

To

Dr. Daya Krishnaji

With warmest regards

Kneet Job
28/6/91

SRI AUROBINDO AND
THE MOTHER

SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

Glimpses of Their Experiments, Experiences
and Realisations

KIREET JOSHI

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To
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and
THE MOTHER

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Preface

The more one studies Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, the more is one wonderstruck by the breathtaking sweep of their experimentation and their victorious achievements. It is impossible to present even a distant idea of the crucial significance of their realisations to the expanding horizons of knowledge and to the possibilities of evolution and mutation of the human species. What has been attempted in this book is to present only a few glimpses.

It would be useful to explain some of the important terms that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have used in describing their experiences and realisations. In doing so, it would be necessary to present a brief account of what may be called the yogic psychology of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. This has been presented in Appendix IV.

I wish to place on record my gratitude to Sir C.P.N. Singh, formerly Governor of Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, and to Professor D.P. Chattopadhyaya, Chairman of the Indian Council of Philosophical Research, for the encouragement they have given me to pursue my research work. Above all, I am deeply grateful to Satprem whose books on Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have provided me valuable insights into the significance of their work.

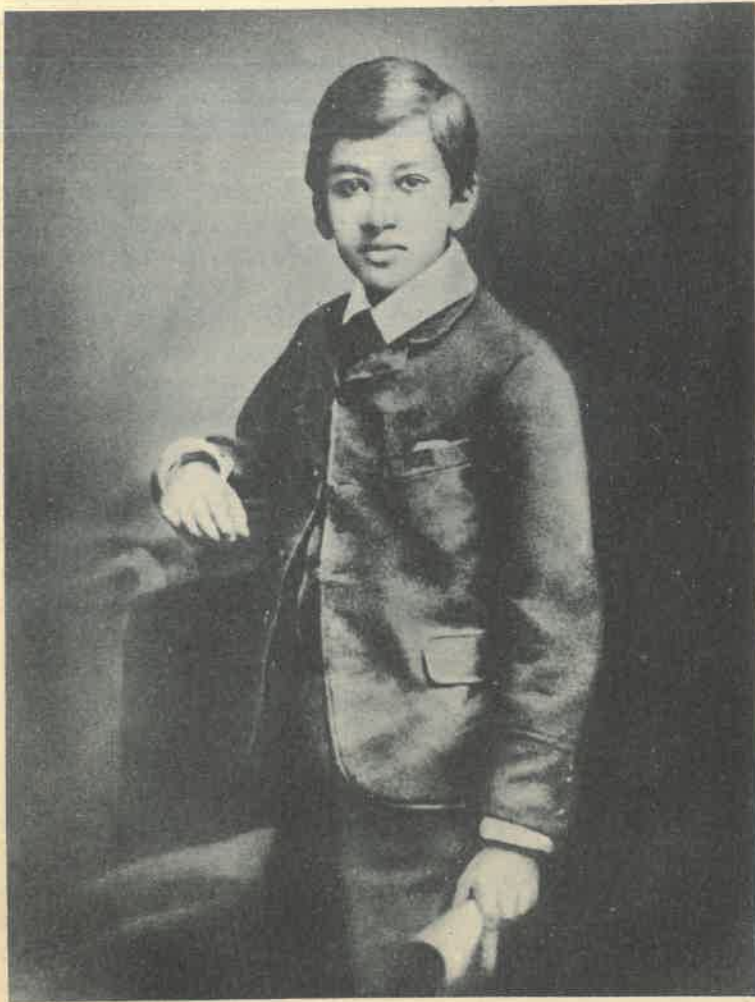
KIREET JOSHI

Introduction

Sri Aurobindo was born on the 15th August 1872 at Calcutta. At an early age of seven, he was taken along with his elder brothers to England for education, since his father wanted him to have no Indian influence in the shaping of his outlook and personality. And yet, even though Sri Aurobindo assimilated in himself richly the best of the European culture, he returned to India in 1893 with a burning aspiration to work for the liberation of India from the foreign rule. While in England, Sri Aurobindo passed the I.C.S. Examination, and yet he felt no call for it; so he got himself disqualified by remaining absent from the riding test. The Gaekwar of Baroda happened to be there at that time, and Sri Aurobindo accepted the proposal to be his Personal Secretary, and returned to India.

Soon thereafter, however, Sri Aurobindo switched over to the Baroda College as Professor of French and then of English, and when in 1906, he left for Bengal, he was the acting Principal of the College. It was during the Baroda period that Sri Aurobindo assimilated in himself the spirit and culture of India and prepared himself for his future political and spiritual work. Indeed, his political work had already begun in Baroda, but it was behind the scenes, largely of the nature of a preparation for an armed revolution for the liberation of India.

Sri Aurobindo was the first among the Indian leaders to declare and work for the aim of complete Independence of India. In 1905, Bengal was divided, and Sri Aurobindo left Baroda and, invited by the nationalistic leaders, he joined at Calcutta the newly started National College as its first Principal. It was here that Sri Aurobindo, while working secretly for the revolution, chalked out also a plan of outer action. This plan consisted of the programme of passive Resistance, Boycott and Swadeshi, which was later adopted as the policy of the struggle for freedom. It was here again that Sri Aurobindo wrote powerfully and boldly for 'Bande Mataram', and later for 'Karma Yogin'; through his writings, he electrified the nation and surcharged the people with a new energy which ultimately led the nation to her freedom. It was, therefore, significant that



Sri Aurobindo as a young student

when India attained her liberation in 1947, it was on the 15th August, the birthday of Sri Aurobindo.

The pioneering work that Sri Aurobindo did for the liberation of India was evidently a part of his larger work for the entire humanity and for the whole earth. For him, the liberation of India was an indispensable part of the new world-order. Moreover, the practice of Yoga, which he had started in 1902, led him, even while in the thick of intense political and literary activity, to major realisations of the Brahmic Silence, Nirvana, and also of the universal dynamic Presence of the Divine. And, in 1908, when he was in Alipore jail during his trial under the charge of sedition, he received through numerous experiences and realisations the assurance of the liberation of the country and also the knowledge of the initial lines on which his own future work was to proceed. For he saw that even in the field of Yoga something was still lacking, something radical that alone would help resolve the problems of the world and would lead mankind to its next evolutionary stage. And so, in 1910, soon after his acquittal from the jail, he withdrew to Pondicherry to concentrate upon this new research work, to hew a new path. It has been a most dynamic work with the entire earth as its central field. It was in the course of this work that Sri Aurobindo declared that the Supramental is the Truth and that its advent on the earth is inevitable. To bring down the supramental consciousness and power on the earth has been the central work of Sri Aurobindo.

Sri Aurobindo has explained the nature of this work, the nature of the Supermind, the necessity of its descent, the process of this descent and the dynamic consequences of this descent for the solutions of the problems of mankind, in his voluminous writings most of which were written serially in the philosophical monthly, *Arya*, which was started in 1914, immediately after the first arrival of The Mother from France to Pondicherry. Some of the most important of these and other writings are: *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *The Ideal of Human Unity*, *The Human Cycle*, *The Foundations of Indian Culture*, *Essays on the Gita*, *On the Veda*, *The Upanishads*, *The Future Poetry*, *The Supramental Manifestation on the Earth*, and the epic *Savitri*.

When Sri Aurobindo withdrew in 1926 into his room for concentrating in the required way on the 'Supramental Yoga',

Mother organized and developed his Ashram. In 1943, a school for the education of children was founded, and after the passing of Sri Aurobindo in 1950, Mother developed that school into an International University Centre, where numerous original and bold experiments of education were carried out under her guidance. This educational work was a part of the Supramental Yoga, and we have rare insights into education and yoga in the volumes entitled 'Entretiens', which contain conversations of the Mother that took place in her classes. In 1958, Mother withdrew to her room in order to come to terms with the research in the problems related to the supramental transformation of the physical consciousness at the cellular level. In 1968, Mother founded Auroville, an International city as a collective field for the material and spiritual researches required for realising human unity as a part of supramental action on the earth.

Mother's exploration into the body-consciousness and her discovery of a 'cellular mind' capable of restructuring the nature of the body is contained in a document of more than 6000 pages, published in 13 volumes. This is 'L' Agenda de Mère' (*Mother's Agenda*), an account of her extraordinary exploration narrated by the Mother to Satprem* covering a period of more than twenty years, during which Mother slowly uncovered the 'Great Passage' to the next species by the supramental transformation of the physical consciousness and fulfilled the work that Sri Aurobindo had given to her.

* Satprem was born in Paris in 1923. After intense experiences in concentration camps and adventures in Guiana, Brazil and Africa, he came to India in 1953, became a Sanyasi and practised Tantrism. Then he left these paths to serve Mother and embarked upon the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. For 19 years, he lived near the Mother and became her confidant and her witness. He recorded innumerable personal conversations that form *Mother's Agenda*. He has written a biography of Sri Aurobindo under the title, 'Sri Aurobindo or The Adventure of Consciousness.' He has also written a biography of the Mother in three volumes, under the titles: Mother or the Divine Materialism; Mother or the New Species; and, Mother or the Mutation of Death.

1

Sri Aurobindo

It is well known that Sri Aurobindo had a thorough Western education, and he had a period of agnostic denial. But from the moment he looked at yogic phenomena, he could never take the attitude of doubt and disbelief which was for so long fashionable in Europe. Abnormal, otherwise supraphysical experiences and powers, occult or yogic, always seemed to him something perfectly natural and credible.

It was after a long stay in India at Baroda that Sri Aurobindo turned decisively to Yoga in 1904. He had, however, a few spiritual experiences even in his pre-yogic period. The first was in London, in 1892, the year of his departure from England. The next experience was when Sri Aurobindo set foot on the Indian soil at Apollo Bunder, Bombay, on his return from England. A vast calm descended upon him and surrounded him and stayed with him for months afterwards. Then, in the first year of his stay in Baroda in 1893, an experience came to him at the moment when there threatened to be an accident to his carriage. He has described this experience later on in the poem, 'The Godhead',* which is reproduced below:

I sat behind the dance of Danger's hooves
In the shouting street that seemed a futurist's whim,
And suddenly felt, exceeding Nature's grooves,
In me, enveloping me the body of Him.

Above my head a mighty head was seen,
A face with the calm of immortality
And an omnipotent gaze that held the scene
In the vast circle of its sovereignty.

His hair was mingled with the sun and breeze;
The world was in His heart and He was I:
I housed in me the Everlasting's peace,
The strength of One whose substance cannot die.

* Sri Aurobindo, *Collected Poems*, Centenary Library, Vol. 5, p. 138.

The moment passed and all was as before;
Only that deathless memory I bore.

Here is a description of a vision that Sri Aurobindo had during his Baroda period: 'Once when Sri Aurobindo was on a visit to Chandod he went to one of the temples of Kali on the bank of the Narmada. He went there because of the company. He never had felt attracted to image-worship—if anything, till then he was averse to it. Now when he went to the temple he found a presence in the image. He got a direct proof of the truth that can be behind image-worship.'

Sri Aurobindo, in one of his letters written much later, seems to be referring to this experience in the following words:

Or, you stand before a temple of Kali beside a sacred river
and see what?—a sculpture, a gracious piece of architecture,
but in a moment mysteriously, unexpectedly there is instead a
Presence, a Power, a Face that looks into yours, an inner sight
in you has regarded the World-Mother.*

He has described this experience also in the poem, 'The Stone Goddess':†

In a town of gods, housed in a little shrine,
From sculptured limbs the Godhead looked at me,—
A living Presence deathless and divine,
A Form that harboured all Infinity.

The great World-Mother and her mighty will
Inhabited the earth's abysmal sleep,
Voiceless, omnipotent, inscrutable,
Mute in the desert and the sky and deep.

Now veiled with mind she dwells and speaks no word,
Voiceless, inscrutable, omniscient,
Hiding until our soul has seen, has heard
The secret of her strange embodiment,

One in the worshipper and the immobile shape,
A beauty and mystery flesh or stone can drape.

In 1901, Sri Aurobindo witnessed some occult phenomena

* Sri Aurobindo, *On Yoga II*, Tome I, p. 216.

† Sri Aurobindo, *Collected Poems*, Centenary Library, Vol. 5, p. 139.

during his younger brother Barin's experiments with the planchette. There were also some experiments of automatic writing. A direct proof of the power of Yoga came to him when a Naga sadhu cured Barin of mountain fever by mantra. The sadhu took a glass full of water and cut the water crosswise with a knife while repeating the mantra. He then told Barin to drink it saying he could not have the fever the next day. And the fever left him.

In April 1903, Sri Aurobindo was on a tour of Kashmir and visited the hill of Shankaracharya (also known as the Takht-i-Suleman—Seat of Solomon), and experienced the vacant Infinite in a very tangible way. He has described this experience in his poem, 'Adwaita':

I walked on the high-wayed Seat of Solomon
Where Shankaracharya's tiny temple stands
Facing Infinity from Time's edge, alone
On the bare ridge ending earth's vain romance.

Around me was a formless solitude:
All had become one strange Unnamable,
An unborn sole Reality world-nude,
Topless and fathomless, for ever still.

A Silence that was Being's only word,
The unknown beginning and the voiceless and
Abolishing all things moment-seen or heard,
On an incommunicable summit reigned,

A lonely Calm and void unchanging Peace
On the dumb crest of Nature's mysteries.

In 1904, Sri Aurobindo began practising Yoga on his own account, starting with *Prānāyāma*, as explained to him by a friend, a disciple of Brahmananda. The purpose of this Yoga practice was to find the spiritual strength which would support him and enlighten his way.

Explaining the results of this practice, Sri Aurobindo has written:

What I did was four or five hours a day pranayama. . . . The flow of poetry came down while I was doing *prānāyāma*, not

* Ibid., p. 153.

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* Ibid., p. 153.

some years afterwards. If it is the flow of experiences, that did come after some years, but after I had stopped the *prānāyāma* for a long time and was doing nothing and did not know what to do or where to turn once all my efforts had failed.*

After four years of *prānāyāma* and other practices on my own, with no other result than an increased health and outflow of energy, some psycho-physical phenomena, a great outflow of poetic creation, a limited power of subtle sight (luminous patterns and figures, etc.) mostly with the waking eye, I had a complete arrest and was at a loss.†

In another letter, Sri Aurobindo has explained an interesting aspect of the subtle sight experiences.

I remember when I first began to see inwardly (and outwardly also with the open eye), a scientific friend of mine began to talk of after-images—'these are only after-images'! I asked him whether after-images remained before the eye for two minutes at a time—he said, 'no', to his knowledge only for a few seconds; I also asked him whether one could get after-images of things not around one or even not existing upon this earth, since they had other shapes, another character, other hues, contours and a very different dynamism, life-movements and values—he could not reply in the affirmative. That is how these so-called scientific explanations break down as soon as you pull them out of their cloud-land of mental theory and face them with the actual phenomena they pretend to decipher.**

The first decisive turn and experience came to Sri Aurobindo in 1907 when he was groping for a way. At this juncture he was induced to meet a Maharashtrian Yogi, Lele, who showed him the way to silence the mind. And by meditation with him at Baroda, Sri Aurobindo attained to an entire silence of thought and feeling and of all the ordinary movements of consciousness within three days.

Describing this meditation and experience, Sri Aurobindo wrote in one of his letters:

* Sri Aurobindo on Himself, Centenary Library, Vol. 26, p. 77.

† Ibid., pp. 78–9.

** Ibid., p. 90.

It was my great debt to Lele that he showed me this. 'Sit in meditation', he said, 'but do not think, look only at your mind; you will see thoughts *coming into it*; before they can enter throw these away from your mind till your mind is capable of entire silence.' I had never heard before of thoughts coming visibly into the mind from outside, but I did not think either of questioning the truth or the possibility, I simply sat down and did it. In a moment my mind became silent as a windless air on a high mountain summit and then I saw one thought and then another coming in a concrete way from outside; I flung them away before they could enter and take hold of the brain and in three days I was free. From that moment, in principle, the mental being in me became a free Intelligence, a universal Mind, not limited to the narrow circle of personal thought as a labourer in a thought factory, but a receiver of knowledge from all the hundred realms of being and free to choose what it willed in this vast sight-empire and thought-empire.*

Elaborating upon the same experience in another letter, Sri Aurobindo wrote:

There was an entire silence of thought and feeling and all the ordinary movement of consciousness except the perception and recognition of things around without any accompanying concept or other reaction. The sense of ego disappeared and the movements of the ordinary life as well as speech and action were carried on by some habitual activity of Prakriti alone which was not felt as belonging to oneself. But the perception which remained saw all things as utterly unreal; this sense of unreality was overwhelming and universal. Only some undefinable Reality was perceived as true which was beyond space and time and unconnected with any cosmic activity, but yet was met wherever one turned. This condition remained unimpaired for several months and even when the sense of unreality disappeared and there was a return to participation in the world-consciousness, the inner peace and freedom which resulted from this realisation remained permanently behind all surface movements and the essence of the realisation itself was not lost.†

* Ibid., pp. 83–4.

† Ibid., pp. 85–6.

In his poem, 'Nirvana',* we have a vivid description of this experience.

All is abolished but the mute Alone.
 The mind from thought released, the heart from grief
 Grow inexistent now beyond belief;
 There is no I, no Nature, known-unknown.
 The city, a shadow picture without tone,
 Floats, quivers unreal; forms without relief
 Flow, a cinema's vacant shapes; like a reef
 Foundering in shoreless gulfs the world is done.
 Only the illimitable Permanent
 Is here. A Peace stupendous, featureless, still,
 Replaces all,—what once was I, in It
 A silent unnamed emptiness content
 Eihier to fade in the Unknowable
 Or thrill with the luminous seas of the Infinite.

This experience and realisation of the utter reality of the Brahman and the unreality of the world is a recognised culmination of the classical path of Knowledge and Advaitic Mayavada. For Sri Aurobindo, however, this turned out to be only one of the foundational experiences, and a series of spiritual experiences and realisations† that followed led Sri Aurobindo to a new exploration and a new discovery. This is how he explained in one of his letters:

Now to reach Nirvana was the first radical result of my own Yoga. It threw me suddenly into a condition above and without thought, unstained by any mental or vital movement; there was no ego, no real world—only when one looked through the immobile senses, something perceived or bore upon its sheer silence a world of empty forms, materialised shadows without true substance. There was no One or many even, only just absolutely That, featureless, relationless, sheer, indescribable, unthinkable, absolute, yet supremely real and solely real. . . . I lived in that Nirvana day and night before it began to admit other things into itself or modify itself at all, and the inner heart of experience, a constant

* Sri Aurobindo, *Collected Poems*, Centenary Library, Vol. 5, p. 161.

† Some of these experiences and realisations were described in his poems by Sri Aurobindo. A few of them have been reproduced in Appendix I. 1 to I. 7.

memory of it and its power to return remained until in the end it began to disappear into a greater Superconsciousness from above. But meanwhile realisation added itself to realisation and fused itself with this original experience. At an early stage the aspect of an illusionary world gave place to one in which illusion* is only a small surface phenomenon with an immense Divine Reality behind it and a supreme Divine Reality above it and an intense Divine Reality in the heart of everything that had seemed at first only a cinematic shape or shadow. And this was no reimprisonment in the senses, no diminution or fall from supreme experience, it came rather as a constant heightening and widening of the Truth; it was the spirit that saw objects, not the senses, and the Peace, the Silence, the freedom in Infinity remained always with the world or all worlds only as a continuous incident in the timeless eternity of the Divine.

