

# Matrimandir

Matrimandir Journal

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ॐ आनन्दमायि चैतन्यमायि सत्यमायि परमै  
OM anandamayi chaitanyemayi  
satyamayi parama  
Ari Anubandya

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



Aditi

## The Divine Shakti

All yogas are methodised efforts at self-perfection, at union, at a recovery of an original consciousness of Oneness. They may differ in degree, action and result, for three major reasons: firstly, because of the particular aspect of the Supreme with whom union, static or dynamic, is sought; secondly due to the part of the instrumental nature through which this purpose is to be achieved; and finally, because of the particular method that is to be applied. *Siddhi* depends upon this aim, instrument and method. No yoga has ever attempted so integral a change as to arrive at a permanent and irreversible transformation of consciousness, action and instrumentation so as to give birth to a new being that transcends, once and for all, its separative consciousness up to the cellular level of the body. This implies the bringing in of a dynamic divine consciousness-power which will govern even in the minutest detail man's life and action. It is not merely something that constitutes a *siddhi* but is rather a full mutation.

A complete and irrevocable transmutation of the physical nature, into

the forms of the divine being has never been seen as possible. Yet it was this task upon which Sri Aurobindo embarked when he set his sadhana's sail upon the oceans of the Infinite. Such a realization demanded a thorough and exhaustive exploration of all the worlds and a mastery of all the planes of being. In Sri Aurobindo one discovers the comprehensive geographer of the Infinite. To create the pathways to a divine life, these uncharted inner continents were meticulously mapped by Sri Aurobindo and by Mother who continued the yoga into the cellular regions of the body consciousness. The entire complexity of domains, planes and parts which constitute this ladder of worlds descending into the nescience of matter and rising up into the heights of the superconscience stand unveiled. Their endeavour hewed out tracks in virgin inner-scapes which have created discoverable pathways for all those who now wish to dedicate themselves to this greatest of adventures.

We who are turned to their yoga can uncover and trace passages for our own journey into the inner countries. As we embark upon the quest to illumine and transmute our unknown depths, we find ourselves guided and protected by many signposts and beacons that shorten the route. The sun-lit paths have been created – we may well tread them if we choose. Sri Aurobindo has repeatedly asserted that the yoga of transformation cannot be done by the effort, however great, of the little human individual – it is the descent of the Mahashakti's powers alone that can bring about the needed change. Conditions can be consciously created for such a descent. Therefore, our exploration continues; in search of more illuminations, lights, clarities, and signals for aspirant mariners sailing through the many worlds of the Divine Shakti.

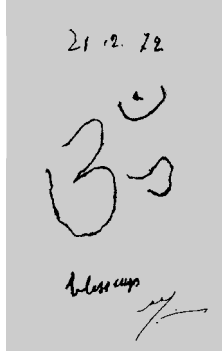
***“It is thus by an integralisation of our divided being that the Divine Shakti in the Yoga will proceed to its object; for liberation, perfection, mastery are dependent on this integralisation, since the little wave on the surface cannot control its own movement, much less have any true control over the vast life around it. The Shakti, the power of the Infinite and the Eternal descends within us, works, breaks up our present psychological formations, shatters every wall, widens, liberates, presents us with always newer and greater powers of vision ideation,***

***perception and newer and greater life-motives, enlarges and new-models increasingly the soul and its instruments, confronts us with every imperfection in order to convict and destroy it, opens to a greater perfection, does in a brief period the work of many lives or ages, so that new births and new vistas open constantly within us. Expansive in her action, she frees the consciousness from confinement in the body; it can go out in trance or sleep or even waking and enter into worlds or other regions of this world and act there or carry back its experience. It spreads out, feeling the body only as a small part of itself, and begins to contain what before contained it; achieves the cosmic consciousness and extends itself to be commensurate with the universe. It begins to know inwardly and directly and not merely by external observation and contact the forces at play in the world, feels their movement, distinguishes their functioning and can operate immediately upon them as the scientist operates upon physical forces, accept their action and results in our mind, life, body and reject them or modify, change, reshape, create immense new powers and movements in place of the old small functionings of the nature. We begin to perceive the working of the forces of universal Mind and to know how our thoughts are created by that working, separate from within the truth and falsehood of our perceptions, enlarge their field, extend and illumine their significance, become master of our own mind and action and capable and active to shape the movements of Mind in the world around us. We begin to perceive the flow and surge of the universal life forces, detect the origin and law of our feelings, emotions sensations, passions, are free to accept, reject, new-create, rise to higher planes of Life-Power. We begin to perceive too the key to the enigma of Matter, follow the interplay of Mind and Life and Consciousness upon it, discover more and more its instrumental and resultant function and detect ultimately the last secret of Matter as a form not merely of Energy but of involved and arrested or unstably fixed and restricted consciousness and begin to see too the possibility of its liberation and plasticity of response to higher Powers, its possibilities of the conscious and no longer the more than half-inconscient incarnation and self-expression of the Spirit. All this and more becomes more and more possible as***

*the working of the Divine Shakti increases in us and, against much resistance or labour to respond of our obscure consciousness, through much struggle and movement of progress and regression and renewed progress necessitated by the work of intensive transformation of a half-inconscient into a conscious substance, moves to a greater purity, truth, height, range. All depends on the psychic awakening in us, the completeness of our response to her and our growing surrender.”<sup>1</sup>*



1972



## *The Conditions for Integral Yoga*

All Yoga is acceleration. But the Integral Yoga's processes aim at compressing our common mud, our earth-bound littleness into the diamond that nature's customary methods would need evolutionary millennia to achieve. If we but nurture within the psychic awakening and make ever more complete our response and surrender to her, then all that Sri Aurobindo speaks of in the above passage from *The Synthesis of Yoga* becomes possible in this body and in this life-time. The Divine Shakti first shapes and then chisels out of our dull clod-like material nature, a perfectly faceted diamond. Indeed, her methods and processes can be so vast and multiform, embracing simultaneously all the planes and parts of the being, that it may appear as if she follows no system. Are there some guide-posts, some steps, and some general indications that can explain her perplexing movements? While this Journal's itinerary will explore many statements made by Sri Aurobindo and Mother on the subject of the Integral Yoga and its processes, we commence with some essential advice from Mother:

***“When you come to the Yoga, you must be ready to have all your mental buildings and all your vital scaffoldings shattered to pieces. You must be prepared to be suspended in the air with nothing to support you except your faith. You will have to forget your past self all together, to pluck it out of your consciousness and be born anew, free from every kind of bondage. Think not of what you were, but of what you aspire to be; be altogether in what you want to realise. Turn from your dead past and look straight towards the future. Your religion, country, family lie there; it is the DIVINE.”<sup>2</sup>***

***“In Sri Aurobindo's Integral yoga, there are no such rigid rules and distinctions. Each one follows his own path and has his own experiences. Nevertheless, Sri Aurobindo has often said and written that his yoga begins where the others leave off.***

*“This is to say that yoga ordinarily consists in awakening the physical consciousness and making it rise gradually towards the Divine. Whereas Sri Aurobindo has said that to do his yoga, one must already have found the Divine and united with Him – then the consciousness descends through all the states of being down to the most material, bringing the Divine Force with it so that the Force can transform the whole being and finally divinise the physical body.”*



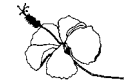
1972

## Matrimandir and Integral Yoga

*The Matrimandir wants to be the  
symbol of the Universal Mother according  
to Sri Aurobindo's teaching*



Viewed outwardly, it might be asked what connection there is between Matrimandir and an exploration and analysis of the Integral Yoga. The Matrimandir is not merely a monument at the centre of Auroville which houses a meditation room and is to be surrounded by beautiful gardens and trees. In itself, first and foremost, it is a spiritual symbol, one that wants to embody both an aspiration and a response: the *human aspiration* which rises up and the *Divine's response to man's aspiration for perfection*, as Mother said of it. A spiritual symbol risks to be, a void blankness, unless the thing it symbolises is experienced within as a living and dynamic power able to reorder the axis of the being around its inmost truth. The Matrimandir symbol, Mother has said, is based upon the teaching of Sri Aurobindo. To activate its power in our individual and collective consciousness we have necessarily to attempt to know comprehensively Sri Aurobindo and his action. Such has been the quest of successive Matrimandir Journals, each of which has taken up an aspect, a topic, or a focus in an effort to create a vast symphonic movement towards inner truths that must be lived if Auroville is to be what Mother wanted of it to be.



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# Integral Yoga and Salvation

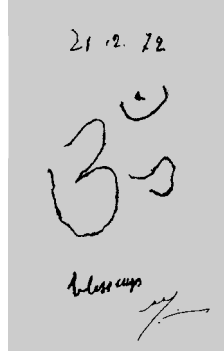
In the process of self-observation, some questions every seeker ought to ask are: Why does one turn to the Divine? Why does one take up sadhana? Is it to improve and ennoble one's human substance? Is it for one's own 'salvation' or for 'doing good' in and to the world? Is it to bring a divine descent into one's individual being? Such attitudes and positions, left unaddressed, may become a source of weakness later. A rigorous effort at clarifying one's aim can only improve the quality of one's development. One may recall Yajnavalkya's instruction in the Upanishad that it is not for any reason, however lofty, that the Self is sought; one should seek the Self solely for the sake of the Self alone. In the Integral Yoga, whatever one's claim to knowledge or power of action, no sadhak is allowed to forget that as long as the irrevocable transformation has not come about, one is merely a more or less ignorant and imperfect human creature. In a stark amplification on the subject, Mother responds to a question about depriving the world of 'capacities' by coming to the Ashram for one's salvation.

***"Nobody comes here for his own salvation because Sri Aurobindo does not believe in salvation; for us salvation is a meaningless word. We are here to prepare the transformation of the earth and men so that the new creation may take place, and if we make individual efforts to progress, it is because this progress is indispensable for the accomplishment of the work.***

***"I am surprised that after having lived in the Ashram for so long, you can still think in this way and be open to this Sunday-school drivel.***

***"I am sending you a quotation from Sri Aurobindo which will perhaps help to enlighten your thought:***

***'It is equally ignorant and one thousand miles away from my teaching to find it in your relations with human beings or in the nobility of the human character or an idea that we are here to establish mental and moral and social Truth and justice on human***



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***and egoistic lines. I have never promised to do anything of the kind. Human nature is made up of imperfections, even its righteousness and virtue are pretensions, imperfections and prancings of self-approbatory egoism ... What is aimed at by us is a spiritual truth as the basis of life, the first words of which are surrender and union with the Divine and the transcendence of ego. So long as that basis is not established, a sadhak is only an ignorant and imperfect human being struggling with the evils of the lower nature.'*** "4



1972

*"A dark concealed hostility is lodged  
In the human depths, in the hidden heart of Time  
That claims the right to change and mar God's work."  
Savitri VI.2.447*

## The Tree of Knowledge

In spite of all that has been repeatedly stated there yet remains a sort of romantic belief that human substance, as it is, can be made to achieve some sort of pinnacle which will give rise to a new being, or to a new moral, social and spiritual order. This is an illusion which completely ignores the inconscient roots of human nature. What is perhaps more problematic is that such attitudes set back to some future date the need for a thorough change of the present status of human consciousness. Sri Aurobindo has categorically asserted that the only way to achieve this permanent reversal



1972

of consciousness, to prevent once and for all a 'sliding back', is to bring into dynamic action the hitherto unmanifest supramental consciousness. Even the domain of the great Gods, the Overmind, which is the highest mind plane, is not capable of wiping out these perverse unfound roots. The Supramental is a plane of consciousness beyond all mental mixture. The Supramental is Truth-Force in action which, once brought into active play, can illumine and progressively transmute these inconscient roots.

***"The tree of the knowledge of good and evil with its sweet and bitter fruits is secretly rooted in the very nature of the Inconscience from which our being has emerged and on which it still stands as a nether soil and basis of our physical existence; it has grown visibly on the surface in the manifold branchings of the Ignorance which is still the main bulk and condition of our consciousness in its difficult evolution towards a supreme consciousness and an integral awareness. As long as there is this soil with the unfound roots in it and this nourishing air and climate of Ignorance, the tree will grow and flourish and put forth its dual blossoms and its fruit of mixed nature. It would follow that there can be no final solution until we have turned our inconscience into the greater consciousness, made the truth of self and spirit our life-basis and transformed our ignorance into a higher knowledge. All other expedients will only be makeshifts or blind issues; a complete and radical transformation of our nature is the only true solution".***<sup>5</sup>



*"By the Truth-Consciousness, I mean a dynamic divine consciousness. This Power must govern even the minutest detail of the life and action of man. The question is to bring it down and establish it on earth and keep it pure. For there is a gravitation pull downwards. So the spiritual power must be such that it can not only resist but overcome that pull."*

*Sri Aurobindo*

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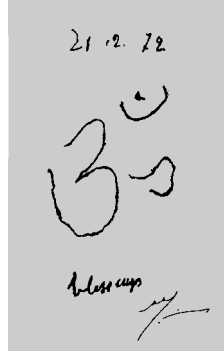
# Incarnation Not the Aim

*"A soul made ready through a thousand years  
Is the living mould of a supreme Descent."*

*Savitri V.2.308*

This 'complete and radical transformation of our nature' is what Sri Aurobindo dedicated his whole life to achieving, and for which he finally chose to sacrifice his bodily existence. There is an ancient knowledge in India which acknowledges that when an individual being rises up to the point of union with the Divine a descent may also take place to create the embodiment of the Supreme's Action in matter. Such supreme descents in a representative individual generally take place at an evolutionary moment and for a specific purpose. This is the spiritual symbol in the allegory of the Dashavatara – the ten incarnations of Vishnu. Indian tradition accepts that the Avatar manifests to help the totality rise into a new phase of progressive development. Viewed from such a perspective one can perceive that there have indeed been great stages of the supreme incarnations on earth; and at least some have been recognized to be so. The present idea of a spiritual mutation for the species clearly represents a transition. One may well ask: What happens after the Supreme descent has taken place and the Truth-Consciousness has been established in matter? What is the relation between incarnations and the Integral Yoga?

With reference to this subject, in a particularly significant letter, Sri Aurobindo asserts that '**incarnation is not the object of this yoga**'. At best it can be a condition or a means towards the object of bringing down and establishing the Supramental Truth-Consciousness. Were the seven suns to descend into all the seven centres, he states, it would still not necessarily add up to the irrevocable supramental transformation that transcends mental mixture. What matters even a hundred incarnations – he exclaims – if the Truth that is sought cannot be possessed and flawlessly embodied! This letter clearly delineates not only the severe demands of the yoga; it demonstrates an altogether radical perspective, unique to Sri



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Aurobindo. Up until the present, to incarnate a divine being in an individual human vessel would be considered the very summit of possibility. In this yoga the contrary seems truer! Were the gods themselves to descend to participate in the work and even take up a human body, their service would

rest in their divine capacity to rapidly transmute their part of the inconscience. The measure of their godhood would be in the relative speed of work on their own material substance and their capacity to diffuse and pervade all with the light to which they have greater access.

The aim of bodily existence is not to shine brilliantly, but rather to make oneself humbly serviceable. The force to be brought down is so high and so intense as to make the possibility for error and deviation very great. We find therefore, in Sri Aurobindo's letter, an insistence on the special qualities needed: a great patience, calm, sobriety, balance, an impersonal detachment and sincerity **free from all taint of ego or personal human desire**.

Here also we may perceive the spiritual explanation of why, in Sri Aurobindo's yoga, there is an absolute absence of the customary 'inheritors', the so called continuators; the 'chosen' who are meant to 'lead' the faithful into the future. There are merely tasks to be fulfilled and it is certainly not the most visible or the most prominent, who are necessarily the most advanced. In fact, a close reading of this letter may even suggest that to assume oneself to be specially 'chosen' might in this yoga be the greatest snare and delusion!

***"One thing must be said—that an incarnation is not the object of this yoga; it is only a condition or means towards the object. The one and the only aim we have before us is to bring down the supramental Consciousness and the supramental Truth into the world; the Truth and nothing but the Truth is our aim, and if we cannot embody this Truth, a hundred incarnations do not matter. But to bring down the true supramental, to escape from all mental mixture is not an easy matter. The mere descent of the suns into the centres, even of all the seven suns into all the seven centres is only the seed; it is not the thing itself done***

and finished. One may feel the descent of the suns, one may have the attempt, the beginning of an incarnation, and yet in the end one may fail, if there is a flaw in the nature or a failure to pass through all the ordeals and satisfy all the hard conditions of the perfect spiritual success. Not only the whole mental, vital and physical nature of the ignorant human being has to be overcome and transformed, but also the three states of mental consciousness which intervene between the human and the supramental and like all mind are capable of admitting great and capital errors. Till then there may be descents of the supramental influence, light, power, Ananda, but the supramental Truth cannot be possessed, organised, put in possession of the whole nature.

