its passions and errors, so subtly insistent or persistently invasive, so obstinate up to the very gates of Heaven the fury of its attack or the tedious obstruction of its obstacles that even the saint and the Yogin cannot be sure of their liberated purity or their trained self-mastery against its intrigue or its violence."* <sup>31</sup>

Mother's comment on this passage:

*"It seems to me that when you begin to see things in this way, when they appear to you as they are described here, you are already close, very close to the solution.*

*"The worst of it is that generally the whole material reality seems to be the only reality, and everything which is not that seems altogether secondary. And the 'right' of that material consciousness to rule, guide, organise life, to dominate all the rest, is justified to such an extent that if someone tries to challenge this sacrosanct authority, he is considered half-mad or extremely dangerous. ... It seems to me one must still go a very long way to consider material life in the way Sri Aurobindo has described it here. And I am quite convinced that if one feels it like that, sees it like that, as he has described it, one is very, very close to the remedy.*

*"It is only elite natures, those who have already had a contact with a higher reality, with something of the divine Consciousness, who feel earthly existence in that way. And when one can become so fully conscious of all these weaknesses and stupidities of the outer consciousness, all these falsehoods of so-called material knowledge and so-called physical laws, the so-called necessities of the body, the 'reality' of one's needs; if one begins to see how very false, stupid, illusory, obscure, foolish all this is, one is truly very close to the solution.*

*"That is the impression I had while reading this. In comparison with the ordinary atmosphere of people around me, I had the feeling that to see things in this way, one must have already climbed to a very high peak, that one is at the gates of liberation. It is because I felt it so strongly that I wanted to tell you this.*

*"If you can read this passage again and be convinced of its reality and its absolute truth, well, that is already a great step." <sup>32</sup>*



## The Supermind as Mirror

A little later in the same conversation, Mother responds to a question about the effect of the Supermind upon earth. When we look at the world situation it is exactly what She says that has taken place: the external life of man has unveiled itself more and more as Sri Aurobindo described it in the above passage. The rock-hardness of the Inconscience seems to have been churned to a quagmire in which we all find ourselves engulfed. While it was easier to disassociate ourselves from it before – we are all visibly bespattered in its mud and mire. We can neither escape nor continue to equivocate – and isn't that progress!

*"Probably one of the first effects [of the descent of the supermind] will be exactly to reveal things on earth in this way, as in what I have just read to you." <sup>33</sup>*

In another conversation, also in 1956, in response to a question of why the difficulties seem to have increased for the sadhaks since the descent of the supermind Mother responded rather forcefully:

*"Who told you that it is not because you have become more conscious! that all your difficulties were there before, only you did not know it? ... If you see more clearly and see things which are not very pretty, it is not the fault of the Supermind, it is your fault! It gives you a light, a mirror in which you can see yourself better than you did before, and you are a little troubled because it is not always very pretty? But what can I do? ...*

*"When the Force which is at work is stronger, more insistent, naturally what resists, resists as strongly. And if instead – it is here I have to say something that's not very pleasant – if instead of being hypnotised by your little difficulties, your little inconveniences, your*

*small discomforts, your 'big' defects, if instead of being hypnotised by all that, you tried to see the other side, how much more powerful the Force is, the Grace more active, the Help more tangible; in a word, if you were a little less egoistic and less concentrated on yourselves and had a little wider vision in which you could include things that don't concern you personally, perhaps your view of the problem would change."* <sup>34</sup>



*"Sincerity is the key to the divine doors"*

*The Mother*

## To Know Oneself

To know ourselves – something that is completely in the hands of each of us – is the simplest and most obvious key in any effort for progress. Instead of worrying about the progress or lack of it in others, we need to concentrate upon ourselves. This is the material field that is wholly in our hands, in our control, and we can do with it whatever we will. Either we use the lifetime given us to grow, to progress and reach our highest destiny. Either we break even those limits through the sheer power of our aspiration; we take the tide at its flood and sail deep into the universality that is our future potential, or we dawdle in the ebb waters of self-centeredness and waste a lifetime. The choice is ours.

The paradox here is that one can really progress best by surrender: by turning each thought, movement, action of our being into an offering to the highest Truth. And when we rigorously and minutely surrender to the light the substance that is gathered within our small individuality we make our best contribution to the totality of the macrocosm. The first thing to do is to scrutinise every corner of our being as if with a microscope. This reordering

and illuminating ray is the characteristic action of the Mahasaraswati power within us. We have only to call her forward and surrender to her this field that is given us as our own.

