

Matrimandir

Matrimandir Journal

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ॐ आनन्दमाये चैतन्यमाये सत्यमाये परमे
OM anandamayi chaitanyamayi
satyamayi parama
Sri Anubandor

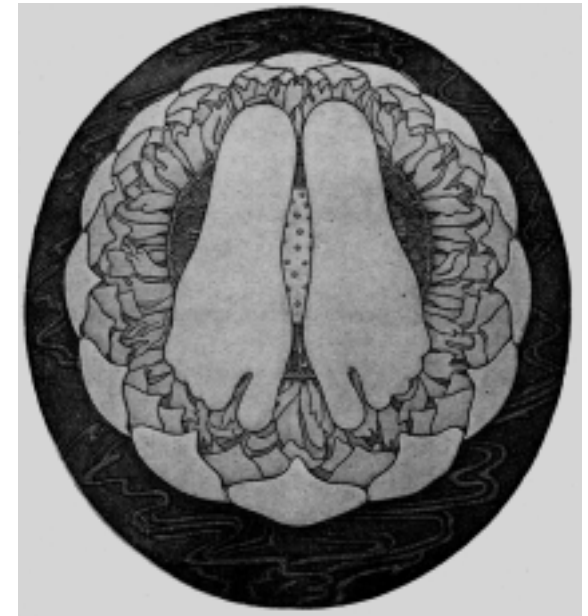
OM - She, the Delight
She, the Courtesan
She, the Truth
She, the Supreme

where she presses her feet course miraculous streams
of ^{entrancing} delightful Ananda.

All Nature dumbly calls to her alone
To heal with her feet the aching throb of life
Sri Anubandor

"...where she presses her feet course miraculous streams of an entrancing Ananda."

"All Nature dumbly calls to her alone
To heal with her feet the aching throb of life."



Mahalakshmi

"... she is Mahalakshmi, the goddess of the supreme love and delight, and her gifts are the spirit's grace and the charm and beauty of the Ananda and protection and every divine and human blessing;"¹

In human beings, there dwells somewhere an urge, whether conscious or otherwise, to break away from what Sri Aurobindo vividly phrases **"the unrestful pressure of the outward appearances of life, the urgent siege of its necessities, the deafening clamour of its utilities"**. Life so often comes to us **"in its aspect as a prison-house with Necessity for our jailer and utility for our constant taskmaster"**.² It is at such moments when we yearn for something else. Perhaps if we become more deeply aware, we may recognize this longing as a seeking for life's fullness – for the touch which alone may complete existence. We long for a Grace that will miraculously heal **"the aching throb of life"**; for that marvellous touch-stone which will turn the base dullness of mortal things into endless rhythms of universal harmonies and sweetnesses. It is then that life seems simply a quest for the All-Beautiful – for the Divine as Beauty and Delight.

All this and more are embodied in the third great Power of the Universal Mahashakti – the alluring power of Mahalakshmi. Harmony, beauty, love, sweetness, richness; the glad joyousness of perfected rhythms and measures, are some of the gifts of Mahalakshmi.

In the embodied Divine it is this aspect more than any other whom we expect to meet. Those beings who have walked the earth and who have been accepted or recognized as manifest Divinities, have most materialized an experience of this entrancing Ananda for a yearning humanity.



Power of Beauty

"The Mother was she of Beauty and Delight,"

Savitri VII 1.525

Always, and in all things, we seek obscurely for Delight. A Delight that is yet but a promise, a mystic memory of our once and future home; a home we can recover only when we have risen beyond the tracts of our animal evolution.

Mostly, we are inapt to bear for long the exacting call of this Force of love. Our littleness shrinks in anger at the inexorable demands of harmony and unity. A gross and unrefined humanity, bounded by its selfishness and its cherished hatreds, jealousies and malignancies, its common discords, its treacheries, greed and ingratitude, cannot be at ease with this most unseizable of the Goddess-Powers.

So even though we desire Her beneficent grace, our turbid grossness limits her action largely to spheres and cultural pursuits in which humanity's higher aspirations find expression, or else to the lives of individuals whose natures are more refined and responsive. Mahalakshmi consents to bestow the grace of her presence where there is fullness and abundance and joyous harmony, where an aristocracy of beauty reigns. She will not abide in the meanness, coarseness and habitual crookedness of unregenerate natures. And unlike her sister power, Mahakali, She does not insist or impose. Her greatest punishment is to veil her face, withdraw and wait **"for this bitter and poisonous devil's stuff to be rejected and disappear"**.

In the descent of the Mahashakti powers into the material world, Her manifestation follows those of the Mother of Wisdom, Maheshwari, and the Mother of Force and strength, Mahakali. Indeed the ideal condition would seem to be to allow expression through one's instrumental nature, of the force, the strength and the power of Mahakali, but leavened by the sweetness, charm and instinct for harmony of Mahalakshmi. But this is the most difficult of things.

Sri Aurobindo's description of Mahalakshmi leaves one longing to be worthy of a touch of Her Grace, so one can be **"seized and made captive and plunged into the depths of an unfathomable bliss"**.



"Wisdom and Force are not the only manifestations of the supreme Mother; there is a subtler mystery of her nature and without it Wisdom and Force would be incomplete things and without it perfection would not be perfect. Above them is the miracle of eternal beauty, an unseizable secret of divine harmonies, the

compelling magic of an irresistible universal charm and attraction that draws and holds things and forces and beings together and obliges them to meet and unite that a hidden Ananda may play from behind the veil and make of them its rhythms and its figures. This is the power of MAHALAKSHMI and there is no aspect of the Divine Shakti more attractive to the heart of embodied beings. Maheshwari can appear too calm and great and distant for the littleness of earthly nature to approach or contain her, Mahakali too swift and formidable for its weakness to bear; but all turn with joy and longing to Mahalakshmi. For she throws the spell of the intoxicating sweetness of the Divine: to be close to her is a profound happiness and to feel her within the heart is to make existence a rapture and a marvel; grace and charm and tenderness flow out from her like light from the sun and wherever she fixes her wonderful gaze or lets fall the loveliness of her smile, the soul is seized and made captive and plunged into the depths of an unfathomable bliss. Magnetic is the touch of her hands and their occult and delicate influence refines mind and life and body and where she presses her feet course miraculous streams of an entrancing Ananda.

"And yet it is not easy to meet the demand of this enchanting Power or to keep her presence. Harmony and beauty of the mind and soul, harmony and beauty of the thoughts and feelings, harmony and beauty in every outward act and movement, harmony and beauty of the life and surroundings, this is the demand of Mahalakshmi. Where there is affinity to the rhythms of the secret world-bliss and response to the call of the All-Beautiful and concord and unity and the glad flow of many lives turned towards the Divine, in that atmosphere she consents to abide. But all that is ugly and mean and base, all that is poor and sordid and squalid, all that is brutal and coarse repels her advent.

Where love and beauty are not or are reluctant to be born, she does not come; where they are mixed and disfigured with baser things, she turns soon to depart or cares little to pour her riches. If she finds herself in men's hearts surrounded with selfishness and hatred and jealousy and malignance and envy and strife, if treachery and greed and ingratitude are mixed in the sacred chalice, if grossness of passion and unrefined desire degrade devotion, in such hearts the gracious and beautiful Goddess will not linger. A divine disgust seizes upon her and she withdraws, for she is not one who insists or strives; or, veiling her face, she waits for this bitter and poisonous devil's stuff to be rejected and disappear before she will found anew her happy influence."³



Sweetness of Thoughts turned Exclusively towards the Divine

The Grace of Sweet Captivity

*"Her look, her smile awoke celestial sense
Even in earth-stuff, and their intense delight
Poured a supernal beauty on men's lives,"*

Savitri I.1.15

The collectivity that spontaneously grew up around Sri Aurobindo and Mother, and which came to be called *Sri Aurobindo Ashram*, was actually an ashram like no other. It harked back to ancient Vedic times, to the Gurukuls when great rishis were surrounded by bustling energetic collectivities, communities of students, seekers and others drawn around the sun of a splendid presence. In those thriving forest communities all aspects of human endeavour were present. But, in recent centuries, ashrams have come to represent retreats where seekers renounce life and the world for what is often the bare anchorite's cell and a life spent in good works at least if not merely meditation.