**“One must not think before that that one possesses the supermind, for that is a delusion which would prevent the fulfilment. One thing more. The more intense the experiences that come, the higher the forces that descend, the greater become the possibilities of deviation and error. For the very intensity and the very height of the force excites and aggrandises the movements of the lower nature and raises up in it all opposing elements in their full force, but often in the disguise of truth, wearing a mask of plausible justification. There is needed a great patience, calm, sobriety, balance, an impersonal detachment and sincerity free from all taint of ego or personal human desire. There must be no attachment to any idea of one’s own, to any experience, to any kind of imagination, mental building or vital demand; the light of discrimination must always play to detect those things, however fair or plausible they may seem. Otherwise, the Truth will have no chance of establishing itself in its purity in the nature.”**<sup>6</sup>



*“O soul it is too early to rejoice!  
Thou has reached the boundless silence of the self,  
Thou has leapt into a glad divine abyss;  
But where hast thou thrown self’s mission and self’s power?”*

*Savitri III.2.310*

## A Perfect Spiritual Consciousness

And Mother offers us a perfect litmus test to verify the purity of a nature that may allow the Truth to establish itself. As long as there is the least personal reaction, even the slightest spiritual preference, as long as there is not perfect neutrality, the consciousness, however advanced and luminous it may appear, can be said to be still on the way. And, as Sri Aurobindo has explained, the possibility for errors and deviations is all the greater the more one ascends! One has only to think of what happens to an aeroplane flying at tremendous speeds: the most infinitesimal wobble can result in an uncontrolled spin – this is after all the basis of aerobatics – imagine what can happen to a consciousness travelling inwardly at a similar high speed. Until one arrives at the point of identity, of being there, one is always in movement. And the more one advances the more calamitous can be the effects of the spin arising from the slightest orientations, preferences and attachments. Apropos, the allegory of the fallen angel, Lucifer, the brightest of them all, is not without deep spiritual significance.

**“To have the perfect and total consciousness of the world as it is in all its details, one must first cease to have any personal reactions towards any of its details, AND EVEN ANY SPIRITUAL PREFERENCE of how they should be. In other words, a total acceptance in a perfect neutrality and indifference is the indispensable condition to have knowledge through integral identity. If there is one detail, however small that escapes neutrality, that detail also escapes identification.”**<sup>7</sup>

In 1924 in a conversation of Sri Aurobindo recorded in the *Evening Talks* by one of his early disciples, AB Purani, there is a little piece that confirms the devastating effect of any weak point. The yoga of transformation is a perilous endeavour which cannot be embarked upon lightly. Simple,



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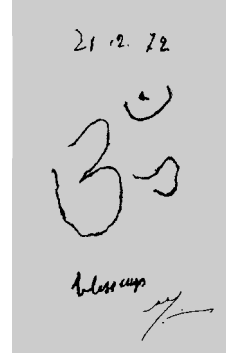
humble people with few pretensions to spiritual status do appear to fare better; a great purity of nature and of purpose seems the sole protection.

***“On the physical plane something you have not worked out turns up and shows that your conquest is not complete. That is why the process takes such a long time. You must establish the higher consciousness IN EVERY ATOM OF THE BODY, otherwise what happens is that something escapes your view in the hidden depth of the lower physical being which is known to the hostile forces, and they can attack through that weak point. They can create a combination of circumstances which would give rise to the thing not worked out and before you can control them they are already beyond control. In that case they can destroy you.”***<sup>8</sup>

The true measure of service in this Divine Work is to become egoless and universalized. But then such a being may have no more a personal place in the world – he may cease to be ‘noticed’ anymore. No wonder it is said that the Superman may perhaps be present and active amongst us and be the very one least recognized!

***“One who is no longer egoistic, no longer has any personal place in this world. That is to say, in exact proportion to his impersonality, this personal world no longer has any personal relations with him. He is in relation with the world, with beings and things only as universal and non-individual forces are; like them, he acts in all, animates all, supports all, but in a general way he is completely ignored by all that he animates, supports and sets in motion.***

***It is not he who no longer wants the world, it is the world that no longer wants him or, rather, that no longer even notices that he exists.”***<sup>9</sup>

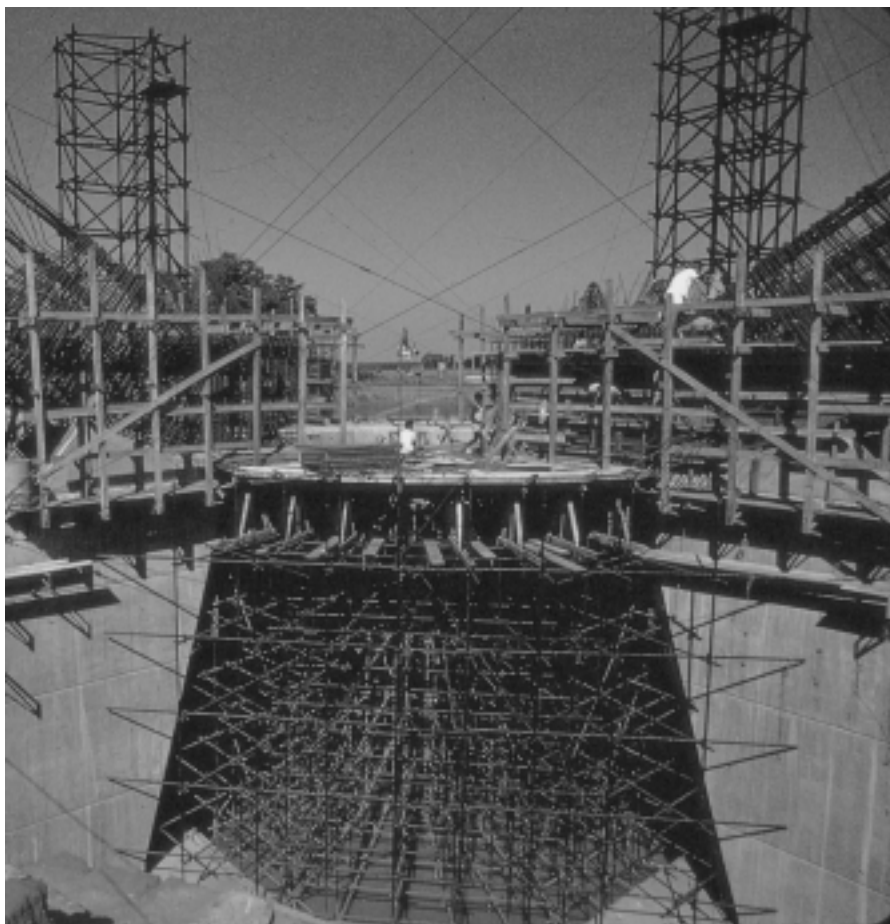


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## Integral Yoga's Aim

Whence have come these fundamentally altered yogic necessities that one finds in Sri Aurobindo? The answer lies in the radical aim of this Yoga. In the very early stages of his sadhana, Sri Aurobindo arrived at experiences that are normally considered the culmination of yogic siddhis. And yet he saw that something was missing – a key was still to be found; something that could irrevocably change the structure of the present manifestation. The solution to this problem Sri Aurobindo found in a hitherto unmanifest plane of consciousness – that ‘fourth one’; the *Turiyam Svid* of the Veda – a plane of Truth-Consciousness which he called the Supermind. His whole effort was therefore focused upon bringing it down to act dynamically in the material world. To achieve this, it became necessary for him to descend into the nether planes of consciousness, to discover, in the dark and inconscient roots of being the secret of the solution. It is this extraordinary journey that provides us with a map of the worlds. In his writings one discovers extensive descriptions of the seven worlds that constitute the seven-fold cord of nature. Sri Aurobindo found an upper hemisphere and a lower one, separated in the middle by the Supermind. Above in the superconscience, were the worlds of Sat, Chit and Ananda and below the worlds of mind and life and body. In the old yogas the ascent generally stopped with the realization of Samadhi in the spiritual mind, there was little effort to bring the higher planes as a transmuting force into the lower. Sri Aurobindo, on the other hand, sought the Truth-Consciousness in its dynamic aspect; he wanted it to govern, in the minutest detail, life and action in the material creation. Thus the whole effort was: to bring the Supramental down; establish it as a dynamic and active force on earth and keep it pure. It is often said therefore, that Sri Aurobindo's Yoga begins where the others stop. Given all these revolutionary new ideas, many of the early disciples had innumerable questions to ask of the Master. In response to such queries, Sri Aurobindo undertook a prodigious correspondence. In his *Letters on Yoga* we find so many elucidations to illumine our own questions.

*“This yoga aims at the conscious union with the Divine in the supermind and the transformation of the nature. The ordinary yogas go straight from Mind into some featureless condition of the cosmic silence and through it try to disappear upward into the Highest. The object of this yoga is to transcend Mind and enter into the Divine Truth of Sachchidananda which is not only static but dynamic and raise the whole being into that truth.”<sup>10</sup>*



1973

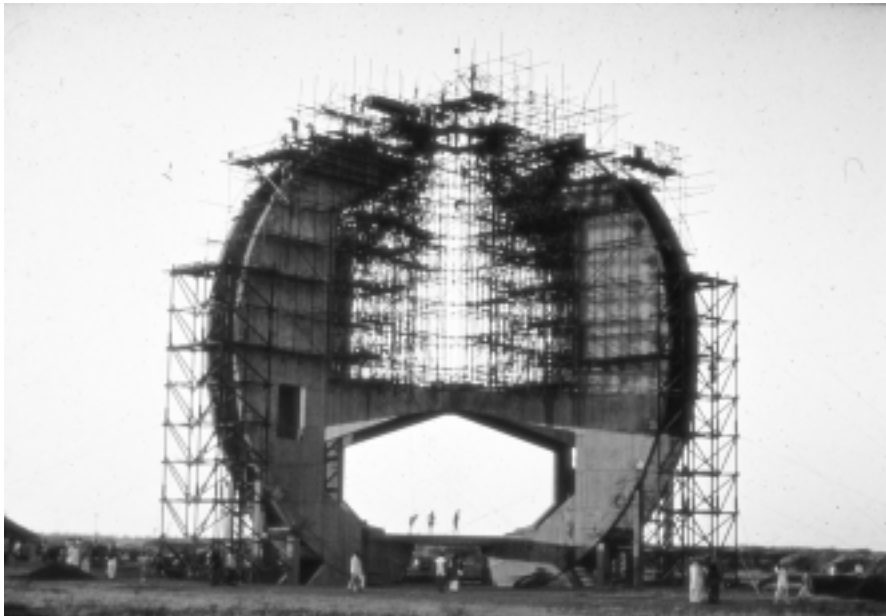
*“In the former yogas it was the experience of the Spirit which is always free and one with the Divine that was sought. The nature had to change only enough to prevent its being an obstacle to that knowledge and experience. The complete change down to the physical was only sought for by a few and then more as a “siddhi” than anything else, not as the manifestation of a new Nature in the earth-consciousness.”<sup>11</sup>*

*“There are many planes above man’s mind,—the supramental is not the only one, and on all of them the Self can be realised,—for they are all spiritual planes. Mind, vital and physical are inextricably mixed together only on the surface consciousness—the inner mind, inner vital, inner physical are separated from each other. Those who seek the Self by the old yogas separate themselves from mind, life and body and realise the self of it all as different from these things. It is perfectly easy to separate mind, vital and physical from each other without the aid of supermind. It is done by the ordinary yogas.*

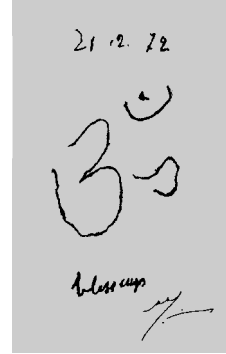
*“The difference between this and the old yogas is not that they are incompetent and cannot do these things—they can do this perfectly well—but that they proceed from realisation of Self to Nirvana or some Heaven and abandon life, while this does not abandon life. The supramental is necessary for the transformation of terrestrial life and being, not for reaching the Self. One must realise Self first, only afterwards can one realise the supermind.”<sup>12</sup>*

*“Transformation is a word I have brought in myself to express certain spiritual concepts and spiritual facts of the integral Yoga. ... What I mean by spiritual transformation is something dynamic (not merely liberation of the Self or realisation of the One which can very well be attained without any descent). It is a putting on of the spiritual consciousness dynamic as well as static in every part of the being down to the subconscious. That cannot be done by the influence of the Self leaving the consciousness fundamentally as it is with only purification, enlightenment of the mind and heart and quiescence of the vital. It means a bringing down of the Divine Consciousness static and dynamic into all these parts and the entire replacement of the present*

*consciousness by that. This we find unveiled and unmixed above mind, life and body. ... It is my experience that nothing short of its full descent can thoroughly remove the veil and mixture and effect the full spiritual transformation. No metaphysical or logical reasoning in the void as to what the Atman 'must' do or can do or needs or needs not to do is relevant here or of any value. I may add that transformation is not the central object of other paths as it is of this Yoga – only so much purification and change is demanded by them as will lead to liberation and the beyond-life. The full influence of the Atman can no doubt do that – a full descent of a new consciousness into the whole nature from top to bottom to transform life here is not needed at all for the spiritual escape from life.”<sup>13</sup>*



1977



*“A mutual debt binds man to the Supreme:  
His nature we must put on as he put ours;  
We are sons of God and must be even as he:  
His human portion, we must grow divine.  
Our life is a paradox with God for key.”*

*Savitri I.4.67*

## *The Yoga in the Physical*

The traditional yogas aimed at an inner and spiritual escape from life – they never concerned themselves with the inconscient nether roots of the material existence. To change the nature from top to bottom was never at issue; only so much purification was needed that led to liberation in the beyond-life. Thus they never needed to bring the force they met above in the superconscience down into the material planes. But integral transformation, the transformation of the body and its activities demands a radically different stance. A whole new dimension – a corresponding descent for every ascent—had to be brought in. What does this imply? We look at Mother’s words to have another elucidation of what Sri Aurobindo is proposing.