Q: *"Isn't it more important to know oneself than to try to know others?"*  
*"Very important, of capital importance! Besides, that's the field of work given to each one. It is this one must understand, that each one – this totality of substance constituting your inner and outer body, the totality of substance with which your being is built from the outermost to the inmost – is a field of work; it is as though one had gathered together carefully, accumulated a certain number of vibrations and put them at your disposal for you to work upon them fully. It is like a field of action constantly at your disposal; night and day, waking or asleep, all the time – nobody can take it away from you, it is wonderful! You may refuse to use it (as most men do), but it is a mass to be transformed that is there in your hands, fully at your disposal, given to you for you to learn to work upon it. So, the most important thing is to begin by doing that. You can do nothing with others unless you are able to do it with yourself. You can never give a good advice to anyone unless you are able to give it to yourself first, and to follow it. And if you see a difficulty somewhere, the best way of changing this difficulty is to change it in yourself first. If you see a defect in anyone, you may be sure it is in you, and you begin to change it in yourself. And when you will have changed it in yourself, you will be strong enough to change it in others. And this is a wonderful thing; people don't realise what an infinite grace it is that this universe is arranged in such a way that there is a collection of substance, from the most material to the highest spiritual, all that gathered together into what is called a small individual, but at the disposal of a central Will. And that is yours, your field of work, nobody can take it away from you, it is your own property. And to the extent you can work upon it, you will be able to have an action upon the world. But only to that extent. One must do more for oneself, besides, than one does for others."* <sup>35</sup>

*"One's cocksureness, is in proportion to one's unconsciousness; the more unconscious one is, the more is one sure of oneself. The most foolish are always the most vain. Your stupidity is in proportion to your vanity. The more one knows ... In fact, there is a time when one is quite convinced that one knows nothing at all. There's not a moment in the world which does not bring something new, for the world is perpetually growing. If one is conscious of that, one has always something new to learn. But one can become conscious of it only gradually. One's conviction that one knows is in direct proportion to one's ignorance and stupidity"* <sup>36</sup>



## The Joy of Effort

*"Yet is it joy to live and to create  
And joy to love and labour though all fails,  
And joy to seek though all we find deceives  
And all on which we lean betrays our trust;  
Yet something in its depths was worth the pain,  
A passionate memory haunts with ecstasy's fire."*

*Savitri II.2.194*

Mahasaraswati is said to be most kind, close, helpful and long-suffering with the thousand and one imperfections of human nature. If we but remember to offer her the joy of our effort we may discern in the depths of our being the experience that Sri Aurobindo describes in the above lines from Savitri.

*"It is the effort which gives joy; a human being who does not know how to make an effort will never find joy. Those who are*



*essentially lazy will never find joy – they do not have the strength to be joyful! It is effort which gives joy. Effort makes the being vibrate at a certain degree of tension which makes it possible for you to feel joy."*

Q: *"But is the effort which brings joy an effort imposed by circumstances or an effort which makes for progress?"*

*"You are mixing up two things: one physical, the other psychological. It is quite obvious that an act done because one has decided to do it and an act imposed by circumstances, more or less favourable, do not have at all the same result. ...*

*"It is only effort, in whatever domain it be – material effort, moral effort, intellectual effort – which creates in the being certain vibrations which enable you to get connected with universal vibrations; and it is this which gives joy. It is effort which pulls you out of inertia; it is effort which makes you receptive to the universal forces. And the one thing above all which spontaneously gives joy, even to those who do not practise yoga, who have no spiritual aspiration, who lead quite an ordinary life, is the exchange of forces with universal forces. People do not know this, they would not be able to tell you that it is due to this, but so it is. ...*

*"When you want to realise something, you make quite spontaneously the necessary effort; this concentrates your energies on the thing to be realised and that gives a meaning to your life. This compels you to a sort of organisation of yourself, a sort of concentration of your energies, because it is this that you wish to do and not fifty other things which contradict it. And it is in this concentration, this intensity of the will, that lies the origin of joy. This gives you the power to receive energies in exchange for those you spend."* <sup>37</sup>



# A Cheerful Perseverance

If one seriously attempts to know oneself there are two aspects to the work, a negative and a positive side. On the one side one has to build one's aspiration just as one would build a muscle in the body. One must discover the complex structure of one's multitudinous personality and then organise and unify it around the psychic centre. This is the first necessity before one can even dream of being of service to the divine.

The other aspect is a work of rejection. Initially, one works with the instruments of one's lower nature. Every influence, suggestion, impulse, from within or without, that obscures the consciousness must be given to the light. And in this period, which may stretch out long years, the greatest trait that may support one is the capacity of cheerful and unflagging good humour.

Q: "Sweet Mother, here Sri Aurobindo writes 'For all the first period he [the individual] has to work by means of the instruments of the lower Nature.' (The Synthesis of Yoga) What is this work, and how is it accomplished?"