Now, that is the whole trouble in my approach to Mayavada. Nirvana in my liberated consciousness turned out to be the beginning of my realisation, a first step towards the complete thing, not the sole true attainment possible or even a culminating finale.†

Of the next major realisation we learn from Sri Aurobindo's Uttarpara Speech in which he has given a soul-stirring description of the experiences he had in the Alipore jail in which he was detained in May 1908 under a charge of sedition until May 1909 when he was acquitted. In the jail Sri Aurobindo spent almost all his time in reading the Gita and the Upanishads and in intensive meditation and the practice of Yoga. It was here that the realisation which had continually been increasing in magnitude and universality and assuming a large place took him up entirely and his work became a part and result of it and besides far exceeded the service and liberation of the country and fixed itself in the aim, previously only glimpsed, which was world-wide in its bearing and concerned the whole future of humanity.

The major realisation that he had here was that of the Uni-

* In fact it is not an illusion in the sense of an imposition of something baseless and unreal on the consciousness, but a misinterpretation by the conscious mind and sense and a falsifying misuse of manifested existence. (Sri Aurobindo's note.)

† Sri Aurobindo on Himself, Centenary Library, Vol. 26, pp. 101-2.

versal Presence of the Divine. As he says:

I looked at the jail that secluded me from men and it was no longer by its high walls that I was imprisoned; no, it was Vasudeva who surrounded me. I walked under the branches of the tree in front of my cell but it was not the tree, I knew it was Vasudeva, it was Sri Krishna whom I saw standing there and holding over me his shade. I looked at the bars of my cell, the very grating that did duty for a door and again I saw Vasudeva. It was Narayana who was guarding and standing sentry over me. Or I lay on the coarse blankets that were given me for a couch and felt the arms of Sri Krishna around me, the arms of my Friend Lover. This was the first use of the deeper vision He gave me. I looked at the prisoners in the jail, the thieves, the murderers, the swindlers, and as I looked at them I saw Vasudeva, it was Narayana whom I found in these darkened souls and misused bodies. . . .

When the case opened in the lower court and we were brought before the Magistrate I was followed by the same insight. He said to me, 'when you were cast into jail, did not your heart fail and did you not cry out to me, where is Thy protection? Look now at the Magistrate, look now at the Prosecuting Counsel.' I looked and it was not the Magistrate whom I saw, it was Vasudeva, it was Narayana who was sitting there on the bench. I looked at the Prosecuting Counsel and it was not the Counsel for the prosecution that I saw; it was Sri Krishna who sat there, it was my Lover and Friend who sat there and smiled.*

The following two interesting experiences in the Alipore jail may be noted:

I . . . knew something about sculpture, but [I was] blind to painting. Suddenly one day in the Alipore jail while meditating I saw some pictures on the walls of the cell and lo and behold! the artistic eye in me opened and I knew all about painting except of course the more material side of the technique. I don't always know how to express though, because I lack the knowledge of the proper expressions, but that

*Sri Aurobindo, Uttarpara Speech, Centenary Library, Vol. 2, pp. 4-5.

does not stand in the way of a keen and understanding appreciation.*

His other experience, that of levitation, he has described as follows:

I was . . . having a very intense sadhana on the vital plane and I was concentrated. And I had a questioning mind: Are such siddhis as utthapana (levitation) possible? I then suddenly found myself raised up in such a way that I could not have done it myself with muscular exertion. Only one part of the body was slightly in contact with the ground and the rest was raised up against the wall. I could not have held my body like that normally even if I had wanted to and I found that the body remained suspended like that without any exertion on my part.†

While in the Alipore jail, Sri Aurobindo was also on his way in his meditations to two other realisations: that of the Supreme Reality with the static and dynamic Brahman as its two aspects, and that of the higher planes of consciousness above the Mind leading up to the Supermind. It is a fact that Sri Aurobindo received help from Vivekananda in regard to a transition to some of the planes of consciousness above the Mind. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

It is a fact that I was hearing constantly the voice of Vivekananda speaking to me for a fortnight in the jail in my solitary meditation and felt his presence. . . . The voice spoke only on a special and limited but very important field of spiritual experience and it ceased as soon as it finished saying all that it had to say on the subject.**

It was again in the Alipore jail that Sri Aurobindo received the messages from Sri Krishna which opened up before him a passage to a new work. And it was in this direction that Sri Aurobindo was moving after his release from the jail in May 1909 when he got the Divine *adesh* in early 1910 to go to Chandernagore, and, later, another *adesh* to go to Pondicherry

*Sri Aurobindo on Himself, Centenary Library, Vol. 26, pp. 226-7.

†Reported by A. B. Purani in 'The Life of Sri Aurobindo', 1964, pp. 128-9.

**Ibid., p. 129.

where he reached on 4th April 1910. What was the nature of the new work can be glimpsed from a letter that Sri Aurobindo wrote in 1911:

I need some place of refuge in which I can complete my Yoga unassailed and build up other souls around me. It seems to me that Pondicherry is the place appointed by those who are Beyond, but you know how much effort is needed to establish the thing that is purposed upon the material plane. . . .

What I perceive most clearly is that the principal object of my Yoga is to remove absolutely and entirely every possible source of error and ineffectiveness, of error in order that the Truth I shall eventually show to men may be perfect, and of ineffectiveness in order that the work of changing the world, so far as I have to assist it, may be entirely victorious and irresistible. It is for this reason that I have been going through so long a discipline and that the more brilliant and mighty results of Yoga have been so long withheld. I have been kept busy laying down the foundation, a work severe and painful. It is only now that the edifice is beginning to rise upon the sure and perfect foundation that has been laid.*

Earlier, at Chandernagore, Sri Aurobindo lived in deep meditation. In his descending process of yoga, he had reached the last steps of the physical subconscient. At the same time, in his ascending movement of yoga, he had reached the extreme overmind border. Then one day as he descended downwards, he came across all the impurities one by one. The line of the subconscient seemed to be deepening further downwards towards the depth in an ever more solid concentration in the inverse image of the concentration above. Then, at one bound, without transition, at the bottom of this 'inconscient', and in the dark cells of the body, without falling into ecstatic trance, without the loss of the individual, without cosmic dissolution, and with eyes wide open, Sri Aurobindo found himself precipitated into the supreme Light. He had touched the Supermind. Later on, Sri Aurobindo was to discover that the Supermind was the lost Secret, that of the Veda and of many seekers

* Sri Aurobindo on Himself, Centenary Library, Vol. 26, pp. 423-4.

after perfection. The Vedic Rishis had called their discovery of the Supermind as the discovery of the 'great passage', *mahas panthah*, the world of the 'unbroken light', Swar, at the bottom of the rock of the Inconscient.

After coming to Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo began the study of the Veda, and discovered therein the confirmation of many of his experiences. He found in the Rigveda many clues, based upon his own experiences and he found that the Vedic Rishis could open 'the great passage' at the individual level, and that this was a kind of a promise of a future realisation at a collective level. A new knowledge was still needed, a new experiment was required, and it was this adventure of consciousness that Sri Aurobindo undertook.

In explaining the nature of the Supermind, however, Sri Aurobindo has often referred to the cryptic verses of the Veda. As he says:

It is the cryptic verses of the Veda that help us here; for they contain, though concealed, the gospel of the divine and immortal Supermind and through the veil some illumining flashes come to us. We can see through these utterances the conception of this Supermind as a vastness beyond the ordinary firmaments of our consciousness in which truth of being is luminously one with all that expresses it and assures inevitably truth of vision, formulation, arrangement, word, act and movement and therefore truth also of result of movement, result of action and expression, infallible ordinance or law. Vast all-comprehensiveness; luminous truth and harmony of being in that vastness and not a vague chaos or self-lost obscurity; truth of law and act and knowledge expressive of that harmonious truth of being: these seem to be the essential terms of the Vedic description. The Gods, who in their highest secret entity are powers of this Supermind, born of it, seated in it as in their proper home, are in their knowledge 'truth-conscious' and in their action possessed of the 'seer-will'. Their conscious-force turned towards works and creation is possessed and guided by a perfect and direct knowledge of the thing to be done and its essence and its law,—a knowledge which determines a wholly effective will-power that does not deviate or falter in its process or in its result, but expresses and fulfils spontaneously and inevi-

tably in the act that which has been seen in the vision. Light is here one with Force, the vibrations of knowledge with the rhythm of the will and both are one, perfectly and without seeking, groping or effort, with the assured result. The divine Nature has a double power, a spontaneous self-formulation and self-arrangement which wells naturally out of the essence of the thing manifested and expresses its original truth, and a self-force of light inherent in the thing itself and the source of its spontaneous and inevitable self-arrangement.

There are subordinate, but important details. The Vedic seers seem to speak of two primary faculties of the 'truth-conscious' soul; they are Sight and Hearing, by which is intended direct operations of an inherent Knowledge describable as truth-vision and truth-audition and reflected from far-off in our human mentality by the faculties of revelation and inspiration. Besides, a distinction seems to be made in the operations of the Supermind between knowledge by a comprehending and pervading consciousness which is very near to subjective knowledge by identity and knowledge by a projecting, confronting, apprehending consciousness which is the beginning of objective cognition. These are the Vedic clues. And we may accept from this ancient experience the subsidiary term 'truth-consciousness' to delimit the connotation of the more elastic phrase, Supermind.*

In his writings, Sri Aurobindo has written at length on the Supermind, but we may give here only one more statement from his 'Supramental Manifestation upon Earth':†

The Supermind is in its very essence a truth-consciousness, a consciousness always free from the Ignorance which is the foundation of our present natural or evolutionary existence and from which nature in us is trying to arrive at self-knowledge and world-knowledge and a right consciousness and the right use of our existence in the universe. The Supermind, because it is a truth-consciousness, has this knowledge inherent in it and this power of true existence; its course is straight and can go direct to its aim, its field is wide and can even be made illimitable. This is because its very nature is

* Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, Centenary Library, Vol. 18, pp. 124-5.

† Written in 1949.

knowledge; it has not to acquire knowledge but possesses it in its own right; its steps are not from nescience or ignorance into some imperfect light, but from truth to greater truth, from right perception to deeper perception, from intuition to intuition, from illumination to utter and boundless luminousness, from growing widenesses to the utter vasts and to very infinitude. On its summits it possesses the divine omniscience and omnipotence but even in an evolutionary movement of its own graded self-manifestation by which it would eventually reveal its own highest heights it must be in its very nature essentially free from ignorance and error: it starts from truth and light and moves always in truth and light. As its knowledge is always true, so too its will is always true; it does not fumble in its handling of things or stumble in its paces. In the Supermind feeling and emotion do not depart from their truth, make no slips or mistakes, do not swerve from the right and the real, cannot misuse beauty and delight or twist away from a divine rectitude. In the Supermind sense cannot mislead or deviate into the grossnesses which are here its natural imperfections and the cause of reproach, distrust and misuse by our ignorance. Even an incomplete statement made by the Supermind is a truth leading to a further truth, its incomplete action a step towards completeness. All the life and action and leading of the Supermind is guarded in its very nature from the falsehoods and uncertainties that are our lot; it moves in safety towards its perfection. Once the truth-consciousness was established here on its own sure foundation, the evolution of divine life would be a progress in felicity, a march through light to Ananda.*

Soon after his arrival in Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo 'received' a programme of his own yoga in the form of Sanskrit mantras that constituted a system of 'Sapta Chatushthaya' (seven tetrads). This programme related to the work of the descent and manifestation of the Supermind in the physical life. We find reference to this system in his record of Yoga,† which is a

* Sri Aurobindo, *The Supramental Manifestation Upon Earth*, Centenary Library, Vol. 16, pp. 41-2.

† Sri Aurobindo kept a record of his own practice of Yoga in a series of diaries. The earliest entries in these diaries began in 1909 and the latest ended in 1927. But

meticulous and scientifically scrupulous record of fact and experience.

Each of the Chatushthayas laid down the summits* of realisation pertaining to one aspect of Sadhana. The intensity and rapidity with which Sri Aurobindo conquered these summits are evident even if we cast a cursory glance at his record of yoga. Let us take a few examples at random:

January 13th 1912

10.15 a.m.

... Ananda has very fully established itself in the field of the indriyas. All sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, movements, actions, are now pleasurable or give pleasure; all carry with them the rasagrahana or appreciation of beauty of the gunas which they are in expression, the joy of the vijñana in them (the basis of chidghana ananda), the joy of the heart in them (the basis of premananda), the joy of the body in them (the basis of the kamananda), the joy of the mind as indriya in them (the basis of the ahaituka ananda). ... Experiments made with the body show that below a certain intensity all pain now gives ananda of bhoga at the time of the feeling of pain, & pain beyond that degree brings it after the immediate acuteness has passed. ...

The forward movement of the ananda is now being left to itself and another Siddhi taken up, the relations of the Jiva (dasyam) with the Master of the Yoga and those whom he has chosen. All restraint by the mind or any other organ used by the Jiva is to be entirely abandoned.

there are dated entries for only twelve of those nineteen years. (See 'Record of Yoga' in Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research, Vol. 10, No. 1).

*These Summits are: Shuddhi, Mukti, Bhukti, Siddhi—pertaining to Siddhi Chatushthaya; Sarvam Ābrahma, Anantam Brahma, Jñanam Brahma, Anandam Brahma—pertaining to Brahma Chatushthaya; Krishna, Kali, Karma, Kama—pertaining to Karma Chatushthaya; Samata, Shanti, Sukha, Hasya—pertaining to Shanti Chatushthaya; Virya, Shakti, Chandibhava, Sraddha—pertaining to Shakti Chatushthaya; Jnana, Trikaladrishti, Ashtasiddhi, Samadhi—pertaining to Vijñana Chatushthaya; Arogya, Utthapana, Saundarya, Vividhananda—pertaining to Sharira Chatushthaya.

A brief explanation of these terms is given in Appendix II.

A detailed but incomplete explanation of Sapta Chatushthaya is to be found in the last part of Sri Aurobindo's 'Synthesis of Yoga' (Centenary Library, Vol. 21).

Next day 10.20

... The most important siddhi was the perfection of the articulate thought, which resumed rapidly all the characteristics of perfect vijñanamaya thought,—prakasha, asu, nischaya, inevitability (adequate, effective and effective illuminative) of the vak, truth of substance, nihshabdata. All these were perfected and delivered from breach or restraint, except the nihshabdata which is still pursued with shabda by the annamaya devatas; but the thought can no longer be strongly impeded or suspended by annamaya interference, only hampered in its speed. Fluency has been acquired, rapidity prepared and declared due at 8.[0] 2 a.m. on the morrow. ...

January 14th

... Now that the period of uninterrupted Siddhi has begun, there will be no relaxation of the karma and the siddhi, the karma only waiting for the effectiveness of the power, the Siddhi perfecting its force as the tapas increases in the body. Today, the typical perfection of the remaining elements of the jñanam throughout its whole range, the growth of lipi and drishti, the constant realisation of the Ishwara, the forward movement of the other Siddhis. ...

January 16th

... The Ishwara is now master of all thought perceptions or expressed thought in the system and is laying his hold upon all feelings and sensations. ...

... The power of aisvaryam has greatly increased in the matter of siddhi, producing a much more rapid and spontaneous effect even in things physical than ever formerly. ... The mastery of the system by the Ishwara is now almost complete, though still of a moderate intensity and force. The second Chatushthaya & the nature & realisation of the Shakti Jiva, marked by the appearance of the lipi 11 (kali), are growing more rounded and permanently real to the consciousness. ...

Standing & walking, 6.35 to 7.35 and again from 9.20 to 11.20. Altogether 12 hours out of 16. Sleep from 3.10 to 6.40. Ananda in all outward things and the established sense of

the one Personality in all. Certain defects in the thought perception appeared towards the close of the day. Safety was confirmed to the trikaladrishti, not by events.

January 27th

... Jnanam increases in force & exactness. The style of the vak rises to the inspired illuminative and is effective at its lowest level. The thought perception is now almost rid of false vijñanam in its material, but not in the arrangement of its material. Nevertheless accuracy of time is growing, accuracy of place has begun, accuracy of circumstance, chiefly, is defective—all this in trikaladrishti. Prakāmya & Vyapti are strong and more continuous, less chequered by error. The internal motions of animals & to a less extent of men, the forces working on them, the ananda & tapas from above, even the explicit thoughts are being more and more observed and are usually justified by the attendant or subsequent action. The Siddhis of power work well & perfectly, in harmony with the trikaladrishti, not so well when divorced from it. The physical tone of the system is recovering its elasticity & with it elementary utthapana and bhautasiddhi are reviving. Samadhi improves steadily, but is much hampered by sleep which has revived its force during these last three or four days. ...

July 1st 1912

August, 1912, will complete the seventh year of my practice of Yoga. It has taken so long to complete a long record of wanderings, stumbles, gropings, experiments,—for Nature beginning in the dark to grope her way to the light—for the Master of the Yoga to quiet the restless individual will and the presumptuous individual intelligence so that the Truth might liberate itself from human possibilities & searchings and the Power emerge out of human weaknesses and limitations. The night of the thirtieth marked by a communication from the sahasradala, of the old type, sruti, but clear of the old confusions which used to rise around the higher Commands. It was clearly the Purushottama speaking and the Shakti receiving the command. Already the lipi had given warning

of a new life beginning on the 1st July,—a new life, that is to say, a new type of action, starting with a temporarily complete realisation of novel Personality and the final inevitable seal on the dasyabhava. Not that anything was done abruptly. In this yoga at least nothing has been abrupt except the beginnings,—the consummations are always led up to by long preparation & development, continual ebb & flow, ceaseless struggling, falling & rising—a progress from imperfection through imperfections to imperfect and insecure perfections and only at last an absolute finality and security. ...

... Formerly I realised the Impersonal God, Brahma or Sacchidan [an] dam separately from the Personal, Ishwara or Sacchidananda. Brahma has been thoroughly realised in its absolute infinity & as the material & informing presence of the world & each thing it contains, yat kincha jagatyam jagat. But the sense of the One has not been applicable utterly & constantly,—there have been lacunae in the unitarian consciousness, partly because the Personality has not been realised with equal thoroughness or as one with the Impersonality. Hence while dwelling on the Paratman, the mind, whenever the Jivatman manifested itself in the sarvam Brahma, has been unable to assimilate it to the predominant realisation and an element of Dwaitabhava,—of Visishtadwaita has entered into its perception. Even when the assimilation is partly effected, the Jiva is felt as an individual & local manifestation of the impersonal Chaitanya and not as the individual manifestation of Chaitanya as universal Personality. On the other hand the universal Sri Krishna or Krishna-Kali in all things animate or inanimate has been realised entirely but not with sufficient constancy & latterly with little frequency. The remedy is to unify the two realisations & towards this consummation I feel the Shakti to be now moving. ...

July 3rd

The barrier offered in the annamaya prakriti to all decisive fulfilment of the vijñana—chatushtaya (the siddhis of knowledge & power incidental to the opening of the ideal faculty) (has) at last given way. ...