*“Unless one practises yoga in the physical being (outer being), it remains ignorant – even its aspiration is ignorant and so is its goodwill; all its movements are ignorant and so they distort and disfigure the Divine Presence. That is why the yoga of the body-cells is indispensable.”<sup>14</sup>*

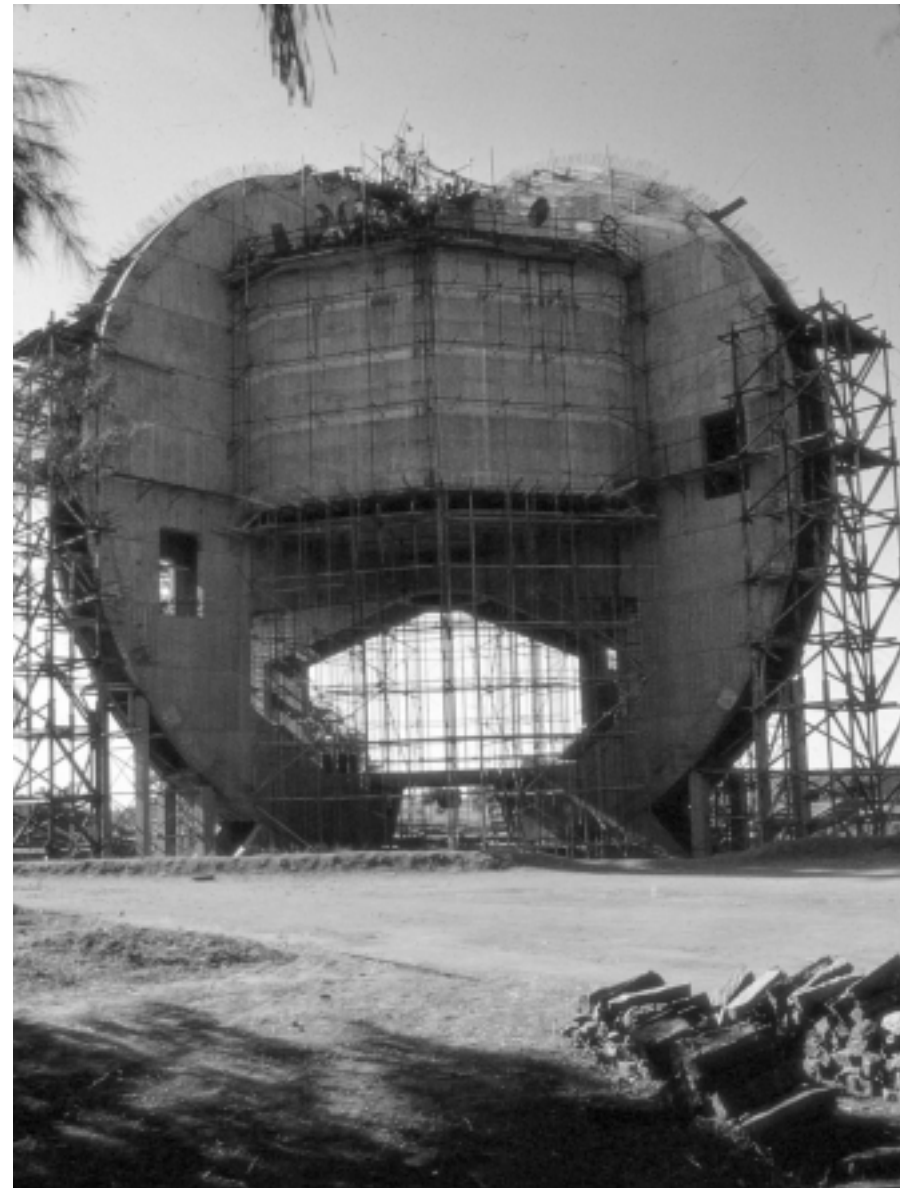
*“We want an integral transformation, the transformation of the body and all its activities.*

*“Formerly, when one spoke of transformation one meant solely the transformation of the inner consciousness. One tried to discover in oneself this deep consciousness and rejected the body and its activities like an encumbrance and a useless thing, in order to attend only to the inner movement. Sri Aurobindo declared that this was not enough; the Truth demanded that the material world should also participate in this*

*transformation and become an expression of the deeper Truth. But when people heard this, many thought that it was possible to transform the body and its activities without bothering in the least about what was happening within – naturally this is not quite true. Before you can undertake this work of physical transformation, which of all things is the most difficult, your inner consciousness must be firmly established, solidly established in the Truth, so that this transformation may be the final expression of the Truth – ‘final’ for the moment at least.*

*“The starting-point of this transformation is receptivity; we have already spoken about it. That is the indispensable condition for obtaining the transformation. Then comes the change of consciousness. This change of consciousness and its preparation have often been compared with the formation of the chicken in the egg: till the very last second the egg remains the same, there is no change, and it is only when the chicken is completely formed, absolutely alive, that it itself makes with its little beak a hole in the shell and comes out. Something similar takes place at the moment of the change of consciousness. For a long time you have the impression that nothing is happening, that your consciousness is the same as usual, and, if you have an intense aspiration, you even feel a resistance, as though you were knocking against a wall which does not yield. But when you are ready within, a last effort – the pecking in the shell of the being – and everything opens and you are projected into another consciousness.*

*I said that it was a revolution of the basic equilibrium, that is, a total reversal of consciousness comparable with what happens to light when it passes through a prism. Or it is as though you were turning a ball inside out, which cannot be done except in the fourth dimension. One comes out of the ordinary three-dimensional consciousness to enter the higher four-dimensional consciousness, and into an infinite number of dimensions. This is the indispensable starting-point. Unless your consciousness changes its dimension, it will remain just what it is with the superficial vision of things, and all the profundities will escape you.”<sup>15</sup>*



1978

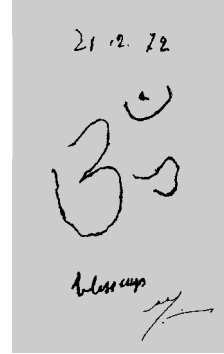
*"I have been digging deep and long  
Mid a horror of filth and mire  
A bed for the golden river's song  
A home for the deathless fire."  
A God's Labour*

## A God's Labour

As the letter that follows illustrates, Sri Aurobindo had often to respond to accusations of his (and the Supramental's) supposed divinely impersonal aloofness!

***"The traditions of the past are very great in their own place, in the past, but I do not see why we should merely repeat them and not go farther. In the spiritual development of the consciousness upon earth the great past ought to be followed by a greater future. ...***

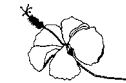
***"I am concerned with the earth, not with worlds beyond for their own sake; it is a terrestrial realisation that I seek and not a flight to distant summits. All other yogas regard this life as an illusion or a passing phase; the supramental yoga alone regards it as a thing created by the Divine for a progressive manifestation and takes the fulfilment of the life and the body for its object. The supramental is simply the Truth-Consciousness and what it brings in its descent is the full truth of life, the full truth of consciousness in Matter. One has indeed to rise to high summits to reach it, but the more one rises, the more one can bring down below. No doubt, life and body have not to remain the ignorant, imperfect, impotent things they are now; but why should a change to fuller life-power, fuller body-power be considered something aloof, cold and undesirable? The utmost Ananda the body and life are now capable of is a brief excitement of the vital mind or the nerves or the cells which is limited, imperfect and soon passes: with the supramental change all the cells, nerves, vital forces, embodied mental forces can become filled with a thousand fold Ananda, capable of an intensity of bliss which passes description and which need not fade away. How aloof,***



***repellent and undesirable! The supramental love means an intense unity of soul with soul, mind with mind, life with life, and an entire flooding of the body consciousness with the physical experience of oneness, the presence of the Beloved in every part, in every cell of the body. Is that too something aloof and grand but undesirable? With the supramental change, the very thing on which you insist, the possibility of the free physical meeting of the embodied Divine with the sadhak without conflict of forces and without undesirable reactions becomes possible, assured and free. That too is, I suppose, something aloof and undesirable? I could go on—for pages, but this is enough for the moment."***<sup>16</sup>

As for Sri Aurobindo himself, all accounts speak of the sheer understatedness and quietude of his way of being. Was it this that created the impression of lofty distance? He never raised his voice, it is said, and seldom if ever asked for anything. Of himself he spoke little, but sometimes, a hint of what he was going through shows itself. It is marvellous therefore to meet him through his letters – particularly those in which he is making a devastatingly forceful point! One interesting detail that suggests itself is that sometimes the divine himself may disguise from himself the next step to be taken; perhaps such a veiling is necessitated by the evolutionary movement. One finds, here and there, remarks from the Master, so revealing of the God's labour he undertook. The pathway he was called upon to tread was not wholly 'made known' to him initially. At what personal cost did he clean out the Augean inconscient stables we shall not know; for he never really said and that august presence, photographed upon the armchair, reveals little in its majestic calm:

***"It is a Herculean labour, for, when one enters there, it is a sort of an unexplored continent. Previous Yogis came down to the vital. If I had been made to see it before, probably I would have been less enthusiastic."***<sup>17</sup>



*"He who would bring the heavens here  
Must descend himself into clay  
And the burden of earthly nature bear  
And tread the dolorous way.  
Coercing my godhead I have come down  
Here on the sordid earth,  
Ignorant, labouring, human grown  
Twixt the gates of death and birth. ...  
My gaping wounds are thousand and one  
And the titan kings assail,  
But I cannot rest till my task is done  
And wrought the eternal will."*

*A God's Labour*

## *Purifying The Inconscient*

*"This earth is full of the anguish of the gods;  
Ever they travail driven by Time's goad,  
And strive to work out the eternal will  
And shape the life divine in mortal forms."*

*Savitri VI.2.444*

Two letters from Sri Aurobindo, written in 1947 and 1948 illustrate the difficulties this yoga gives rise to. They may perhaps shed some light on his decision in 1950 to 'withdraw' from the body and enter consciously into Death. Looking at the outward conditions of the world it seems that much is still to be done and the last 50 odd years have only continued the purificatory processes – the world does not yet appear to have emerged from the dark glutinous mud of the churned inconscient.

***"I am afraid I can hold out but cold comfort – for the present at least – to those of your correspondents who are lamenting the present state of things. Things are bad, are growing worse and may at any time grow worse than worst if that is possible – and anything however paradoxical seems possible in the present perturbed world. The best thing for them is to realise that all this was necessary because certain possibilities had to emerge and be got rid of, if a new and better world was at all to come into being; it would not have done to postpone them for a later time. It is, as in Yoga, where things active or latent in the being have to be put into action in the light so that they may be grappled with and thrown out or to emerge from latency in the depths for the same purificatory purpose. Also they can remember the adage that night is darkest before dawn and that the new world whose coming we envisage is not to be made of the same texture as the old and different only in pattern, and that it must come by other means – from within and not from without; so the best way is not to be too much preoccupied with the lamentable things that are happening outside, but themselves to grow within so that they may be ready for the new world, whatever form it may take."*** <sup>18</sup>



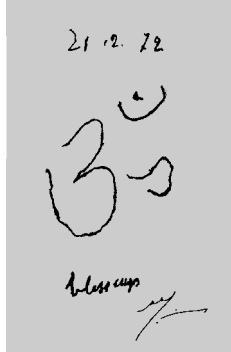
1979

*“The extreme acuteness of your difficulties is due to the Yoga having come down against the bed-rock of Inconscience which is the fundamental basis of all resistance in the individual and in the world to the victory of the Spirit and the Divine Work that is leading toward that victory. The difficulties themselves are general in the Ashram as well as in the outside world. Doubt, discouragement, diminution or loss of faith, waning of the vital enthusiasm for the ideal, perplexity and baffling of the hope for the future are common features of the difficulty. In the world outside there are much worse symptoms such as the general increase of cynicism, a refusal to believe in anything at all, a decrease of honesty, an immense corruption, a preoccupation with food, money, comfort, pleasure, to the exclusion of higher things, and a general expectation of worse and worse things awaiting the world. All that, however acute, is a temporary phenomenon for which those who know anything about the workings of the world-energy and the workings of the Spirit were prepared. I myself foresaw that this worst would come, the darkness of night before the dawn; therefore I am not discouraged. I know what is preparing behind the darkness and can see and feel the first signs of its coming. Those who seek for the Divine have to stand firm and persist in their seeking; after a time, the darkness will fade and begin to disappear and the Light will come.”<sup>19</sup>*



*“Hard is the world redeemer’s heavy task;  
The world itself becomes his adversary,  
His enemies are the beings he came to save. ...  
“He must enter the eternity of Night  
And know God’s darkness as he knows his Sun.  
For this he must go down into the pit,  
For this he must invade the dolorous Vasts.  
Imperishable and wise and infinite,  
He still must travel Hell the world to save.”*

*Savitri VI.p. 448-450*



## The Goal: The Supramental

No other path, no other yoga, has transformation as its central object. The aim is to bring down, possess and embody the supreme divine Ananda in each cell of the body. And the dark inconscient roots have necessarily to be transfigured first. Herein is the radical perspective one finds in Sri Aurobindo. It is not enough to possess the Infinite in a static state; the condition of possession has to be dynamized in every part of the being including the subconscious. But such a realization is a complete impossibility for even the most powerful and concentrated human will. Therefore the sole method in this yoga is surrender to the power of the Divine Shakti who alone can achieve, by her dynamic, expansive action this permanent reversal of consciousness. But what then is the role of the human individual?

*“O Knower of the Births, the man perfect in his works  
for whom thou createst that other blissful world\*,  
reaches a felicity that is peopled happily with his  
life’s swiftesses, his herds of Light, the children  
of his soul, the armies of his energy”.*

*Hymn to Agni, Rig Veda*

Sri Aurobindo’s footnote in *The Secret of the Veda*: **“The supramental world has to be formed or created in us by the Divine Will as the result of a constant expansion and self perfection.”**

Mother refers to this notation of Sri Aurobindo while responding to a child’s question on how the Supermind will act and what can be done to ‘receive it’. She reminds us that the will for progress into the supramental world cannot be something that surfaces periodically. It must be something that burns as a permanent beacon guiding each movement in our lives. It

is only if the Supramental is the CONSTANT idea, will, effort and preoccupation of the being that one can hope to achieve any result. The Supramental is a difficult and arduous conquest, demanding total adhesion of the being, and we can dream of it only when, experiencing permanently how very small we presently are, we embark on realizing the psychic conversion first and then ascend to the spiritual discovery of the Self in all things – for it is the power of these transformations that can lead to the last.

*“That is to say, to hope to receive, use and form in oneself a supramental being, and consequently a supramental world, there must first of all be an expansion of consciousness and a CONSTANT personal progress: not to have sudden flights, a little aspiration, a little effort, and then fall back into somnolence. This must be the CONSTANT idea of the being, the CONSTANT will of the being, the CONSTANT effort of the being, the CONSTANT preoccupation of the being.*

*“If for five minutes in the day you happen to remember that there is something in the universe like the supramental Force, and that, after all, ‘it would be nice if it manifested in me’, and then all the rest of the time you are thinking of something else and are busy with other things, there is not much chance that it would come and do any serious work in you. Sri Aurobindo says this quite clearly and precisely. He does not tell you that you will do it; he says it is the Divine Will. So don’t come and say ‘Ah! I can’t’. No one is asking you to do it. But there MUST BE enough aspiration and adhesion in the being to make the expansion of the being, the expansion of consciousness possible. For, to tell the truth, everybody is small, small, small, so small that there is not enough room to put any supramental in! It is so small that is already quite filled up with all the ordinary little human movements. There must be a great widening to make room for the movements of the Supermind.*

*And then there must also be an aspiration for progress: not to be satisfied with what one is, how one is, what one does, what one knows or thinks one knows; but to have a constant aspiration for something more, something better, for a greater light, a vaster consciousness, a truer truth and a more universal goodness. And over and above all this, a goodwill which never fails.”* <sup>20</sup>

*“What I call ‘being on the path’ is being in a state of consciousness in which only union with the Divine has any value – this union is the only thing worth living, the sole object of aspiration. Everything else has lost all value and is not worth seeking, so there is no longer any question of renouncing it because it is no longer an object of desire.*

*“As long as union with the Divine is not THE thing for which one lives, one is not yet on the path.”* <sup>21</sup>



1981



# Integral Yoga's Method

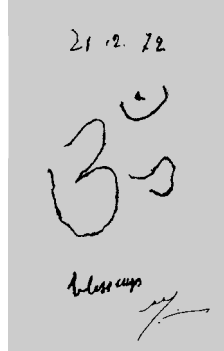
***"To feel deeply, intensely and constantly a total gratitude towards the Divine is the best way to be happy and peaceful.***

***"And the only true way of expressing one's gratitude to the Divine is to identify with Him."***<sup>22</sup>

The sole remedy is to burn constantly with the aspiration for integral progress. If there is an ever growing adhesion, then one's being has some chance of becoming serviceable for the divine's work. In any case the work is not done for individual achievement. This yoga is both world-changing and nature-changing in its aim so it must be all-including in its ways too. It is impossible to specify a perfect technique, but in one letter



1983



Sri Aurobindo speaks of the process and method of the Integral Yoga in relation to other yogas.

***"What is a perfect technique of yoga or rather of a world-changing or Nature-changing yoga? Not one that takes a man by a little bit of him somewhere, attaches a hook, and pulls him up by a pulley into Nirvana or Paradise. The technique of a world-changing yoga has to be as multiform, sinuous, patient, all-including as the world itself. If it does not deal with all the difficulties or possibilities and carefully deal with each necessary element, has it any chance of success? And can a perfect technique which everybody can understand do that? It is not like writing a small poem in a fixed metre with a limited number of modulations. If you take the poem simile, it is the Mahabharata of a Mahabharata that has to be done."***<sup>23</sup>

***"By transformation I do not mean some change of the nature – I do not mean, for instance, sainthood or ethical perfection or Yogic Siddhis (like the Tantrik's) or a transcendental (cinmaya) body. I use transformation in a special sense, a change of consciousness radical and complete and of a certain specific kind which is so conceived as to bring about a strong and assured step forward in the spiritual evolution of the being of a greater and higher kind and of a larger sweep and completeness than what took place when a mentalised being first appeared in a vital and material animal world. If anything short of that takes place or at least if a real beginning is not made on that basis, a fundamental progress towards this fulfilment, then my object is not accomplished. A partial realisation, something mixed and inconclusive, does not meet the demand I make on life and Yoga. ...***

***"I have never said that my Yoga was something brand new in all its elements. I have called it the integral Yoga and that means that it takes up the essence and many processes of the old Yogas – its newness is in its aim, standpoint and the totality of its method. ...***

***"It is new as compared with the old Yogas:***

# Statures of Divine Consciousness

The supramental had never been an active principle even in the spiritual life upon earth. It had to be brought down by Sri Aurobindo. What, we may ask, was the highest principle governing life on earth before the Supramental descent on the 29<sup>th</sup> February 1956? What was the spiritual status of other divine instruments – the avatars and Vibhutis who have illumined earth-life?