***"There is a positive side and a negative side to this work.***

***"The positive side is to increase one's aspiration, develop one's consciousness, unify one's being, to go within in order to enter more and more into contact with one's psychic being; to take up all the parts, all the movements, all the activities of one's being and put them before this psychic consciousness so that they fall into their true place in relation to this centre; finally, to organise all one's aspiration towards the Divine and one's progress towards the Divine. That is the positive side.***

***"At the same time the negative side consists in refusing methodically and with discernment all the influences which come from outside or from the subconscious or inconscient or from the environment, and stand in the way of spiritual progress. One must discern these influences, suggestions, impulses, and systematically refuse them without ever getting discouraged by their persistence***



Cheerful Endeavour



and ever yielding to their will. One must, at the same time, observe clearly in one's being all its different elements, obscure, egoistic, unconscious, or even ill-willed, which consciously or otherwise, answer these bad influences, and allow them not only to penetrate into the consciousness but sometimes to get settled there. That is the negative side.

*"Both must be practised at the same time. According to the moment, the occasion, the inner readiness, you must insist now on one, now on the other, but never forget either of them.*

*"Generally all progress made on one side is set off by an attack of the adverse forces on the other. So the more you advance; the more vigilant must you become. And the most essential quality is perseverance, endurance, and a ... what shall I call it? – a kind of inner good humour which helps you not to get discouraged, not to become sad and to face all difficulties with a smile. There is an English word which expresses this very well – cheerfulness. If you can keep this within you, you fight much better, resist much better, in the light, these bad influences which try to hinder you from progressing.*

*"That is the work. It is vast and complex. And one must never forget anything." 38*



*"All Nature's recondite spaces were stripped bare,  
All her dim crypts and corners searched with fire  
Where refugee instincts and unshaped revolts  
Could shelter find in darkness' sanctuary  
Against the white purity of heaven's cleansing flame."*

*Savitri III.3. 318*



## Conversion in the Light

There is an exchange in the 1969 volume of the Agenda, where Mother speaks of the best method by which one can overcome one's difficulties and darknesses without suppressing them. For in this yoga, suppression is disastrous. The thing that for years has been successfully hidden from view may resurface and entrap you in your very moment of self-transcendence and send you spinning back into the horrors of a seemingly unchanged nature:

Q: *"I would like to know what is the key to cure without suppression? Precisely because the Light is usually thrown, and then the wrong movement is driven underground."*

*"Yes, that is a general rule. The opposite is to be done; instead of driving it underground, it is to be offered. It is to place the thing, the movement itself to project it into the light. ... Generally it wriggles and refuses! But (Mother laughs) that is the only way. That is why this Consciousness is so precious ... Well, what brings about the suppression is the idea of good and bad, a kind of contempt or shame for what is considered bad, and you do like this (gesture of repulsion), you do not want to see it, you do not want it to be there. It must ... The first thing – the very first thing to realise is that it is the weakness of our consciousness that makes this division and that there is a Consciousness (now I am sure of it) in which that does not exist, in which what we call 'evil' is as much necessary as what we call 'good', and that if we can project our sensation – or our activity or our perception – into that Light, that will bring the cure. Instead of suppressing or rejecting it as something to be destroyed (it cannot be destroyed!), it has to be projected into the Light. ... instead of seeking to throw away far from oneself certain*

*things (which one does not accept, and which produce an imbalance in the being), instead of doing that, to accept them, take them as part of oneself and ... (Mother opens her hands) offer them up. They do not want to be offered, but there is a way of compelling them: the resistance is diminished in the proportion as we can diminish in us our sense of disapprobation; if we can replace this sense of disapprobation by a higher understanding, then we succeed. It is much more easy.*

*"I believe it is that. All, all the movements that drag you down must be put in contact with the higher understanding."* <sup>39</sup>

*"In a general and absolute way, difficulties are ALWAYS graces. And due to ... (how can I put it?) human weakness they fail to be helpful. Difficulties are ALWAYS graces. I have been on earth for quite a while this time and always – always, always, always, without a single exception – I have seen in the end that difficulties are*



Right use of the Granted Grace

*nothing but graces. I can neither feel nor see things otherwise because it has been my experience all my life. I might be upset at first and say, 'how come, I am full of goodwill, yet difficulties keep piling up' But afterwards, I could have simply given myself a slap: 'Silly you! It's just to bring more perfection to your character and the work!' There."* <sup>40</sup>



## The Sun of Divine Laughter

Sri Aurobindo speaks of the radiant smile of Mahasaraswati which can chase away the clouds of gloom and fretfulness and despair with which we may sometimes enwrap ourselves. These moods are the moments when we give our nature over to the adversary, lose faith, choose to be self-righteous, whatever is the particular means, or passport, or method of entry that the adverse forces use when we allow them to occupy our house and disrupt our balance. To help us, here is some marvellous advice from Mother:

*"The only way to make life perfect – I mean here, life on earth, of course – is to look at it from high enough to see it as a whole, not only in its present totality, but in the whole of the past, present and future: what it has been, what it is and what it will be – one must be able to see everything at once. Because that is the only way to put everything in its place. Nothing can be eliminated, nothing should be eliminated, but each thing must be in its place in total harmony with all the rest. And then all these things that seem so 'bad' so 'reprehensible', so 'unacceptable' to the puritan mind, would become movements of delight and freedom in a totally divine life. And then nothing would prevent us from knowing, understanding, feeling and living this wonderful laughter of the Supreme who takes infinite delight in watching Himself live infinitely.*

*"This delight, this wonderful laughter that dissolves every shadow, every pain, every suffering! You only have to go deep enough within yourself to find the inner Sun, to let yourself be flooded by it; and then there is nothing but a cascade of harmonious, luminous, sunlit laughter, which leaves no room for any shadow or pain. ...*

*"In fact, this is the most powerful way of dissolving difficulties, overcoming sorrows and removing pain. The first two are relatively easy – I say relatively – and the last one is more difficult because we are in the habit of considering the body and its feelings to be extremely concrete, positive; but it is the same thing, it is simply because we have not learnt, we are not in the habit of regarding our body as something fluid, plastic uncertain, malleable. We have not learnt to bring into it this luminous laughter that dissolves all darkness, all difficulty, all discord, all disharmony, everything that jars, that weeps and wails.*

*"And this Sun, this Sun of divine laughter is at the centre of all things, the truth of all things: we must learn to see it, to feel it, to live it. And for that, let us avoid people who take life seriously; they are very boring people.*

*"As soon as the atmosphere becomes grave you can be sure that something is wrong, that there is a troubling influence, an old habit trying to reassert itself, which should not be accepted. All this regret, all this remorse, the feeling of being unworthy, of being at fault – and then one step further and you have the sense of sin. Oh! to me it all seems to belong to another age, an age of darkness." <sup>41</sup>*

We must never be pessimistic about the future. We hardly realise the cost of allowing ourselves this seemingly minor indulgence. In 1971, in response to a statement by the disciple, Mother remarks that pessimism is the weapon of choice used by all that opposes the divine work. We must rigorously prevent the admittance into ourselves of this mood. When we come into such a state, we banish from ourselves the sunshine of divine laughter, all our joyous trust in the Divine, and we make ourselves into tools of the adversary.

Q: *"For some time I was feeling a great pessimism"*



*"All that does not want the Divine creates this atmosphere purposely to discourage those who want the Divine. You must ... you must not pay attention. That, that is the way of the devil. Pessimism is the demon's weapon and he senses his situation. (gesture of shaking) Well, if what I see as possible is realised, it will be truly a decisive victory over the adverse forces – naturally, he defends himself as best he can ... That, it is always the devil; as soon as you see even the tail of pessimism, it is the devil. That is his great weapon." <sup>42</sup>*



Eternal Smile

# Collective Yoga

The Avatar, the pathfinder comes to create the conditions, to reveal in life and action new pathways to the Light. But for the work to arrive at fulfilment there must be a collectivity of human consciousnesses that can hold this light, broaden the field of its manifestation and create the living templates that the race can adopt. This is the inner reason for the birth and growth of first the Ashram and later Auroville. There is much to observe in the way both these collectivities came into being and the contrasting manner of their development.



Psychic Work

*"I have been asked if we are doing a collective yoga and what are the conditions of a collective yoga.*

*"First, I could tell you that to do a collective yoga, there has to be a collectivity! And I could speak to you about the different conditions required to be a collectivity..*

*"It is certainly not an arbitrary construction of the type built by men, where everything is put pell-mell, without any order, without reality, and which is held together by only illusory ties. ...*

*"Yet it is one of the most common types of human collectivity – to group together, band together, unite around a common idea, a common action, a common realization but in an absolutely artificial way. In contrast to this, Sri Aurobindo tells us that a true community – what he terms a Gnostic or supramental community – can be based only upon the INNER REALIZATION of each one of its members, each realizing his real, concrete oneness and identity with all the other members of the community; that is, each one should not feel himself a member connected to all the others in an arbitrary way, but that all are one within himself. For each one, the others should be as much himself as his own body – not in a mental and artificial way, but through a fact of consciousness, by an inner realization. (silence)*