July 16th

Dasyam more strongly confirmed, by emphasis on all action being for Srikrishna's ananda & bhoga, not for the Shakti's and by passive acceptance of the truth of the vani as superior to the apparent experience of the movement. Knowledge by sruti has begun to be proved & accepted. The process of finally manifesting the trikaldrishti in things distant has begun, the automatic unsought knowledge proving always truer than the mental opinions, inferences etc. The increased strength of the kamachakra strongly tested last night, has endured the test so far. Visrishti in the morning, but the bhautic symptoms were slight.

Programme

1. Trikaldrishti confirmed & extended; trailokyadrishti & rupadrishti.
2. Powers strengthened.
3. Samadhi largely developed.
4. Utthapana & health carried forward—
5. Ananda established in an intenser movement.
6. Madhurabhava of Kali Krishna.
7. Karma & Kama strengthened. . . .

July 22nd

. . . The permanent realisation of the fourfold Brahman is final. The activity of shuddhi, mukti, bhukti is now final in all their parts, though not yet consummate; only the siddhi remains and this is being rapidly brought forward. It is still chiefly hampered in the karma proper to Mahakali & in the outward fulfilment of kama.

November 10

. . . Samata siddhi, sraddha, virya, shakti, are perfect except for the defective spot in the Sraddha through which the asiddhi can still enter.

In a letter of 1913, Sri Aurobindo had explained what he was attempting to accomplish. He had written:

What I am attempting is to establish the NORMAL working of the Siddhis (faculties or powers) in life, i.e. the perception of thoughts, feelings and happenings of other beings and in other places throughout the world without any use of information by speech or any other data; 2nd, the communication of the ideas and feelings I select to others (individuals, groups, nations) by mere transmission of will-power; 3rd, the silent compulsion on them to act according to these communicated ideas and feelings; 4th, the determining of events, actions and results of action throughout the world by pure silent will-power . . . in the 1st, 2nd and even 3rd I am now largely successful, although action of these powers is not yet perfectly organised. It is only in the 4th that I feel a serious resistance.*

It could thus be seen that the period between 1910 and 1914 was for Sri Aurobindo a period of intense search and exploration.

On the 29th March, 1914, Mother came to Pondicherry and met Sri Aurobindo.

* Sri Aurobindo, Centenary Library, Vol. 27, p. 428.

2

The Mother

The Mother (Mirra Alfassa) was born in Paris on the 21st February, 1878. Her mother was Egyptian and her father was Turkish—both of them were perfect materialists. As a result, although she had inner experiences, including that of the divine Presence, right from her childhood, she was in her external life an atheist until she entered into adulthood. In her early years, she had a good grounding in music (piano), painting and higher mathematics. At the same time, she used to have spontaneous experiences including those of coming out of her body to discover inner realities without understanding what they really meant.

Let us note a few of these experiences in her own words.

□ Every night at the same hour when the whole house was very quiet, I would go out of my body and have all kinds of experiences. And then my body gradually became a sleep-walker (that is, the consciousness of the form became more and more conscious, while the link remained very solidly established). I got into the habit of getting up—but not like an ordinary sleepwalker; I would get up, open my desk, take out a piece of paper and write . . . poems. Yes, poems—I, who had nothing of a poet in me! I would jot things down, then very consciously put everything back into the drawer, lock everything up again very carefully and go back to bed. One night, for some reason or other, I forgot and left it open. My mother came in (in France the windows are covered with heavy curtains and in the morning my mother would come in and violently throw open the curtains, waking me up, brrrm! without any warning; but I was used to it and would already be prepared to wake up—otherwise it would have been most unpleasant!) Anyway, my mother came in, calling me with unquestionable authority, and then she found the open desk and the piece of paper: 'What's that?!' She grabbed it. 'What have you been up to?' I don't know what I replied



The Mother in her childhood

but she went to the doctor: 'My daughter has become a sleep-walker! You have to give her a drug.'*

□ When I was a child of about thirteen, for nearly a year every night as soon as I had gone to bed it seemed to me that I went out of my body and rose straight up above the house, then above the city, very high above. Then I used to see myself clad in a magnificent golden robe, much longer than myself; and as I rose higher, the robe would stretch, spreading out in a circle around me to form a kind of immense roof over the city. Then I would see men, women, children, old men, the sick, the unfortunate coming out from every side; they would gather under the outspread robe, begging for help, telling of their miseries, their suffering, their hardships. In reply, the robe, supple and alive, would extend towards each of them individually, and as soon as they had touched it, they were comforted or healed, and went back into their bodies happier and stronger than they had come out of them. Nothing seemed more beautiful to me, nothing could make me happier; and all the activities of the day seemed dull and colourless and without any real life, beside this activity of the night which was the true life for me.†

□ The Jewish temples in Paris have such beautiful music; oh, what beautiful music! I had one of my first experiences in a temple. It was at a marriage, and the music was wonderful—Saint-Saens, I later learnt; organ music, the second best organ in Paris—wonderful! I was fourteen years old, sitting high up in the galleries with my mother, and this music was being played. There were some leaded-glass windows—white, with no designs. I was gazing at one of these windows, feeling uplifted by the music, when suddenly through the window came a flash like a bolt of lightning. Just like lightning. It entered—my eyes were open—it entered like this (*Mother strikes her breast violently*), and then I... I had the feeling of becoming vast and all-powerful... And it lasted for days.

Of course, my mother was such an out-and-out materialist, thank God, that it was impossible to speak to her of invisible things—she took them as evidence of a deranged brain!

*Mother's Agenda, Vol. 2, pp. 307–8.

†22.2.1914 in 'Prayers and Meditations'.

Nothing counted for her but what could be touched and seen. But this was a divine grace—I had no opportunity to say anything. I kept my experience to myself. But it was one of my first contacts with... I learned later that it was an entity from the past who had come back into me through the aspiration arising from the music.*

□ At the age of eighteen, I remember having such an intense need in me to KNOW... Because I was having experiences—I had all kinds of experiences—but my surroundings offered me no chance to receive an intellectual knowledge which would have given me the meaning of it all: I couldn't even speak of them. I was having experience after experience... For years, I had experiences during the night (but I was very careful never to speak about them!)—memories from past lives, all sorts of things, but without any base of intellectual knowledge. (Of course, the advantage of this was that my experiences were not mentally contrived; they were entirely spontaneous.) But I had such a NEED in me to know!... I remember living in a house (one of these houses with a lot of apartments), and in the apartment next door were some young Catholics whose faith was very... they were very convinced. And seeing all that, I remember saying to myself one day while brushing my hair, 'These people are lucky to be born into a religion and believe unquestioningly! It's so easy! You have nothing to do but believe—how simple that makes it.' I was feeling like this, and then when I realised what I was thinking (*laughing*), well, I gave myself a good scolding: 'Lazybones!'+

To know, know, KNOW!... You see, I knew nothing, really; nothing but the things of ordinary life: external knowledge. I had learned everything I had been given to learn. I not only learned what I was taught but also what my brother was taught—higher mathematics and all that! I learned and I learned and I learned—and it was NOTHING.

None of it explained anything to me—nothing. I couldn't understand a thing!

To know!...

*Mother's Agenda, Vol. 2, pp. 195–6.

†Ibid., pp. 196–7.

It was to happen to me two years later when I met someone who told me of Theon's teaching.

When I was told that the Divine was within—the teaching of the Gita, but in words understandable to the Westerner—that there was an inner Presence, that one carried the Divine within oneself, oh! . . . What a revelation! In a few minutes, I suddenly understood all, all, all. Understood everything. It brought the contact instantly.*

□ between the ages of 18 and 20, I had attained a constant and conscious union with the Divine Presence and . . . I had done this ALL ALONE, without ANYONE'S help, not even books. When a little later I chanced upon Vivekananda's *Raja Yoga*, it really seemed so wonderful to me that someone could explain something to me! And it helped me realise in only a few months what would have otherwise taken years.

I met a man (I was perhaps 20 or 21 at the time), an Indian who had come to Europe and who told me of the *Gita*. There was a French translation of it (a rather poor one, I must say) which he advised me to read, and then he gave me the key (HIS key, it was his key). He said, 'Read the Gita. . .' (this translation of the Gita which really wasn't worth much but it was the only one available at the time—in those days I wouldn't have understood anything in other languages; and besides, the English translations were just as bad and . . . well, Sri Aurobindo hadn't done his yet!). He said, 'Read the *Gita* knowing that Krishna is the symbol of the immanent God, the God within.' That was all. 'Read it with THAT knowledge—with the knowledge that Krishna represents the immanent God, the God within you.' Well, within a month, the whole thing was done!†

Her need to know led her into two directions. The first was the world of painting. She had already joined Ecole des beaux Arts in Paris. She mingled with the artists and widened her horizons. It was the era of the Impressionists; it was the era of Manet, a brilliant era during which beautiful things were being created. Even great literary masters like Hugo, Beaudelaire and Zola had become champions of Impressionism.

* Ibid.

† Mother's Agenda, Vol. I, pp. 42–3.

But, in spite of her intimate contact with the leading artists, she was left dissatisfied. She found the artists' horizon to be limited. She discovered that even the best among them were unable or unwilling to expand their horizons.

At the same time, her inner experiences had continued unabated; but she was in need of explanations of these experiences in the light of intellectual or wider knowledge. This was the second domain towards which she turned.

At this stage, a young man, Themanlys, who was a friend of her brother (Matteo Alfassa), spoke to her of Theon and his teaching. She started to work with him (Themanlys), and just at that time she began to have a series of visions.

When I first began to work (not with Theon personally but with an acquaintance of his in France, a boy who was a friend of my brother), well, I had a series of visions (I knew nothing about India, mind you, nothing, just as most Europeans know nothing about it: 'a country full of people with certain customs and religions, a confused and hazy history, where a lot of "extraordinary things" are said to have happened.' I knew nothing.) Well, in several of these visions I saw Sri Aurobindo just as he looked physically, but glorified; that is, the same man I would see on my first visit, almost thin, with that golden-bronze hue and rather sharp profile, an unruly beard and long hair, dressed in a dhoti with one end of it thrown over his shoulder, arms and chest bare, and bare feet. At the time I thought it was 'vision attire'! I mean I really knew nothing about India; I had never seen Indians dressed in the Indian way.

Well, I saw him. I experienced what were at once symbolic visions and spiritual FACTS: absolutely decisive spiritual experiences and facts of meeting and having a united perception of the work to be accomplished. And in these visions I did something I had never done physically; I prostrated before him in the Hindu manner. All this without any comprehension in the little brain (I mean I really didn't know what I was doing or how I was doing it—nothing at all). I did it, and at the same time the outer being was asking, 'What is all this?!'

I wrote the vision down (or perhaps that was later on) but I never spoke of it to anyone (one doesn't talk about such

things, naturally). But my impression was that it was premonitory, that one day something like it would happen. And it remained *in the background of the consciousness*, not active, but constantly present.*

This was around 1904. Soon thereafter, she went to Tlemcen in Algeria where Max Theon and his wife Madame Theon lived. Theon was European, either Polish or Russian, but more probably Russian, of Jewish descent. When she saw him, she recognised him as a being of great power.

And he bore a certain likeness to Sri Aurobindo: Theon was about the same size (not a tall man, of medium height) and thin, slim, with quite a similar profile. But when I met Theon I saw (or rather I felt) that he was not the man I saw in my vision because . . . he didn't have that vibration. Yet it was he who first taught me things, and I went and worked at Tlemcen for two years in a row.†

Mother will meet Sri Aurobindo in 1914. Till then, she will not know what Sri Aurobindo was, nor even his name. The vision that she had of Sri Aurobindo remained a kind of a mystery for several years, although it gave her a premonition of what was to happen in the future. As for Theon, with whom she worked for two years in Tlemcen, he was well-versed in the Rig Veda, and spoke of a tradition which antedated and lay at the origin of both the Kabbala and the Vedas. This tradition, he said, held the view that the summit of evolution would be the divinisation of everything objectified. Theon had written all kinds of things—not philosophy but stories, fantastic stories to explain this view. Theon was the first to give to the Mother the idea 'that the earth is symbolic, representative—symbolic of concentrated universal action allowing divine forces to incarnate and work concretely.'**

Theon had received his initiation in India. After working with Blavatsky and having founded an occult society in Egypt, he had gone to Algeria, where he first called himself 'Aia Aziz' (a word of Arabic origin meaning 'the beloved'). Then, he began

* Mother's Agenda, Vol. 2, p. 404.

† Ibid., p. 405.

** Ibid., p. 297.

to set his 'cosmic group' and 'Cosmic Review'. At that time, he called himself Max Theon, meaning supreme God!

He had an English wife. She was an extraordinary occultist, having incredible faculties. Mother has narrated several stories about her (Madame Theon). A few of them can be noted here. The location of all these stories was Tlemcen.

□ Someone had wanted to plant pine trees—Scotch firs, I think—and by mistake Norway spruce were sent instead. And it began to snow! It had never snowed there before, as you can imagine—it was only a few kilometres from the Sahara and boiling hot: 113° in the shade and 130° in the sun in summer. Well, one night Madame Theon, asleep in her bed, was awakened by a little gnomelike being—a Norwegian gnome with a pointed cap and pointed slippers turned up at the toes! From head to foot he was covered with snow, and it began melting onto the floor of her room, so she glared at him and said:

'What are you doing here? You're dripping wet! You're making a mess of my floor!'

'I'm here to tell you that we were called to this mountain and so we have come.'

'Who are you?'

'The Lord of the Snow.'

'Very well,' replied Madame Theon, 'I shall see about that when I get up. Now go away, you're spoiling my room!'

So the little gnome left.

But when she awoke, there was a puddle of water on the floor, so it couldn't have been a dream. And when she looked out the window, all the hills were snow-covered!

It was the first time. They had lived there for years but had never seen snow. And every winter after that, the hillsides would be covered with snow.*

□ I saw it with Madame Theon: she would will a thing to come to her instead of going to the thing herself; instead of going to get her sandals when she wanted them, she made the sandals come to her. She did this through a capacity to radiate her matter—she exercised a will over her matter—her central will acted upon matter anywhere, since she was

* Ibid., pp. 66–7.



The Mother at the turn of the century

THERE. With her, then, I saw this power in a methodical, organized way, not as something accidental or spasmodic (as it is with mediums), but as an organisation of Matter.*

□ the deeper significance of figures came to me in Tlemcen, when I was in the overmind . . . a world that corresponded to the highest and most luminous regions of Sri Aurobindo's *overmind*. It was above, just above the gods' region. . . . That was where figures took on a living meaning for me—not a mental speculation: a living meaning. That was where Madame Theon recognized me, because of the formation of twelve pearls she saw about my head; and she told me, 'You are that because you have this. Only that can have this!' (*Mother laughs*) It hadn't even remotely occurred to me, thank God!†

□ She would go out of her body and become conscious in the vital world (there were many intermediary states, too, if one cared to explore them). After the vital came the mental: you consciously went out of the vital body, you left it behind (you could see it) and you entered the mental world. Then you left the mental body and entered into. . . . They used different words, another classification (I don't remember it), but even so, the experience was identical. And like that, she successively left twelve different bodies, one after another. She was extremely 'developed', you see—individualized, organized. She could leave one body and enter the consciousness of the next plane, fully experience the surroundings and all that was there, describe it . . . and so on, twelve times.

I learned to do the same thing, and with great dexterity; I could halt on any plane, do what I had to do there, move around freely, see, observe, and then speak about what I had seen. And my last stage, which Theon called 'pathetisme', a very barbaric but very expressive word, bordered on the Formless—he sometimes used the Jewish terminology, calling the Supreme 'The Formless'. (From this last stage one passed to the formless—there was no further body to leave behind, one was beyond all possible forms, even all thought-forms.) In this domain (the last stage before the

*Ibid., p. 414.

†Mother's Agenda, Vol. 4, p. 138.

Formless) one experienced total unity—unity in something that was the essence of Love; love was a manifestation more... 'dense', he would always say (there were all sorts of different 'densities'); and Love was a denser expression of That, the sense of perfect Unity—perfect unity, identity—with no longer any forms corresponding to those of the lower worlds. It was a Light!... An almost immaculate white light, yet with something of a golden-rose in it (words are crude). This Light and this Experience were truly wonderful, inexpressible in words.

Well, one time I was there (Theon used to warn against going beyond this domain, because he said you wouldn't come back), but there I was, wanting to pass over to the other side, when—in a quite unexpected and astounding way—I found myself in the presence of the 'principle', a principle of the human form. It didn't resemble man as we are used to seeing him, but it was an upright form, standing just on the border between the world of forms and the Formless, like a kind of standard.* At that time nobody had ever spoken to me about it and Madame Theon had never seen it—no one had ever seen or said anything. But I felt I was on the verge of discovering a secret.

Afterwards, when I met Sri Aurobindo and talked to him about it, he told me, 'It is surely the prototype of the supramental form.' I saw it several times again, later on, and this proved to be true.

But naturally, you understand, once the border has been crossed, there is no more 'ascent' and 'descent'; you have the feeling of rising up only at the very start, while leaving the terrestrial consciousness and emerging into the higher mind. But once you have gone beyond that, there's no notion of rising; there's a sense, instead, of a sort of inner transformation.

And from there I would redescend, re-entering my bodies one after another—there is a real feeling of re-entry; it actually produces friction.

When one is on that highest height, the body is in a cataleptic state.

* By 'standard', Mother means a sort of model or archetype.

I think I made this experiment in 1904, so when I arrived here it was all a work accomplished and a well-known domain; and when the question of finding the Supermind came up, I had only to resume an experience I was used to—I had learned to repeat it at will, through successive exteriorizations. It was a voluntary process.*

Mother's life in Tlemcen was very interesting and Theon and Madame Theon taught her many things.

Theon also taught me how to turn aside lightning... Oh (*laughing*), he had a formidable power! Theon had a formidable power... One stormy day (there were terrible thunderstorms there), he climbed to the high terrace above the sitting room. 'It's strange time to be going up there', I said to him. He laughed. 'Come along, don't be afraid!' So I joined him. He began some invocations and then I clearly saw a bolt of lightning that had been heading straight towards us suddenly swerve IN THE MIDST OF ITS COURSE. You will say it's impossible, but I saw it turn aside and strike a tree farther away. I asked Theon, 'Did you do that?' He nodded.

Oh, that man was terrible—he had a terrible power. But quite a good external appearance!†

Theon and Madame Theon spoke of 'new heavens and a new earth', a phrase picked up by them from the Gospels. It contains also the ideal of which the Vedas speak. The question had been that of the realisation of this ideal, and this was being studied by various experiments in consciousness. A vision that Mother had in this context, and which was transcribed by her for publication in Theon's *Cosmic Review* in 1906, gives us the profundity of her experience. Speaking of this vision, she said:

I have had the experience of being 'missioned' so to speak, in a form of Love and consciousness combined—divine Love in its supreme purity, divine Consciousness in its supreme purity—and emanated DIRECTLY, without passing through all the intermediate states, directly into the nethermost depths of the Inconscient. And there I had the impression of being,

* Mother's Agenda, Vol. 2, pp. 378–9.