In his letters, Sri Aurobindo elaborates the different statures of divine consciousness as well as the different statures of transformation. The three great stages of transmutation in this yoga are first the conversion into the psychic consciousness, next the spiritual transformation, and finally, the supramental transformation which gives birth to the gnostic being – it is only with the last that this yoga arrives at any sense of completeness. Sri Aurobindo also makes the crucial clarification on the difference between yogic siddhis aimed at by the traditional yogas, and transformation as he envisages it. He also sheds light upon the statures of consciousness of some divinely inspired beings, the ‘spirituals’, as he calls them. What is most marvellous in Sri Aurobindo is that one does not find oneself fobbed off with things left unexplained. He leads you to ask legitimate questions: to be spiritual is one thing, but in what way, in which part of the being are you spiritualized? His clarities take you straight to the heart of the matter and you are given as if the key to understand and situate yourself even in the inward spiritual planes. To the reason – that instrument of doubt – all he says is deeply and wholly satisfying for he puts order into the illusory generalities that so often enfold much of the knowledge of the inner worlds.

***“There are different statures of the Divine Consciousness. There are also different statures of transformation. First is the psychic transformation, in which all is in contact with the Divine through the individual psychic consciousness. Next is the spiritual transformation in which all is merged in the Divine in the cosmic consciousness. Third***

1. ***“Because it aims not at a departure out of world and life into Heaven or Nirvana, but at a change of life and existence, not as something subordinate or incidental, but as a distinct and central object. If there is a descent in other Yogas, yet is it only an incident on the way or resulting from the ascent – the ascent is the real thing. Here the ascent is the first step, but it is a means for the descent. It is the descent of the new consciousness attained by the ascent that is the stamp and seal of the Sadhana. Even the Tantra and Vaishnavism end in the release from life; here the object is the divine fulfilment of life.***
2. ***“Because the object sought after is not an individual achievement of divine realisation for the sake of the individual, but something to be gained for the earth consciousness here, a cosmic, not solely a supra-cosmic achievement. The thing to be gained also is the bringing in of a Power of Consciousness (the Supramental) not yet organised or active directly in earth-nature, even in the spiritual life, but yet to be organised and made directly active.***
3. ***“Because a method has been precognized for achieving this purpose which is as total and integral as the aim set before it, viz., the total and integral change of the consciousness and nature, taking up old methods but only as part action and present aid to others that are distinctive. I have not found this method (as a whole) or anything like it professed or realised in the old Yogas. If I had, I should not have wasted my time in hewing out a road and in thirty years of search and inner creation when I could have hastened home safely to my goal in an easy canter over paths already blazed out, laid out, perfectly mapped, macadamised, made secure and public. Our Yoga is not a retreading of old walks, but a spiritual adventure.”*** <sup>24</sup>



*“He who would save himself lives bare and calm;  
He who would save the race must share its pain;  
This he shall know who obeys that grandiose urge.”*

*Savitri VI.2.445*

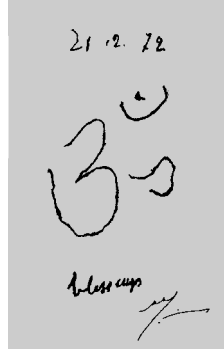
is the supramental transformation in which all becomes supramentalised in the divine gnostic consciousness. It is only with the latter that there can begin the COMPLETE transformation of mind, life and body – in my sense of completeness.

“You are mistaken in two respects. First, the endeavour towards this achievement is not new and some Yogis have achieved it, I believe – but not in the way I want it. They achieved it as a personal Siddhi maintained by Yoga-Siddhi – not a Dharma of the nature (physical transformation). Secondly, the supramental transformation is not the same as the spiritual-mental. It is a change of mind, life and body which the mental or overmental-spiritual cannot achieve. All whom you mention were spirituals, but in different ways. Krishna’s mind, for instance, was overmentalised, Ramakrishna’s intuitive, Chaitanya’s spiritual-psychic, Buddha’s illumined higher mental. ... All that is different from the supramental. ...

“One can be an instrument of the Divine in any of the transformations. The question is an instrument for what?”<sup>25</sup>

What is realisation? And what does Sri Aurobindo mean when he speaks of Descent? In his yoga, it is not enough to realise something in the Purusha part of one’s consciousness – what is demanded is a radical change in the parts of Prakriti. It is also not enough that Light descends – all the powers of the higher consciousness must descend – Peace, Power, Knowledge, Love and Ananda. What is sought is for the earth-consciousness to enable it to take that definitive forward stride.

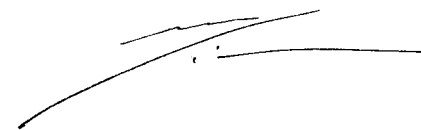
“Realisation by itself does not necessarily transform the being as a whole; it may bring only an opening or heightening or widening of the consciousness at the top so as to realise something in the Purusha part without any radical change in the parts of Prakriti. One may have some light of realisation at the spiritual summit of the consciousness but the parts below remain what they were. I have seen any number of instances of that. There must be a descent of the light not merely into the mind or part of it but into all the being down to the physical and below before a real transformation can take place. A light in the mind may



spiritualise or otherwise change the mind or part of it in one way or another, but it need not change the vital nature; a light in the vital may purify and enlarge the vital movements or else silence and immobilise the vital being, but leave the body and the physical consciousness as it was, or even leave it inert or shake its balance. And the descent of Light is not enough; it must be the descent of the whole higher consciousness, its Peace, Power, Knowledge, Love, Ananda. Moreover, the descent may be enough to liberate, but not to perfect, or it may be enough to make a great change in the inner being, while the outer remains an imperfect instrument, clumsy, sick or unexpressive. Finally, transformation effected by the Sadhana cannot be complete unless it is a supramentalisation of the being. Psychicisation is not enough, it is only a beginning; spiritualisation and the descent of the higher consciousness is not enough, it is only a middle term; the ultimate achievement needs the action of the supramental Consciousness and Force. Something less than that may very well be considered enough by the individual, but it is not enough for the earth-consciousness to take the definitive stride forward it must take at one time or another.<sup>26</sup>



To know is good,  
to live is better;  
to be, that is perfect.



# Freedom and Renunciation

*“Hard it is to be in the world, free, yet living the life of ordinary men; but because it is hard, therefore it must be attempted and accomplished.”*

*Sri Aurobindo*

One subject that seems to bring forth much mental confusion is the idea of freedom. Because the Integral Yoga embraces all the domains of the being, its methods and processes may seem sometimes as vast, multiform and governed by chance as the ordinary processes of nature. This may encourage people to merely follow the stream of their outer nature with little effort at conscious control. But that is not yoga! Yoga demands conscious acceleration; it is both effort and a constant and conscious progress. As long as the poise of the being is based upon the ignorant, transient outer nature – intelligent control needs to be exercised. Freedom comes only when one has surrendered to the Divine, before that one is often merely the slave of various movements. And even a very advanced state of consciousness can be led astray because of minor orientations and preferences in the being. What we call spontaneity or inspiration can sometimes be simply a disguised unilluminated impulse. The Divine alone can be spontaneous. Only a being, integrally surrendered and allowing the unlimited divine action to pass through without the least shadow of the ego, can be free.

***“What is meant by free activity? With us the freedom consists in freedom from the darkness, limitation, error, suffering, transience of the ignorant lower Nature, but also in a total surrender to the Divine. Free action is the action of the Divine in us and through us; no other action can be free.”***<sup>27</sup>

Traditionally the condition of *Vairagya*, which translates poorly into the word renunciation in English, has played a crucial role in India’s spiritual quest. What is its role in Sri Aurobindo’s yoga which, on the contrary, does not seem to demand the renouncing of one’s life as householder

(the *Grihasta* stage) ? When the *Vairagya* movement arises in one’s consciousness, the questions to be asked are: In which part of the being, mental, vital or physical, has it arisen? What type of *Vairagya* is it – tamasic, rajasic or sattvic? Sri Aurobindo does not show enthusiasm for seeking the Divine out of a movement of tamasic recoil from the sorrows of life. Certainly, this yoga is not meant for the **‘failed boys of the world class’!** It ought to be the preferred pathway of the choicest spirits of the age simply because to seek the Integral Divine in his dynamic aspect is the highest fulfilment of one’s purpose as an embodied being.

***“I have objected in the past to Vairagya of the ascetic kind and the tamasic kind. By the tamasic kind I mean that spirit which comes defeated from life, not because it is really disgusted with life, but because it could not cope with it or conquer its prizes; for it comes to yoga as a kind of asylum for the maimed or weak and to the Divine as a consolation prize for the failed boys in the world-class. The Vairagya of one who has tasted the world’s gifts or prizes but found them insufficient or finally tasteless and turns away towards a higher and more beautiful ideal or the Vairagya of one who has done his part in life’s battles but seen that something greater is demanded of the soul, is perfectly helpful and a good gate to the yoga. Also the sattvic Vairagya which has learnt what life is and turns to what is above and behind life. By the ascetic Vairagya I mean that which denies life and world altogether and wants to disappear into the Indefinable—I object to it for those who come to this yoga because it is incompatible with my aim which is to bring the Divine into life. But if one is satisfied with life as it is, then there is no reason to seek to bring the Divine into life,—so Vairagya in the sense of dissatisfaction with life as it is is perfectly admissible and even in a certain sense indispensable for my yoga.”***<sup>28</sup>

*Vairagya* then is liberation from the lower movements of ego and desire. In seeking self-transcendence one has to subject every motive, every movement to a detailed scrutiny. Failure to uncover a hidden impulse may become a dangerous weakness later on. Sri Aurobindo and Mother aim for fullness; so suppression, diminution or lessening are not encouraged. From Mother on the same subject:

***“Anything that suppresses, diminishes or lessens cannot bring freedom. Freedom has to be experienced in the whole of life and in all sensations. ...***

***“For fear of being mistaken in our actions, we stop doing anything at all; for fear of being mistaken in our speech, we stop speaking; for fear of eating for the pleasure of eating we do not eat at all—this is not freedom, it is simply reducing the manifestation to a minimum; and the natural conclusion is Nirvana. But if the Lord wanted only Nirvana, nothing but Nirvana would exist! It is obvious that he conceives of the co-existence of all opposites, and that for Him this must be the beginning of a totality. So, obviously, if one feels meant for that, one can choose only one of His manifestations, that is to say, the absence of manifestation. But it is still a limitation. And this is not the only way to find Him, far from it! ...***

***“No, the solution is to act only under the divine impulsion, to speak only under the divine impulsion, to eat only under the divine impulsion. That is the difficult thing, because naturally, you immediately confuse the divine impulsion with your personal impulses. ...***

***“All these things [renunciation etc.] are means, stages, steps, but true freedom is to be free of everything – including means.***

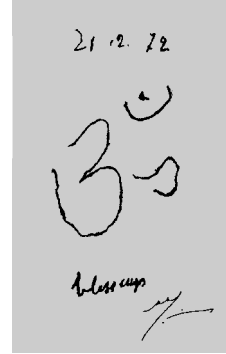
***“It is a restriction, a constriction, whereas the True Thing is an opening, a widening, an identification with the whole.***

***“When you reduce, reduce, reduce yourself, you do not have any feeling of losing yourself, it takes away your fear of losing yourself – you become something solid and compact. But if you choose the method of widening – the greatest possible widening – you must not be afraid of losing yourself.”***<sup>29</sup>



*“Consciousness is a state and a power.  
Love is a force and an action.”*

*The Mother*



## *Evolutionary Spirals*

When one chooses the method of widening, and one overcomes the fear of losing oneself, another very disconcerting experience may occasionally present itself. Sometimes one may have the sense that one is just not progressing, or it may translate in one's consciousness as the feeling that one seems constantly to circle back to the same place. Though this impression can appear real, it is not true. For, in a progressive universe one never quite returns to the same place. And this is as valid for the individual and the collective as for the whole world. Things do change, perhaps infinitesimally, but the change is there, whether on an ascending or a descending curve. A very interesting conversation of Mother's speaks of how the world progresses in such evolutionary spirals.

Q: *“Why does evolution go in spirals instead of being a constant progress?”*

***“It is a constant progress. But if you made it in a straight line, you would cover only a single part – the world is a globe, it is not a line.”***

Q: *“If it were a cylinder!”*

***“Even for a cylinder, if you drew only one line, one part of the cylinder would escape you altogether. This movement in a spiral is precisely to try and make everything enter this phenomenon of evolution – so that not only one thing may advance whilst the others remain behind. And so, according to the centre where the progress is concentrated, one seems to move away from one thing and enter into another. But in the long run, when one evolves consciously, one does not forget one thing in order to do another. What is bad at present is forgetfulness; it is that when following a certain activity for a realisation, one forgets all the others or they go into the background, they have no longer any intensity. But this is a human shortcoming which can be corrected – it ought to be corrected.”***

Q: *“Do all progress in a spiral, and all together or separately?”*

*"I fear it is not very harmonious, for the world seems to me rather chaotic! If indeed the march were totally organised, it would be a harmonious development, and if one could see where one is going – having the line of what has been done; one could prolong these lines and see what would come. But for the moment this is open only to an elite. And the mass follows the movement, and all the movements are not homogeneous and simultaneous – certain things are slower to put into line and movement than others. So, even a little difference like this suffices for it to create an immense difference in the movement.*

*"There is even a considerable number of spirals intersecting and giving the impression of contradiction. If one could follow in its totality the movement of universal progress, one would see that there is such a great number of spirals which intersect, that finally one does not know at all whether one is advancing or going back. For, at the same moment some things are going up and others are falling back into darkness, and all these are not absolutely independent of one another. There is a kind of coordination, so that instead of imagining a spiral like that, we should have to think of spherical spirals. If this could be described, the ensemble of all these spirals would make an immense globe. And it is at the intersection of these spirals that there are moments of progress. But before the progress is coherent, total, there must be an inner organisation of life, different from that of Nature, arranged in accordance with a plan. For Nature – her plan is only made with an aspiration, a decision and a goal. And the road seems quite fantastic, following the impulses of every minute – trials, set-backs, contradictions, progress and demolition of what has already been done; and it is such a chaos that one can understand nothing there. She has the air of somebody doing things impulsively – giving out certain impulses and destroying them, beginning others again, and going on and on like that. She makes and unmakes, she remakes and again demolishes, she mixes, destroys, constructs and all this at the same time. It is incomprehensible. And yet, she evidently has a plan, and herself goes towards a certain goal which is very*

*clear to her but quite veiled to human consciousness .... It is very interesting. If one could construct something like that, it would give an idea: a globe made of intersecting spirals of different colours, and each representing one aspect of Nature's creation. And these aspects are made to complete one another – but so far they are rather in competition than collaboration, and it seems she is always obliged to destroy something in order to make another, which makes for a terrible wastage, and a still greater disorder. But if all this were seen in its ensemble, it would be extremely interesting. For it is an extremely complex criss-crossing, in all possible directions, of a spiralling ascent."*<sup>30</sup>



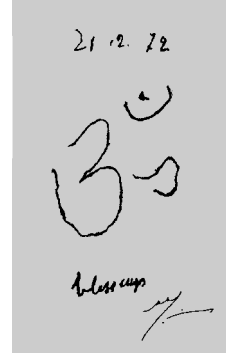
1983

# Kala – The Time Factor

There is also the matter of timing; one has to develop a friendly relation with the Lord of Time – Kala. The seeker of Integral Yoga must learn to put time on his side if he wants to keep his balance in movement. He must become enduringly patient and plastic. Sri Aurobindo spoke of aspiring intensely but without impatience – one has to sense the subtle but crucial difference between a vibration of intensity and one of impatience. In an evolutionary progression you cannot have a vast realisation if all is not ready. A narrow linear development may take place much more easily; but the realisation will be small, local and infinitesimal in relation to the totality. And this is not the aim of the Integral Yoga.