*"This means that before hoping to realize such a gnostic collectivity, each one must first of all become (or at least start to become) a gnostic being. It is obvious that the individual work must take the lead and the collective work follow; but the fact remains that spontaneously, without any arbitrary intervention of will, the individual progress is restrained or CHECKED, as it were, by the collective state. Between the collectivity and the individual, there exists an interdependence from which one cannot be totally free even if one tries. And even he who might try, in his yoga, to free himself totally from the human and terrestrial state of consciousness, would be at least subconsciously bound by the state of the whole, which impedes and PULLS BACKWARDS. One can attempt to go much faster, one can attempt to let all the weight of attachments and responsibilities fall off, but in spite of everything,*

*the realization of even the most advanced or the leader in the march of evolution is dependent upon the realization of the whole, dependent upon the state in which the terrestrial collectivity happens to be. And this PULLS backwards to such an extent that sometimes one has to wait centuries for the earth to be ready before being able to realize what has to be realized.*

*"This is why Sri Aurobindo has also written somewhere else that a double movement is necessary: the effort for the individual progress and realization must be combined with the effort of trying to uplift the whole so as to enable it to make a progress indispensable for the greater progress of the individual: a mass progress, if you will, that allows the individual to take a further step forward." <sup>43</sup>*

*"You must also understand that you are not separate individualities, that life is a constant exchange of forces, of consciousnesses, of vibrations, of movements of all kinds. It is as in a crowd, you see; when everyone pushes all go forward, when all recede, everyone recedes. It is the same thing in the inner world, in your consciousness. There are all the time forces and influences acting and reacting upon you, it is like a gas in the atmosphere, and unless you are quite awake, these things enter into you, and it is only when they have gone well in and come out as if they came from you, that you become aware of them. ...*

*"To be individualised in a collectivity, one must be absolutely conscious of oneself. And of which self? – the Self which is above all intermixture, that is what I call the Truth of your being. And as long as you are not conscious of the Truth of your being, you are moved by all kinds of things, without taking any note of it at all. Collective thought, collective suggestions are formidable influences which act constantly on individual thought. And what is extraordinary is that one does not notice it. One believes that one thinks 'like that'. But in truth it is the collectivity which thinks 'like that'. The mass is always inferior to the individual. Take individuals with similar qualities, of similar categories,*



*well, when they are alone these individuals are at least two degrees better than people of the same category in a crowd. There is a mixture of obscurities, a mixture of unconsciousness, and inevitably you slip into this unconsciousness. To escape this there is but one means: to become conscious of oneself, more and more conscious and more and more attentive." <sup>44</sup>*



Aspiration for Organisation

*"Identity's reconciling happiness gave  
A rich security to difference."*

*Savitri III 3.324*

## A Model Collectivity

The Ashram grew spontaneously around the presence of Sri Aurobindo and Mother. Initially admission to it was carefully restricted to the serious pursuit of sadhana; this changed when the children began to arrive. As if by chance a complete representative collectivity was born to serve Their work of transformation.

While the Ashram evolved organically, it was supervised and organised with a detailed and painstaking perfection – a living demonstration of Mahasaraswati at work. And this was the Grace that the Ashram received. The measure in which that collectivity has been able to benefit from this Grace is the degree of its evolutionary success.

*"You are fifty persons doing the Integral Yoga. If it is only one of the fifty who is doing it, then he does it for all the fifty. But if each one of the fifty is doing it, each doing it for all the fifty, he does it actually for one person alone, because all do it for all. ...*

*"One must widen oneself.*

*"The work is more complicated, it is more complete, it asks for a greater power, a greater wideness, a greater patience, a greater tolerance, a greater endurance; all these things are necessary. But in fact, if each one does perfectly what he has to do, it is no longer only one single person who does the whole thing: not one single person who does it for all, but all now form only one person who does it for the whole group.*

*"This ought to form a kind of sufficient unity among all those who are doing it, so that they no longer feel the distinction. This is indeed the ideal way of doing it: that they now form only one single*

*body, one single personality, working at once each for himself and for the others without any distinction. ...*

*"And if one wants to do the thing in a solitary way, it is absolutely impossible to do it totally. For every physical being, however complete he may be, is only partial and limited, he represents only one law in the world; it can be a very complex law, but it is only one law; what is called in India, you know, the Dharma, one Truth, one Law.*

*"Each individual being, even if he be of a completely higher kind, even if he is made for an absolutely special work, is only one individual being; that means, the totality of the transformation*



Matrimandir

cannot take place through one single body. And that is why, spontaneously, the multiplication came about.