† Ibid., pp. 64–5.

or rather of finding a symbolic Being in deep sleep... so veiled that he was almost invisible. Then, at my contact, the veil seemed to be rent and, without his awakening, there was a sort of radiation spreading out... I can still see my vision.*

In his book 'The Tradition', Theon told his story of Creation, which attempted to explain the process of involution and evolution of consciousness, the origin of the Inconscience and the process of the descent of the divine Being into the Inconscience. As Mother has explained, Theon told the whole story in the Biblical manner, with psychological knowledge hidden in symbols and forms.

The way Theon told it, there was first the universal Mother (he didn't call her the universal Mother, but Sri Aurobindo used that name), the universal Mother in charge of creation. For creating she made four emanations.... In India they speak only of three: Sat—Chit—Ananda (Sat is Existence, expressed by Life, Chit is consciousness, expressed by Power; Ananda is Bliss, synonymous with Love). But according to Theon, there were four.... Well, these emanations (Theon narrated it in such a way that someone not a philosopher, someone with a childlike mind, could understand), these emanations, conscious of their own power, separated themselves from their Origin; that is, instead of being entirely surrendered to the supreme Will and expressing only.... Instead of carrying out only the supreme Will, they seem to have acquired a sense of personal power. (They were personalities of sorts, universal personalities, each representing a mode of being.) Instead of remaining connected, they cut the link—each acted on his own, to put it simply. Then, naturally, Light became darkness, Life became death, Bliss became suffering and Truth became falsehood. And these are the four great Asuras: the Asura of Inconscience, the Asura of Falsehood, the Asura of Suffering and the Asura of Death.

Once this had occurred, the divine Consciousness turned towards the Supreme and said (*Mother laughs*): 'Well, here's what has happened. What's to be done?' Then from the Divine came an emanation of Love (in the first emanation it

*Ibid., p. 278. For the text of the transcription of the vision, *vide*, Ibid., pp. 283–5.

wasn't Love, it was Ananda, Bliss, the Delight of being which became Suffering), and from the Supreme came Love; and Love descended into this domain of Inconscience, the result of the creation of the first emanation, Consciousness—Consciousness and Light had become Inconscience and Darkness. Love descended straight from the Supreme into this Inconscience; the Supreme, that is, created a new emanation, which didn't pass through the intermediate world (because, according to the story, the universal Mother first created all the gods who, when they descended, remained in contact with the Supreme and created all the intermediate worlds to counterbalance this fall—it's the old story of the 'Fall', this fall into the Inconscient. But that wasn't enough). Simultaneously with the creation of the gods, then, came this direct Descent of Love into Matter, without passing through all the intermediate worlds. That's the story of the first Descent....*

At Tlemcen, Mother was rushing like a cyclone through multitudes of experiences. Among these experiences, she had also experience of death. What is life? What is death? Are they opposed to each other? Or is death a process of life? Is there something like overlife in which life and death as we understand them are surpassed? These and allied questions are centrally related to the evolutionary crisis through which mankind is passing today and they inevitably formed the kernel of the work for which Mother was preparing herself.

Once during her work in trance, Mother discovered the location of the 'mantra of life'—the mantra that has the power to create life (and to withdraw it as well). During her trances, she was able to narrate her experiences; so on this occasion, Theon told Mother to repeat this mantra to him. Mother refused as it was inwardly indicated to her that it was meant only for her and that it should not be communicated to Theon. Theon became violently angry and the link that connected Mother to her body was cut. When he realised the catastrophe his anger had caused, Theon grew afraid (for he knew who Mother was) and he then made use of all his power, and with Mother's active help from above her re-entry into her body was effected.

*Ibid., pp. 279–80.

Mother has recounted the experience as follows:

... my body was in a cataleptic state and I was in conscious trance... It was a peculiar kind of catalepsy in the sense that my body could speak, though very slowly—Theon had taught me how to do it. But this is because the 'life of the form' always remains (this is what takes seven days to leave the body) and it can even be trained to make the body move—the being is no longer there, but the life of the form can make the body move (in any case, utter words). However, this state is not without danger, the proof being that while I was working in trance, for some reason or other (which I no longer remember, but obviously due to some negligence on the part of Theon who was there to watch over me), the cord—I don't know what to call it—went snap! The link was cut, malevolently, and when it was time and I wanted to return, I could no longer re-enter my body. But I was still able to warn him: 'The cord is cut'. Then he used his power and knowledge to help me come back—but it was no joke! It was very difficult. And this is when I had the experience of the two different states, because the part that had gone out was now without the body's support—the link was cut. Then I knew. Of course, I was in a special state; I was doing a fully conscious work with all the vital power, and I was in control not only of my surroundings but... You see, what happens is a kind of reversal of consciousness: you begin to belong to another world; you feel this quite distinctly. Theon instantly told me to concentrate (I was finding it all interesting—*Mother laughs*—I was making experiments and getting ready to go wandering off, but he was terribly scared that I would die on him!). He begged me to concentrate, so I concentrated on my body.

When I re-entered, it hurt terribly, terribly—an excruciating pain, like plunging into a hell.*

A few months later, Mother spoke again of the above experiment and said:

Anyway, it was because of Theon that I first found the 'Mantra of Life', the mantra that gives life, and he wanted me to give it to him, he wanted to possess it—it was some-

* Ibid., pp. 305–6.

thing formidable! It was the mantra that gives life (it can make anyone at all come back into life, but that's only a small part of its power). And it was shut away in a particular place, sealed up, with my name in Sanskrit on it. I didn't know Sanskrit at that time, but he did, and when he led me to that place, I told what I saw: 'There's a sort of design, it must be Sanskrit.' (I could recognise the characters as Sanskrit). He told me to reproduce what I was seeing, and I did so. It was my name, Mirra, written in Sanskrit—the mantra was for me and I alone could open it. 'Open it and tell me what's there,' he said. (All this was going on while I was in a cataleptic trance). Then immediately something in me KNEW, and I answered, 'No', and did not read it.

I found it again when I was with Sri Aurobindo and I gave it to Sri Aurobindo.

But that's yet another story...*

Mother's experience of death through the violent anger of Theon was significant. For, as Mother narrated much later in 1961, Theon was an emanation or a '*vibhuti*' of the Asura of Death. In fact, as Mother explained:

It was not by choice that I met all the four *Asuras*, it was a decision of the Supreme. The first one, whom religions call Satan, the Asura of consciousness, was converted and is still at work. The second (the Asura of suffering) annulled himself in the Supreme. The third was the Lord of Death (that was Theon). And the fourth, the Master of the World, was the Lord of Falsehood: Richard was an emanation, a *vibhuti*, as they say in India, of this Asura.

Theon was the *vibhuti* of the Lord of Death.

It's a wonderful story, a real novel, which will perhaps be told one day... when there are no more Asuras. Then it can be told.†

As a part of the Mother's work of transformation, it was necessary for her to come into close connection with each one of the Adversaries and to try to convert them.

Mother's meeting with Theon was a part of her struggle with

* Ibid., pp. 367–8.

† Ibid. p. 367

one of the most formidable problems that are afflicting the world. Even after her return from Algeria, she continued attending to Theon's 'Revue Cosmique.' Five years, in fact. She even translated into French the experiences that Madame Theon, while in trance, had dictated to her English Secretary. Finally, Theon was to disappear one day as mysteriously as he had appeared, without leaving a trace. Madame Theon was dashed upon the rocks on the Isle of Wight while walking along the cliffs in trance. Perhaps, she had realised that Theon was not destined to bring down the 'new world' that he had spoken of, and she had no more reason to live.

In her death, Theon lost his base, and there is no record to show what happened to him thereafter. Later, speaking of Theon, Sri Aurobindo had said: 'He knew that he was not meant to succeed, but had only come to prepare the way to a certain extent.'*

* * *

In her childhood and adolescence, Mother had developed consciousness through inner experiences. She had found how to communicate with plants and animals; she had found the great coloured waves, the creative vibrations, the sound from above; she had played the piano a lot, and she did painting. She knew the planes of consciousness, went out of her body, went wandering everywhere. She even wandered quite easily into higher mathematics. Then, with Theon she found the knowledge of a system that could explain her inner experiences and learnt a great deal of occultism. She came into contact with great artists and thinkers like Rouault, Rodin, Matisse, Anatole France. She had read a number of books,—in fact, libraries. But she had not yet done the 'mental' gymnastics of metaphysical philosophy, comparative studies, and systems of law and sociology. And if with Theon, Mother had touched death, with Paul Richard she would touch the world's Falsehood. It was in about 1908 that Mother met Paul Richard at Montmorency in the house of the sisters of the artist Henri Morisset (whom she had married in 1897). It was to these sisters that she had entrusted her son, Andre, who was born in 1898. In 1908, there was divorce from Henri Morisset.

* 'Some Talks of Sri Aurobindo' in *Mother India*, May, 1974.

Paul Richard was a theologian and a philosopher. He was also a lawyer and a brilliant orator. In Mother's words:

He was a pastor at Lille, in France, for perhaps ten years; he was quite a practising Christian, but he dropped it all as soon as he began to study occultism. He had first specialised in theological philosophy in order to pass the pastoral examinations, studying all the modern philosophy of Europe (he had a rather remarkable metaphysical brain). Then I met him in connection with Theon and the *Cosmic Review*, and I led him into occult knowledge. Afterwards, there were all sorts of uninteresting stories. . . . He became a lawyer during the early period of our relationship and I learned law along with him—I could even have passed the exam! Then the divorce stories began: he divorced his wife; they had three children and he wanted to keep them, but to do so he had to be legally married, so he asked me to marry him—and I said yes. I have always been totally indifferent to these things. Anyway, when I met him I knew who he was and I decided to convert him—the whole story revolves around that.

As a matter of fact, the books he wrote (especially the first one, *The Living Ether*) were based on my knowledge; he put my knowledge into French—and beautiful French, I must say! I would tell him my experiences and he would write them down. Later he wrote *The Gods* (it was incomplete, one-sided). Then he became a lawyer and entered politics (he was a first-class orator and fired his audiences with enthusiasm) and was sent to Pondicherry to help a certain candidate who couldn't manage his election campaign single-handed. And since Richard was interested in occultism and spirituality, he took this opportunity to seek a 'Master', a yogi. When he arrived, instead of involving himself in politics, the first thing he did was announce, 'I am seeking a yogi'. Some one said to him, 'You're incredibly lucky! The Yogi has just arrived.' It was Sri Aurobindo who was told, 'There's a Frenchman asking to see you . . .' Sri Aurobindo wasn't particularly pleased but he found the coincidence rather interesting and received him. This was in 1910.

When Richard had finished his work, he returned to France with a poor photograph of Sri Aurobindo and a completely superficial impression of him, yet with the feeling

that Sri Aurobindo *knew* (he hadn't at all understood the man that Sri Aurobindo was, he hadn't felt the presence of an Avatar, but he had sensed that he had knowledge). Moreover, I think he always held this opinion, because he used to say that Sri Aurobindo was a unique intellectual giant . . . without many spiritual realisations! (The same type of stupidity as Romain Rolland's). Well, my relationship with Richard was on an occult plane, you see, and it's difficult to touch upon. What happened was far more exciting than any novel imaginable.*

From 1910 to 1920—these ten years were a period of intensive mental studies for the Mother. This meant a mental development in all its comprehensiveness: the study of all philosophies, all the jugglings of ideas in their smallest details—entering into systems and understanding them. She went as wholeheartedly into philosophy as into painting, music, occultism, or the truths of existence. She came to the conclusion that all ideas are true, that a synthesis had to be made, and that there is something luminous and true *BEYOND THE SYNTHESIS*.

Mother also made a systematic and detailed study of the comparative history of religions. But her study was not limited to religion; political and social systems were reviewed in detail, philosophies of every colour, exercises and disciplines of every spirituality—in other words, the higher echelons of the mind. Almost every evening, she received at her home Madame David-Neel, who had just returned from her first journey to the Far East. Mother heard of Bahaism, Taoism, studied the discipline of meditation, Buddhist *dhyana*, Buddhist renunciation. But she was searching for something else. At Tlemcen, she had seen a world of an entirely different consciousness above, a world which Sri Aurobindo was to call the 'supramental'. Her question was whether that world could be made to descend, and if so, how it could be made to enter into Matter.

In 1911, Mother started keeping a 'journal'† to record her

*Mother's Agenda, Vol. 2, pp. 368–9.

†A few selections from this 'journal' have been published under the title 'Prayers and Meditations'. Much later, speaking of this journal, Mother said: *Prayers and Meditations* came to me, you know—it was dictated each time. I would write at the end of my concentration, and it didn't pass through the mind, it just came—and it obviously came from someone interested in beautiful form. I used to keep it under lock and key so nobody could see it. But when I came here Sri Aurobindo asked

experiences, her hopes and her prayers for the future—she seemed only to think of the future.

Mother had several groups during this period (one of which was named *idea*). She tried to communicate to these groups her first vision of the future. She said that the general goal to be attained was the advent of universal harmony, the realisation of human unity, and the establishment of an ideal society in a place propitious for the flowering of the new race, putting the earth into contact with one or several sources of universal force that are still sealed from it. This was in 1912.

In her journey, Mother had come to the point where the mental government of intelligence had to be replaced by the supramental government of consciousness. She was becoming intensely conscious of the movement of terrestrial transformation.

Earlier, she had already an experience of what the Veda calls Agni (Fire), in the middle of man's house. Sri Aurobindo will call it the psychic being, the immortal in the mortal, the ever-pure fire that burns in the deep cavern of the heart. As Mother said: 'I thought only of that—this concentration, like sitting before a closed door and pressure hurt, hurt physically. She carried that in her walks, went up and down the Boulevard St. Michel with it, was almost run over by a streetcar on the way to the Jardin du Luxembourg—heard nothing, saw nothing. She was pushing, pushing against the 'bronze door' of the surface being, pushing more and more with a growing energy.

And then, all of a sudden for no apparent reason—I was

about it, so I showed him a few pages and then he wanted to see the rest. Otherwise I would have always kept it locked away. I destroyed whatever was left—there were five thick volumes in which I had written every single day (there was some repetition, of course): the outcome of my concentrations. So I chose which parts would be published (Sri Aurobindo helped in the choice), copied them out, and then I cut the pages up and had the rest burned. . . .

It wasn't written for anyone and wasn't meant to be read. I showed it to Sri Aurobindo because he was speaking of certain things and I said, 'Ah, yes, that's the experience I had in. . . .' Then I showed him my note book for that date (there was something written for each day).

Five thick notebooks, year after year. . . . Even here I kept on writing for a while. I wrote a lot in Japan.

Anyway, everything of general interest was kept. But that's why there are gaps in the dates, otherwise it would be continuous—it was monumental, you know! (Mother's Agenda, Vol. 3, pp. 346–7).

neither more concentrated nor more or less anything—vloom! It opened! And then . . . not for hours but months, my child, it never left me: this light, this radiance, this light and this vastness! And the feeling that this is what wants, what knows, what rules all life, what guides everything—this never left me. Not for a single minute from that moment on. And whenever I had a decision to make, I would always pause for a second and receive the answer from there.

A total reversal. And this reversal never returned to the old position . . . a feeling of becoming another person.*

But this was a part of the journey. For her, triumph in the inner worlds was not enough; she was working for triumph even in the most material worlds. Without knowing Sri Aurobindo or his teaching, she had already come to the same aspiration and vision that she was to find soon in Sri Aurobindo.

Let us note here some of her Prayers and Meditations which may provide to us a few glimpses into the depth, width and height of her experience before she met Sri Aurobindo.

November 2, 1912

Although my whole being is in theory consecrated to Thee, O Sublime Master, who art the life, light and love in all things, I still find it hard to carry out this consecration in detail. It has taken me several weeks to learn that the reason for this written meditation, its justification, lies in the very fact of addressing it daily to Thee. In this way I shall put into material shape each day a little of the conversation I have so often with Thee; I shall make my confession to Thee as well as it may be; not because I think I can tell Thee anything—for Thou art Thyself everything, but our artificial and exterior way of seeing and understanding is, if it may be so said, foreign to Thee, opposed to Thy nature. Still by turning towards Thee, by immersing myself in Thy light at the moment when I consider these things, little by little, I shall see them more like what they really are,—until the day when, having made myself one in identity with Thee, I shall no more have anything to say to Thee, for then I shall be Thou. This is the goal that I would reach; towards this victory all my efforts will

* The Mother, *Conversations*, 17.8.55, 6.6.56.

tend more and more. I aspire for the day when I can no longer say 'I' for I shall be Thou. How many times a day, still, I act without my action being consecrated to Thee; I at once become aware of it by an indefinable uneasiness which is translated in the sensibility of my body by a pang in my heart. I then make my action objective to myself and it seems to me ridiculous, childish or blameworthy; I deplore it, for a moment I am sad, until I dive into Thee and, there losing myself with a child's confidence, await from Thee the inspiration and strength needed to set right the error in me and around me,—two things that are one; for I have now a constant and precise perception of the universal unity determining an absolute interdependence of all actions.*

November 19, 1912

I said yesterday to that young Englishman who is seeking for Thee with so sincere a desire, that I had definitively found Thee, that the Union was constant. Such is indeed the state of which I am conscious. All my thoughts go towards Thee, all my acts are consecrated to Thee; Thy Presence is for me an absolute, immutable, invariable fact, and Thy Peace dwells constantly in my heart. Yet I know that this state of union is poor and precarious compared with that which it will become possible for me to realise tomorrow, and I am as yet far, no doubt very far, from that identification in which I shall totally lose the notion of the 'I' of that 'I', which I still use in order to express myself, but which is each time a constraint, like a term unfit to express the thought that is seeking for expression. . . .†

November 25, 1913

The greatest enemy of a silent contemplation turned towards Thee is surely this constant subconscious registering of the multitude of phenomena with which we come into contact. So long as we are mentally active, our conscious thought veils for us this over-activity of our subconscious receptivity; an entire part of our sensibility, and

* Prayers and Meditations of the Mother, pp. 1-2.

† Ibid., p. 3.

perhaps not the smallest, acts like cine-camera without our knowledge and indeed to our detriment. It is only when we silence our active thought, which is relatively easy, that we see this multitude of little subconscious notations surging up from every side and after drowning us in their overflowing flood. . . .

What is the remedy? In their simplistic way, some ascetic disciplines promise solitude and inaction: to shelter the subconscient from all possibility of any registration; this appears to me a child's remedy, for it leaves the ascetic at the mercy of the first surprise; and when he thinks he is perfectly master of himself, if one day, he wishes to come back among his fellows to help them, his subconscient so long deprived of its receptive activity, is sure to abandon itself to it with an intensity greater than ever as soon as it gets the smallest opportunity.

There is certainly another remedy. Which? Undoubtedly we must learn how to control our subconscient as we control our conscious thought. The means for arriving at that are numerous. A regular introspection in the Buddhist manner and a systematic analysis of one's dreams—almost always constructed with this subconscient registration—form part of the method to be discovered. But there is certainly something more rapidly effective. . . .

O Lord, Eternal Master, it is Thou who wilt be the Teacher, the Inspirer; Thou who wilt teach me what I should do; so that I can, after an indispensable application to my own case, make others profit by what Thou wilt have taught me. . . .*

January 8, 1914

Let us shun the paths which are too easy and without effort, those paths which engender in us the illusion that we have arrived; let us shun the negligence which opens the door to every fall; let us shun the complacent self-admiration which leads towards every abyss.