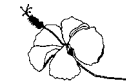
*“Now the most material level remains and that is the most dangerous because it is solid, compact, and can refuse or even give up its own stuff completely. It is the least open to reasoning and in dealing with it you require the highest divine Power. Besides, the whole samskara – established imprint – of the whole universe is against your effort.”*<sup>31</sup>

*“Your notion of what things should be is so enormously removed from what they shall be that, even if you strive to see things in the most complete way possible, you will still leave out such a large quantity of the universe that it would amount to an almost linear realisation, or at any rate so small and narrow that for the most part the universe would remain unchanged. And even if you are capable of conceiving of something more whole and you advance on the path that is ready—for it is with paths as it is with beings: certain paths are ready—without being patient enough to wait for the others, in other words, if you try to realise something that is very close to the true truth compared to the present state of the world—what would happen? The disruption of a certain whole, a break not only in harmony but in equilibrium, because a whole part of creation won’t be able to follow. And instead of a total realisation of the Divine, you will have a small, local realisation—infinitesimal—and nothing of what ultimately must be done will have been done.”*<sup>32</sup>



*“There is another cause of the general inability to change which at present afflicts the sadhak. It is because the sadhana, as a general fact, has now and for a long time past come down to the Inconscient; the pressure, the call is to change in that part of the nature which depends directly on the Inconscient, the fixed habits, the automatic movements, the mechanical repetitions of the nature, the involuntary reactions to life, all that seems to belong to the fixed character of a man. This has to be done if there is to be any chance of a total spiritual change. The Force (generally and not individually) is working to make that possible, its pressure is for that,—for, on the other levels, the change has already been made possible (not, mind you, assured to everybody). But to open the Inconscient to light is a herculean task; change on the other levels is much easier. As yet this work has only begun and it is not surprising that there seems to be no change in things or people. It will come in time, but not in a hurry.*

*“As for experiences, they are all right but the trouble is that they do not seem to change the nature, they only enrich the consciousness—even the realisation, on the mind level, of the Brahman seems to leave the nature almost where it was, except for a few. That is why we insist on the psychic transformation as the first necessity—for that does change the nature—and its chief instrument is bhakti, surrender, etc.”*<sup>33</sup>



*“The ideal attitude of the sadhaka towards Time is to have an endless patience as if he had all eternity for his fulfilment and yet to develop the energy that shall realise now and with an ever-increasing mastery and pressure of rapidity till it reaches the miraculous instantaneousness of the supreme divine Transformation.”*

*Sri Aurobindo*

*"It is the consciousness and not the body that is the being, the person, the body is only a support and instrument for the action of the Consciousness."*

*Sri Aurobindo*

## *Antennae of Consciousness*

Sri Aurobindo makes a very interesting point about experiences – the trouble with them is that while they may enrich the consciousness they do not seem to change the nature. Here again appears the demand of this yoga which asks nothing short of a transfiguration of the ignorant outer person. Even great yogis, given to exceptional experiences, are automatically endowed with the physical nature — a universal ‘gift’ accompanying the body — and they cannot escape the work of transmuting it. The only method is to do the work infinitesimally. The very first step is to discover one’s consciousness and painstakingly separate it from one’s mind and vital and body. For this, one must be totally alert at all times; aware, conscious, not mentally but with the antennae of consciousness in every corner of the being.

*"To be in this state of attentive observation, you must have, so to say, antennae everywhere which are in constant contact with your true centre of consciousness. You register everything, you organise everything and, in this way, you cannot be taken unawares, you cannot be deceived, mistaken, and you cannot say anything other than what you wanted to say. But how many people normally live in this state? It is this I mean precisely, when I speak of ‘becoming conscious’. If you want to benefit most from the conditions and circumstances in which you find yourself, you must be fully awake: you must not be taken by surprise, you must not do things without knowing why, you must not say things without knowing why. You must be constantly awake."*<sup>34</sup>

*"It is as when one works with colours, takes three, four or five different colours and puts them in water and beats them up together. It makes a grey indistinct and incomprehensible mixture, you see, and one can't say which is red, which blue, which green, which yellow; it is something turbid, a mixture of many colours together. So the very first task is to separate out the red, blue, yellow and green, and put each one in its proper place."*<sup>35</sup>

*"We BATHE in every conceivable thing – good, bad, neutral, luminous, obscure – they are all there, and each person's consciousness is supposed, in principle, to act as a filter. You should receive only what you want to receive, you should think only what you want to think; and then, you should not allow these thoughts to be changed into feelings and actions without formal authorisation.*

*"In fact, this is the very purpose of physical existence. Each person is an instrument for controlling a certain range of vibrations that represent his particular field of work; each one must receive only the ones which are in conformity with the divine plan and refuse the rest.*

*"But not one in a thousand does that. ... It requires years of labour and such a long practice. And so, to have the ability to do this in your head (Mother moves her hand across her brow), to annul all the movements, to stop the vibrations. And the mental surface becomes smooth. Everything stops, as when you open a book at a blank page – but almost materially, you understand – blank!"*<sup>36</sup>

*"What you call ‘consciousness’ is thinking things out: that's what you call consciousness. But that's not it at all! That's not consciousness. Consciousness . . . should be wholly lucid and WORDLESS. (Mother closes her eyes). Like that . . . everything becomes luminous and warm and STRONG!*

*And peaceful. . a true peace, which is not inertia or immobility."*<sup>37</sup>

*"I can clearly see that instead of thought governing life, it is consciousness...."*



And . . . (how can I put it?) the difference between the two: thought is something that goes like this (whirring, restless gesture), ever in motion. . . whereas consciousness is like this (gesture hands open, offered upward).”<sup>38</sup>

“Everything is a phenomenon of consciousness – everything. Only, it is not a matter of this consciousness, or that one, or that other one, that’s not it: it’s our way, the human way of being conscious versus the divine way of being conscious. That’s all. That’s the whole question.”<sup>39</sup>

“We may say that all experiences tend towards a single revelation—that consciousness alone exists. And that it is the decision or choice (words are inaccurate), a decision of the consciousness that causes the form—all the forms, from the most subtle to the most material ones; and the material world, the apparent fixity of the material world stems from a distortion or a darkening of the consciousness, which has lost the sense of its all-powerfulness.

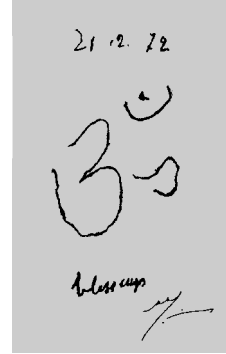
“This distortion has been still more pronounced since the advent of the mind, which in its workings has so much taken the place of consciousness that it has so to speak substituted itself for consciousness, and that the mind, in its ordinary workings, cannot be distinguished from consciousness—it doesn’t know what consciousness is, and so (Mother makes a gesture expressing a shrinking or hardening).

“And all this only has a meaning – only a single meaning – if one reaches the end of it. The end is when consciousness regains its power.”<sup>40</sup>



“Poets make much of death and external afflictions, but the only tragedies are the soul’s failures and the only epics man’s triumphant ascent towards Godhead”

Sri Aurobindo



“The first effect of Yoga, however, is to take away the mental control, and the hungers that lie dormant are suddenly set free; they rush up and invade the being.”

The Mother

## Yogic Examinations

The Sadhak of Integral Yoga has to confront not only all the dormant movements let loose under pressure from yogic forces but also the truth that one is permanently ‘under test’ in this yoga. And these tests are for all equally — for the most humble beginner on the path as for the most highly advanced, complex and luminous being. The Integral yoga seems not to permit a resting upon the laurels of one’s siddhis! The moment one has attained to a level, the tests of and for that status commence. And, as Mother clarifies, the examiners may be of a most unusual kind:

“The integral yoga consists of an uninterrupted series of examinations that one has to undergo without any previous warning, thus obliging you to be constantly on the alert and attentive.

“Three groups of examiners set us these tests. They appear to have nothing to do with one another, and their methods are so different, sometimes even so apparently contradictory, that it seems as if they could not possibly be leading towards the same goal. Nevertheless, they complement one another, work towards the same end, and are all indispensable to the completeness of the result.

“The three types of examinations are: those set by the forces of Nature, those set by spiritual and divine forces, and those set by hostile forces. These last are the most deceptive in their appearance and to avoid being caught unawares and unprepared requires a state of constant watchfulness, sincerity and humility.

“The most commonplace circumstances, the events of everyday life, the most apparently insignificant people and things all belong to one or other of these three kinds of examiners. In this vast and complex

organisation of tests, those events that are generally considered the most important in life are the easiest examinations to undergo, because they find you ready and on your guard. It is easier to stumble over the little stones in your path, because they attract no attention.

*“Endurance and plasticity, cheerfulness and fearlessness are the qualities specially needed for the examinations of physical nature.*

*“Aspiration, trust, idealism, enthusiasm and generous self-giving, for spiritual examinations.*

*“Vigilance, sincerity and humility for the examinations from hostile forces.*

*“And do not imagine that there are on the one hand people who undergo the examinations and on the other people who set them. Depending on the circumstances and the moment we are all both examiners and examinees, and it may even happen that one is at the same time both examiner and examinee. And the benefit one derives from this depends, both in quality and in quantity, on the intensity of one’s aspiration and the awakening of one’s consciousness.*

*“To conclude, a final piece of advice: never set yourself up as an examiner. For while it is good to remember constantly that one may be undergoing a very important examination, it is extremely dangerous to imagine that one is responsible for setting examinations for others. That is the open door to the most ridiculous and harmful kinds of vanity. It is the Supreme Wisdom which decides these things, and not the ignorant human will.”<sup>41</sup>*



*“Death helps us not, vain is the hope to cease;  
A secret Will compels us to endure.  
Our life’s repose is in the Infinite;  
It cannot end, its end is Life supreme.  
Death is a passage, not the goal of our walk:”*

*Savitri II.6.197*

## The Purpose of Earthly Life

In spite of much said to the contrary, there is one illusion that persists. Somewhere there remains the idea that death can bring about peace and rest; an eternal release into something better. No, this is an illusion! If one has not done the work for which one took a body in the first place, the forces of the universe will inexorably return one, perhaps in more adverse circumstances, to complete the work. And the work to be achieved has nothing to do with worldly ideas of success or failure but can be only measured by the soul’s progress. If one grasps this aspect of truth behind the vast mystery of birth one can turn one’s life into an uninterrupted period of progress and growth. And this must continue until that irrevocable identification puts the being into another cycle of development, into a new world, a wonderful world of delight: the supramental cycle which is the greater destiny that awaits beyond the circling tracts of mind.

*“It is useless to run away from your body, it won’t be easier without the body. On the contrary it will be much more difficult. And the body is made for doing yoga. We are upon earth; the period one passes on earth is that in which one can make progress. One does not progress outside terrestrial life. The earthly, material life is essentially the life of progress, it is here that one makes progress. Outside the earthly life one takes rest or is unconscious or one may have periods of assimilation, periods of rest, periods of unconsciousness. But as for the periods of progress, they are on the earth and in the body. So, when you take a body it is to make progress, and when you leave it the period of progress is over.*

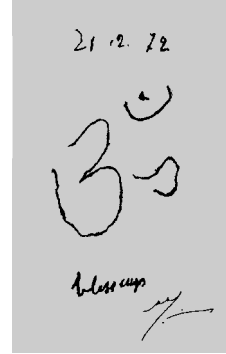
*“And true progress is sadhana; that is, it is the most conscious and swiftest progress. Otherwise one makes progress with the rhythms of Nature, which means that it can take centuries and centuries and millenniums to make the slightest bit of progress. But true progress is that made by sadhana. In yoga one can do in a very short time what takes otherwise an interminable time. But it is always in the body and always upon earth that it is done, not elsewhere. That is why when one is in a body one must take advantage of it and not waste one’s*

time, not say, 'A little later, a little later.' It is much better to do it immediately." 42

***"As for the question of what is necessary for progress, in an evolving world everything is necessarily a help to progress; but individual progress extends over a considerable number of lives and through innumerable experiences. It cannot be judged on the basis of a single life between birth and death. On the whole, it is certain that the experience of a life of failure and defeat is just as useful to the soul's growth as the experience of a life of success and victory; even more so, no doubt, than the experience of an uneventful life, as human existence usually is, in which success and failure, satisfaction and disappointment, pleasure and pain mingle and follow one another – a life that seems 'natural' and does not require any great effort."*** 43



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## To Change the World

Habitually, we surround ourselves with many mental constructions, some we create for ourselves and others are formed through the countless imprints we have unconsciously gathered from birth and environment – from family and culture and religion and education. Such 'constructions', left unaddressed can be a great retardation for someone who wishes to accelerate growth and progress. One quite common idea is the moral notion of serving humanity, of doing 'good' in and to the world. Mother is very categorical in her statement that the one and only way to do 'good' is to change oneself; all the rest are happy little illusions that merely pad up the ego a little more comfortably in its narrow self-important round!

***"How can you possibly change anything without first changing yourself? ... Only a child would say, 'I'll open a dormitory, I'll build a nursery, give soup to the poor, preach knowledge, spread religion.' It is because you think you're better than others, and you know better than they what they should be or do. That's all 'serving humanity' is. Do you really want to perpetuate that? So far it hasn't brought much change at all. ...***

***"You can open millions of hospitals; it won't keep people from falling sick. On the contrary, they will have every facility and encouragement to fall ill. We are steeped in ideas of this kind. This puts your conscience at rest: 'I have come to the world, I must help others.' One tells oneself: 'How disinterested I am! I am going to help humanity.' All this is nothing but egoism.***

***"In fact, the first human being that concerns you is yourself. You want to alleviate suffering, but unless you can change the very capacity for suffering into a certitude of being happy, the world will never change. It will always remain the same, and we turn in a circle – one civilization follows another, one catastrophe another; but the thing does not change, for there is something missing. Something is not there, and that is consciousness. That's all." ...***

Q: "Can one help the world with a vibration of goodwill?"

***"With good wishes one can change many things, only it must be an extremely pure and unmixed goodwill. It is quite obvious that a thought, a perfectly pure and true prayer, if it is sent forth into the world, does its work. But where is this perfectly pure and true thought when it passes into the human brain. There are degradations. If through an effort of inner consciousness and knowledge, you can truly overcome in yourself a desire, that is to say, dissolve and abolish it, and if through inner goodwill, through consciousness, light, knowledge, you are able to dissolve the desire, you will be, first of all in yourself personally, a hundred times happier than if you had satisfied this desire, and then it will have a marvellous effect. It will have a repercussion in the world of which you have no idea. It will spread forth. For the vibrations you have created will continue to spread. These things grow larger like the snowball. The victory you win in your character, however small it be, is one which can be gained in the whole world. And this is what I meant just now: all things which are done outwardly without changing the inner nature – hospitals schools, etc. – are done through vanity, for the feeling of being great, whilst these small unnoticed things overcome in oneself gain an infinitely greater victory, though the effects are hidden. Every movement in you which is false and opposed to the truth is a negation of the divine life. Your small efforts have considerable results which you don't even have the satisfaction of knowing, but which are true and have precisely an impersonal and general effect.***

***"If you really want to do something good, the best thing you can do is to win your small victories in all sincerity, one after another, and thus you will do for the world the maximum you are able to do. ... Nothing must be mixed with your sincerity, your aspiration, your motive. You do things for love of the Divine, for truth, for perfection, without any other motive, any other idea. And that brings results".*** <sup>44</sup>



*"Man has one leg in animality and the other in humanity. At the same time he is a candidate for divinity. His is not a happy condition. The true animals are better off. And they are also more harmonious among themselves. They do not quarrel as human beings do. They do not put on airs; they do not consider some as inferiors and keep them at a distance."* <sup>45</sup>

## Personal Perfection

In this yoga the aim cannot be personal perfection. As Sri Aurobindo has written, his yoga is for the earth consciousness, the earth nature. One turns to Sri Aurobindo only if one is ready to give over all of oneself for the general progress. And, to make this gift worthy, one attempts to perfect one's instrumental nature.