*"One can reach, alone and solitary, his own perfection. One can become in one's consciousness infinite and perfect. But when it is a question of a work, it is always limited.*

*"I don't know if you understand me well. But personal realisation has no limits. One can become inwardly in himself perfect and infinite. But the outer realisation is necessarily limited, and if one wants to have a general action, at least a minimum number of physical beings, is needed. ...*

*"There must be a representative group. Which means that ... you know nothing about it or you don't imagine it well, but each one of you represents one of the difficulties which must be conquered for the transformation. And this makes many difficulties! (Mother laughs) I have written somewhere ... I have said that more than a difficulty, each one represents an impossibility to be solved. And it is the whole set of all these impossibilities which can be transformed into the Work, the Realisation. Each case is an impossibility to be solved and it is when all these impossibilities are resolved that the Work will be accomplished. ...*

*"If someone comes to tell me, 'I come to work, I come to make myself useful', it is all right. But if someone comes and says, 'I have many difficulties outside, I can't manage to overcome these difficulties, I want to come here because it will help me', I say, 'No, no, it will be much more difficult here; your difficulties will increase considerably.' And that is what it means, because they are no longer isolated difficulties; they are collective difficulties.*

*"So in addition to your own personal difficulty you have all the frictions, all the contacts, all the reactions, all the things which come from outside. As a test. Exactly on the weak point, the thing that's most difficult to solve; it is there that you will hear from someone the phrase which was just the one you did not want to*



*hear; someone will make towards you that gesture which was exactly the one which could shock you; you find yourself facing a circumstance, a movement, a fact, an object, anything at all – just the things which ... 'Ah, how I should have liked this not to happen!'*

*And it's that which will happen. And more and more. Because you do not do your yoga for yourself alone. You do the yoga for everybody – without wanting to – automatically.*

*"So when people come and tell me, 'I come here for peace, quietness, leisure, to do my yoga.' I say, 'No, no, no! Go away immediately somewhere else, you will be much more peaceful anywhere else than here.'*

*"If someone comes and says, 'well, here I am, I feel that I should consecrate myself to the divine Work, I am ready to do any work at all that you give me', then I say, 'Good, that's all right. If you have goodwill, endurance, and some capacity, it is alright. But to find the solitude necessary for your inner development it is better to go somewhere else, anywhere else, but not here.' There we are." <sup>45</sup>*



*"Each being there is a member of the Self,  
A portion of the million-thoughted All,  
A claimant to the timeless Unity,  
The many's sweetness, the joy of difference  
Edged with the intimacy of the One."*

*Savitri X.4.663*

# A Willed Creation

Auroville, on the other hand, was visibly created by a Willed intent. And here the differences become piquant. Those who came for Auroville were arriving as if from a different world – a post-war society in the throes of degeneration, noticeably crumbling at its moral foundations. Such an environment often gives rise to somewhat rough outer personalities and this was the robust, pioneering substance that offered itself. Perhaps the raw earthiness of the material was just the thing needed for the New Consciousness to act in freedom – indeed human judgments have no play here – but the very conditions of Auroville asked primarily for the capacity for material endurance. The Aurovilians were flung without escape into the physical – it was the truth of matter, of the earth itself from which all the harmony and beauty had to evolve. It remains a truth of Auroville even today that the material base and life itself are the foundations from which all emerge. The mind is at best a good instrument for transcription, for observation and analysis; it never quite succeeds in organising the multi-hued energy of life that expresses itself in Auroville. The ideal dreams it constructs are built upon the shifting sands of a totality quite outside its grasp. And this is a marvellous fact, which should never be lost hold of, because in the New Consciousness, the mind is no longer the organiser; it must become its true self – a transparent instrument of transmission. How to leap collectively into the domains of this supra-rationality is the present question of Auroville's destiny. Mother wanted in Auroville that the spiritual extreme and the material extreme which are so often seen as mutually exclusive, meet in their truth of unity to give birth to a new poise of being.

*“These standpoints, the spiritual and the ‘materialist’, if one may say so, that think they are exclusive – exclusive and unique, so that one denies the value of the other, from the point of view of Truth – are insufficient, not only because they do not accept one another, but also because to accept both and to unite both is not enough to solve the problem. It is something else – a third thing which is not the result of these two, but something that is yet to be discovered, which will probably open the door to the total Knowledge.”*

Q: *“In practice, how can we participate in this ..?”*

*“This discovery.*

*“Well! ... Basically it is always the same thing. It is always the same thing: to realise one's own being, to enter into conscious relation with the supreme Truth of one's own being, in any form, by any path – it does not matter at all – but this is the only way. We carry, each individual carries within him a truth, and this is the truth he must unite with, this is the truth he must live; and so the path he must follow to reach and realise this truth is the path that will lead him as near as possible to Knowledge. That is to say, the two are absolutely one: the personal realisation and the Knowledge.*

*“Who knows, perhaps this very multiplicity of approach will yield the secret – the secret that will open the door.*

*“I do not think that a single individual on the earth as it is now, a single individual, however great, however eternal his consciousness and origin, can on his own change and realise – change the world, change the creation as it is and realise this higher Truth which will be a new world, a world more true, if not absolutely true. It would seem that a certain number of individuals – until now it seems to have been more in time, as a succession, but it could also be in space, a collectivity – are indispensable so that this Truth can become concrete and realise itself. Practically I am sure of it.*