We must learn that whatever our efforts, whatever our struggles, whatever even our victories, compared with the path still to be traversed what we have already travelled is

*Ibid., pp. 26-7.

nothing, and that all are equal—infinitesimal particles of dust or the same divine stars—in face of Eternity.

But Thou art the conqueror of all obstacles, the Light which illumines all ignorance, the Love which overcomes all pride. And no error can persist before Thee.*

February 22, 1914

Many a time during the day and in the night it seems to me that I,—that is to say, my consciousness is wholly concentrated in my heart, which is no longer an organ, not even a feeling, but the divine love impersonal, eternal; being this Love, I feel myself living in the centre of everything upon the whole earth, and at the same time it seems to me that I am stretching out immense, infinite arms and enveloping with a limitless tenderness all beings, clasped, grouped, nestled upon my breast vaster than the universe. . . . Words are poor and clumsy, O divine Master, and mental translations are always childish. . . . But my aspiration for Thee is constant and, to tell the truth, it is very often Thyself and Thou alone who livest in this body, an imperfect means of Thy manifestation.

May all beings be happy in the peace of Thy illumination!†

In a certain context, Mother narrated the following synoptic account of her life from early childhood to the point when she came to Sri Aurobindo.

□ When I was five years old (I must have begun earlier, but the memory is a bit vague and imprecise). . . but from five onwards, in my consciousness (not a mental memory but—how can I put it?—it's noted, a notation in my consciousness). . . well, I began with consciousness. Of course I had no idea what it was. But my first experience was of the consciousness here (*gesture above the head*), which I felt like a Light and a Force; and I felt it there (*same gesture*) at the age of five.

It was a very pleasant sensation. I would sit in a little armchair made especially for me, all alone in my room, and

*Ibid., pp. 38-9.

†Ibid., p. 64.

I... (I didn't know what it was, you see, not a thing, nothing—mentally zero) and I had a VERY PLEASANT feeling of something very strong, very luminous, and it was here (*above the head*). Consciousness. And I felt, 'That's what I have to live, what I have to be.' Not with all those words, naturally, but... (*Mother makes a gesture of aspiration upward*). Then I would pull it down, for it was... it was truly my *raison d'être*.

That is my first memory—at five years old. Its impact was more on the ethical side than the intellectual; and yet it took an intellectual form too, since... You see, apparently I was a child like any other, except that I was hard to handle. Hard in the sense that I had no interest in food, no interest in ordinary games, no liking for going to my friends' houses for snacks, because eating cake wasn't the least bit interesting! And it was impossible to punish me because I really couldn't have cared less: being deprived of dessert was rather a relief for me! And then I flatly refused to learn reading, I refused to learn. And even bathing me was very hard, because I was put in the care of an English governess, and that meant cold baths—my brother took it in stride, but I just howled! Later it was found to be bad for me (the doctor said so), but that was much later. So you get the picture.

But whenever there was unpleasantness with my relatives, with playmates or friends, I would feel all the nastiness or bad will—all sorts of pretty ugly things that came (I was rather sensitive, for I instinctively nurtured an ideal of beauty and harmony, which all the circumstances of life kept denying)... so whenever I felt sad, I was most careful not to say anything to my mother or father, because my father didn't give a hoot and my mother would scold me—that was always the first thing she did. And so I would go to my room and sit down in my little armchair, and there I could concentrate and try to understand... in my own way. And I remember that after quite a few probably fruitless attempts I wound up telling myself (I always used to talk to myself; I don't know why or how, but I would talk to myself just as I talked to others): 'Look here, you feel sad because so-and-so said something really disgusting to you—but why does that make you cry? Why are you so sad? He's the one who was bad, so

he should be crying. You didn't do anything bad to him. . . . Did you tell him nasty things? Did you fight with her, or with him? No, you didn't do anything, did you; well then, you needn't feel sad. You should only be sad if you've done something bad, but. . . . So that settled it: I would never cry. With just a slight inward movement, or 'something' that said, 'You've done no wrong,' there was no sadness.

But there was another side to this 'someone': it was watching me more and more, and as soon as I said one word or made one gesture too many, had one little bad thought, teased my brother or whatever, the smallest thing, it would say (*Mother takes on a severe tone*), 'Look out, be careful!' At first I used to moan about it, but by and by it taught me: 'Don't lament—put right, mend.' And when things could be mended—as they almost always could—I would do so. All that on a five to seven-year-old child's scale of intelligence.

So it was consciousness.

Next came the period of learning and developing, but on an ordinary mental level—school years.* Curiosity made me want to learn to read. Did I tell you how it happened? When I was around seven, just under seven, my brother, who was eighteen months older, used to bring big pictures home from school with him (you know, pictures for children with captions at the bottom; they're still used nowadays) and he gave me one of them. 'What's written there?' I asked. 'Read it!' he said. 'Don't know how,' I replied. 'Then learn!' 'All right,' I told him, 'show me the letters.' He brought me an A-B-C book. I knew it within two days and on the third day I started reading. That's how I learned. 'Oh-oh,' they used to say, 'this child is backward! Seven years old and she still can't read—disgraceful!' The whole family fretted about it. And then lo and behold, in about a week I knew what should have taken me years to learn—it made them think twice!

Then school years. I was a very bright student, always for the same reason: I wanted to understand. I wasn't interested

* Mother clarified: 'Actually, a growth of consciousness was going on throughout those years of study; I didn't learn things by rote, I needed to understand them; and as soon as I understood something, I knew it. In other words, because the learning period was not yet intellectual, it can be considered part of the period of consciousness development.'

in learning things by heart like the others did—I wanted to understand them. And what a memory I had, a fantastic memory for sounds and images! I had only to read a poem aloud at night, and the next morning I knew it. And after I had studied or read a book and someone mentioned a passage to me, I would say, 'ah, yes—that's on page so and so.' I would find the page. Nothing had faded, it was all still fresh. But this is the ordinary period of development.

Then at a very young age (about eight or ten), along with my studies I began to paint. At twelve I was already doing portraits. All aspects of art and beauty, but particularly music and painting, fascinated me. I went through a very intense vital development during that period, with, just like in my early years, the presence of a kind of inner Guide; and all centred on studies: the study of sensations, observations, the study of technique, comparative studies, even a whole spectrum of observations dealing with taste, smell and hearing—a kind of classification of experiences. And this extended to all facets of life, all the experiences life can bring, all of them—miseries, joys, difficulties, sufferings, everything—oh, a whole field of studies! And always this presence within, judging, deciding, classifying, organizing and systematizing everything.

Then conscious yoga made a sudden entry into the picture when I met Theon; I must have been about twenty-one. Life's orientation changed, a whole series of experiences took place, with the development of the vital giving interesting occult result.

Then, a period of intensive mental development, mental development of the most complete type: a study of all the philosophies, all the conceptual juggling, in minute detail—delving into systems, getting a grasp on them. Ten years of intensive mental studies leading me to . . . Sri Aurobindo.

So I had all this preparation. And I am giving you these details simply to tell you it all began with consciousness (I knew very well what consciousness was, even before I had any word or idea to explain it), consciousness and its force—its force of action, its force of execution. Next a detailed study and thorough development of the vital. After that, mental development taken to its uppermost limit, where

you can juggle with all ideas; a developmental stage where it's already understood that all ideas are true and that there's a synthesis to be made, and that beyond the synthesis lies something luminous and true. And behind it all, a continual consciousness. Such was my state when I came here: I'd had a world of experiences and had already attained conscious union with the Divine above and within—all of it consciously realized, carefully noted and so forth—when I came to Sri Aurobindo.*

* *Mother's Agenda*, Vol. 3, pp. 278–81.

The Mother Meets Sri Aurobindo

On March 7, 1914, Mother was aboard *Kaga Maru* sailing for Pondicherry.

'He whom we saw yesterday is on earth.'

Thus Mother wrote in her 'Prayers and Meditations' of her meeting with Sri Aurobindo on 29th March 1914. 'Exactly my vision'—she narrated much later on. He whom she was seeing in her vision since 1904 corresponded exactly with Sri Aurobindo. In her own words:

I came here . . . But something in me wanted to meet Sri Aurobindo all alone the first time. Richard went to him in the morning and I had an appointment for the afternoon. He was living in the house that's now part of the second dormitory, the old *Guest House*. I climbed up the stairway and he was standing there, waiting for me at the top of the stairs . . . EXACTLY my vision! Dressed the same way, in the same position, in profile, his head held high. He turned his head towards me . . . and I saw in his eyes that it was He. The two things clicked (*gesture of instantaneous shock*), the inner experience immediately became one with the outer experience and there was a fusion—the decisive shock.*

But this was merely the beginning of my vision. Only after a series of experiences—a ten months' sojourn in Pondicherry, five years of separation, then the return to Pondicherry and the meeting in the same house and in the same way—did the END of the vision occur. . . . I was standing just beside him. My head wasn't exactly on his shoulder, but where his shoulder was (I don't know how to explain it—physically there was hardly any contact). We were standing side by side like that, gazing out through the open window, and then TOGETHER, at exactly the same moment, we felt, 'Now the Realisation will be accomplished.' I felt the Thing descending massively within me, with the same certainty

* Mother's Agenda, Vol. 2, pp. 405–6.

I had felt my vision. From that moment on there was nothing to say—no words, nothing. We *knew* it was THAT.*

Mother met Sri Aurobindo again the next day (30.3.1914). But this time, Richard was there. The Mother has narrated the meeting in the following words:

I was seated on the veranda . . . There was a table in front of him, and Richard was on the other side facing him. They began talking. Myself, I was seated at his feet, very small, with the table just in front of me—it came to my forehead, which gave me a little protection. . . . I didn't say anything, I didn't think anything, try anything, want anything—I merely sat near him. When I stood up half an hour later, he had put silence in my head, that's all, without my even having asked him—perhaps even without his trying.

Oh, I had tried—for years I had tried to catch silence in my head . . . I never succeeded. I could detach myself, but it would keep on turning . . . But at that moment, all the mental constructions, all the mental, speculative structures . . . none of it remained—a big hole.

And such a peaceful, such a luminous hole!

Afterwards, I kept very still so as not to disturb it. I didn't speak, above all I refrained from thinking and held it, held it tight against me—I said to myself, 'Make it last, make it last, make it last. . .'

For years, from 1912 to 1914, I did endless exercises, all kinds of things, even *prāṇāyāma*—if it would only shut up! Really, if it only be quiet! . . . I was able to go out (that wasn't difficult), but inside it kept turning.

This lasted about half an hour. I quietly remained there—I heard the noise of their conversation, but I wasn't listening. And then when I got up, I no longer knew anything, I no longer thought anything, I no longer had any mental construction—everything was gone, absolutely gone, blank!—as if I had just been born.†

Referring to this experience, she had said the following also:

It was in 1910 that I had . . . reversal of consciousness—that

* Ibid., pp. 405–6.

† Mother's Agenda, Vol. 1, pp. 421–2.

is, the first contact with the higher Divine—and it completely changed my life.

From that moment on, I was conscious that all one does is the expression of the indwelling Divine Will. But it is the Divine Will AT THE VERY CENTRE of oneself, although for a while there remained an activity in the physical mind. But this was stilled two or three days after I saw Sri Aurobindo for the first time in 1914, and it never started up again. Silence settled. And the consciousness was established above the head.

In the first experience (of 1910), the consciousness was established in the psychic depths of the being, and from that poise issued the feeling of no longer doing anything but what the Divine wanted—it was the consciousness that the divine Will was all-powerful and that there was no longer any personal will, although there was still some mental activity and everything had to be made silent. In 1914, it was silenced, and the consciousness was established above the head. Here (*the heart*) and here (*above the head*), the connection is constant.*

It would be rewarding to go through her journal 'Prayers and Meditations' to get an intimate idea of what she felt and experienced during those days of her early meetings with Sri Aurobindo. We may cite here a few of these prayers and meditations:

March 30, 1914

How in the presence of those who are integrally Thy servitors, of those who have arrived at the perfect consciousness of Thy Presence, I perceive that I am still far, very far, from that which I would realise; and I know that what I conceive to be highest, noblest and purest is still dark and ignorant in comparison with that which I have to conceive. But this perception, far from being depressing, stimulates and strengthens my aspiration, my energy, my will to triumph over all obstacles so as to be at last identified with Thy law and Thy work.

Little by little the horizon becomes precise, the path

* Ibid., pp. 163–4.

becomes clear. And we advance to an ever greater gratitude. It matters not if there are hundreds of beings plunged in the densest ignorance. He whom we saw yesterday is on earth: His presence is enough to prove that a day will come when darkness shall be transformed into light, when Thy reign shall be, indeed, established upon earth.

O Lord, Divine Builder of this marvel, my heart overflows with joy and gratitude when I think of it, and my hope is boundless.

My adoration surpasses all words and my reverence is silent.*

April 1, 1914

It seems to me that we have entered into the heart of Thy sanctuary and become aware of Thy will itself. A great joy, a deep peace reign in me, and yet all my inner constructions have vanished like a vain dream, and I find myself now before Thy immensity without any frame or system, like a being not yet individualised. All that past, in its external form, appears to me ridiculous and arbitrary, and yet I know that it was useful in its time. But at present all is changed: a new stage has begun.†

April 3, 1914

It seems to me that I am being born into a new life and that all methods and habits of the past can no longer be of any use. It seems to me that what was once a result is now only a preparation. I feel as if I had nothing yet, as if I had not lived the spiritual life, as if I was only entering upon the way which leads to it; it seems to me that I know nothing, that I am incapable of formulating anything, that all experience is yet to commence. It is as if I was stripped of all my past, of my errors as well as my conquests, as if all that had disappeared to give place to one new-born whose sole existence has yet to take shape, who has no Karma, no experience it can profit by, but no error either which it must repair. My head is empty of all knowledge and all certitude, but also of all vain thought.

* Prayers and Meditations of The Mother, pp. 90–91.

† Ibid., pp. 91–2.

I feel that if I can surrender without any resistance to this state, if I do not strive to know or understand, if I consent to be completely like a child ignorant and candid, some new possibility will open before me. I know that I must now definitively give myself up and be like a page absolutely blank on which Thy thought, Thy will, O Lord, will be able to inscribe themselves freely, secure against all deformation.

An immense gratitude rises from my heart, I seem to have at last arrived at the threshold which I have so long sought.

Grant, O Lord, that I may be pure enough, impersonal enough, animated enough with Thy divine love, to be able to cross it definitively.

O, to belong to Thee, without any darkness or restriction!*

April 7, 1914

O Lord, all thought seems dead in me, . . . I search for my conscious mind and find it no more; I search for my individuality and discover it nowhere; I search for my personal will and it is absent, I search for Thee and there is no word from Thee. . . . Silence, only silence. I seem now to hear Thy voice: 'Never hast thou been able to die integrally. Always something in thee has wished to know, to see, to understand, surrender completely, learn how to disappear, break the last dam which separates thee from me; accomplish without reserve thy act of surrender.' Alas, O Lord, for a long time I have wanted to do it, but I have not been able. Now wilt Thou give me the power to do it?

O Lord, my sweet eternal Master, break this resistance which fills me with anguish . . . deliver me from myself!†

April 10, 1914

Suddenly the veil was rent, the horizon was disclosed. Before the clear vision my whole being knew itself at Thy feet in a great outburst of gratitude. Yet in spite of this deep and integral joy, all was calm, all was peaceful with the peace of eternity.

I seem to have no more limits; there is no longer the perception of the body, no sensations, no feelings, no thoughts. . . . A

*Ibid., pp. 92-3.

†Ibid., p. 95.

clear, pure, tranquil immensity,—penetrated with love and light, filled with an unspeakable beatitude, is all that is there, and that all seems now to be myself, and this 'myself' is so little the former 'I', selfish and limited, that I cannot tell if it is I or Thou, O Lord, sublime Master of our destinies.

It is as though all were energy, courage, force, will, infinite sweetness, incomparable compassion.

Even more forcibly than during these last days the past is dead and as though buried under the rays of a new life. The last glance that I have just thrown backward, as I read a few pages of the book, definitively convinced me of its death, and lightened of a great weight. I present myself before Thee, O my divine Master, with all the simplicity, all the nudity of a child. . . . And still the only thing I perceive is that calm and pure immensity. . . . Lord, Thou hast answered my prayer, Thou hast granted me what I have asked from Thee; the 'I' has disappeared, there is only a docile instrument put at Thy service, a centre of concentration and manifestation of Thy infinite and eternal rays; Thou hast taken my life and made it Thine; Thou hast taken my will and united it to Thine; Thou hast taken my love and identified it with Thine; Thou hast taken my thought and replaced it by Thy absolute consciousness.

The body, marvelling, bows its forehead in the dust in mute and submissive adoration. And nothing else exists but Thou alone in the splendour of Thy immutable peace.*

May 16, 1914

Now I clearly understand that union with Thee is not an end to be pursued, so far as this present individuality is concerned; it is a fact accomplished long since. And that is why Thou seemest to tell me always: 'Do not revel in the ecstatic contemplation of this union, fulfil the mission I have confided to thee on the earth.'†

May 25, 1914

O DIVINE Master of love and purity, grant that in its last stages, its smallest activities, this instrument which wishes

*Ibid., pp. 97-8.

†Ibid., p. 115.

to serve Thee worthily may be purged of all egoism, of all error, of all obscurity, so that nothing in it may prevent, deform or stay Thy action. How many nooks are yet in the shadow, far from the full brightness of Thy illumination! For them I ask the supreme happiness of that illumination.

O to be pure crystal without stain which allows Thy divine ray to pass without obscuring, colouring or deforming it! Not out of a desire for perfection, but that Thy work may be accomplished as perfectly as possible.

And when I ask of Thee, the 'I' which speaks to Thee is the whole earth, aspiring to be the pure diamond, perfect reflector of Thy supreme light. The hearts of all men beat in my heart, all their thoughts vibrate in my thoughts, the least aspiration of the docile animal or of the modest plant joins in my formidable aspiration, and all this lifts itself towards Thee, to the conquest of Thy love and light, scaling the peaks of the being to attain to Thee, to ravish Thee from Thy immobile beatitude and make Thee penetrate into the shadow of suffering so as to transform it into divine Joy, into sovereign Peace. And this violence is of an infinite love which gives itself and of a confident serenity which smiles in the certitude of Thy perfect unity.

O my sweet Master, Thou art the Triumpher and the Triumph, the Victor and the Victory.*

June 13, 1914

We must first conquer knowledge, that is to say, learn how to know Thee, to be united with Thee, and all means are good and can be employed to attain this end. But it would be a great mistake to think that all is done when the end is attained. All is done in principle, the victory is won theoretically and those who have for their motive only the egoistic aspiration for their own salvation can be satisfied and can then live only in and for this communion, without any care for Thy manifestation.

But those whom Thou hast chosen as Thy representatives upon the earth cannot be satisfied with the result so obtained. To know Thee, first and before everything else, yes; but

*Ibid., pp. 125-6.

once the knowledge of Thee is acquired, there remains all the work of Thy manifestation; and then intervene the quality, force, complexity and perfection of that manifestation. Very often those who have known Thee, dazzled and transported with ecstasy by their knowledge, are content to see Thee for themselves and to express Thee as best or as worst they can in their outermost being. He who would be perfect in Thy manifestation cannot be satisfied with that; he must manifest Thee on all the planes,—in all the states of the being, and thus draw from the knowledge he has acquired the greatest possible profit for the whole world.