Sri Aurobindo's ashram was therefore revolutionary in its patterns and forms. It balanced the austerities of the highest inward seekings with the manifold activities of life. To cite just one telling example: imagine that even in pre-Independence India, women seekers who had till then never stepped out of their homes except in demurely draped saris, habitually dressed themselves in shorts, shirts and kitty-cap to take part in a vigorous sports programme instituted by Mother. Sadhaks had to take up a work and do it as a yoga, for how else could life be transformed? The fundamental demand was to express beauty and harmony in the least detail of one's body, one's life and action and one's thoughts. Under Mother's radiant gaze, sadhikas produced the most wondrously intricate embroideries and students performed in rich theatrical productions. An extraordinary creativity abounded. Sri Aurobindo's guidance led to attempts among sadhaks at new forms of mystical poetry. Not just one or



Beauty in Art

21.12.72



two creative souls but many tried to catch higher and higher inspirations. Mother herself, whether on the tennis courts or receiving the salute of marching students, admiring some intricate work of embroidery or scrutinizing accounts, presided over all, beautifully clad, coiffed and perfumed. 'How can a spiritual leader wear lipstick?', one visiting dignitary is said to have asked! We are so bounded by our habitual ideas of how *vairagya*, renunciation, should be visible that just so long as appearances conform, we can believe. Repeatedly, Mother reminded everyone, "***In the physical the Divine manifests as Beauty***". And those who thought that only an ascetic plainness could best embody Divinity were forced to review their preconceived notions. This yoga is concerned with the world, and how can a Divinity that has created this amazing, complex, beautiful earth, be satisfied with a mere pallid and colourless bareness?

Sri Aurobindo and Mother embodied in their lives and action a spiritual revolution. In their yoga, Life had to be taken up, certainly not to be kept at its present level, but to be lifted out of its often obscure state, transmuted and made wholly beautiful. They demonstrated by example the idea-forces they put forward. In painstaking detail, Mother worked with one to create a new music that captured intimations of the world of tomorrow; with another She sought to 'communicate' inspired visions of beings from higher worlds to be expressed in new kinds of drawing and painting. There was an efflorescence of new faculties. Always the attempt was to give form to the inexpressible, to bring into the present the realizations of tomorrow, to make matter more and more plastic to the rhythms of the All-Beautiful.

The manifestation of Beauty and Harmony is part of the Divine realization upon earth, perhaps even its greatest part. This is the work of Mahalakshmi: She it is who can take up our emotional, vital, aesthetic being and raise it to its heights of spiritualized effulgence.

“Ascetic bareness and harshness are not pleasing to her nor the suppression of the heart’s deeper emotions and the rigid repression of the soul’s and the life’s parts of beauty. For it is through love and beauty that she lays on men the yoke of the Divine. Life is turned in her supreme creations into a rich work of celestial art and all existence into a poem of sacred delight; the world’s riches are brought together and concerted for a supreme order and even the simplest and commonest things are made wonderful by her intuition of unity and the breath of her spirit. Admitted to the heart she lifts wisdom to pinnacles of wonder and reveals to it the mystic secrets of the ecstasy that surpasses all knowledge, meets devotion with the passionate attraction of the Divine, teaches to strength and force the rhythm that keeps the might of their acts harmonious and in measure and casts on perfection the charm that makes it endure for ever.”⁴



Lakshmi - Batik print

*“A Voice ill-heard shall speak, the soul obey,
A power into mind’s inner chamber steal,
A charm and sweetness open life’s closed doors
And beauty conquer the resisting world,
The truth-light capture Nature by surprise,
A stealth of God compel the heart to bliss
And earth grow unexpectedly divine.”*

Savitri 1.4.55

It is not humans alone that are captivated by this most entrancing of all the Mahashakti’s powers. When Sri Aurobindo speaks of ‘All Nature’ calling dumbly to her he is not using a mere poetical turn of phrase. Indeed she can cast the spell of her intoxicating sweetness on the most aggressive and ferocious of animals too.

Q: *“Sweet Mother, I didn’t understand this: ‘This is the power of Mahalakshmi and there is no aspect of the Divine Shakti more attractive to the heart of embodied beings.’?”*

“That means men. It is another way of saying human beings upon the earth. There are also ... it means animals also. She is very, very loving towards animals and animals love her very much; even the most ferocious ones become gentle with her, and that is why instead of using the words ‘human beings’ he has used ‘embodied beings’, beings with a body upon earth.”⁵





Beauty aspiring for the Supramental Realization

21.12.22

30
blossom

*"And the world change with the beauty
of a smile."*

Savitri II.14. 290

Beauty: Ananda taking form

Who then is this graceful goddess of universal charm? When we speak of Beauty or Harmony, what do we really mean? Perhaps we will better understand this Power of the Mahashakti if we attempt to define some of her attributes: Beauty as also Harmony and Grace and Sweetness and Richness and Wealth, for it is in and through these divine attributes that we may discover the miraculous streams of Ananda that her footfalls bring. Whenever Sri Aurobindo and Mother speak of the Divine manifesting in the physical, they speak of Beauty. And Beauty, as Sri Aurobindo further defines it, is the intense expression, the physical manifestation of Ananda, Delight – it is, quite literally, the Delight, the Ananda, taking form.

"Beauty is the special divine Manifestation in the physical as Truth is in the mind, Love in the heart, Power in the vital. Supramental beauty is the highest divine beauty manifesting in Matter."⁶

"Beauty is the way in which the physical expresses the Divine – but the principle and the law of Beauty is something inward and spiritual and expresses itself through the form."⁶

"Beauty is Ananda taking form – but the form need not be a physical shape. One speaks of a beautiful thought, a beautiful act, a beautiful soul. What we speak of as beauty is Ananda in manifestation; beyond manifestation beauty loses itself in Ananda or, you may say, beauty and Ananda become indistinguishably one."⁶

“Delight is the soul of existence, beauty the intense impression, the concentrated form of Delight;”⁷

Our little earth, however much it is a world of falsehood at present, has been given this one gift by the Supreme that even the Gods must take a body to experience – for it is in matter alone that the utmost delight of the spirit can be embodied. In a world transformed, we will live in the supreme rapture of the All-Beautiful.

*“Thus we draw near to the All-Wonderful
Following his rapture in things as sign and guide;
Beauty is his footprint showing us where he has passed,”*

Savitri II.2. 112



Beauty of Supramental Love (Flower of Auroville)

Sri Aurobindo’s supramental yoga is based upon the Upanishadic truth which he formulates thus in *The Life Divine*: ***“Delight is existence, Delight is the secret of creation, Delight is the root of birth, Delight is the cause of remaining in existence, Delight is the end of birth and that into which creation ceases.”⁸***

A world created by desire, such as the Buddhists postulate, would necessarily seek release and refuge in a vast self-negating nihil – Nirvana, a desireless nought; but a progressive creation that ought to embody all-Beauty and all-Harmony must have a very different aim. Thus the sadhak of the Integral Yoga seeks the fullness of spiritual realisation in all the planes of his existence, those he is familiar with – such as the mind, the vital and the bodily existence – as well as those that are habitually beyond his ordinary reach.