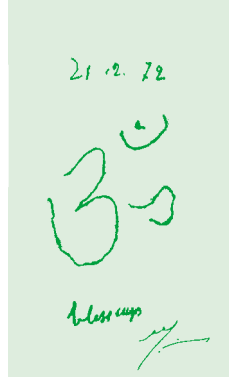
*“That is to say, however great, however conscious, however powerful he may be, one Avatar cannot by himself realise the supramental life on earth. It is either a group in time, extending over a period of time, or a group spread out in space – perhaps both – that are indispensable for this Realisation. I am convinced of it.*

*“The individual can give the impulsion, indicate the path, walk on the path himself – that is to say, show the path by realising it himself – but he cannot fulfil. The fulfilment obeys certain group laws which are the expression of some aspect of Eternity and Infinity – naturally, it is all the same Being! They are not different individuals or different personalities, it is all the same Being. And it is all the same Being expressing Himself in a way which for us becomes a body, a group, a collectivity.”<sup>46</sup>*





Progress of the New Creation (Progress of Auroville)



From Auroville's inception, Mother chose to intervene as little as possible outwardly. She would indicate Her choice of direction but it was left to the faithfulness or lack of it of those who heard Her to implement what She envisioned. She never gave orders; only suggestions (She herself remarks that Her orders could be given only to those who would obey Her implicitly – it would be catastrophic not to obey such an order). The pressure of Consciousness was put on all equally and under its searing light people categorized themselves automatically.

Above all: Unity; a unity built through the harmony of complexities remains the basic aim of Auroville. But this is a complete impossibility for the human substance in its present make-up. It is only the highest forces working in the smallest detail of matter that can give birth to the new creation that Auroville wants to manifest.

Observing the two collectivities, we see the comprehensive wisdom of Mahasaraswati's work in material nature. By contrary methods the same effects are sought to be generated. When initially the work in a 'collectivity of matter' was being established, a firm and exhaustive direction was given at every step. When the work of consciousness was secured and established, a new method, a new model collectivity was born, and the Conscious-Force adopted a wholly opposite method. The human substance was now given every opportunity to freely embrace, or refuse the path of progress and growth of consciousness. In that freedom was the key to the next step. The Aurovillians are called to a willing collaboration and adherence without obvious outer direction and guidance, something that yet allows the new consciousness to do its integral work and unveil the new being.



# *Plastic Human Substance*

The most significant truth of the present work is that it is a yoga of physical transformation. It is not great yogis with marvellous siddhis that are necessarily the best material for such a work. It is child-like and open beings who are not yet crystallized into their own development. Sometimes a siddhi or realisation can create a sort of plateau or solid construction which becomes a resting place impossible to surrender. Simple, humble, supple, plastic material is more likely to offer itself for change as the following conversation tellingly illustrates.

Mother was once asked by the children in the Ashram whether it would not have been better for Her to have highly developed personalities around her, Her response is most interesting and turns standard ideas of what may be good for Sri Aurobindo and Mother's work upon their head!

Q: *"If you had around you people like Vivekananda, for example, your work would be more easy, wouldn't it? Instead of having unrefined stuff like us?" (laughter)*

*"Probably they would have been more refractory! ... For what is most difficult is to convince someone who has already had a realisation. He believes he is above all progress.*

*"Not necessarily. It is not necessarily someone with experience who is most advanced. He lacks the element of simplicity, of modesty, and the plasticity that comes from the fact that one is not yet totally developed. As one grows, something crystallizes in the head; it gets more and more fixed and unless you try very hard you finish by becoming fossilized. That is what usually happens to people, particularly those who have tried for some realization and succeeded in it or those who have come to believe they have reached the goal. In any case it was their personal goal. They have reached it, they have*



Perfect New Creation

attained. It is done, they remain there; they settle there, they say 'that's it'. And they do no more any more. So, after that they may live ten years more, or twenty or thirty, they will not budge. They are there, they will stay there. Such people lack all the suppleness of stuff that's necessary for going further and progressing. They are stuck. They are very good objects to be put in a museum, but not for doing work. They are like samples to show what can be done but they are not the stuff to do more. For me personally, I admit I prefer for my work someone who knows very little, has not laboured too much, but who has a great deal of aspiration, a great goodwill and who feels in himself this flame, this need for progressing. He may know very little, may have realized still less, but if he has that within him, it is good stuff with which one can go very far, much further. ...