Before the immensity of the programme the whole being exults and sings to Thee a hymn of gladness.

All nature in full conscious activity, vibrating all over with Thy sovereign forces, responds to their inspiration and wills to be illumined and transfigured by them.

Thou art the Master of the World, the sole Reality.*

On the 15th August, 1914, Sri Aurobindo brought out the first issue of the 'Arya', a monthly journal devoted to the synthesis of knowledge. For the next seven years, Sri Aurobindo was to write, day after day, in one mighty avalanche almost the entire body of his work. He began writing three books simultaneously 'The Secret of the Veda', 'The Life Divine,' and 'The Synthesis of Yoga.' Then he started writing five and even six books at a time—a most extraordinary feat! Mother has explained the secret of this feat:

Sri Aurobindo's consciousness was above, in the Supermind, but what formed the words was the consciousness IN HIS HANDS. He became aware of the words only as they were expressed.†

Sri Aurobindo was perfectly silent and transparent; the knowledge from above was transmitted through the silent mind direct to the consciousness in his hands which was doing all the work. Again, as Mother explained, 'He established silence in his head, He sat at his typewriter, and from above, from the higher regions, everything that had to be written came down, all-composed, and He had only to move his fingers

*Ibid., pp. 137-8.

†Conversations avec Pavitra, p. 156.

on the machine—whereupon it was transcribed.*

During the period of 1914, when she was in Pondicherry, Mother came to see Sri Aurobindo every afternoon; she learnt Sanskrit from him. She also formed a small group with the young men who were with Sri Aurobindo and a few soccer players from the 'Sports Club' of Pondicherry. The group was named by her 'L'Idée Nouvelle' (The New Idea). Already in 1913, Sri Aurobindo had described his small group in his letter as a seed plot, a laboratory. He had written:

I have also begun . . . the second part of my work which will consist in making men for the new age by imparting whatever Siddhi (power) I get to those who are chosen. From this point of view our little colony here is a sort of seed plot, a laboratory. The things I work out in it, are then extended outside.†

The Mother was giving a concrete shape to the idea of the 'laboratory', through 'L'Idée Nouvelle'.***

In the meantime, however, the World War had broken out on the 1st August 1914. Paul Richard was called to war, and this was the outward reason for departure from Pondicherry. While on board, the *Kama Maru*, she described her terrible state in a line, 'solitude, a harsh solitude . . . cast headlong into an inferno of darkness.'†† She could have stayed at Sri Aurobindo's side at Pondicherry, but what Paul Richard represented had to be conquered and transformed. A full effort had to be made. So, as she noted, 'No flight from the world! The burden of darkness and ugliness must be borne to the end.'***

She fell severely ill with a kind of generalised neuritis just after passing through the Suez Canal. As a matter of fact, for the next five years, she would go from one mortal illness to another, intrepidly, indomitably.

Mother spent one year in France, finding enough strength to take care of the wounded. Then, Paul Richard managed to

* Entretiens, 29th August, 1956.

† Sri Aurobindo, Centenary Library, Vol. 27, p. 434.

** (In due course, as the research work began to expand, the laboratory too grew, and Mother developed the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, and much later in 1968, another laboratory in the form of 'Auroville'.)

†† Prayers and Meditations, 3rd March, 1915.

*** Ibid., 7th March, 1915.

get himself demobilised and sent to Japan. In Japan, Mother passed through mortal illnesses during four years' stay.

She took upon her body the first wartime epidemic of Japan, which had resulted in hundreds upon thousands of deaths. She had got on a streetcar, crossed Tokyo, come back with the disease and fought with it in her body until she could cure the disease in its very roots. Mother has narrated the episode as follows:

There was an epidemic of influenza, an influenza that came from the war (the 1914 war), and was generally fatal. People would get pneumonia after three days, and plop! finished. In Japan they never have epidemics (it's a country where epidemics are unknown), so they were caught unawares; it was an ideal breeding ground, absolutely unprepared—incredible: people died by the thousands every day, it was incredible! Everybody lived in terror, they didn't dare to go out without masks over their mouths. Then somebody whom I won't name asked me (*in a brusque tone*), 'What is this?' I answered him, 'Better not think about it'. 'Why not?' he said, 'It's very interesting! We must find out, at least you are able to find out whatever this is.' Silly me, I was just about to go out; I had to visit a girl who lived at the other end of Tokyo (Tokyo is the largest city of the world, it takes a long time to go from one end to the other), and I wasn't so well-off I could go about in a car: I took the train . . . What an atmosphere! An atmosphere of panic in the city! You see, we lived in a house surrounded by a big park, secluded, but the atmosphere in the city was horrible. And the question, 'What is this?' naturally came to put me in contact—I came back home with the illness. I was sure to catch it, it had to happen! (*laughing*) I came home with it.

Like a bang on the head—I was completely dazed. They called a doctor. There were no medicines left in the city—There weren't enough medicines for people, but as we were considered important people (!) the doctor brought two tablets. I told him (*laughing*), 'Doctor, I never take any medicines.' 'What!' he said. 'It's so hard to get them!' 'That's just the point,' I replied, 'They're very good for others!' Then, then . . . suddenly (I was in bed, of course, with a first-rate fever), suddenly I felt seized by trance—the real trance, this



The Mother in Japan

kind that pushed you out of your body—and I knew. I knew: 'It's the end; if I can't resist it, it's the end.' So I looked. I looked and I saw it was a being whose head had been half blown off by a bomb and who didn't know he was dead, so he was hooking on to anybody he could to suck life. And each of those beings (I saw one over me, doing his 'business'!) was one of the countless dead. Each had a sort of atmosphere—a very widespread atmosphere—of human decomposition, utterly pestilential, and that's what gave the illness. If it was merely that, you recovered, but if it was one of those beings with half a head or half a body, a being who had been killed so brutally that he didn't know he was dead and was trying to get hold of a body in order to continue his life (the atmosphere made thousands of people catch the illness every day, it was swarming, an infection), well, with such beings. You died. Within three days it was over—even before, within a day, sometimes. So once I saw and knew, I collected all the occult energy, all the occult power, and . . . (*Mother bangs down her fist, as if to force her way into her body*) I found myself back in my bed, awake, and it was over. Not only was it over, but I stayed very quiet and began to work in the atmosphere . . . From that moment . . . there were no new cases! It was so extraordinary that it appeared in the Japanese papers. They didn't know how it happened, but from that day on, from that night on, not a single fresh case. And people recovered little by little.

I told the story to our Japanese friend in whose house we were living; I told him, 'Well, that's what this illness is—a remnant of war; and here's the way it happens. . . . And that being was repaid for his attempt!' Naturally, the fact that I repelled this influence by turning around and fighting . . . [dissolved the formation]. But what power it takes to do that! Extraordinary.

He told the story to some friends, who in turn told it to some friends, so in the end the story became known. There was even a sort of collective thanks from the city for my intervention. . . .

But that feeling of being absolutely paralyzed, a prey to something—absolutely paralyzed, you can't . . . you are no longer in your body, you understand, you can't act on it any

more. And a sense of liberation when you are able to turn around.

I had a tremendous fever, which naturally dropped little by little—after a few days I was completely cured; even immediately, I was almost cured. . . .*

During the sojourn in Japan, she had tuberculosis, which was cured only after her return to Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry. In passing, it may be mentioned that Rabindranath Tagore, who also happened to be in Japan at that time, came to know Mother, and struck by the clarity of her vision, he invited her to come and organise education at his Santiniketan in Bengal. But Mother had already something else in view. During her stay in Japan, Mother also tried to put a little consciousness into men and women of Japan, and something of this effort we can see in the talk that she gave to the women of Japan. She had remarked: 'That the superman shall be born of women is a great indisputable truth! . . . The true domain of women is spiritual. We forget it all too often.'[†]

'Turn to the earth'—such was a constant message that she seemed to hear. Yet, she was asking what was contained in her destiny. In her contemplations, there was a constant note of her silence and battle and identification with the earth. On the other hand, Japan, with all its beauty, gave to her the splendour of landscapes and the divine smile of flowers. In her prayer of April 1, 1917, she wrote:

Thou hast shown to my mute and expectant soul all the splendour of fairy landscapes: trees at festival and lonely paths that seem to scale the sky.

But of my destiny Thou didst not speak to me. Must it be so veiled from me? . . .

Once more, everywhere I see cherry trees; thou hast put a magical power in these flowers: they seem to speak of Thy sole Presence; they bring with them the smile of the Divine.

My body is at rest and my soul blossoms in light: what kind of a charm hast Thou put into these trees in flower?

O Japan, it is thy festive adorning, expression of thy goodwill, it is thy purest offering, the pledge of thy fidelity; it is thy way of saying that thou dost mirror the sky.

* Mother's Agenda, Vol. 4, pp. 116–8.

[†] A Talk to the Women of Japan, 1917.

And now here is a magnificent country, of high mountains all covered with pines and richly tilled valleys. And the little pink roses this Chinese brings, are they a promise of the near future?*

And here is an illuminating experience of identification with cherry-blossoms, recorded on April 7, 1917:

A deep concentration seized on me, and I perceived that I was identifying myself with a single cherry-blossom, and, as I descended deeper in the consciousness, following a stream of bluish force, I became suddenly the cherry-tree itself, stretching towards the sky like so many arms its innumerable branches laden with their sacrifice of flowers. Then I heard distinctly this sentence:

Thus hast thou made thyself one with the soul of the cherry-trees and so thou canst take note that it is the Divine who makes the offering of this flower-prayer to heaven.

When I had written it, all was effaced; but now the blood of the cherry-tree flows in my veins and with it flows an incomparable peace and force. What difference is there between the human body and the body of a tree? In truth, there is none: the consciousness which animates them is identically the same.

Then the cherry-tree whispered in my ear:

It is in the cherry-blossom that lies the remedy for the disorders of the spring.

Japan is the land of the Buddha, and one of the most revealing experiences that Mother had in Japan was that of a communication that she received one evening from Sakyamuni. Mother has recorded this communication as follows:

December 20, 1916

(Communication received at 5.30 in the evening after meditation.)

□ As thou art contemplating me, I shall speak to thee this evening. I see in thy heart a diamond surrounded by a golden light. It is at once pure and warm, something which may manifest impersonal love; but why dost thou keep this treasure enclosed in that dark casket lined with deep purple?

* Prayers and Meditations, April 1, 1917.

The outermost covering is of a deep lustreless blue, a real mantle of darkness. It would seem that thou art afraid of showing thy splendour. Learn to radiate and do not fear the storm: the wind carries us far from the shore but shows us over the world. Wouldst thou be thrifty of thy tenderness? But the source of love is infinite. Dost thou fear to be misunderstood? But where hast thou seen man capable of understanding the Divine? And if the eternal truth finds in thee a means of manifesting itself, what dost thou care for all the rest? Thou art like a pilgrim coming out of the sanctuary; standing on the threshold in front of the crowd, he hesitates before revealing his precious secret, that of his supreme discovery. Listen, I too hesitated for days, for I could foresee both my preaching and its results: the imperfection of understanding. And yet I turned to the earth and men and brought them my message. Turn to the earth and men—isn't this the command thou always hearest in thy heart?—in thy heart, for it is that which carries a blessed message for those who are athirst for compassion. Henceforth nothing can attack the diamond. It is unassailable in its perfect constitution and the soft radiance that flashes from it can change many things in the hearts of men. Thou doubtst thy power and fearest thy ignorance? It is precisely this that wraps up thy strength in that dark mantle of starless night. Thou hesitatest and tremblest as on the threshold of a mystery, for now the mystery of the manifestation seems to thee more terrible and unfathomable than that of the Eternal Cause. But thou must take courage again and obey the injunction from the depths. It is I who am telling thee this, for I know thee and love thee as thou didst know and love me once. I have appeared clearly before thy sight so that thou mayst in no way doubt my word. And also to thy eyes I have shown thy heart so that thou canst thus see what the supreme Truth has willed for it, so that thou mayst discover in it the law of thy being. The thing still seems to thee quite difficult: a day will come when thou wilt wonder how for so long it could have been otherwise.

Sakyamuni.*

*Prayers and Meditations.

The earth was in pain, being shattered by the war. And to turn to the earth was to turn to the war. Recounting years later the inner experience of that war, Mother said:

I remember quite well that when the war—the first war—broke out, each part of my body, one after the other [*and Mother touched her legs, arms, chest*], or sometimes repeatedly the same part, symbolized battle-fields—I saw, felt and LIVED it. And each time . . . it was quite strange, for I had only to remain seated and watch: I saw it all in my body, here, there, there—everything that was happening. And while it was happening, I concentrated the divine Force there so that everything (all this pain, all this suffering, all of it) . . . so that it would hasten the preparation of the earth—or in truth, the descent of the Force.*

The basic reason for the Mother to go with Paul Richard to France and Japan was to convert him, and this task, too, was extremely difficult. As Mother explained much later:

You know that I had taken on the conversion of the Lord of Falsehood: I tried to do it through an emanation incarnated in a physical being [Richard], and the greatest effort was made during those four years in Japan. The four years were coming to an end with an absolute inner certainty that there was nothing to be done—that it was impossible, impossible to do it this way. There was nothing to be done. And I was intensely concentrated, asking the Lord, 'Well, I made You a vow to do this, I had said, 'Even if it's necessary to descend into hell, I'll descend into hell to do it'. . . . Now tell me, what must I do? . . . ' The power was plainly there: suddenly everything in me became still; the whole external being was completely immobilised and I had a vision of the Supreme . . . more beautiful than that of the Gita. A vision of the Supreme. And this vision literally gathered me into its arms; it turned towards the West, towards India, and offered me—and there at the other end I saw Sri Aurobindo. It was . . . I felt it physically. I saw, saw—my eyes were closed but I saw (twice I have had this vision of the Supreme—once here, much later—but this was the first time) . . . ineffable. It was as if this

*Satprem, *Mother or the Divine Materialism*, p. 268.

Immensity had reduced itself to a rather gigantic Being who lifted me up like a wisp of straw and offered me. Not a word, nothing else, only that.

Then everything vanished.

The next day we began preparing to return to India.*

In 1920, on her return journey to India, Mother stopped for a while in China. On 24th April, 1920, Mother returned to Pondicherry. Once again, on her arrival, she met Sri Aurobindo. As we have noted earlier, she had seen him earlier sixteen years ago for the first time in her vision, and this vision continued to come to her during all these years. But it was only now, after this meeting of 1920, that that vision came to an end. As already mentioned earlier, in Mother's words:

Only after a whole series of experiences,—a ten months' sojourn in Pondicherry, five years of separation, then the return to Pondicherry and the meeting in the same house and in the same way—did the end of the vision occur. . . . I was standing just beside him. My head wasn't exactly on his shoulder, but where his shoulder was (I don't know how to explain it—physically there was hardly any contact). We were standing side by side like that, gazing out through the open window, and then TOGETHER, at exactly the same moment, we felt, 'Now the Realisation will be accomplished.' That the seal was set and the Realisation will be accomplished. I felt the Thing descending massively within me, with the same certainty I had felt in my vision. From that moment on there was nothing to say—no words, nothing. We knew it was THAT.†

* Mother's Agenda, Vol. 2, pp. 406–7.

† Ibid., pp. 405–6.

4

Sri Aurobindo and The Mother

An ocean of knowledge was poured by Sri Aurobindo in his monthly journal, 'Arya'. By 1920, when Mother returned to Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo had already expounded in the pages of 'Arya' much of his studies which were not confined merely to philosophical and spiritual knowledge, but which extended also to fields of literature, psychology, and social and political thought. The all-embracing idea was, however, that of spiritual evolution, which subsumed within itself latest knowledge of physics and biology. Warrior and hero of Indian independence, Sri Aurobindo had now scaled vast heights of knowledge and power and had launched upon an unprecedented revolution of the entire mankind. The struggle for freedom of India was now only a part of a larger struggle of mankind. Sri Aurobindo had discovered that mankind was passing through a crisis, that this crisis was not merely economic, social or political, but evolutionary in character, and that the problems confronted by mankind could be resolved only by working out the evolutionary needs of the human species. As Sri Aurobindo wrote:

At present mankind is undergoing an evolutionary crisis in which is concealed a choice of its destiny; for a stage has been reached in which the human mind has achieved in certain directions an enormous development while in others it stands arrested and bewildered and can no longer find its way. . . . Man has created a system of civilisation which has become too big for his limited mental capacity and understanding and his still more limited spiritual and moral capacity to utilise and manage, a too dangerous servant of his blundering ego and its appetites. For no greater seeing mind, no intuitive soul of knowledge has yet come to his surface of consciousness which could make . . . basic fullness of life a condition for the free growth of something that exceeded it. . . . Man has harmonised life in the past by organised



Sri Aurobindo at his desk

ideation and limitation; he has created societies based on fixed ideas or fixed customs, a fixed cultural system or an organic life-system, each with its own order; the throwing of all these into the melting-pot of a more and more intermingling life and a pouring in of ever new ideas and motives and facts and possibilities call for a new, a greater consciousness to meet and master the increasing potentialities of existence and harmonise them. Reason and Science can only help by standardising, by fixing everything into an artificially arranged and mechanised unity of material life. A greater whole-being, whole-knowledge, whole-power is needed to weld all into a greater unity of whole-life.*

The question was as to the ways and means by which this greater whole-being, whole-knowledge, whole-power can be attained. Sri Aurobindo found, and this was also Mother's discovery, that this could be done through the processes of yoga, many of which were known, and many of which had to be discovered, created, built and perfected, so that they could meet the needs of man's upward evolution.

This was the task in which Sri Aurobindo was engaged during the years since he came to Pondicherry. This was also the task in which Mother participated. The result was what has come to be known as a synthesis of yoga or integral yoga or supramental yoga. This yoga was developed jointly by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

In one of his letters, Sri Aurobindo has written the following:

Mother was doing Yoga before she knew or met Sri Aurobindo, but their lines of Sadhana independently followed the same course. When they met, they helped each other in perfecting the Sadhana. What is known as Sri Aurobindo's Yoga is the joint creation of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother...†

Stressing the novelty of the aim and method of this Yoga, Sri Aurobindo has written in one of his letters:

It is the descent of the new consciousness attained by the ascent that is the stamp and seal of the Sadhana... a method

* Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, Centenary Library, Vol. 19, pp. 1053-5.