“Beauty is not the same as Delight, but like love it is an expression, a form of Ananda, created by Ananda and composed of Ananda; it conveys to the mind that delight of which it is made. Aesthetically the delight takes the appearance of Rasa and the enjoyment of this Rasa is the mind’s and the vital’s reaction to the perception of beauty. The spiritual realisation has a sight, a perception, a feeling which is not that of the mind and vital, it passes beyond the aesthetic limit, sees the universal beauty, sees behind the object what the eye cannot see, feels what the emotion of the heart cannot feel and passes beyond Rasa and Bhoga to Pure Ananda, – a thing more deep, intense, rapturous than any mental or vital or any physical Rasa reaction can be. It sees the One everywhere, the original bliss of existence everywhere, and all these can create an inexpressible Ananda of beauty, the beauty of the One, the beauty of the Divine, the beauty of the Beloved, the beauty of the eternal Existence in things. It can see also the beauty of forms and objects, but with a seeing other than the mind’s, other than that of a limited physical vision, – what was not beautiful to the eye becomes beautiful, what was beautiful to the eye wears now a greater, marvellous and ineffable beauty. The spiritual realisation can bring the vision and the rapture of the All-Beautiful everywhere.”⁹

“The word ‘expression’ means only something that is manifested by the Ananda and of which Ananda is the essence. Love and Beauty are powers of Ananda as Light and Knowledge are of Consciousness. Force is inherent in Consciousness and may be called part of the Divine Essence. Ananda is always there even when Sachchidananda takes on an impersonal aspect or appears as the sole essential Existence; but Love needs a Lover and Beloved, Beauty needs a manifestation to show itself. So in the same way Consciousness is always there, but Knowledge needs a manifestation to be active, there must be a Knower and a Known. That is why the distinction is made between Ananda which is of the essence and Beauty which is a power of expression of Ananda in manifestation. These are of course philosophical distinctions necessary for the mind to think about the world and the Divine.”⁹



Artistic Sensitivity



“The search for beauty is only in its beginning a satisfaction in the beauty of form, the beauty which appeals to the physical senses and the vital impressions, impulses, desires. It is only in the middle a satisfaction in the beauty of the ideas seized, the emotions aroused, the perception of perfect process and harmonious combination. Behind them the soul of beauty in us desires the contact, the revelation, the uplifting delight of an absolute beauty in all things which it feels to be present, but which neither the senses and instincts by themselves can give, though they may be its channels,—for it is suprasensuous,—nor the reason and intelligence, though they too are a channel,—for it is suprarational, supra-intellectual,—but to which through all these veils the soul itself seeks to arrive. When it can get the touch of this universal, absolute beauty, this soul of beauty, this sense of its revelation in any slightest or greatest thing, the beauty of a flower, a form, the beauty and power of a character, an action, an event, a human life, an idea, a stroke of the brush or the chisel or a scintillation of the mind, the colours of a sunset or the grandeur of the tempest, it is then that the sense of beauty in us is really, powerfully, entirely satisfied. It is in truth seeking, as in religion, for the Divine, the All-Beautiful in man, in nature, in life, in thought, in art; for God is Beauty and Delight hidden in the variation of his masks and forms. When, fulfilled in our growing sense and knowledge of beauty and delight in beauty and our power for beauty, we are able to identify ourselves in soul with this Absolute and Divine in all the forms and activities of the world and shape an image of our inner and our outer life in the highest image we can perceive and embody of the All-Beautiful, then the aesthetic being in us who was born for this end has fulfilled himself and risen to his divine consummation. To find highest beauty is to find God; to reveal, to embody, to create, as we say, highest beauty is to bring out of our souls the living image and power of God.”¹⁰



*"The world's senseless beauty mirrors God's delight.
That rapture's smile is secret everywhere;
It flows in the wind's breath, in the tree's sap,
Its hued magnificence blooms in leaves and flowers."*

Savitri II.4.139



Smile of Beauty

The Tapasya of Creativity

The sadhaks of Sri Aurobindo's yoga practise the creative arts, poetry and music for their self-educative value: to refine, uplift and transmute existence. For music, art and poetry between them still, deepen and harmonize the emotions. Sri Aurobindo calls them **"a perfect education for the soul"**. Used rightly, they can represent a straight and high road to the inner and higher planes. And it is these more refined human pursuits which are the proper domains of Mahalakshmi.

"True art means the expression of beauty in the material world. In a world wholly converted, that is to say, expressing integrally the divine reality, art must serve as the revealer and teacher of this divine beauty in life." ¹¹

"There is nothing harmful in the thing [aspiration for beauty] itself. On the contrary to awake to the universal beauty and refinement of the Mahalakshmi force is good. It is not an expression of greed or lust – only into these things a perversion can always come if one allows it, as into the Mahakali experience there may come rajasic anger and violence, so here there may come vital passion for possession and enjoyment. One must look at the beauty as the artist does without desire of possession or vital enjoyment of the lower kind." ¹²

Q: "Supramental beauty in the physical' – what does it mean? All these things – all the arts, the beautiful work we do for the Divine – are they expressions of supramental beauty in the physical?"

"No, all that is only the manifestation of a universal harmony which lies, as it were, at the very heart of creation. But the supramental beauty is something much higher and more perfect; it is a beauty untainted by any ugliness and it does not need the proximity of ugliness in order to look beautiful."



"When the supramental forces descend into Matter in order to manifest, this perfect beauty will express itself quite naturally and spontaneously in all forms." ¹³

"There is a certain consciousness in which all things become full of beauty and Ananda, – even what is painful and ugly becomes an outward play, and becomes suffused with the beauty and Ananda behind. It is specially the Overmind consciousness of things – although it can be felt from time to time on the other planes also. A great equality and the view of the Divine everywhere is necessary for this to come fully." ¹⁴



*"All here shall be one day her sweetness's home,
All contraries prepare her harmony;
Towards her our knowledge climbs, our passion gropes,
In her miraculous rapture we shall dwell,
Her clasp will turn to ecstasy our pain.
Our self shall be one self with all through her.
In her confirmed because transformed in her,
Our life shall find in its fulfilled response
Above the boundless hushed beatitudes,
Below the wonder of the embrace divine."*

Savitri III.2.314

A Home of Beauty

What can we do to meet the demands of this Power? Mother remarks that people complain about their empty sordid lives, but often they are themselves the authors of these unfilled barenesses. How can Beauty stay if it is not offered a home of beauty? How can Love stay where all is foul and low and squalid and empty? When we create a fitting home for her, Mahalakshmi will gladly consent to reside in it and lift thereby all our parts to pinnacles of wonder. In Her Conversations, in reference to Sri Aurobindo's description of the Mahashakti powers, Mother comments upon the atmosphere that befits Mahalakshmi.

"Harmony and beauty of the mind and soul, harmony and beauty of the thoughts and feelings, harmony and beauty in every outward act and movement, harmony and beauty of the life and surroundings, this is the demand of Mahalakshmi. ...Where love and beauty are not or are reluctant to be born, she does not come." – Sri Aurobindo

"When the surroundings, circumstances, atmosphere, the way of living and above all the inner attitude are altogether of a low kind, vulgar, gross, egoistic, sordid, love is reluctant to come, that is, it always hesitates to manifest itself and generally does not stay long. A home of beauty must be given for Beauty to stay. I am not speaking of external things – a real house, real furniture and all that – I am speaking of an inner attitude, of something within which is beautiful, noble, harmonious, unselfish. There Love has a chance to come and stay. But when, as soon as it tries to manifest, it is immediately mixed with such low and ugly things, it does not remain, it goes away. This is what Sri Aurobindo says: 'it is reluctant to be born' – it could be said that it immediately regrets being born. Men always complain that love does not stay with them but it is entirely their fault. They give this love such a sordid life, mixed with a heap of horrors and such vulgarity, things so base, so selfish, so dirty, that the poor thing cannot stay. If they don't succeed in killing it altogether, they make it utterly sick. So the only thing it can do is to take flight."

*People always complain that love is impermanent and passing. To tell the truth, they should be very grateful that it manifested in them in spite of the sordidness of the house they gave it."*¹⁵

"Let beauty be your constant ideal.