"Naturally, at the beginning there were no children [in the Ashram] and children were not accepted, children were all refused. It was only after the war that children were taken. But I do not regret that they have been accepted. For I believe there is much more stuff for the future among children who know nothing than among those grown-ups who believe they know everything. I do not know if you have much knowledge of sculpture. But to do sculpture, you have to take some clay, soak it with water; it must be finely powdered clay, and you soak it with water and make a paste. You have to keep it wet all the time and you make a statue or whatever you want out of that. When it is finished, you bake it so that it does not move. And after that – indeed after that – it cannot move any more. If you want to change something, you must break it and make another. For otherwise as it is, it is no longer pliable. It is hard and rigid like stone ... Something like that happens in life. You must not attain something and then remain crystallized, fossilized, immobilized. For otherwise you have to break it, take it to pieces, or else you can do nothing with it any longer.



"So long as one remains thus clay-like, very soft, very malleable, not yet formed, not aware of being formed, something can be done. And as long as one remains a child ... it is a blissful state. I was saying this yesterday, children have only one idea, to become grown-ups, and they do not know that when they are grown-up, they will have lost three-fourths of their worth which consists in being something which can still be developed, formed, something malleable, progressive, which need not be broken into bits so that it may progress. There are people who are compelled to take a whole turn around the mountain, in that way, from the foot to the top, and they take an entire lifetime to reach the top. There are others who know the road, the shortest cut that can be taken by which one can go straight to the top. And then, once up there, they are still full of youthfulness and energy and they can see the horizon and the next mountain. On the contrary, the others are conscious of having done a considerable work by tuming round and round and spending their whole life to reach the summit. But as for you, my children, it is being tried here to take you quite at the bottom and make you go up by the funicular railway right to the top, the shortest cut. And when you are on the top, you will have the vision of the spaces before you and you will be able to choose the mountain you wish to climb.

"Above all, do not be in a hurry not to be a child any more! One must be a child all one's life, as much as one can, as long as one can. Be happy, joyful, content to be a child and remain a child, plastic stuff for shaping. Voila." <sup>47</sup>



And so, in this vast and multi-form physical world, we have journeyed through the first of Mahasaraswati's many-chambered domains . Not every note has been sounded, not every aspect of her work touched upon. Thus we will return to our exploration of this Power as also of all the other powers whose work she completes, in Journal 11, *The Divine Shakti*, where we shall continue our discovery of the Mahashakti in her myriad moods and actions and activities.



Growth

---

## REFERENCES

1. SABCL (Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library), Vol. 21, p.752.
2. SABCL, Vol. 25, p.33.
3. Mother's Agenda, Vol.1 p.295.
4. CWM (Collected Works of The Mother), Vol. 6, p.275.
5. CWM, Vol. 15, p.19.
6. SABCL, Vol. 25, p.78.
7. SABCL, Vol. 25, p.77.
8. SABCL, Vol. 26, p.112.
9. CWM, Vol. 6, p. 283.
10. CWM, Vol. 6, p. 289.
11. CWM, Vol. 4, p.404.
12. CWM, Vol. 3, p.178-9.
13. Mother's Agenda, Vol. 4, p.100-102.
14. Ibid.
15. Mother's Agenda, Vol. 4, p.98.
16. CWM, Vol. 15, p.21.
17. Mother's Agenda, Vol. 4, p.103.
18. CWM, Vol. 8, p. 399-400.
19. Mother's Agenda, Vol. 8, p.59.
20. Sri Aurobindo, Essays Divine and Human, p.116.
21. CWM, Vol. 4, p.15-16.
22. CWM, Vol. 11, p.208.
23. CWM, Vol. 16, p.427.
24. CWM, Vol. 4. p.40-2.
25. SABCL, Vol. 26, p.140.
26. CWM, Vol. 15, p.19.
27. CWM, Vol. 16, p.428.
28. CWM, Vol. 8, p.233.
29. CWM, Vol. 15, p.95.
30. CWM, Vol. 7, p.251.
31. SABCL, Vol. 20, p.160-1.
32. CWM, Vol. 8, p.289-91.
33. Ibid.
34. CWM, Vol. 8, p.221.
35. CWM, Vol. 5, p.303.
36. CWM, Vol. 5, p.30.
37. CWM, Vol. 4, p.31-3.
38. CWM, Vol. 8, p.22.
39. CWM, Vol. 11, p.211-13.
40. Mother's Agenda, Vol. 13, p.131.
41. CWM, Vol. 10, p.157-8.
42. CWM, Vol. 11, p.256.
43. Mother's Agenda, Vol. 1, p. 105-07.
44. CWM, Vol. 4, p. 36.
45. CWM, Vol. 7, p.414-16.
46. CWM, Vol. 10, p.136-39.
47. CWM, Vol. 5, p.285-88.

---

Printed at All India Press - Pondicherry

---

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.

MATRIMANDIR - AUROVILLE 605101 - TAMIL NADU - INDIA