† Sri Aurobindo *On Himself*, Centenary Library, Vol. 26, p. 459.

has been preconised 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 a 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 down, perfectly mapped, macadamised, made secure and public. Our Yoga is not a retreading of old walks, but a spiritual adventure.*

Describing the difficulties of the hewing of the new Yoga, Sri Aurobindo has written in one of his letters to a disciple:

As for the Mother and myself, we have had to try all ways, follow all methods, to surmount mountains of difficulties, a far heavier burden to bear than you or anybody else in the Ashram or outside, far more difficult conditions, battles to fight, wounds to endure, ways to cleave through impenetrable morass and desert and forest, hostile masses to conquer—a work such as, I am certain, none else had to do before us. For the Leader of the Way in a work like ours has not only to bring down and represent and embody the Divine, but to represent too the ascending element in humanity and to bear the burden of humanity to the full and experience, not in a mere play or Lila but in grim earnest, all the obstruction, difficulty, opposition, baffled and hampered and only slowly victorious labour which are possible on the Path.†

Sri Aurobindo had discovered yoga as a method of accelerating the evolutionary process. He found, however, that each system of Yoga is a specialisation in a more or less limited field of achievement, and therefore none of them sufficient for the total movement of evolution. In his analysis of the systems of Yoga, he shows how an integrating principle of Yoga could be discovered and how on the basis of that principle, a synthesis of Yoga could be so achieved that Yoga could meet the total

*Ibid., p. 109.

†Ibid., p. 464.

demands of evolutionary movement. He shows how the evolutionary movement itself is a secret Yoga, the Yoga of Nature, and how this secret could be used as a clue to a conscious integral method in our effort to lead Nature as rapidly as possible and as perfectly as possible towards its next momentous evolutionary stage, viz., the radical and complete transmutation of Man, the emergence of a new species. All life is Yoga, declares Sri Aurobindo, but all life has been so far a sub-conscious Yoga of Nature. But we can study Nature consciously and apply scientifically the inner workings of Nature to our own evolution, and we can consciously make all life a conscious Yoga. As Sri Aurobindo puts it:

The true and full object and utility of Yoga can only be accomplished when the conscious Yoga in man becomes, like the subconscious Yoga in Nature, outwardly conterminus with life itself and we can once more, looking out both on the path and the achievement, say in a more perfect and luminous sense: 'all life is Yoga'.*

Each system of Yoga selects certain activities of Nature, purifies them, develops them, perfects them, and achieves a contact, a union with the Object that is at the source of these activities. Each system chooses an instrument in our psychological complex by which the selected activities can be dealt with. The essence of each system is the method of *concentration* on the Object in view; and by this concentration is achieved a conscious acceleration of the evolution of Nature. Thus, Hatha Yoga selects the body and vital functionings as its instrument of perfection and realisation. The method is a concentration and effort of energy released by *Asana* and *Pranayama* in the outer and inner body for an object of physical perfection. Raja Yoga selects the mental being in its different parts as its lever-power. It effects a change of the ordinary fleeting mind by a process of *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Asana*, *Pranayama*, *Pratyahara*, *Dharana*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi*, so that it can dwell constantly in a fixed poise and reflect the luminosity of the Object that is pursued. The triple Path of Works, Love and Knowledge uses some part of the mental being, will, heart or intellect, as a starting-point and seeks by its purification, development and perfection, the

* The Synthesis of Yoga, Centenary Library, Vol. 20, p. 4.

liberating Truth, Beatitude and Infinity. Its method is a direct commerce, a direct contact, a direct concentration of the human individual or Purusha in the individual body with the Divine, the Purusha who dwells in every body and yet transcends all form and name.

This analysis of the systems of Yoga indicates a solution to the problem of their synthesis. The synthesis, as Sri Aurobindo points out, cannot be arrived at by a combination of these systems in mass. That is neither possible nor desirable, nor needed. Again, as Sri Aurobindo points out, synthesis does not mean a successive practice of the various systems. It is effected by neglecting the forms and outsides of the Yogic disciplines and seizing rather on the central principle common to all which will include and utilise in the right place and proportion their particular principles. While each system is a specific process of concentration, the synthesis of yoga is an integral process of *integral concentration*; while each system makes a selection from the activities of Nature for purification and perfection, integral yoga would admit all activities of Nature for their transformation and perfection; while each system aims at a specific object or a poise or aspect of Reality of the Divine, the Object of the integral yoga would be the realisation of the Integral Divine. An integral concentration on the Integral Divine through the whole of our being for a complete perfection by a union with and manifestation of the Divine—this would be the natural formula of the Integral Yoga. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

The method we have to pursue, then, is to put our whole conscious being into relation and contact with the Divine and to call Him in to transform our entire being into His, so that in a sense God Himself, the real Person in us, becomes the Sadhaka of the Sadhana* as well as the Master of Yoga by whom the lower personality is used as the centre of a divine transfiguration and the instrument of its own perfection.†

In the integral yoga, the Divine Power in us uses all life as the means of our upward evolution. Every experience and outer or inner contact with our world-environment, however trifling

* *Sadhana*, the practice by which perfection, *Siddhi*, is attained; *Sadhaka*, the Yogin who seeks by that practice the *Siddhi*.

† Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Centenary Library, Vol. 20, p. 40.

or disastrous, is used as an occasion and opportunity for the yogic work, and every experience becomes a step on the path to perfection.

And we recognise in ourselves with opened eyes the method of God in the world, His purpose of light in the obscure, of might in the weak and fallen, of delight in what is grievous and miserable. We see the divine method to be the same in the lower and in the higher working; only in the one it is pursued tardily and obscurely through the sub-conscious in Nature, in the other it becomes swift and self-conscious and the instrument confesses the hand of the Master. All life is a Yoga of Nature seeking to manifest God within itself. Yoga marks the stage at which this effort becomes capable of self-awareness and therefore of right completion in the individual. It is a gathering up and concentration of the movements dispersed and loosely combined in the lower evolution.*

By this integral method is proposed an integral realisation and perfection: the realisation of not only unity in the Self but also of unity in the infinite diversity of activities, world and creatures, the perfect harmony of the results of Knowledge, Love and Works, the perfection of freedom, purity, beatitude, and the perfection of the mind and body.

The integral yoga aims at an integral transformation. The word 'transformation' has a special meaning in the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. It does not mean merely what is known as conversion in the psychology of religious belief; nor does it mean a conversion that occurs as an inner change into sainthood or ethical perfection. Even what are known as Yogic Siddhis of spiritual experiences or realisations such as those of Mukti or Nirvana do not amount to 'transformation'. As Sri Aurobindo explains it in one of his letters:

'Transformation' is a word that I have brought in myself (like 'Supermind') to express certain spiritual concepts and spiritual facts of the integral Yoga Purification of the nature by the 'influence' of the Spirit is not what I mean by transformation; purification is only part of a psychic change

* *Ibid.*, 42.

or a psycho-spiritual change—the word besides has many senses and is very often given a moral or ethical meaning which is foreign to my purpose. What I mean by the 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 a matter of the undeniable experience of many that this can descend and it is my experience that nothing short of its *full* descent can thoroughly remove the veil and mixture and effect the full spiritual transformation . . . 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 transformation that is sought after in the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is that of Nature or Prakriti. The Spirit that is manifest to itself is to be made manifest to Nature. The Prakriti or Nature of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* has to be fully transformed by the Divine Nature, the Supramental Nature, so that Nature itself would be liberated from its limitations and be the direct and full expression of the Divine Supermind. In the supramental transformation of Nature, there is not merely the transcendence of the three *gunas* of Nature (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) but the three *gunas* themselves become purified, refined and changed into their divine equivalents; *sattva* becomes *jyoti*, the authentic spiritual light; *rajas* becomes *tapas*, the tranquilly intense divine force; *tamas* becomes *shama*, the divine quiet, rest, peace. But this can be done, according to Sri Aurobindo, in its fullness in the physical only when the physical life is finally transformed by the supramental power.

* Sri Aurobindo On Himself, Centenary Library, Vol. 26, pp. 109–10.

One of the first questions that was raised when Mother met Sri Aurobindo was whether they should do the yoga and go right to the end without involving others, and to see about them afterwards or let the suitable individuals come to them and take them along on the adventure of yoga. As Mother explained much later:

Truly speaking, it was the first question that arose when I met Sri Aurobindo: should we do this yoga and go right to the end, then afterwards to see about the others, or should we immediately let all those who have an identical aspiration come to us and walk all together towards the goal? . . . The two possibilities were there: either to do an intensive individual Sadhana by withdrawing from the world and having no more contact with others, or else to let a group form in a natural and spontaneous way without preventing it from being formed, and then setting out all together on the path.*

But the aim of yoga was not individual salvation; the aim was collective, even cosmic. And, as Mother explained years later, no individual, however great he may be, can by himself achieve a collective realisation. A representative collectivity—at the very minimum—is needed. Here the yoga was the yoga of conscious evolution, and it needed an evolutionary laboratory. Thus, as noted earlier, an 'Ashram' began to be formed out of a nucleus of the few who had already joined Sri Aurobindo since his arrival in Pondicherry. Later, hundreds joined so as to make a small representative world consisting of specimens of each type of human consciousness and development. This collective formation was a sort of a spontaneous development. In the words of the Mother:

The decision was not at all a mental choice; it came spontaneously. The circumstances were such that there was no choice; in other words, the group formed very naturally and spontaneously as an imperative necessity.

And then once it begins in that direction, there is no question of going back—you have to go right to the end.†

* The Mother, Entretiens, 21.12.1955.

† Ibid.

The yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is, in fact, a programme of yogic research. This is as it ought to be. For Yoga is not a closed book. It is not a body of revelations made once for all, unverifiable and unsurpassable. It is not a religion; it is an advancing Science, with its field of inquiry and search always enlarging; its methods are not only intuitive but include also bold experimentation and rigorous verification by means of *abiding experience*, and, finally, even by physical change and transformation. It is in this spirit that Sri Aurobindo and Mother went on testing day and night their experiments and results over decades and decades. Their programme of yogic research took within its sweep all the domains of life, all aspects of culture, and arrived at a synthesis of yoga based upon the discovery of the supermind resulting in an ever-growing methodised discipline for the transformation of man and the eventual transmutation into a new species.

It is this discovery which is at the base of the affirmation that 'spiritual liberation' or Mukti is not the highest possible aim for Man on the earth, and that there is a farther aim imperatively demanded by the concealed intention of 'evolutionary' Nature. Not merely the liberation of the Spirit *from* Nature, but also the liberation of Nature itself from its limitations by a radical transformation; not an escape into the acosmic static Reality of featureless Nirvana or into supraterrrestrial planes of heavenly existence, but the establishment of the kingdom of the Spirit on the earth; not merely an individual achievement but a collective one for the earth; not merely the realisation of the Divine, but the realisation of the integral Divine and its integral manifestation in the physical life,—this is the aim which, according to Sri Aurobindo and Mother, is demanded of us, and which can be fulfilled only by the descent and manifestation of the Supermind.

There is, indeed, an ascending path which, by various processes or by combination of various processes takes us to higher and higher levels of consciousness. And then there is a descending path for bringing down the higher levels of consciousness, including supermind, into lower levels of Matter, right up to the lowest, which is the Inconscient, in order to bring about transformation. Speaking of these paths, Mother said:

When you follow the ascending path, the work is relatively easy. I had already covered this path by the beginning of the century and had established a constant relationship with the Supreme—That which is beyond the Personal and the gods and all the outward expressions of the Divine, but also beyond the Absolute Impersonal. It's something you cannot describe; you must experience it. And this is what must be brought down into Matter. Such is the descending path, the one I began with Sri Aurobindo; and there, the work is immense.

The thing can still be brought down as far as the mental and vital planes (although Sri Aurobindo said that thousands of lifetimes would be needed merely to bring it down to the mental plane, unless one practised a perfect *surrender*). With Sri Aurobindo, we went down below Matter, right into the Subconscient and even into the Inconscient. But after the descent comes the transformation, and when you come down to the body, when you attempt to make it take one step forward—oh, not even a real step, just a little step!—everything starts grating; it's like stepping on an anthill. . . .

The path is difficult. . . .

I could have begun this work on the body thirty years ago, but I was constantly caught up in this harassing ashram life. . . . It does not mean that thirty years were wasted, for it is likely that had I been able to start this work thirty years ago, it would have been premature. The consciousness of the others also had to develop—the two are linked, the individual progress and the collective progress, and one cannot advance if the other does not advance.*

The words 'ascent' and 'descent' have a relative significance—relative to our present composition and status of consciousness. But, as Mother explained:

Once the border has been crossed, there is no more 'ascent' and 'descent'; you have the feeling of rising up only at the very start, while leaving the terrestrial consciousness and emerging into the higher mind. But once you have gone beyond that, there's no notion of rising; there's a sense,

* Mother's Agenda, Vol. 1, pp. 300–1.

instead, of a sort of inner transformation.*

* * *

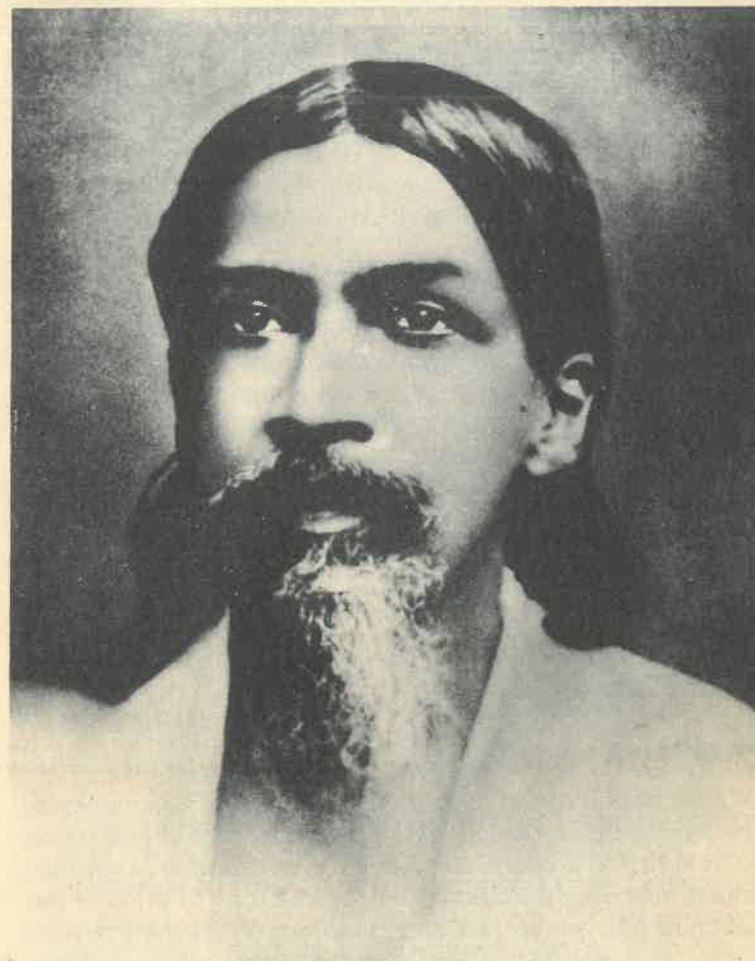
In his *magnum opus*, 'The Life Divine', Sri Aurobindo has explained at length the philosophy of ascent and descent in the context of spiritual evolution and provided a detailed exposition of the entire process of integral transformation, consisting of a triple transformation, the psychic, the spiritual and the supramental.

Sri Aurobindo uses the word 'psychic' in the Greek sense where it does not connote merely the inner psychological powers, but stands for the inmost soul. The psychic entity is, according to Sri Aurobindo, the true soul secret in us, screened behind the body, life and mind, and its presence burns in the temple of the inmost heart. It is the flame of the Godhead always alight within us, inextinguishable even by the dense unconsciousness which obscures our outward nature. It is this psychic entity which puts forward gradually a psychic personality which changes, grows, develops. At first, the psychic being can exercise only a concealed and partial and indirect action through the mind, the life and the body, for it permits these parts of Nature to develop as its instruments of self-expression. But in due course, it can come forward and lead our entire growth, internal as well as external. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

It is this secret psychic entity which is the true original Conscience in us deeper than the constructed and conventional conscience of the moralist, for it is this which points always towards Truth and Right and Beauty, towards Love and Harmony and all that is a divine possibility in us, and persists till these things become the major need of our nature. It is the psychic personality in us that flowers as the saint, the sage, the seer; when it reaches its full strength, it turns the being towards the knowledge of Self and the Divine, towards the supreme Truth, the supreme Good, the supreme Beauty, Love and Bliss, the divine heights and largenesses, and opens us to the touch of spiritual sympathy, universality, oneness.†

* Mother's Agenda, Vol. 2, p. 379.

† Sri Aurobindo, The Life Divine, Centenary Library, Vol. 18, p. 226.



Sri Aurobindo

The coming forward of the psychic person marks a momentous stage in the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. It then begins to govern overtly and entirely our outer nature of mind, life and body, and these can be cast into soul images of what is true, right and beautiful, and in the end the whole nature can be turned towards the real aim of life, the supreme victory. A transformation of the mind, life and body by the presence and powers of the psychic being is effected. This process may be rapid or tardy according to the resistance in our developed nature. But ultimately, by the greater and greater infusion of the psychic light every part of the being is psychified. As Sri Aurobindo describes it:

Every region of the being, every nook and corner of it, every movement, formation, direction, inclination of thought, will, emotion, sensation, action, reaction, motive, disposition, propensity, desire, habit of the conscious or subconscious physical, even the most concealed, camouflaged, mute, recondite, is lighted up with the unerring psychic light, their confusions dissipated, their tangles disentangled, their obscurities, deceptions, self-deceptions precisely indicated and removed; all is purified, set right, the whole nature harmonised, modulated in the psychic key, put in spiritual order.*

The psychic transformation is the one necessary condition of the total transformation of our existence, but that is not all that is needed for the largest spiritual change. As explained by Sri Aurobindo:

□ since this is the individual soul in Nature, it can open to the hidden diviner ranges of our being and receive and reflect their light and power and experience, but another, a spiritual transformation from above is needed for us to possess our self in its universality and transcendence. By itself the psychic being at a certain stage might be content to create a formation of truth, good and beauty and make that its station; at a farther stage it might become passively subject to the world-self, a mirror of the universal existence, consciousness, power, delight, but not their full participant or possessor...†

* Ibid., Vol. 19, pp. 907-8

† Ibid., Vol. 18, p. 227. For some adequate idea, *vide* The Life Divine, Vol. 19, pp. 889-918.

While the psychic is the inmost and deepest being in us, the spiritual is the *higher* and *transcendental*. While the psychic life is the life immortal, endless time, limitless space, ever progressive change, unbroken continuity in the world of forms, the spiritual consciousness, on the other hand, means to live in the infinite and the eternal, to throw oneself outside all creation beyond time and space. When we go deeper *behind* the mental, we enter into the field of the psychic, when we go *above* the mental we enter into the domain of the spiritual experiences of the transcendental self or of the wide cosmic consciousness or of the one and the Supreme as the upholder of time-space.

For purposes of transformation, it is not enough in the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo to have even these spiritual experiences and realisations. The realisations of the One and of the Unity of the Cosmic and Transcendental Peace, Knowledge, Power, Bliss,—these need to be expressed in our dynamic Nature. And for that, according to Sri Aurobindo, there is to be an ascent into the planes of the higher dynamic action and the descent of the powers of these planes into our mind, life and body. These planes are those of the Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuitive Mind, and Overmind. It is this process that is specifically called in the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo the process of spiritual transformation.