The beauty of the soul

The beauty of sentiments

The beauty of thoughts

The beauty of the action

The beauty in the work

*so that nothing comes out of your hands which is not an expression of pure and harmonious beauty. And the Divine Help shall always be with you."*¹⁶



Imagination



Art

21.12.72



"In the physical world, of all things it is beauty that expresses best the Divine. The physical world is the world of form and the perfection of form is beauty. Beauty interprets, expresses, manifests the Eternal. Its role is to put all manifested nature in contact with the Eternal through the perfection of form, through the harmony and a sense of the ideal which uplifts and leads towards something higher." ¹⁶

"There is a psychological health as much as a physical health; there is a beauty and harmony of the sensations as much as a beauty of the body and its movements." ¹⁷

Q: "Can those who have a sense of beauty also become cruel?"

"That's a psychological problem. It depends on where their sense of beauty is located. One may have a physical sense of beauty, a vital sense of beauty, a mental sense of beauty. If one has a moral sense of beauty – a sense of moral beauty and nobility – one will never be cruel. One will always be generous and magnanimous in all circumstances. But as men are made of many different pieces... For instance, I was thinking about all the artists I knew – I knew all the greatest artists of the last century or the beginning of this century, and they truly had a sense of beauty, but morally, some of them were very cruel. When the artist was seen at his work, he lived in a magnificent beauty but when you saw the gentleman at home, he had only a very limited contact with the artist in himself and usually he became someone very vulgar, very ordinary. Many of them did, I am sure of it. But those who were unified, in the sense that they truly lived their art – those, no; they were generous and good." ¹⁸



“O India, land of light and spiritual knowledge! Wake up to your true mission in the world, show the way to union and harmony.”¹⁹

The Rejection of Beauty

Mother has spoken about the effect on India of the life-denying yoga which this culture fell into in the last millennia. Yes, India kept a knowledge of the spirit largely lost by other cultures. But the Divine she sought metamorphosed into a vast Nought, a Nihil quite outside of creation. As a result, she chose to neglect life and all the outer domains of existence. It was the steamrolling occupation of the British Raj that forced her to begin to awaken from her torpid somnolence. Indeed, all lovers of Mother India may almost despair when they look around at her present-day material actualities – filthy over-crowded cities; little civic sense in her citizens; over-population; over-exploitation; greed; corruption – a seeming concentration of every human failing. This is the price to be paid when one neglects to bring consciousness into life. If we would consciously distinguish this central truth we could better go about seeking remedies for it. And these solutions lie not in the utilitarian values of the modern world but in means and methods truer to the deeper Indian spirit. The soul of India, leonine, awaits that awakened consciousness; that self-transcending love of Beauty; that action informed by will and character and self-discipline; that aspiration for material perfection which alone can wrest back these domains for the Divine. In a very stark message Mother remarks: ***“It is one of the greatest weapons of the Asura at work when you are taught to shun beauty. It has been the ruin of India. The Divine manifests in the psychic as love, in the mind as knowledge, in the vital as power and in the physical as beauty. If you discard beauty it means that you are depriving the Divine of this manifestation in the material and you hand over that part to the Asura.”²⁰***



Aristocracy of Beauty



Lakshmi - Tanjore painting

21.12.72

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Blessings

“India has become the symbolic representation of all the difficulties of modern mankind. India will be the land of its resurrection, the resurrection to a higher and truer life.”

“And the clear vision: the same thing which in the history of the universe made the earth the symbolic representation of the universe so as to concentrate the work at one point, the same phenomenon is now taking place: India is the representation of all human difficulties on earth, and it is in India that the cure will be found. And then, that is why—THAT IS WHY I was made to start Auroville.”²¹

Thus we have the redeeming truth of the promise that it is India’s task to find solutions so that it can also be the land of resurrection where a higher and truer life will be visibly demonstrated to the world. The absolute pursuit of Beauty and Harmony and Delight replacing all truth-negating modern utilitarian values is the one thing needful. Perhaps if Auroville does become the laboratory proving the veracity of Mahalakshmi’s gifts, it will serve the purpose for which it has been created. It is not for nothing that Mother wanted this absolute beauty to be embodied in the various elements of Matrimandir.

“...in each part of the being the Divine manifests Himself differently. In the higher parts He manifests as Power, Love, etc., but in the physical He manifests as Harmony and Beauty. Hence the problem of the expression of physical beauty is a spiritual problem.”²²

“On the physical plane the Divine expresses himself through beauty, on the mental plane through knowledge, on the vital plane through power and on the psychic plane through love.

“When we rise high enough, we discover that these four aspects unite with each other in a single consciousness, full of love, luminous, powerful, beautiful, containing all, pervading all.

*"It is only to satisfy the universal play that this consciousness divides itself into several lines or aspects of manifestation."*²³

*"The beauty which is fundamental, profound, universal, constant belongs only to the psychic, but the sense of the beauty of form, of appearance, of colour, the educated, refined vital fully possesses."*²⁴

*"There is behind all things, a divine beauty, a divine harmony: it is with this that we must come into contact; it is this that we must express."*²⁵

*"...if you want to have the sense of beauty in itself ... you must have a universal consciousness ... to know true beauty independent of all form, one must rise above all form. And once you have known it beyond every form, you can recognise it in any form whatsoever."*²⁶



Refinement of Habits

"It is certain that in the present state of the physical world, appearances are still very deceptive; physical beauty is not always a sign of a beautiful soul, and an ugly or grotesque body may conceal a genius or a resplendent soul."

"But for one who has more inner sensitivity, appearances are no longer deceptive and he can perceive the ugliness hidden beneath a pretty face and the beauty concealed beneath a mask of ugliness."

*"There are also cases, and these are becoming more and more numerous, where the appearance reveals the inner reality which then becomes discernible to all."*²⁷



Utilitarianism

There is one sphere of modern life where the absence of the Mahalakshmi power is intensely injurious for the future of the race. In the overriding pursuit of success and career and money, which have become the primary aims of modern-day utilitarian education, a great violence is done to young and innocent beings. We harm the race as a whole by continuing to create the very type of humans who have no qualms in recklessly denuding the earth and her resources to fulfil their incessant desires. We seldom allow ourselves to see the connection between the manner in which our children are brought up, the values they are taught and the selfish, self-aggrandizing, individualistic and self-centred beings we create. Sri Aurobindo calls such beings the modern economic barbarians. It is these unlovely philistines who instinctively banish Mahalakshmi even as they may worship her, often merely as a power of money. A series of chapters in *The Human Cycle*, masterfully depicts this creature of commercialism, the great economic barbarian, and the world he creates. Sri Aurobindo's description of the 'successful man', may leave us wondering – do we recognise something of ourselves here?

“This economic barbarism is essentially that of the vital man who mistakes the vital being for the self and accepts its satisfaction as the first aim of life. The characteristic of Life is desire and the instinct of possession. Just as the physical barbarian makes the excellence of the body and the development of physical force, health and prowess his standard and aim, so the vitalistic or economic barbarian makes the satisfaction of wants and desires and the accumulation of possessions his standard and aim. His ideal man is not the cultured or noble or thoughtful or moral or religious, but the successful man. To arrive, to succeed, to produce, to accumulate, to possess is his existence. The accumulation of wealth and more wealth, the adding of possessions to possessions, opulence, show, pleasure, a cumbrous inartistic luxury, a plethora of conveniences, life devoid of beauty and nobility, religion vulgarised or coldly formalised, politics and government turned into a trade and profession, enjoyment itself made a business, this is commercialism. To the natural unredeemed economic man beauty is a thing otiose or a nuisance, art and poetry a frivolity or an ostentation and a means of advertisement. His idea of civilisation is comfort, his idea of morals social respectability, his idea of politics the encouragement of industry, the opening of markets, exploitation and trade following the flag, his idea of religion at best a pietistic formalism or the satisfaction of certain vitalistic emotions. He values education for its utility in fitting a man for success in a competitive or, it may be, a socialised industrial existence, science for the useful inventions and knowledge, the comforts, conveniences, machinery of production with which it arms him, its power for organisation, regulation, stimulus to production. The opulent plutocrat and the successful mammoth capitalist and organiser of industry are the supermen of the commercial age and the true, if often occult rulers of its society.