***"How well you can see that it is egoism, the egoism that seeks individual personal perfection: instead of seeking general progress, it wants personal progress and still creates divisions where there aren't any, separations where they don't exist, and how one must accept that a particular movement takes place [through the body] so that the WHOLE may follow its course – it is very very interesting. ... The whole must progress at the same time, you can't separate one piece like that and make it perfect – that cannot be! It's not possible. It isn't that it shouldn't be: it CANNOT BE. Everything is bound up together."*** <sup>46</sup>

***"The effect of the ego is to shrivel the being. It's the cause of ageing, it dries you up – the being shrivels under it like a withering flower.***

***...And I was giving him the example of BEING the thing you manipulate and so – since you ARE the thing – having not only the joy of perfect knowledge of manipulation, but the joy of collaboration as well (not collaboration; rather a participation from the thing being utilized). And this from the smallest thing (objects you put in order, for example) right up to the universal transformation that comes with***

*the new Creation – and it's all the same movement of abolishing limits, the movement of expansion, of a generosity that abolishes limits. It begins with self-giving, it ends in identification.”<sup>47</sup>*

*“The ordinary Yoga is usually concentrated on a single aim and therefore less exposed to such recoils; ours is so complex and many-sided and embraces such large aims that we cannot expect any smooth progress until we near the completion of an effort, – especially as all the hostile forces in the spiritual world are in a constant state of opposition and besiege our gains; for the complete victory of a single one of us would mean a general downfall among them. In fact by our own effort we could not hope to succeed ... The final goal is far but the progress made in the face of so constant and massive an opposition is the guarantee of its being gained in the end. But the time is in other hands than ours.”<sup>48</sup>*

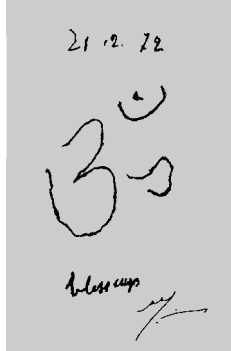
*“The world will be made better only in proportion as we make ourselves better. The Vedantic Truth that the world is only a projection – a function – of our consciousness is as pragmatically true as it is spiritually true. The ills that humanity suffers from – collectively and individually – stem from the errors that lie at the roots of our ignorant nature. We must be cleansed of these evils – individually first of all – if we ever hope to see a clean world outside. A yoga of self-purification is the condition precedent to a yoga of perfection.*

*“But in the end, a Higher Destiny leans over earth's children and its ways are beyond calculation.”<sup>49</sup>*



*“He who wants to advance on the path of perfection must never complain about the difficulties on the way, for each is an opportunity for a new progress. To complain is a sign of weakness and insincerity.”*

*The Mother*



## Transformation: Three Approaches

In the Mother's Agenda – that priceless record of Mother's yoga of the body consciousness – one finds marvellous guideposts and illuminations which can be so valuable for mapping our own pathways through this yoga of transformation. In one conversation, in the simplest of ways (it is the body consciousness that speaks), Mother explains the three approaches through which all transformation becomes possible. The first is the way of consciousness, what she calls the spiritual way, the way of identifying oneself with That: Love-Consciousness-Power. The second, which brings in all the intermediary worlds, is what she calls the occult way. The last, the scientific way, approaches the problem from below using the higher intellectual method. Without the first nothing is possible, says Mother, but the best is to 'clothe' the first with the other two.



1985

*“Yes, this problem of the transformation, I see more and more clearly that there are three approaches, three ways to go about it, and that in order to be more complete one should combine the three.*

*“One—the most important, naturally—is the way we call ‘spiritual,’ the way of the contact with the Consciousness—Love-Consciousness-Power, that is. These three aspects; supreme Love-Consciousness-Power. And the contact, the identification; making all the material cells capable of receiving Him and expressing Him—of BEING That.*

*“Of all the ways, that is the most powerful and most indispensable.*

*“There is the occult way, which brings all the intermediary worlds into play. There is a very detailed knowledge of all the powers and personalities, all the intermediary regions, and it makes use of all that. That’s where one makes use of the Overmind godheads; it’s this second way. Shiva, Krishna, all the aspects of the Mother are part of this second way.*

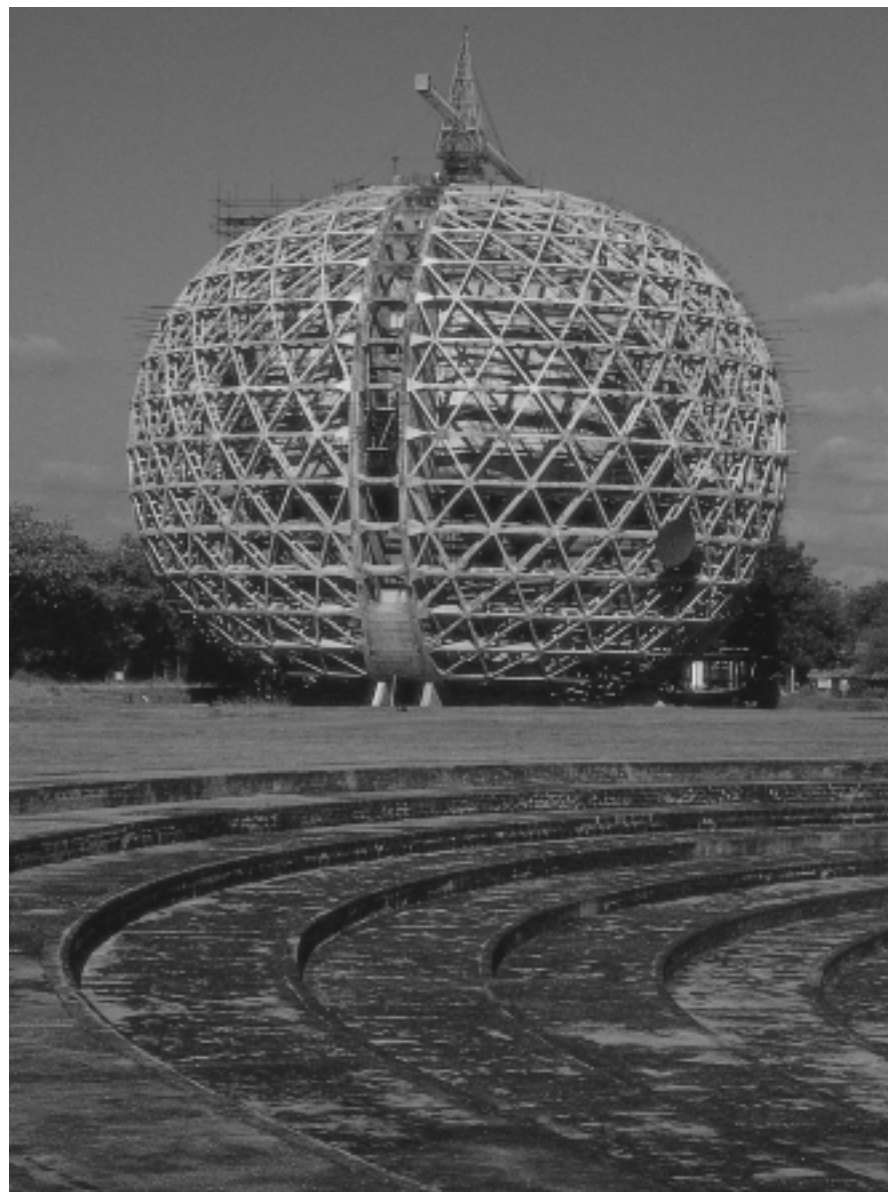
*“Then there is the higher intellectual approach, which is the projection of a surpassing scientific mind and takes up the problem from below. It has its own importance too. From the standpoint of the detail of the procedure, it reduces approximation; it gives a more direct and precise action.*

*“If one can combine all three, then obviously the thing will go faster.*

*“Without the first, nothing is possible (and even, the other two are an illusion without the first: they lead nowhere, you go round in circles endlessly). But if you clothe the first in the other two, then I think the action is more precise, direct, rapid.”<sup>50</sup>*

*“I looked upon the world and missed the Self,  
And when I found the Self, I lost the world,  
My other selves I lost and the body of God,  
The link of the finite with the Infinite,  
The bridge between the appearance and the Truth,  
The mystic aim for which the world was made,  
The human sense of Immortality.”*

*Savitri V.3.407-8*



1987

In another conversation, Mother speaks of the supposed 'opposition' between the scientific and spiritual approaches, One may detect in her words, echoes of the Upanishadic statement: those who follow the ways of ignorance fall into a darkness; but those who follow exclusively the way of knowledge fall into a still greater darkness! It would seem the chaos of the lower way can always be reconstituted into its future truth; whereas the higher way, the way of exclusive knowledge, would take you out of the manifestation into a Nihil and a void which is a more permanently unchangeable condition, and hence a 'greater darkness'!

***"But in any case, if it could be absolutely total (there's an 'if' here), objective, scientific knowledge pushed to its extreme limits would certainly bring you to the threshold. That's what Sri Aurobindo means. But he also says it's fatal, because all those who went in for that knowledge believed in it as an absolute truth, thus closing the door to the other approach. In this respect it is fatal.***

***"From my own experience, though, I could say to all those who believe EXCLUSIVELY in the spiritual approach, the approach through inner experience, that this – at least if it's exclusive – is equally fatal. For it reveals to them ONE aspect, ONE truth of the Whole – but not THE Whole. The other side seems just as indispensable to me, for when I was so utterly in that supreme Realization, this other falsified, outer realization was undeniably just a distortion (and probably accidental) of something EQUALLY TRUE.***

***"This 'something' is what we are seeking. And perhaps not merely seeking – we may be taking part in the MAKING of it.***

***"We are being made use of in the manifestation of this 'something'. Something none can yet imagine, for so far it hasn't come into being. It is an expression yet to come.***

***"That is all I can say. (silence)***

***"This is exactly the state of consciousness I am living in now. It's as if I were facing the same eternal problem but ... from a NEW POSITION.***

***"These positions – the spiritual and the 'materialist' (if you can call it that) positions – which consider themselves exclusive (exclusive and unique, and so each one denies the other's value in the name of Truth) are inadequate, not***

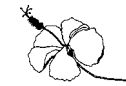
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Aurobindo

***only because neither one will accept the other, but because even accepting and uniting them both won't solve the problem. Something else is needed, a third position that isn't the result of these two but something still to be discovered, which will probably open the door to total Knowledge."***<sup>51</sup>

*"Into a blind darkness they enter  
who follow after the Ignorance,  
they as if into a greater darkness  
who devote themselves to the Knowledge alone."*

*Isha Upanishad*



1993

# The Manifest's Flavour

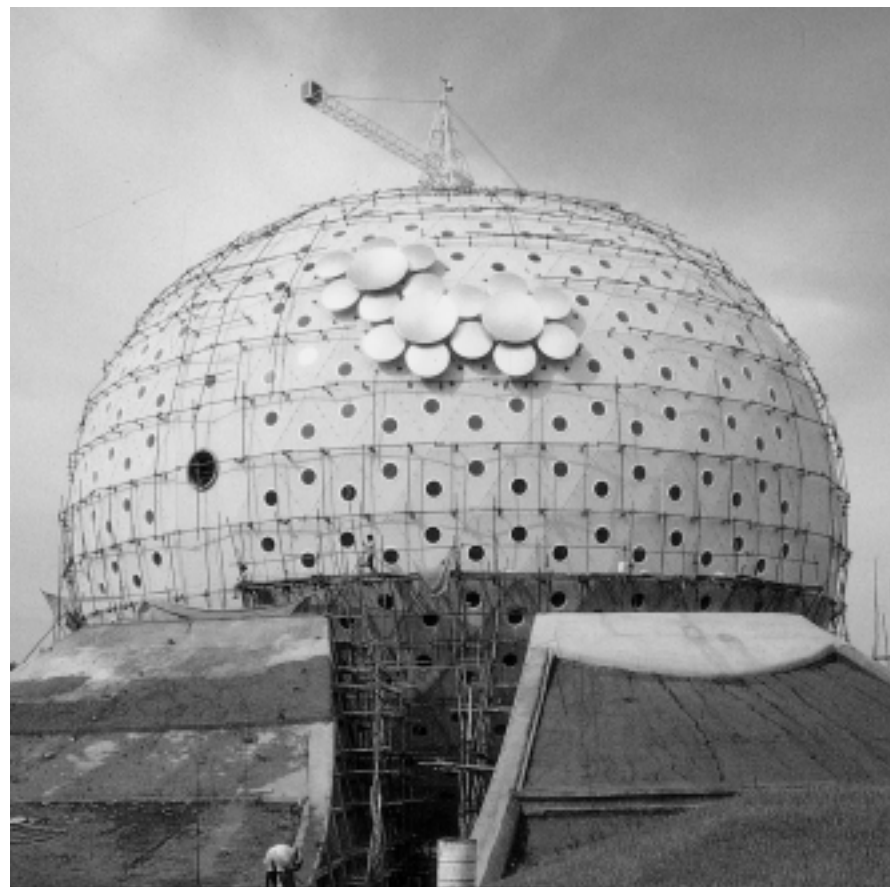
The psychic planes of consciousness are unique in the ladder of inner worlds – this illumination we discover in an Agenda conversation. Mother states that those who attain Nirvana NEVER go into the psychic because the psychic is something essentially linked to divine manifestation and not to divine non-intervention, not to Nirvana. One may discern here why Mother and Sri Aurobindo insist so repeatedly on the psychic transformation: all other conversions in the being could lead one into the Nirvana experience, but the psychic should keep one grounded in the manifestation!

***“There is a nirvana behind the vital, a nirvana behind the psychic, a nirvana behind the mind; there is a nirvana on every level, even behind the physical—it is death. And those who withdraw, who try to attain Nirvana, NEVER go into the psychic—the psychic is something essentially linked to divine manifestation, not to divine non-intervention, not to Nirvana.”*** <sup>52</sup>

***“The interesting thing in man is that materially speaking, he is . . . a mere nothing, a second lost in eternity – a tangled web of weaknesses – but in terms of consciousness, he has the capacity to understand. His consciousness is capable of contacting the supreme Consciousness. So naturally there are all those who wanted to merge back into that Consciousness, but Sri Aurobindo said: the point is not to merge back into it but to make the world capable of manifesting that supreme Consciousness.”*** <sup>53</sup>

Those who take birth to serve the work of transformation may often have one very strong experience – the sense of the futility of a world whose purpose seems to be a realization away from it. Creation appears so profitless, so monumentally wasteful! A consciousness that yearns for fulfilment and completeness of dynamic divine manifestation cannot be satisfied with the idea that the world is an illusion, a maya, from which

one must disentangle oneself to seek eternal and heavenly repose – a position of so many spiritual disciplines. It is a relief to discover in Sri Aurobindo and Mother that there is indeed a meaning in each curve and line and that the Divine Artisan intends the Manifestation to bring its own flavour to the totality. What follows is one of those marvellous mysterious conversations which seem to come from the magic of the other side, beyond the mental fishbowl of the lower hemisphere!



1994

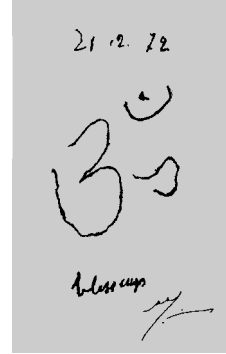


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*“It is obvious – obvious – that what we experience as progress, as progressive manifestation, is not simply a law of the material manifestation as we know it, but the very principle of the eternal Manifestation. To come down to the level of terrestrial thought, one might say that there is no manifestation without progress. But what WE call progress, what is ‘progress’ to our consciousness, up there it is... it can be anything, a necessity, whatever you like – there is a kind of absolute that we do not understand, an absolute of being: it is like that because it is like that, that is all. But for our consciousness it is more and more, better and better – and these words are stupid – it is more and more perfect, better and better perceived. That is the very principle of manifestation.*

*“One experience came very fleetingly, but precisely enough to allow one to say, very clumsily, that – I was about to say the ‘flavour’ of the Non-Manifest – the Non-Manifest has a special flavour because of the Manifest. ...*

*“There is a level here (pointing to the chest) where something plays with words, with images, with phrases, like this (shimmering, undulating gesture), that makes pretty pictures; it has a power of bringing you into contact with the Thing, which may be greater – at least as great, but perhaps greater – than here (pointing to the forehead), than the metaphysical expression – ‘metaphysical’ is a manner of speaking. Images, that is to say, poetry. Here there is an almost more direct way of access to that inexpressible vibration. I see Sri Aurobindo’s expression in its poetic form, it has a charm and a simplicity – a simplicity and a sweetness and a penetrating charm – which brings you into direct contact much more intimately than all the things of the head.”<sup>54</sup>*



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## No Escape

Entering into Samadhi is the summit of traditional yogas. And Samadhi may be kept for all eternity for it takes you outside the manifestation. This then is the difficulty – the pinnacle and apex of realizable siddhi is a non-requirement for the yoga of transformation. One must remain in the body consciousness if one has to change the dharma of the nature – the value of any siddhi is only in measure of its serviceability for this transmutation. And this demands the courage even to surrender one’s luminous strength and power; to accept to appear helpless, infirm, and even imbecilic while working in and on the body consciousness.