The essential barbarism of all this is its pursuit of vital success, satisfaction, productiveness, accumulation, possession, enjoyment, comfort, convenience for their own sake. The vital part of the being is an element in the integral human existence as much as the physical part; it has its place but must not exceed its place. A full and well-appointed life is desirable for man living in society, but on condition



that it is also a true and beautiful life. Neither the life nor the body exist for their own sake, but as vehicle and instrument of a good higher than their own. They must be subordinated to the superior needs of the mental being, chastened and purified by a greater law of truth, good and beauty before they can take their proper place in the integrality of human perfection. Therefore in a commercial age with its ideal, vulgar and barbarous, of success, vitalistic satisfaction, productiveness and possession the soul of man may linger a while for certain gains and experiences, but cannot permanently rest. If it persisted too long, Life would become clogged and perish of its own plethora or burst in its straining to a gross expansion. Like the too massive Titan it will collapse by its own mass, mole ruet sua. ²⁸



Lakshmi - Tanjore painting



Power of Expression

Is it possible for the gentle goddess to manifest in such a world? Can the harmonies of Mahalakshmi find a small corner where the higher laws of Beauty and Delight find precedence? Auroville is meant to be such a place, and will not find itself as long as it does not wholeheartedly recognise that it cannot mix the values of a utilitarian age and yet be a welcoming home for Beauty to stay. Auroville's physical environment already manifests beauty at a touch. Its human psychological domains will express Her splendour when there is a greater conscious adherence within the collectivity to beauty, harmony and unity.

Modern thought is so governed and circumscribed by the impress of commercial values that it is scarcely acknowledged to what extent utilitarianism is wholly antithetical to the seeking for Truth and Beauty. Either we catch flame and burn in the transmuting ardour of high aspiration, worshipping Truth and Beauty and the Good and allowing these to shape every detail of our lives, or we bind ourselves to secondary and ordinary considerations: the seeking of success and security.

Particularly children, who represent the future, should know the difference between choosing the one and the other as well as the contrary pathways that each opens before them. The quality of their lives, and the future health of the race depends upon this awareness.

“From a young age children should be taught to respect good health, physical strength and balance. The great importance of beauty must also be emphasised. A young child should aspire for beauty, not for the sake of pleasing others or winning their admiration, but for the love of beauty itself; beauty is the ideal which all physical life must realise.”²⁹



The Lessons of History

Another question we may ask ourselves is whether the society we aspire to create is a wholly new idea? Have there been cultures and periods in humanity's past that hold lessons for us? In *The Human Cycle* as well as in *The Future Poetry* we find many indications to guide our search. Indeed from Mahalakshmi's perspective, the modern world may have achieved technological brilliance and a great mastery over material nature, but it is at the cost of a seemingly severe regression in other fields. There have been periods when humanity kept the golden temple of Mahalakshmi swept clean, when the lamp of invocation to her wealth of beauty was a pure flame of aspiration.



Aristocracy



These cultures and peoples have left behind a lingering fragrance which we still study and label as the highest pinnacles of civilization. Perhaps if we rediscovered in this past a richness that could restore some colour and warmth to the dry desert sands of modern commercialism, the gracious Goddess would consent to shower us with her abundances.

***“The imperative instinct for beauty and the aesthetic demand which set that among the first needs and was not satisfied with anything else if this were neglected or put second in importance, are now things that are almost lost, nowhere general to the human mind, but once they were the signs of the poetic and artistic peoples and the great ages of art and poetry and supreme creation. The ancient communities who created those fine many-sided cultures which still remain the fountain-head of all our evolving civilisation, had the instinct for beauty, the aesthetic turn of the temperament and formation of the mind almost, it would seem, from the beginning, planted in their spirit and their blood, colouring their outlook so that even before they got the developed intellectual consciousness of it, they created instinctively in the spirit and form of beauty and that is quite half the secret of the compelling and attractive power of the antique cultures. The earliest surviving poetry of ancient India was philosophical and religious, the Veda, the Upanishads, and our modern notions tend to divorce these things from the instinct of delight and beauty, to separate the religious and the philosophic from the aesthetic sense; but the miracle of these antique writings is their perfect union of beauty and power and truth, the word of truth coming out spontaneously as a word of beauty, the revealed utterance of that universal spirit who is described in the Upanishads as the eater of the honey of sweetness, madhvadam purusam; and this high achievement was not surprising in these ancient deep-thinking men who discovered the profound truth that all existence derives from and lives by the bliss of the eternal spirit, in the power of a universal delight, Ananda. The idea of beauty, the spontaneous satisfaction in it, the worship of it as in itself something divine, became*”**

more intellectually conscious afterwards, was a dominant strain of the later Indian mind and got to its richest outward colour and sensuous passion in the work of the classical writers, while the expression of the spiritual through the aesthetic sense is the constant sense of Indian art, as it is also the inspiring motive of a great part of the later religion and poetry. Japan and China, more especially perhaps southern China, for the north has been weighted by a tendency to a more external and formal idea of measure and harmony, had in a different way this fusion of the spiritual and aesthetic mind and it is a distinguishing stamp of their art and culture. The Persian had a sort of sensuous magic of the transforming aesthesis born of psychic delight and vision. Ancient Greece did all its work of founding European civilisation by a union of a subtle and active intelligence with a fine aesthetic spirit and worship of beauty. The Celtic nations again seem always to have had by nature a psychic delicacy and subtlety united with an instinctive turn for imaginative beauty to which we surely owe much of the finer strain in English literature. But there these spontaneous miracles of fusion end and in the mind of later peoples who come in and take possession with a less innate, a more derivative culture, the sense of beauty works with a certain effort and is clogged by many heavier elements which are in conflict with and prevent the sureness of the aesthetic perception. There is in their cruder temperament and intelligence a barbaric strain which worships rudely the power and energy of life and is not at home with the delight of beauty, an ethical and puritanic strain which looks askance at art and beauty and pleasure, a heavy scholastic or a dry scientific intellectual strain which follows after truth with a conscientious and industrious diligence but without vision and fine aesthesis. And the modern mind, inheritor of all this past, is a divided and complex mind which strives at its best to get back at the old thing on a larger scale and realise some oneness of its many strands of experience, but has not yet found the right meeting-place; and it is besides still labouring under the disadvantage of its aberration into a mechanical, economical, materialistic, utilitarian civilisation from which it cannot get free, though it is struggling to shake off that dullest side of it for which a naked and unashamed riot of ugliness could be

indulged in without any prickings of the spiritual conscience but rather with a smug self-righteousness in the hideous, the vulgar and the ignoble. The day when we get back to the ancient worship of delight and beauty, will be our day of salvation; for without these things there can be neither an assured nobility and sweetness in poetry and art, nor a satisfied dignity and fullness of life nor a harmonious perfection of the spirit.”³⁰



“Creative Word”

The Future

In another passage in *The Future Poetry*, we find intimations of what the future will bring. Sri Aurobindo speaks primarily of poetry here, but this is because the poetry of the future will be like the Vedic Agni, the fiery giver of the word and the leader of the journey for he is the Truth-conscious and the Truth-finder. Certainly in *Savitri* this truth-finding is no more a promise but a living, vibrant, life-transmuting actuality. The Seer-poet Rishi has already shown us the face of the Eternal!

The powers that Sri Aurobindo speaks of – Beauty and Delight, which are the soul and origin of poetry and art – are the two powers that bring out the very heart of sweetness, colour and flame of Truth and Life and the Spirit. Life cannot find itself unless it is suffused and filled with the completing power of delight and the fine power of beauty. In the words of the Veda, it is when we ascend to the lap of the Mother that we liberate the powers of the Spirit in us. Many of the present movements in the world are turbid half-conscious seekings for this fulfilment. For instance, the ideas expressed by the growing science of ecology which calls for a greater awareness of the earth-body, the necessity of preserving its least strand of life, as the sole means of survival of the race, is just one such sign.

But finally we will need to recognize that the separation of matter and spirit creates a false division in our being; that ALL problems, including the problem of the environment, are spiritual problems. And then if we would only turn consciously to Mahalakshmi, She, with her sense of harmony, Her knowledge of the times and seasons of Truth, of its degrees and its measures, can restore our nature to the eternal Good and lead the world through pathways of Beauty and Delight to the Oneness it seeks.

"A greater era of man's living seems to be in promise, whatever nearer and earthlier powers may be striving to lead him on a side path away to a less exalted ideal, and with that advent there must come a new great age of his creation different from the past epochs which he counts as his glories and superior to them in its vision and motive. But first there must intervene a poetry which will lead him towards it



from the present faint beginnings. It will be aided by new views in philosophy, a changed and extended spirit in science and new revelations in the other arts, in music, painting, architecture, sculpture, as well as high new ideals in life and new powers of a reviving but no longer limited or obscurantist religious mind. A glint of this change is already visible. And in poetry there is already the commencement of such a greater leading; ... The idea of the poet who is also the Rishi has made again its appearance. Only a wider spreading of the thought and mentality in which that idea can live and the growth of an accomplished art of poetry in which it can take body, are still needed to give the force of permanence to what is now only an incipient and just emerging power. Mankind satiated with the levels is turning its face once more towards the heights, and the poetic voices that will lead us thither with song will be among the high seer voices. For the great poet interprets to man his present or reinterprets for him his past, but he can also point him to his future and in all three reveal to him the face of the Eternal.

"An intuitive revealing poetry of the kind which we have in view would voice a supreme harmony of five eternal powers, Truth, Beauty, Delight, Life and the Spirit. These are indeed the five greater ideal lamps or rather the five suns of poetry. And towards three of them the higher mind of the race is in many directions turning its thought and desire with a new kind of force of insistence. The intellectual side of our recent progress has in fact been for a long time a constant arduous pursuit of Truth in certain of its fields; but now the limited truth of yesterday can no longer satisfy or bind us. Much has been known and discovered of a kind which had not been found or had only been glimpsed before, but the utmost of that much appears now very little compared with the infinitely more which was left aside and ignored and which now invites our search. The description which the old Vedic poet once gave of the seeking of divine Truth, applies vividly to the mind of our age, 'As it climbs from height to height, there becomes clear to its view all the much that is yet to be done.' But also it is

beginning to be seen that only in some great awakening of the self and spiritual being of man is that yet un-lived truth to be found and that infinite much to be achieved. It is only then that the fullness of a greater knowledge for man living on earth can unfold itself and get rid of its coverings and again on his deeper mind and soul, in the words of another Vedic poet-seer, 'New states come into birth, covering upon covering awaken to knowledge, till in the lap of the Mother one wholly sees.' This new-old light is now returning upon our minds. Men no longer so completely believe that the world is a machine and they only so much transient thinking matter, a view of existence in the midst of which however helpful it might be to a victorious concentration on physical science and social economy and material well-being, neither religion nor philosophic wisdom could renew their power in the fountains of the spirit nor art and poetry, which are also things of the soul like religion and wisdom, refresh themselves from their native sources of strength. Now we are moving back from the physical obsession to the consciousness that there is a soul and greater self within us and the universe which finds expression here in the life and the body.

"But the mind of today insists too and rightly insists on life, on humanity, on the dignity of our labour and action. We have no longer any ascetic quarrel with our mother earth, but rather would drink full of her bosom of beauty and power and raise her life to a more perfect greatness. ...for the spirit and life are not incompatible, but rather a greater power of the spirit brings a greater power of life. Poetry and art most of all our powers can help to bring this truth home to the mind of man with an illumining and catholic force, for while philosophy may lose itself in abstractions and religion turn to an intolerant otherworldliness and asceticism, poetry and art are born mediators between the immaterial and the concrete, the spirit and life. The mediation between the truth of the spirit and the truth of life will be one of the chief functions of the poetry of the future." ³¹



Mahalakshmi's Wealth

In India the three Goddesses – Mahalakshmi, Mahakali and Mahasaraswati are commonly invoked. Temples to each or to a combination of the three dot the subcontinent. And yet there is a debasing, a corruption in what they represent in the popular mind. The goddess Lakshmi, who embodies abundance, richness and plenty, is excessively linked in men's minds to the money-power and often invoked for this reason alone. But indeed, the wealth of Mahalakshmi is a very different thing. Her wealth is the glad harmony of many qualities, her abundance a rich generosity of nature and a sweet gracefulness of spirit. All that is gross and sordid and vulgar repels her advent.



Mahasaraswati, Mahalakshmi, Mahakali - Mahalakshmi Temple, Mumbai

Money is a force and it is meant to serve the Divine work but there is at present little around this force that has not been distorted to the purposes of adversarial powers.

Q: "Sri Aurobindo says here about Mahalakshmi: 'All that is poor ...repels her advent'?"

"Yes, poor, without generosity, without ardour, without amplitude, without inner richness: all that is dry, cold, doubled upon itself, prevents the coming of Mahalakshmi. It is not a question of real money, you know! An extremely rich man may be terribly poor from Mahalakshmi's point of view. And a very poor man may be very rich if his heart is generous."

Q: "When we say 'a poor man – un homme pauvre', what is the exact meaning of 'poor man'?"

"A poor man is a man having no qualities, no force, no strength, no generosity. He is also a miserable, unhappy man. Moreover, one is unhappy only when one is not generous – if one has a generous nature which gives of itself without reckoning, one is never unhappy. It is those who are doubled up on themselves and who always want to draw things towards themselves, who see things and the world only through themselves – it is these who are unhappy. But when one gives oneself generously, without reckoning, one is never unhappy, never. It is he who wants to take that is unhappy; he who gives himself is never so." ³²

Q: "Besides money what are the other divine powers 'delegated' here on earth?"

"All. All the divine powers are manifested here and deformed here – light, life, love, force – all – harmony, ananda – all, all, there is nothing which is not divine in its origin and which does not exist here under a completely distorted, travestied form. The other day we had spoken at length about the way in which divine Love is deformed in its manifestation here, it is the same thing." ³³

21.12.72

 Blessings

Q: "How is it that ordinarily the richer one is (materially), the more dishonest one is?"

"It is because material wealth is controlled by the adverse forces – and because they have not yet been converted to the Divine Influence, though the work has begun."

"That victory will form part of the triumph of Truth."

"Wealth should not be a personal property and should be at the disposal of the Divine for the welfare of all." ³⁴



Generous Wealth

A Day shall come when all the wealth of this world, freed at last from the enslavement to the anti-Divine forces, offers itself spontaneously and fully to the service of the Divine's Work upon earth.

6.1.35



“Wealth is a force – I have already told you this once – a force of Nature; and it should be a means of circulation, a power in movement, as flowing water is a power in movement. It is something which can serve to produce, to organise. It is a convenient means, because in fact it is only a means of making things circulate fully and freely.

“This force should be in the hands of those who know how to make the best possible use of it, that is, as I said at the beginning, people who have abolished in themselves or in some way or other got rid of every personal desire and every attachment. To this should be added a vision vast enough to understand the needs of the earth, a knowledge complete enough to know how to organise all these needs and use this force by these means.