*“..because it [the powerful silence of Samadhi] is not manifested, it is outside the manifestation. But Sri Aurobindo wants us to bring it down here. That is the difficulty. And one must accept infirmity and even the appearance of imbecility, everything, and not one out of fifty million has the courage for that.*

*“There are millions of ways of fleeing. There is only one way to remain: it is truly to have courage and endurance, to accept every appearance of infirmity, helplessness, incomprehension, even an apparent denial of the Truth. But if one does not accept that, it will never change. Those who want to remain great, luminous, strong, powerful and so on and so forth, well, let them stay up there, they cannot do anything for the earth.”<sup>55</sup>*

And finally, Mother states the secret of this manifest universe: one cannot truly flee – even if one’s refuge is the highest state of Samadhi! One may remain there for an eternity, but then what? One would still have to come back and change the rest, wouldn’t one? Perhaps this is why it is said that the Buddha turned back at the threshold of Nirvana! Therefore, from the start, a quiet humble work, done in a true state of consciousness may be worth much more than hours of meditation in the heights of a static silence.

Mother's advice to those who do this yoga is: let the meditation, the vision of an idea, the concentration, seize you into itself just at the very moment when you most need it. At that moment step back and draw its essence into your being; and you will make the progress that you need:

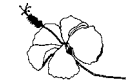
*"One cannot run away, even if one tries. ... In any case, for me, my experience (which is sufficiently long, for it is now almost fifty-three years since I have been dealing with people, with their yoga, their inner efforts; I have seen much here and there, a little everywhere in the world); well, I do not believe that it is by meditation that you can transform yourself. I am absolutely convinced of the contrary.*

*"If while doing what you have to do – whatever it may be, whatever work it is – if you do it and while doing it are careful not to forget the Divine, to offer to Him what you do and try so to give yourself to Him that He may change all your reactions – instead of being selfish, petty, stupid and ignorant, making them luminous, generous – then in that way you will make progress. Not only will you have made some progress but you will have helped in the general progress. I have never seen people who have left everything in order to go and sit down in a more or less empty contemplation (for it is more or less empty); I have never seen such people making any progress, or in any case their progress is very trifling. I have seen persons who had no pretensions of doing yoga. Who were simply filled with enthusiasm by the idea of terrestrial transformation and of the descent of the Divine into the world and who did their little bit of work with that enthusiasm in the heart, giving themselves wholly, without reserve, without any selfish idea of a personal salvation; these I have seen making magnificent progress, truly magnificent. And sometimes they are wonderful. I have seen people who professed to be yogis, well, I would not exchange one of the others for a dozen such people (I mean, from the standpoint of terrestrial transformation and world progress, that is to say from the standpoint of what we want to do, to try that this world may no longer be what it is and may become truly the instrument of the divine Will, with the divine Consciousness). It is not by running away from the world that you will change it. It is by*

*working there, modestly, humbly but with a fire in the heart, something that burns like an offering."*

Q: "So meditation is of no use?"

*"No, and to the extent it is necessary, it will come spontaneously. All of a sudden, you will be seized by something that makes you still, makes you concentrate in the vision of an idea or of a psychological state. That captures you. You must not resist. Then you make the needed progress. At such a moment you see, you understand something; and then the next minute you start your work again and with that something gained in you, but without any pretension. What I most fear are those who believe themselves very exceptional because they sit down and meditate. Of all things this is the most dangerous, because they become so vain and so full of self-satisfaction that they close up in this way all avenues of progress."*<sup>56</sup>



2003

*"Certainly, in a sense the descent of the higher powers is the Divine Mother's own descent – for it is she who comes down in them."*

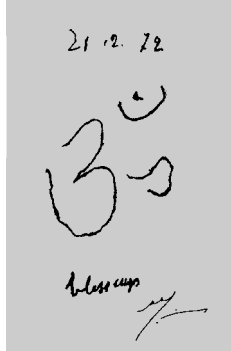
Sri Aurobindo

## The Descending Shakti

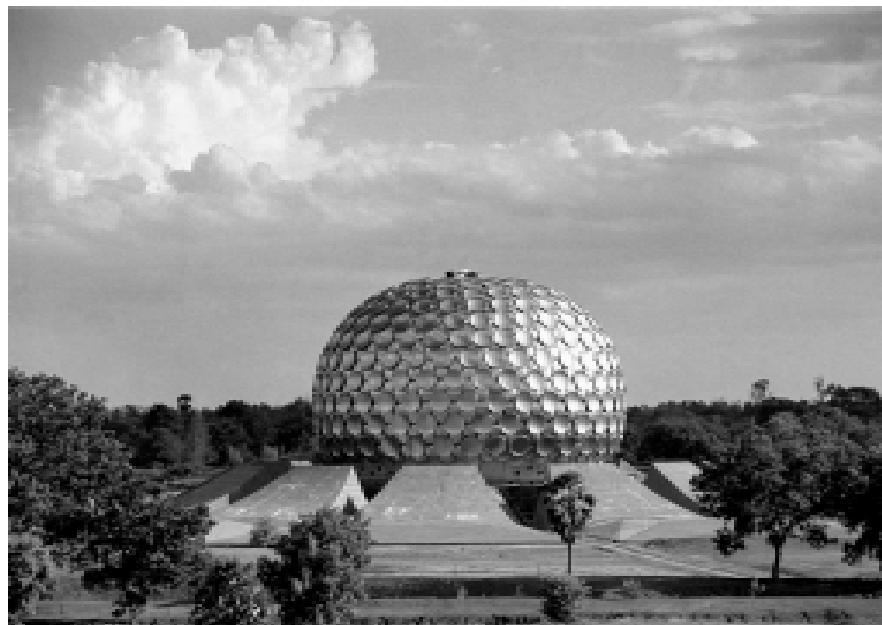
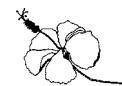
*"To be a Yogi, a Sanyasi, a Tapaswi is not the object here. The object is transformation, and the transformation can only be done by a force infinitely greater than your own; it can only be done by being truly like a child in the hands of the Divine Mother." 57*

In Sri Aurobindo's yoga it is not the ascending Kundalini Shakti that is sought. Traditional yogas are often aimed at its awakening, for it sleeps coiled at the base and rises through the centres of our inner being. In the yoga of transformation, it is the Divine Shakti – awake and scient above our heads – who is called down to move through the different centres, and by its own divinely potent action to awaken progressively the inner centres of consciousness. Therefore in this yoga, the sadhak is literally called upon to open his being – like a flower to the sun – to surrender. It is the psychic which can love and give itself to the Divine without calculation or holding back. It is this psychic consciousness that slowly but surely calls down the action of the Divine Shakti which progressively dissolves the ego-consciousness.

*"There is a force which accompanies the growth of the new consciousness and at once grows with it and helps it to come about and to perfect itself. This force is the Yoga-Shakti. It is here coiled up and asleep in all the centres of our inner being (Chakras) and is at the base what is called in the Tantras the Kundalini Shakti. But it is also above us, above our heads as the Divine Force – not there coiled up, involved, asleep, but awake, scient, potent, extended and wide; it is there waiting for manifestation, to this Force we have to open ourselves*



*– to the power of the Mother. In the mind it manifests itself as a divine mind-force or a universal mind-force and it can do everything that the personal mind cannot do; it is then the Yogic mind-force. When it manifests and acts in the vital or physical in the same way, it is there apparent as a Yogic life-force or a Yogic body-force. It can awaken in all these forms, bursting outward and upwards, extending itself into wideness from below; or it can descend and become there a definite power for things; it can pour downwards into the body, working, establishing its reign, extending into wideness from above, link the lowest in us with the highest above us, release the individual into a cosmic universality or into absoluteness and transcendence." 58*



2003

When you are conscious  
of the whole world at the  
same time, then you can  
become conscious of the Divine

—

## To Become the Supreme

In this yoga each one is called upon to become the Supreme. There are only souls each with its capacity for divine manifestation, no leaders and followers; to seek, find and embody the dynamic divine consciousness in its knowledge, power and perfection is the aim. And for this we have to let go of our little self which is wholly inapt to meet divinity in any form.

*“Personally, I call it ‘Supreme Consciousness’ because I don’t want to say ‘God’. It’s full of . . . the very word is full of deception. It’s not that way, it’s . . . We are – WE are the Divine who has forgotten Himself. And our task, the task is to re-establish the connection – call it by any name you like, it doesn’t matter. It’s the Perfection we must become, that’s all.*

*“The Perfection, the Power, the Knowledge we must become. That’s all. Call it what you like, it doesn’t matter to me. That’s the aspiration we must have. We must get out of this mire, this stupidity, this consciousness, this disgusting defeatism that crushes us because we allow ourselves to be crushed.*

*“And we fear. We fear for its life (Mother touches the skin of her hands), for this thing, as if it were precious, because we want to stay conscious. But let’s unite with the Supreme Consciousness, we, we’ll stay conscious forever! That’s It. That’s exactly it.*

*“I could put it this way: we unite our consciousness with what is perishable and we’re afraid it will perish! Well, I say: let’s unite our consciousness with the eternal Consciousness and we will enjoy eternal consciousness.”<sup>59</sup>*

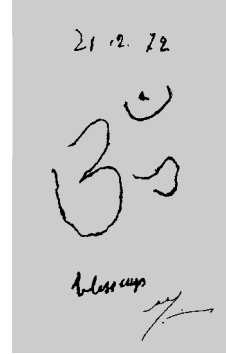


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In another conversation, elaborating further on levels of consciousness, Mother gives us a key to approaching the yoga. At a certain level we become aware that we cannot help being pervaded by the human collective psychological consciousness. Were these currents to pass through us they could 'make' us do just about anything! If, instead of lamenting this condition and feeling disgusted or revolted, we could take the one definitive solution and unite at every moment what is 'oneself' completely with the Divine Will, this alone would constitute omnipotence. And this is the true sense of perfect freedom!

*"There is an atomic consciousness, a purely material consciousness and an even more generally prevailing psychological consciousness. When through interiorisation or a sort of withdrawal from the ego you enter into contact with that zone of consciousness we can call psychological terrestrial or human collective (there is a difference, 'human collective' is restricted, while 'terrestrial' includes many animal and even plant vibrations; but in the present case, since the moral notion of guilt, sin and evil belongs exclusively to human consciousness, let us simply say 'human collective psychological consciousness'): when you contact that through identification, you naturally feel or see or know yourself capable of any human movement whatsoever. To some extent, this constitutes a Truth Consciousness, for at such times the egotistical sense of what does or doesn't belong to you, of what you can or cannot do, disappears; you realize that the fundamental construction of human consciousness makes any human being capable of doing anything. And since you are in a truth-consciousness, you are aware at the same time that to feel judgmental or disgusted or revolted would be an absurdity. For EVERYTHING is potentially inside you. And should you happen to be penetrated by certain currents of force (which we usually can't follow: we see them come and go but we are generally unaware of their origin and direction), if any one of these currents penetrates you, it can make you do anything.*

*"If one always remained in this state of consciousness, keeping alive the flame of Agni, the flame of purification and progress, then after some time, not only could one prevent these movements from*



*taking an active form in oneself and becoming expressed physically, but one could act upon the very nature of the movement and transform it. Needless to say, however, that unless one has attained a very high degree of realization it is virtually impossible to keep this state of consciousness for long. Almost immediately one falls back into the egoistic consciousness of the separate self, and all the difficulties return: disgust, the revolt against certain things and the horror they create in us, and so on.*

*"It is probable – even certain – that until one is completely transformed these movements of disgust and revolt are necessary to make one do WITHIN ONESELF what is needed to slam the door on them. For after all, the point is not to let them manifest.*

*"In another aphorism, Sri Aurobindo says (I no longer recall his exact words) that sin is simply something no longer in its place. In this perpetual Becoming nothing is ever reproduced and some things disappear, so to speak, into the past; and when it's time for them to disappear, they seem – to our limited consciousness – evil and repulsive: we revolt against them because their time is past. But if we had the vision of the whole, if we were able to contain past, present and future simultaneously (as it is somewhere up above), then we would see how relative these things are and that it's mainly the progressing evolutionary Force which gives us this will to reject; yet when these things still had their place, they were quite tolerable. However, to have this experience in a practical sense is impossible unless we have a total vision – the vision that is the Supreme's alone! Therefore, one must first identify with the Supreme, and then, keeping the identification, one can return to a consciousness sufficiently externalized to see things as they really are. But that's the principle, and in so far as we are able to realize it, we reach a state of consciousness where we can look at all things with the smile of a complete certainty that everything is exactly as it should be.*

*"Of course, people who don't think deeply enough will say, 'Oh, but if we see that things are exactly "as they should be", then nothing*

*will budge'. But no! There isn't a fraction of a second when things aren't moving: there's a continuous and total transformation, a movement that never stops. Only because it's difficult for us to feel that way can we imagine that by our entering certain states of consciousness things would not change. Even if we entered into an apparently total inertia, things would continue to change and we along with them.*

*"Ultimately, disgust, rebellion and anger, all movements of violence, are necessarily movements of ignorance and of limitation with all the weakness that limitation implies. Rebellion is a weakness, for it's the feeling of an impotent will. When you feel, when you see that things are not as they should be, then you rebel against whatever is out of keeping with your vision. But if you were all-powerful, if your will and your vision were all-powerful, there would be no opportunity to rebel! You would always see that all things are as they should be! That is omnipotence. Then all these movements of violence become not only useless but profoundly ridiculous.*

*"Consequently, there is only one solution: by aspiration, concentration, interiorization and identification, to unite with the supreme Will. And that is both omnipotence and perfect freedom. It's the only omnipotence, the only freedom – all the rest are approximations. You may be en route, but it's not That, not the total thing.*

*"If you make the experiment, you will come to see that this supreme freedom and this supreme power are accompanied by a total peace and an unfaltering serenity; if you notice any contradiction – revolt, disgust or something inadmissible – this indicates that some part in YOU is not touched by the transformation, is still en route: something still holding on to the old consciousness, that's all." <sup>60</sup>*



*"Mind, hollow mirror in which Ignorance sees  
A splendid figure of its own false Self  
And dreams it sees a glorious solid world."*

*Savitri VII.6.535*

## *The Mind's Distortion*

In this yoga the mind (or the vital for that matter) cannot be merely shut off, locked away or silenced by siddhi. It has to be wholly converted into its true role as a transparent instrument of transmission. It must become a mind of light. Sri Aurobindo has written extensively on the true role of the mind. This short paragraph extracted from *The Synthesis of Yoga* speaks about its limits.

*"The mind by its very nature cannot render with an entirely right rightness or act in the unified completeness of the divine knowledge, will and Ananda because it is an instrument for dealing with the divisions of the finite on the basis of division, a secondary instrument therefore and a sort of delegate for the lower movement in which we live. The mind can reflect the Infinite, it can dissolve itself into it, it can live in it by a large passivity, it can take its suggestions and act them out in its own way, a way always fragmentary, derivative and subject to a greater or less deformation, but it cannot be itself the direct and perfect instrument of the infinite Spirit acting in its own knowledge." <sup>61</sup>*

*"For man's mind is the dupe of his animal self;  
Hoping its lusts to win,  
He harbours within him a grisly Elf  
Enamoured of sorrow and sin."*

*A God's Labour*

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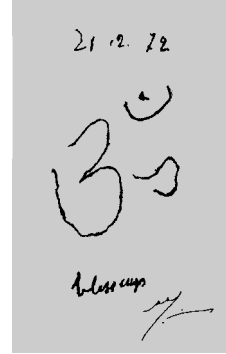
And, in another conversation, Mother explains the true relation between the psychic and the mind. It is not, as some immediately assume, that one does not need the mind, but one has to progressively refine it and turn it towards its true instrumentation as something that helps form and organise. For this it must be educated and trained. It must become wholly docile to the psychic which takes charge of the field. The mind of light shall be an immobile zone of transmission, completely quiet and peaceful until set in motion by the psychic.