“If, besides this, these beings have a higher spiritual knowledge then they can utilise this force to construct gradually upon the earth what will be capable of manifesting the divine Power, Force and Grace. And then this power of money, wealth, this financial force, of which I just said that it was like a curse, would become a supreme blessing for the good of all.” ³⁵



Divine Grace; Divine Justice

*“I am Durga, goddess of the proud and strong
And Lakshmi, queen of the fair and fortunate;”*

Savitri VII.4.509

To know Mahalakshmi it helps to look once again at the action of Mahakali and compare the two. The signs of Mahakali we cannot help but observe within ourselves as well as in the world; but the action of Mahalakshmi is so fine as to pass almost unobserved – for she represents a subtler mystery of the Mahashakti’s nature – the splendour of her Love and Grace and Compassion. Mother often commented on the Mahakali forces which hasten the evolutionary movement of the world. On one occasion a disciple wrote to her inviting Mahakali’s justice as it obviously makes everything progress faster. Mother’s response is revealing.

Q: *“If truly it is Mahakali’s work, then is it to be welcomed?”*

“There is no question of welcoming destruction, but of learning the lesson it gives. ...

“She is not the only power at work in the world. There is also Love and Grace.” ³⁶

“It is for mercy and grace that one must ask, not for power and justice, because if Kali manifested what and who would remain standing!” ³⁷

Q: *“Justice, justice – where is justice?”*

“Fool! Do not call for justice – that is, for the strict consequences of your actions. Only the divine Grace can pull you out of your difficulty.” ³⁸

What then should be one’s attitude to progress? Should one not call for Mahakali to wipe out one’s dark malignancies? For how can

Mahalakshmi come if the sordidness remains, if one never cures the crookedness? The seeker is left wondering at such questions. The Goddess power who smites awake, with sharp pain when necessary, is Mahakali, and given the world's disharmonious state, it has been necessarily her forces that have acted most. Mahalakshmi works quite differently, she is Grace itself in action, she never insists but she may intervene in her compassion to mitigate the strict consequences of our actions. If we would but consciously consent to her demands for manifesting only beauty, harmony and love in ourselves she could absorb all the horrors of our lower nature and fill us with her divine harmonies. And the world would be unexpectedly transformed!



Power of Harmony

21.12.72



blessings

“God’s grace is more difficult to have or to keep than the nectar of the immortals.”³⁹

“For the Grace to help you, you must fulfil the conditions, and the very first condition is to reject all doubt, however slight. ...

“Strictly speaking, the Grace does not withdraw; people make it impossible for themselves to receive it. But you have only to take the right attitude and keep it, so that the Grace can once more do its saving work.”⁴⁰

“When someone has decided to consecrate his life to the seeking for the Divine, if he is sincere, that is to say, if the resolution is sincere and carried out sincerely, there is absolutely nothing to fear, because all that happens or will happen to him will lead him by the shortest way to this realization.

“That is the response of the Grace. People believe that the Grace means making everything smooth for all your life. It is not true.

“The Grace works for the realisation of your aspiration and everything is arranged to gain the most prompt, the quickest realisation—so there is nothing to fear.

“Fear comes with insincerity. If you want a comfortable life, agreeable circumstances, etc., you are putting conditions and restrictions, and then you can fear.

“But it has no business in the sadhana!”⁴¹



Divine Compassion

It is not a mere fable that the Divine accepts to absorb the noisome **devil-stuff** of our crookedness. The Divine delivers us by taking upon her/himself the crown of thorns, the burden of the cross, Halhala the poison. The blue-throated Shiva, Neelkanth, who has swallowed the noxious poison arising out of the churned ocean, is an allegory of the Divine's dealing with an aspiring humanity. Bestir the waters of life and they will first deliver up their poisons. The manifest Divine has necessarily to take upon himself the consequences of the world's falsehood – no wonder a crucified god remains still a dominant image of divinity.



Gentleness

Q: "A divine disgust seizes upon her and she withdraws, for she is not one who insists or strives" Sweet Mother, what is a 'divine disgust'?

"Ah, my child! It is a disgust that is full of a total compassion.

"It is something that takes upon itself the bad vibrations in order to cure others of it. The consequences...(silence) of a wrong and low movement – instead of throwing it back with cold justice upon the one who has committed the mistake, it absorbs it, in order to transform it within itself, and diminishes as far as possible the material consequences of the fault committed. I believe that the old story about Shiva who had a black stain on his neck because he had swallowed all that was bad in the world, is an imaginative way of expressing this divine disgust. It made a black stain on his neck." ⁴²

But it is a glorified, a divinised, a happily harmonized vision that can finally transform our lower natures. Sri Aurobindo and Mother have embodied the whole Divine Action of replacing the law of suffering by Delight.

*A Power greater than that of Evil
can alone win the victory. It is not
a crucified but a glorified body
that will save the world*

Our age must manifest the Mahalakshmi forces – beauty, love, harmony, unity. All the obscure seeking of the world gropes towards these fulfilments. By our conscious adherence we can hasten the advent.





Harmony

21.12.72



Blessings

Harmony

*"Harmony is my aim and all that leads to harmony makes me happy."*⁴³

Mother named the centre of Auroville, Peace. From this central, dynamic and cohesive force of peace the city spirals forth. In one of the two messages on the 'Peace Area' She speaks of the importance of harmony:

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

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

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

"PEACE, HARMONY, ORDER, SELF-DISCIPLINE." 9.1.69

"There must be order and harmony in work. Even what is apparently the most insignificant thing must be done with perfect perfection, with a sense of cleanliness, beauty, harmony and order."⁴⁴

"Beyond all preferences and limitations, there is a ground of mutual understanding where all can meet and find their harmony; it is the aspiration for a divine consciousness."⁴⁵

*"A harmonious collective aspiration can change the course of circumstances."*⁴⁶

Auroville has been created as a collectivity that wants to experiment with finding means for hastening the manifestation of a spiritualized society. Its soul symbol, the Matrimandir, is a vibrant and material reminder of this fact. Auroville's psychological structures can be built therefore only upon the solid bedrock of goodwill and brotherhood. But brotherhood is something that emerges as a result of an inner growth of consciousness. When one can dwell in the harmony of a perceived oneness then it is possible to transcend outer dissonances and live in the accords of the soul. We have hardly sounded the power of these great forces: Unity and Harmony, and the immense role they must play in any Devasangha, any aspiring divine collectivity. It is out of the vast liberating spaces of the psychic and spiritualized consciousness that these idea-forces can effect their untrammelled action.



Matrimandir

Dealing with Auroville, Mother always called for agreement between individuals, for a rising above to the point of harmony and unity, as the soul basis for allowing Her Force to work on Auroville and Aurovilians.

In the Agenda, Mother discusses frequently the penetration of the forces of Harmony, and the pulsations of Divine Love into the world of falsehood and the various effects this causes. Many of these comments will be brought out when we explore the subject of the Mother of Ananda, a higher and hitherto recondite Power of the Universal Mahashakti. What follows are only a few of Mother's various remarks upon an issue which She considered of capital importance.

“Actually everything in the world is a question of equilibrium or disequilibrium, of harmony or disorder. Vibrations of harmony attract and encourage harmonious events; vibrations of disequilibrium create, as it were, a disequilibrium in circumstances (illnesses, accidents, etc.) This may be collective or individual, but the principle is the same – and so is the remedy: to cultivate in oneself order and harmony, peace and equilibrium by surrendering unreservedly to the Divine Will.”⁴⁷

“My way of seeing is somewhat different. For my consciousness the whole of life upon earth, including the human life and all its mentality, is a mass of vibrations, mostly vibrations of falsehood, ignorance and disorder, in which are more and more at work vibrations of Truth and Harmony coming from the higher regions and pushing their way through the resistance. In this vision the ego-sense and the individual assertion and separateness become quite unreal and illusory.