***“The psychic need is an expression of the divine Grace and it is expressed by the divine Grace.***

***“Psychic life in the universe is a work of the divine Grace. Psychic growth is a work of the divine Grace and the ultimate power of the psychic being over the physical being will also be a result of the divine Grace. And the mind, if it wants to be at all useful, has only to remain very quiet, as quiet as it can because if it meddles in it, it is sure to spoil everything.”***

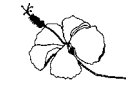
Q: *“So there will be no need of the mind?”*

***“Ah, excuse me; I did not say that one doesn’t need the mind. The mind is useful for something else. The mind is an instrument for formation and organisation, and if the mind lets the psychic make use of it, that will be very good. But it is not the mind which will help the psychic to manifest. The roles are reversed. The mind can be an instrument for the manifestation of the psychic later, when it has already taken possession of the outer consciousness. It is rarely so before that. Usually it is a veil and an obstruction, But surely it can’t help in the manifestation. It can help in the action if it takes its true place and true movement. And if it becomes completely docile to the psychic inspiration, it can help to organise life, for this is its function, its reason of existence. But first of all the psychic being must have taken possession of the field, must be the master of the house. Then, later, things can be arranged.***



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***“There is only one way for the outer being. Let us take the physical being – the poor little physical being, the outer being which knows nothing, can do nothing by itself. Well, for it there is only one way of allowing the psychic being to manifest: with the candid warmth of a child (Mother speaks very softly) to aspire, pray, ask, want with all its strength, without reasoning or trying to understand. One can’t imagine how great an obstruction reasoning and this effort to understand put in the experience.”***<sup>62</sup>



## The Inner Guide

One crucial area where these truths ought to be applied without delay is in the field of education (or, for that matter, parenthood). How does one ‘teach’ without losing hold of such essentials in the relationship between the psychic and the mind? The teacher meets first and foremost the ‘mind’ and the vital being of the student, what should be done or not done so as not to obstruct the process of bringing the psychic forward? Creating conditions for the psychic conversion is the only way to give the child the key to its own destiny. Some advice from Mother follows:

***“There is only one true guide: that is the inner guide, who does not pass through the mental consciousness.***

***“Naturally, if a child gets a disastrous education it will try ever harder to extinguish within itself this little true thing, and sometimes it succeeds so well that it loses all contact with it, and also the power to distinguish between good and evil. That is why I insist upon this, and I say that from their infancy children must be taught that there is an inner reality – within themselves, within the earth, within the universe – and that they, the earth and the universe exist only as a function of this truth, and that if it***

*did not exist the child would not last, even the short time that it does, and that everything would dissolve even as it comes into being. And because this is the real basis of the universe, naturally it is this which will triumph; and all that opposes it cannot endure as long as this does, because it is That, the eternal thing which is at the base of the universe.*

*“It is not a question, of course, of giving a child philosophical explanations, but he could very well be given the feeling of an intense joy when he obeys this little very silent thing within him which will prevent him from doing what is contrary to it. It is on an experience of this kind that teaching may be based. The child must be given the impression that nothing can endure if he does not have within himself this true satisfaction which alone is permanent.”*<sup>63</sup>

*“The world has been so made – at least up to now, let us hope that it will not be so for much longer – that, spontaneously, a man who is not cultured, when he is brought into contact with ideas, always chooses wrong ideas.*

*“And a child who is not educated always chooses bad company. It is a thing I experience constantly and concretely. If you keep a child in a special atmosphere and if, from a very early age, you instill in him a special atmosphere, a special purity; he has a chance of not making a wrong choice. But a child who is taken from the world as it is and is placed in a society where there are good and bad elements will go straight to those who can spoil him, teach him wrong things, that is to say, towards the worst company.*

*“A man who has no intellectual culture, if you give him some mixed ideas, just at random, to choose from, he will always choose the stupid ones; because, as Sri Aurobindo has told us, this is a world of falsehood, of ignorance and an effort is needed, an aspiration; one must come in contact with one’s inmost being – a conscious and luminous contact – if one is to distinguish the true from the false, the good influence from the bad. If you let yourself go, you sink into a hole.*

*“Things are like that because what rules the world – oh! Let us put it in the past tense, so that it becomes true – what ruled the world was falsehood and ignorance.*

*“In fact, for the moment, it is still like that; one should have no illusions about it. But perhaps with a great effort and great vigilance we shall be able to make it otherwise ... soon – the ‘perhaps’ is for ‘soon’.”*<sup>64</sup>

And finally, also in the domain of education, a light on something that seems to be accompanied by much mental confusion: what is ‘higher’ knowledge and how to approach the teaching of ‘subjects’?

*“Your difficulty comes from the fact that you have still the old belief that, in life, there are some high things and some low things. It is not exact. It is not the things or activities that are high or low; it is the consciousness of the doer which is true or false.*

*“If you unite your consciousness with the Supreme Consciousness and manifest It, all you think, feel or do becomes luminous and true. It is not the subject of the teaching which is to be changed; it is the consciousness with which you teach that must be enlightened”.*<sup>65</sup>



## The Victory of Self-Discovery

*To make fine wisdom from coarse scattered strands  
And love and beauty out of war and night,  
The wager wonderful, the game divine.*

*Savitri X.4.653*

Mental attitude and the approach to the development of the mind have been elaborated upon a little. What is the life-attitude required to embark upon a yoga of endless growth, where one needs to face squarely one’s resistance and failings? One will find oneself in trouble if one is unable to perceive such discoveries as another golden opportunity for progress! Some wonderful comments from Mother demonstrate the outlook that can speed us through the pathways of self-development.



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*“To discover the obstacles, the failings, the resistances in one’s own being, in one’s own consciousness, isn’t a defeat, it’s a great victory. One shouldn’t lament, one should rejoice.....*

*“...when one lingers on in a consciousness that must be exceeded, it becomes a failing – one just has not to linger! One just has to reject it and use it as a springboard to jump higher, that’s all ...*

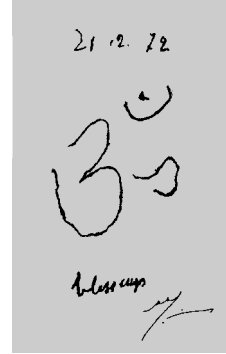
*All discoveries are always graces—wonderful graces. When you discover that you can’t do anything, when you discover that you are a fool, when you discover that you have no capacity, when you discover that you are so petty, mean or stupid, well... ‘Oh Lord, I thank You so much, how good You are to show me this! And then it is over. Because the minute you discover it, you say, ‘Now this is up to You. You will do what has to be done for all this to change.’ And the best part of it is that it does change! It does change. When you do like this (gesture of offering to the Heights), sincerely: ‘Oh take it, take it, take it, rid me of it. Let me be ...only You.’ ... It’s wonderful.”* <sup>66</sup>

Mother gives below a prescription for extricating ourselves from that separative ego-consciousness which is the cause of all our difficulties. We have within us a faculty that can help us understand things by identifying with them. It seems we only need to orient that faculty towards realizing the divine!

*“All knowledge is knowledge by identification. That is, one must become that which one wants to know. One may surmise, imagine, deduce, one may reason, but one does not know. ...*

*“One can learn to identify oneself. One must learn. It is indispensable if one wants to get out of one’s ego. For so long as one is shut up in one’s ego, one can’t make any progress. ...*

*“You have a problem preoccupying you, you don’t know the solution of the problem; well, you objectify your problem in your mind, put it in the most precise, exact, succinct terms possible, and then concentrate, make an effort; you concentrate only on the words, and if possible on the idea they represent, that is, upon your problem – you concentrate, concentrate, concentrate until nothing else exists but*



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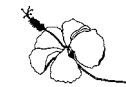
*that. And it is true that, all of a sudden, you have the feeling of something opening, and one is on the other side. The other side of what?... It means that you have opened a door of your consciousness, and instantaneously you have the solution of your problem.*

*It’s an excellent method of learning ‘how’ to identify oneself. ...*

Q: Can the Divine be attained this way?

*“Do you understand, the only way of knowing the Divine is by identifying oneself with Him. There is no other, there is only one, one single way. Hence, once you are master of this method of identification, you can identify yourself. So you choose your object for identification, you want to identify yourself with the Divine. But so long as you do not know how to identify yourself, a hundred and one things will always come across your path, pulling you here, pulling you there, scattering you, and you will not be able to identify yourself with Him. But if you have learnt how to identify yourself, then you have only to orientate the identification, place it where you want it, and then hold on there until you get a result. It will come very fast if you are master of your power of identification. Yes, it will come very quickly. Ramakrishna used to say that the time could vary between three days, three hours and three minutes. Three days is for very slow people, three hours for those who were a little swifter, three minutes for those who are used to it. ...*

*“What hinders the experience is the absence of the practice of concentration, and also the absence of one-pointedness, singleness of purpose, of will.”* <sup>67</sup>



*"A kindling rapture joins the seer and seen;  
The craftsman and the craft grow inly one  
Achieve perfection by the magic throb  
And passion of their close identity."*

*Savitri II.2.112*

## The Grace of Difficulties

*"Above all the complications of the so-called human wisdom stands the luminous simplicity of the Divine's Grace, ready to act if we allow It to do so."*<sup>68</sup>

This yoga is a world-changing, nature-changing work. It is necessary to descend into the pit and convert all that resists and opposes. Difficulties are to be expected. In fact difficulties are a grace! One simply needs to work upon one's attitude towards them. An open-hearted, enduring cheerfulness, a trust-filled serenity and an equality that banishes the drama – these are the attitudes that will draw forth the essence of Grace that lies secret in the heart of the difficulty.

*"The Grace is something that pushes you towards the goal to be attained. Do not try to judge it by your mind; you will not get anywhere, because it is something formidable which is not explained through human words or feelings. When the Grace acts, the result may or may not be pleasant – it takes no account of any human value, it may even be a catastrophe from the ordinary and superficial point of view. But it is always the best for the individual. It is a blow that the Divine sends so that progress may be made by leaps and bounds. The Grace is that which makes you march swiftly towards the realisation."*<sup>69</sup>

*"Never grumble. All sorts of forces enter you when you grumble and they pull you down. Keep smiling. I seem always to be joking but it is not mere joking. It is a confidence born from the psychic. A smile*

*expresses the faith that nothing can stand against the Divine and that everything will come out all right in the end."*<sup>70</sup>

*"In the Yoga as in life it is the man who persists unwearied to the last in the face of every defeat and disillusionment and of all confronting, hostile and contradicting events and powers who conquers in the end and finds his faith justified because to the soul and Shakti in man nothing is impossible."*<sup>71</sup>

*"I have seen in a very clear way that even in circumstances in which you seem to have made a mistake, even with things that betrayed a hope and give you proof that what you expected wasn't legitimate, even in such a case, there isn't one circumstance, not one encounter, not one event that isn't EXACTLY what's necessary to lead you to the victory as rapidly as possible.*

*"This is to me, an absolute thing.*

*"I have noted that whenever something occurred and I said to myself (at the time), 'Oh, I shouldn't have done this – I should have done that' or 'I shouldn't have felt this way – I should have felt that way' afterwards, when I looked at it carefully with the higher knowledge and higher consciousness, I saw that it was EXACTLY what I should have done under the circumstances! But instead of doing it knowingly and consciously, I did it in the usual ignorant way of human beings. And if I had had Knowledge, I would have done exactly the same thing. ...*

*"And as always, when there is nothing pleasant to say, it's better to keep quiet. One has no right to give one's Knowledge, which stems from a higher Consciousness, to those who aren't capable of having it: ... because there are things I know and see and I have no right to reveal them to those who aren't capable of seeing and feeling. Far more complications and disorders are created by an excess of words than by silence. So one shouldn't say anything, one should just let things follow their course—one knows, one KNOWS perfectly well, one isn't deceived, one knows what's what, but one does what one has to do, without comments. ...*

*"It's so amusing every minute when you can discern the TRUE THING from what's added on by the mental functioning, by mental creation and activity – the two things stand out so clearly! But Wisdom lets you know that it would be pointless to want to make an arbitrary purification, that circumstances should be left to unfold as they have to so your knowledge may be TRUE, not arbitrary – at the appropriate time, in the appropriate conditions and with the appropriate receptivity.*

*"One must learn how to wait. Sri Aurobindo said that he who has learned how to wait puts time ON HIS SIDE."*<sup>72</sup>

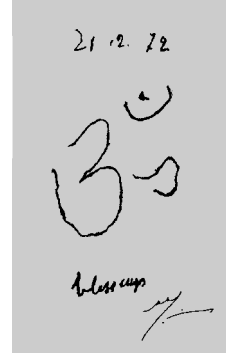


## *A Joy to Dissolve all Falsehood*

*"Earth is the chosen place of mightiest souls;  
Earth is the heroic spirit's battlefield,  
The forge where the Arch-mason shapes his works.  
Thy servitudes on earth are greater, King  
Than all the glorious liberties of heaven."*

*Savitri II.I.686*

Thus speaks Savitri to the Supreme at the end, beyond the vanquishing of Death, when she is offered a final return to the nameless wordless Nought. And this is how one who chooses the yoga of transformation must speak: to feel joy in earthly servitudes, to feel them greater than the most glorious liberties of heaven is the only way through the glutinous darkness of the falsehood which still governs the world. To know how to wait puts time on our side; to be ready to face an eternity of toil simply because an earthly fulfilment is a greater spiritual destiny than any other creates a delight in being. For the silvery light-bursts of Joy are the one thing that can dissolve falsehood:



*"I was in the middle of this hodgepodge of Falsehood, it was really painful, and I was following it down to the minutest vibration, to the origin of the moment when Truth could change into Falsehood – how it happened. But that deformation, that original deformation, is so minute, almost imperceptible, that you lose courage a little and say to yourself: 'How easily I still could tilt to the other side. The least little thing and it could still make you tilt into the Falsehood: the Deformation'. ...*

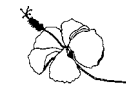
*"It is like something gluey all around you, touching you everywhere; you cannot take a step, you cannot do anything without encountering those black and gluey fingers of Falsehood. It gives a very sad impression.*

*"And last night, there was the Answer, as it were. ... I was as if made to live the WAY of changing this Falsehood into Truth, and it was so joyful! So joyful, in the sense that it is a vibration similar to joy that is capable of dissolving and overcoming the vibration of Falsehood. That was very important: it was quite clear that neither effort, nor rectitude, nor scruples or rigidity, none of that had any effect on that sadness (it is a sadness) of the Falsehood, it is something so sad, so HELPLESS, so miserable ... And only a vibration of Joy can change that.*

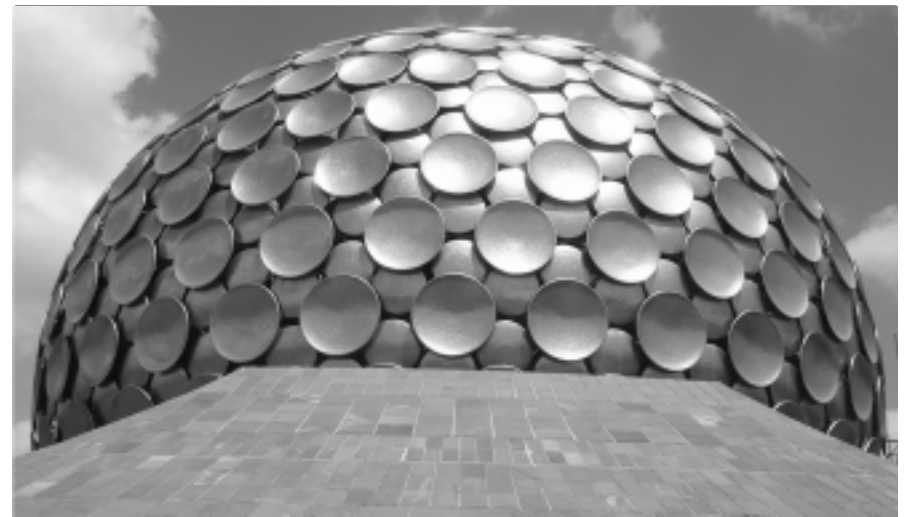
*"It was a vibration that flowed like silvery water – it rippled and flowed like silvery water.*

*"This is to say, austerity, asceticism, even an intense and stern aspiration, all sternness, all that: no action. No action – Falsehood stays put in the background. But it cannot resist the sparkle of Joy. ...*

*"There was even a vision of how the vibrations were in the cells: the vibrations were all silvery, sparkling, shimmering, yet ever steady and precise. (How can I explain it?) ... It was the contradiction of the Falsehood in the cells; like little bursts of silvery light."*<sup>73</sup>



In the Integral Yoga, the Divine Shakti descends into us and, depending on our psychic awakening, does in a brief period the work of many lifetimes or ages. She takes up the imperfections of our instrumental nature and remoulds these into forms worthy of our soul-truth. This Journal travelled through her many-splendoured world. The next issue shall take up another aspect, one that is usually much misunderstood: Mother speaks of the three methods by which all transformation is approached. The first and most important is the spiritual way, the second the occult and the third the higher intellectual, scientific approach (see quote on page 30). The second way, the occult, brings into play all the intermediary regions between the material plane and the Overmind. The Overmind is the highest and last Mind plane. The Supermind transcends mind and represents another condition of consciousness. It is this pathway, which involves the Overmind godheads, that we shall explore in Journal 12: *The Overmind Godheads*.



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