“When some extra confusion is created in the already existing confusion I direct upon it some special vibrations to restore as much as possible a better harmony. It is not the individuals as such that feel the ‘blow’, it is their clinging to or siding with the disharmony. In such cases there is never one side right and one side wrong, but all are to blame in the measure of their adhesion to falsehood and confusion.”⁴⁸

“There are two things ... One, for instance, which I have often observed: an illness is triggered, or a disorder is triggered, and there is a kind of . . . it isn’t a contagion (how can I explain it?), it would almost be like an ‘imitation’, but that’s not quite it. Let’s say that a certain number of cells give way; for some reason or other (there are countless reasons), they submit to the disorder – obey the disorder – and a particular point becomes ‘ill’ according to the ordinary view of illness. But that intrusion of Disorder makes itself felt everywhere, it has repercussions everywhere: whenever there is a weaker point which doesn’t resist the attack so well, it manifests. Take someone who is in the habit of getting headaches, or toothaches, or a cough, or neuralgic pains, whatever, a host of little things of that sort that come and go, increase and decrease. But if there is an attack of Disorder somewhere, a serious attack, all those little troubles reappear instantly, here, there, there . . . It’s a fact I have observed. And the opposite movement follows the same pattern: If you are able to bring to the attacked spot the true Vibration – the Vibration of Order and Harmony – and you stop the Disorder . . . all the other things are put back in order, as if automatically.

“ And that doesn’t happen through contagion, you see; it isn’t that, for instance, the blood carries the illness here or there, that’s not it; it is . . . almost like a spirit of imitation.

“But the truth is that the Harmony that keeps everything together has been attacked, it has given way, and so everything is disrupted (each thing in its own way and according to its own habit).

“I am speaking here of the body’s cells, but it’s the same thing with external events, even with world events. It’s even remarkable with regard to earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, etc.: it would seem that the entire earth is like the body; that is to say, if one point gives way and manifests Disorder, all the sensitive points suffer the same effect.

“From the human standpoint, in a crowd, it’s extraordinarily precise: the contagion of a vibration – especially vibrations of disorder (but the others, too).



“It’s an absolutely concrete demonstration of Oneness. It’s very interesting.

“It is something I have observed on the level of the body’s cells hundreds and hundreds of times. And then, you no longer have at all that mental impression of one ‘disorder added to another, which makes the problem more

difficult’ – that’s not it at all, it’s . . . if you get to the centre all the rest will be naturally restored to order. And that’s a fact: if order is restored at the centre of disorder, everything follows naturally, without your paying it any special attention.

“From the human standpoint, from the standpoint of revolutions, from the standpoint of fights, from the standpoint of wars, it’s extraordinarily accurate and precise.

“An absolutely concrete demonstration of Oneness.

“And it is this knowledge of Oneness that gives you the key.

“People wonder how, for instance, the action of one man or of one thought can restore order – this is how. Not that you have to think of all the troubled spots, no: you have to get to the centre.

“And everything will be restored to order, automatically.”⁴⁹



“It is the heart that has wings, not the head.”⁵⁰

Psychic Harmony

How can we receive the shocks and sorrows of the world with a measure of equality? The solution recommended by Sri Aurobindo and Mother is simple: to seek, discover and unite with one's soul or psychic being, which by its nature is self-surrendered to the Divine Shakti. It is when our psychic being brings with it the experience of Oneness that we truly begin to live. But first we must learn to differentiate between the desire soul, which is just a guise of the ego, and the true soul, the psychic being.

“Human beings are in the habit of basing their relationships with others on physical, vital and mental contacts; that is why there is almost always discord and suffering. If, on the contrary, they based their relationships on psychic contacts (between soul and soul), they would find that behind the troubled appearances there is a profound and lasting harmony which can express itself in all the activities of life and cause disorder and suffering to be replaced by peace and bliss.”⁵¹



Collective Harmony

“It is this secret psychic entity which is the true original Conscience in us deeper than the constructed and conventional conscience of the moralist, for it is this which points always towards Truth and Right and Beauty, towards Love and Harmony and all that is a divine possibility in us, and persists till these things become the major need of our nature. It is the psychic personality in us that flowers as the saint, the sage, the seer; when it reaches its full strength, it turns the being towards the Knowledge of Self and the Divine, towards the supreme Truth, the supreme Good, the supreme Beauty, Love and Bliss, the divine heights and largenesses, and opens us to the touch of spiritual sympathy, universality, oneness. On the contrary, where the psychic personality is weak, crude or ill-developed, the finer parts and movements in us are lacking or poor in character and power, even though the mind may be forceful and brilliant, the heart of vital emotions hard and strong and masterful, the life-force dominant and successful, the bodily existence rich and fortunate and an apparent lord and victor. It is then the outer desire-soul, the pseudo-psychic entity, that reigns and we mistake its misinterpretations of psychic suggestion and aspiration, its ideas and ideals, its desires and yearnings for true soul-stuff and wealth of spiritual experience. If the secret psychic Person can come forward into the front and, replacing the desire-soul, govern overtly and entirely and not only partially and from behind the veil this outer nature of mind, life and body, then these can be cast into soul images of what is true, right and beautiful and in the end the whole nature can be turned towards the real aim of life, the supreme victory, the ascent into spiritual existence.”⁵²



Love and Beauty

As for techniques and methods, each must find his or her own, but worshipping at the portals of Mahalakshmi will bring her sweet smiling sunshine into the hardness of the way. As long as one remembers to lift one's consciousness above the vulgar barbarisms of this utilitarian world. As long as one clear-sightedly recognizes that it is the ego that causes difficulties. And finally as long as one remains concerned with offering to the Light one's own darknesses, the path can be relatively straight and sure.

Our goal is Delight and Oneness and with the Grace of Mahalakshmi we may arrive now rather than hereafter. For the presence of Mahalakshmi heralds the manifestation of the supreme Divine Love which will manifest entirely with the Mother of Ananda.



Supramental Riches



"The general power of Delight is love and the special mould which the joy of love takes is the vision of beauty. The God-lover is the universal lover and he embraces the All-blissful and All-beautiful. When universal love has seized on his heart, it is the decisive sign that the Divine has taken possession of him; and when he has the vision of the All-beautiful everywhere and can feel at all times the bliss of his embrace, that is the decisive sign that he has taken possession of the Divine. Union is the consummation of love, but it is this mutual possession that gives it at once the acme and the largest reach of its intensity. It is the foundation of oneness in ecstasy."⁵³

"You see, Mahalakshmi is the Divine Mother's aspect of love, the perfection of manifested love, which must come before this supreme Love (which is beyond the Manifestation and the Non-manifestation) can be expressed – the supreme Love referred to in Savitri when the Supreme sends Savitri to the earth:

For ever love, O beautiful slave of God! XI.1.702

It is to prepare the earth to receive the Supreme's manifestation, the manifestation of his Victory."⁵⁴



Beauty

And so we come to the end of another journey. Mahalakshmi, the Mother's third great Power, whom Sri Aurobindo describes as **"vivid and sweet and wonderful with her deep secret of beauty and harmony and fine rhythm, her intricate and subtle opulence, her compelling attraction and captivating grace"**⁵⁵ can hardly be explored suitably in a mere few pages. What are presented here are but hints and guideposts.

In the future we will return to some of these attributes when we explore the mysterious Mother of Ananda, the Mother of a supreme divine Love and the powerful ecstasy and Ananda which flows from it. She is one personality of the Mahashakti who has not stood out in front with so much prominence in the evolution of the earth-spirit. But yet She has a special link with the Matrimandir.

The aspect of the Universal Mother that will be highlighted in the next Journal is Her Power of Work and spirit of perfection and order: Mahasaraswati is the fourth and youngest of the four embodied by Maheshwari; Mahakali and Mahalakshmi.



*"Breaking the silence with appeal and cry
A hymn of adoration tireless climbed,
A music beat of winged uniting souls,
Then all the woman yearningly replied:
'Thy embrace with rends the living knot of pain,
Thy joy, O Lord, in which all creatures breathe,
Thy magic flowing waters of deep love,
Thy sweetness give to me for earth and men.'"*

Savitri XI.I.697

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