This process is extremely complex and it is impossible to give any idea of it here. Sri Aurobindo has written extensively on this subject,* but in the following passage from one of his letters, we have some indication of this process:

The Self governs the diversity of its creation by its unity on all the planes from the Higher Mind upwards on which the realisation of the One is the natural basis of consciousness. But as one goes upward, the view changes, the power of consciousness changes, the Light becomes ever more intense and potent. Although the static realisation of Infinity and Eternity and the Timeless One remains the same, the vision of the workings of the One becomes ever wider and is attended with a greater instrumentality of Force and a more comprehensive grasp of what has to be known and done. All possible forms and constructions of things become more

* Some selected passages on the subject are given in Appendix III.

and more visible, put in their proper place, utilisable. Moreover, what is thought-knowledge in the Higher Mind becomes illumination in the Illumined Mind and direct intimate vision in the Intuition. But the Intuition sees in flashes and combines through a constant play of light—through revelations, inspirations, intuitions, swift discriminations. The overmind sees calmly, steadily, in great masses and large extensions of space and time and relation, globally; it creates and acts in the same way—it is the world of the great Gods, the divine Creators. Only each creates in his own way; he sees all but sees all from his own viewpoint. There is not the absolute supramental harmony and certitude. These, inadequately expressed, are some of the differences. I speak, of course, of these planes in themselves—when acting in the human consciousness they are necessarily much diminished in their working by having to depend on the human instrumentation of mind, vital and physical. Only when these are quieted, they get a fuller force and reveal more their character.*

The descent of the Overmind and the consequent transformation of the lower instruments of the mind, life, body and the inconscient mark a further decisive stage in the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. It is the final consummating movement of what Sri Aurobindo has called the dynamic spiritual transformation. And yet, there are certain reasons arising from the status and power of the Overmind that prevent it from being the final possibility of the spiritual evolution. As Sri Aurobindo explains it:

In the terrestrial evolution itself the overmind descent would not be able to transform wholly the Inconscience; all that it could do would be to transform in each man it touched the whole conscious being, inner and outer, personal and universally impersonal, into its own stuff and impose that upon the Ignorance illumining it into cosmic truth and knowledge. But a basis of Nescience would remain; it would be as if a sun and its system were to shine out in an original darkness of Space and illumine everything as far as its rays could reach so that all that dwelt in the light would feel as if no darkness were there at all in their experience of existence.

* Sri Aurobindo, *Letters on Yoga*, Centenary Library, Vol. 24, p. 1154.

But outside that sphere or expanse of experience the original darkness would still be there and, since all things are possible in an overmind structure, could reinvade the island of light created within its empire. Moreover, since Overmind deals with different possibilities, its natural action would be to develop the separate possibility of one or more or numerous dynamic spiritual formulations to their utmost or combine or harmonise several possibilities together; but this would be a creation or a number of creations in the original terrestrial creation, each complete in its separate existence. The evolved spiritual individual would be there, there might evolve also a spiritual community or communities in the same world as mental man and the vital being of the animal, but each working out its independent existence in a loose relation within the terrestrial formula. The supreme power of the principle of unity taking all diversities into itself and controlling them as parts of the unity, which must be the law of the new evolutionary consciousness, would not as yet be there. Also by this much evolution there could be no security against the downward pull or gravitation of the Inconscience which dissolves all the formations that life and mind build in it, swallows all things that arise out of it or are imposed upon it and disintegrates them into their original matter. The liberation from this pull of the Inconscience and a secured basis for a continuous divine or gnostic evolution would only be achieved by a descent of the Supermind into the terrestrial formula, bringing into it the supreme law and light and dynamic of the Spirit and penetrating with it and transforming the inconscience of the material basis. A last transition from Overmind to Supermind and a descent of Supermind must therefore intervene at this stage of evolutionary Nature.*

Only the Supramental Force can, according to Sri Aurobindo, entirely overcome the difficulty of the resistance of the Inconscience. Only the luminous Supermind and its sovereign imperative can descend into the Inconscience without any diminution of its omnipotent power and thus displace or entirely penetrate and transform into itself the Inconscience.

‘Only the Supermind,’ writes Sri Aurobindo, ‘can thus

* Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, Centenary Library, Vol. 19, pp. 953–4.

descend without losing its full power of action; for its action is always intrinsic and automatic, its will and knowledge identical and the result commensurate: its nature is a self-achieving Truth-Consciousness and, if it limits itself or its working, it is by choice and intention, not by compulsion; in the limits it chooses its action and the results of its action are harmonious and inevitable . . . ; the whole radical change in the evolution from a basis of Ignorance to a basis of Knowledge can only come by the intervention of the supramental Power and its direct action in earth-existence.*

The results of the descent of the Supermind on the earth and the consequent supramental transformation of the mind, life, body and the inconscient would mark a momentous stage in the evolutionary process. It would mean the mutation of the human species into what Sri Aurobindo has termed the 'gnostic' species. It would mean a step which would radically alter even the human body, its structure and the principle of its working. It would mean the appearance of what Sri Aurobindo has termed the Divine Body, an ever-youthful physical envelope of the unveiled Spirit.

* * *

When Mother came back from Japan, she began to work with Sri Aurobindo. By that time, Sri Aurobindo had brought down the supramental light into the mental world and was trying to transform the Mind. In Mother's words:

When I returned from Japan and we began to work together, Sri Aurobindo had already brought the supramental light into the mental world and was trying to transform the Mind. 'It's strange', he said to me, 'it's an endless work! Nothing seems to get done—everything is done and then constantly has to be done all over again.' Then I gave him my personal impression, which went back to the old days with Theon: 'It will be like that until we touch bottom.' So instead of continuing to work in the Mind, both of us (I was the one who went through the experience . . . how to put it? . . . practically, objectively; he experienced it only in his consciousness,

*Ibid., pp. 917–8

not in the body—but my body has always participated), both of us descended almost immediately (it was done in a day or two) from the Mind into the Vital, and so on quite rapidly, leaving the Mind as it was, fully in the light but not permanently transformed.

Then a strange thing happened. When we were in the Vital, my body suddenly became young again, as it had been when I was eighteen years old! . . . There was a young man named Pearson, a disciple of Tagore, who had lived with me in Japan for four years; he returned to India, and when he came to see me in Pondicherry, he was stupefied.* 'What has happened to you!' he exclaimed. He hardly recognised me. During that same period (it didn't last very long, only a few months), I received some old photographs from France and Sri Aurobindo saw one of me at the age of eighteen. 'There!' he said, 'That's how you are now!' I wore my hair differently, but otherwise I was eighteen all over again.

This lasted for a few months. Then we descended into the Physical—and all the trouble began.† But we didn't stay in the Physical, we descended into the Subconscient and from the Subconscient to the Inconscient. That was how we worked. And it was only when I descended into the Inconscient that I found the Divine Presence—there, in the midst of Darkness.

It wasn't the first time; when I was working with Theon at Tlemcen (the second time I was there), I descended into the total, unindividualised—that is, general—Inconscient (it was the time he wanted me to find the Mantra of Life). And there I suddenly found myself in front of something like a vault or a grotto (of course, it was only something 'like' that), and when it opened, I saw a Being of iridescent light reclining with his head on his hand, fast asleep. All the light around him was iridescent. When I told Theon what I was seeing, he said it was the 'immanent God in the depths of the Inconscient,' who through his radiations was slowly waking the Inconscient to Consciousness.

* Pearson came to Pondicherry in April 1923.

† In January 1925, Mother had an inflammation of the knee. On May 25 of the same year, Sri Aurobindo noted in a letter, 'The condition here is not very good. I am at present fighting the difficulties on the physical plane.' (cited by A.B. Purani, *Life of Sri Aurobindo*, p. 203). Note that in 1925 the Nazi Party was founded.

But then a rather remarkable phenomenon occurred: When I looked at him, he woke up and opened his eyes, expressing the beginning of conscious, wakeful action.

□ One can realize the Divine in the Inconscient rather quickly (in fact, I think it can happen just as soon as one has found the Divine within). But does this give the power to TRANSFORM DIRECTLY? Does the direct junction between the supreme consciousness and the Inconscient (because that is the experience) give the power to transform the Inconscient just like that, without any intermediary? I don't think so. I simply haven't had that experience. . . .

One thing is certain—as soon as one goes beyond the terrestrial atmosphere, beyond the higher mind's 'highest' region, the sensation of 'high' and 'low' totally vanishes. There are no longer movements of ascent and descent, but (*Mother turns her hand over*) something like inner reversals.

□ It is by rising to the summit of consciousness through a progressive ascent . . . that one unites with the Supermind. But as soon as the union is achieved, one knows and one sees that the Supermind exists in the heart of the Inconscient as well. When one is in that state, there is neither high nor low. But GENERALLY, . . . it is by REDESCENDING through the levels of the being with a supramentalized consciousness that one can accomplish the permanent transformation of physical nature. . . .

(This can be experienced in all sorts of ways, but what we want and what Sri Aurobindo spoke of is a change that will never be revoked, that will persist, that will be as durable as the present terrestrial conditions. . . .)*

This durable transformation necessitated the descent into Inconscience with the power of the Supermind. Necessarily, owing to the resistance of the lower levels of consciousness, particularly of Matter and Subconscience and Inconscience, the process is long, and, there are several stages. Higher and higher levels of consciousness had to be fixed in Matter. By 1926, the Overmind was brought down into Matter, and an overmental creation came into view. Something momentous was being worked out. As Mother explained:

* Mother's Agenda, Vol. 2, pp. 379–82.

In 1926, I had begun a sort of overmental creation, that is, I had brought the *Overmind* down into matter, here on earth (miracles and all kinds of things were beginning to happen). I asked all these gods to incarnate, to identify themselves with a body (some of them absolutely refused). Well, with my very own eyes I saw Krishna, who had always been in rapport with Sri Aurobindo, consent to come down into his body. It was on November 24th, and it was the beginning of 'Mother'. *

Yes, in fact I wanted to ask you what this realization of 1926 was.

It was this: Krishna consented to descend into Sri Aurobindo's body—to be FIXED there; there is a great difference, you understand, between incarnating, being fixed in a body, and simply acting as an influence that comes and goes and moves about. The gods are always moving about, and it's plain that we ourselves, in our inner beings, come and go and act in a hundred or a thousand places at once. There is a difference between just coming occasionally and accepting to be permanently tied to a body—between a permanent influence and a permanent presence.

These things have to be experienced.

But in what sense did this realization mark a turning point in Sri Aurobindo's sadhana?

No, the phenomenon was important FOR THE CREATION; he himself was rather indifferent to it. But I did tell him about it. It was at that time that he decided to stop dealing with people and retire to his room. So he called everyone together for one last meeting. Before then, he used to go out on the verandah every day to meet and talk with all who came to see him . . . I was living in the inner rooms and seeing no one; he was going out onto the verandah, seeing everyone, receiving people, speaking, discussing—I saw him only when he came back inside.

After a while, I too began having meditations with people. I had begun a sort of 'overmental creation,' to make each god descend into a being—there was an extraordinary upward curve! Well, I was in contact with these beings and I told Krishna (because I was always seeing him around

* From 196, Sri Aurobindo officially introduced Mother to the disciples as the 'Mother'; previously he often called her 'Mirra'.

Sri Aurobindo), 'This is all very fine, but what I want now is a creation on earth—you must incarnate.' He said 'Yes.' Then I saw him—I saw him with my own eyes (inner eyes, of course), join himself to Sri Aurobindo.

Then I went into Sri Aurobindo's room and told him, 'Here's what I have seen.' 'Yes, I know!' he replied (*Mother laughs*) 'That's fine; I have decided to retire to my room, and you will take charge of the people. You take charge.' (There were about thirty people at the time.) Then he called everyone together for one last meeting. He sat down, had me sit next to him, and said, 'I called you here to tell you that, as of today, I am withdrawing for purposes of sadhana, and Mother will now take charge of everyone; you should address yourselves to her; she will represent me and she will do all the work.' (He hadn't mentioned this to me!—*Mother bursts into laughter*).

These people had always been very intimate with Sri Aurobindo, so they asked: 'Why, why, why?' He replied, 'It will be explained to you.' I had no intention of explaining anything, and I left the room with him, but Datta began speaking. (She was an English-woman who had left Europe with me; she stayed here until her death—a person who received 'inspirations'.) She said she felt Sri Aurobindo speaking through her and she explained everything: that Krishna had incarnated and that Sri Aurobindo was now going to do an intensive sadhana for the descent of the Supermind; that it meant Krishna's adherence to the Supramental Descent upon earth and that, as Sri Aurobindo would now be too occupied to deal with people, he had put me in charge and I would be doing all the work.

This was in 1926.

It was only... (how can I put it?) a participation from Krishna. It made no difference for Sri Aurobindo personally: it was a formation from the past that accepted to participate in the present creation, nothing more. It was a descent of the Supreme, from... some time back, now consenting to participate in the new manifestation.

Shiva, on the other hand, refused. 'No', he said, 'I will come only when you have finished your work. I will not come into the world as it is now, but I am ready to help.' He was

standing in my room that day, so tall (*laughing*) that his head touched the ceiling! He was bathed in his own special light, a play of red and gold... magnificent! Just as he is when he manifests his supreme consciousness—a formidable being! So I stood up and... (I too must have become quite tall, because my head was resting on his shoulder, just slightly below his head) then he told me, 'No, I'm not tying myself to a body, but I will give you ANYTHING you want.' The only thing I said (it was all done wordlessly, of course) was: 'I want to be rid of the physical ego.'

Well... (*laughing*), it happened! It was extraordinary!... After a while, I went to find Sri Aurobindo and said, 'See what has happened! I have a funny sensation (*Mother laughs*) of the cells no longer being clustered together! They're going to scatter!' He looked at me, smiled and said, *Not yet*. And the effect vanished.

But Shiva had indeed given me what I wanted!

Not yet, Sri Aurobindo said.

No, the time wasn't ripe. It was too early, much too early.*

As for the overmental creation, in which Mother had asked various gods to incarnate, to identify themselves with a body, the fact was that the gods were beginning to manifest. But as Mother explained:

In the end, Sri Aurobindo told me it was an overmental creation, not the Truth. These were his very words: 'Yes, it's an overmental creation, but that's not the truth we're seeking; it's not the truth, *the highest truth*,' he said.

I made no reply, not a word: in half an hour I had undone everything—I undid it all, really everything, cut the connection between the gods and the people here, demolished absolutely everything. Because you see, I knew it was so attractive for people (they were constantly seeing the most astonishing things) that the obvious temptation was to hand on to it and say, 'We'll improve on it'—which was impossible. So I sat down quietly for half an hour, and I undid it all. We had to start over again with something else. But I said nothing. I told no one about it except Sri Aurobindo. At the time I let

* Ibid., pp. 298–301.

no one know, because they would have been completely discouraged.*

Overmental creation would have meant the possibility of establishment of a new religion, but as Sri Aurobindo pointed out:

It is far from my purpose to propagate any religion, new or old, for humanity. . . . A way to be opened that is still blocked, not a religion to be founded is my conception of the matter.†

The descent of the Supermind into the Inconscient, and manifestation of the Supermind in material life—this was the clear object on which Sri Aurobindo and the Mother worked together. A major portion of this work, in its external aspect, was the development and organisation of their research laboratory, which was named 'Sri Aurobindo Ashram'. This laboratory consisted of an increasing number of individuals who represented a special difficulty in the process of transformation. Each individual received from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother all the care and attention that were required for his or her growth. This was a daily affair, and this implied a gigantic task. Members of the Ashram used to write letters to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and Sri Aurobindo wrote in answer to these letters. This required daily 12 hours, three hours in the afternoon, and the whole night up to 6 in the morning. Mother herself used to meet each individual daily or periodically in various ways and in various contexts. Each individual was given a specific work, and every one was expected to spend at least 8 hours a day on a work useful for the entire collectivity. The work had to be done with a certain attitude and in a certain state of consciousness in consonance with the demands of the Yoga of transformation. The Ashram was not created for renunciation of action, but for a dynamic Sadhana which would accelerate the evolution of the Supermind in the life on the earth. As Sri Aurobindo pointed out:

This Ashram has been created . . . not for the renunciation of the world but as a centre and a field of practice for the evolution of another kind and form of life.**

* Mother's agenda, Vol. 3, pp. 463-4.

† Sri Aurobindo, *On Yoga*, Centenary Library, Vol. 22, p. 149.

** Ibid., p. 823.

The entire organisation of the Ashram embodied the dynamic principles of the supramental yoga. Each must find his own truth, and this cannot be done by imposing uniformity or external rules of behaviour. Everybody was given a work appropriate to the needs of his or her growth—work relating to the agricultural fields, gardens, mechanical workshops, printing press, laboratories, carpentry, smithy, painting, music, teaching (from the kinder-garten to the university stage), physical education, bakery, laundry, or even washing dishes. The work changed, if it was necessary for a new development of consciousness. The idea behind this organisation was that each individual carries in himself a truth and that it is with that truth that he must unite himself. The road that he or she follows to join and realise that truth becomes also the road which would bring him or her the nearest possible to the anvil of transformation. All activities were under minute observation of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother; everything was under test. As Sri Aurobindo pointed out: 'I have been testing day and night for years upon years more scrupulously than any scientist his theory or his method on the physical plane.'*

* * *

The Mother was Shakti in action. After full day's work starting from 4 a.m., she would go at 1 a.m. to Sri Aurobindo's room. With Sri Aurobindo, there was hardly any talk, but silence and gaze. They were perfectly attuned and in the same vibration. As she said:

When there was a special force that came down or an opening or a supramental manifestation, we knew it at the same time, in the same way. And we did not even need to speak to each other about it; only for consequences, for the practical results in the work, did we sometimes exchange a word or two. I never had this with anyone except Sri Aurobindo.

The work was microscopic; the work was complex; the work was both external and internal. After the overmind was fixed in Matter, the next step in the work was to fix the Supermind in Matter.

It became clearer that the task of fixing the supermind in the

* Sri Aurobindo *On Himself*, Centenary Library, Vol. 26, p. 378.

physical had to be done by opening up the physical *cells*. It also became clearer that the physical cells contained the whole evolutionary past, all the layers, not only human but animal and vegetal. And the process of crossing these layers, of clearing them, was found to be interminably fraught with resistances, constant negations, obstinate refusals.

At the same time, there were expectations. Questions were pressing on Sri Aurobindo and the Mother: 'So, when will this supramental descent take place?' 'When will it be?' 'Is it for now?' 'Is it possible?'

In an answer to a disciple, Sri Aurobindo wrote:

I find that the more the Light and Power are coming down the greater is the resistance. You yourself can see that there is something pressing down. You can also see that there is the tremendous resistance.*

By 1935, the Pressure and the Resistance had grown. A disciple, feeling that the resistance came from the members of the Ashram, research laboratory, from the 'staff', asked Sri Aurobindo rather innocently as to why the whole 'staff' should not be retrenched and then get the Supermind down quickly. In answer, Sri Aurobindo wrote back:

I am not Hitler. Things cannot be done like that. You might just as well ask the Mother and myself to isolate ourselves in the Himalayas...†

In another context, Sri Aurobindo wrote:

If we had lived physically in the Supermind from the beginning nobody could have been able to approach us nor could any Sadhana have been done. There could have been no hope of contact between ourselves and the earth and men... **

In 1935, there was a significant breakthrough, and Sri Aurobindo wrote in a letter:

Now I have got the hang of the whole hanged thing—like a very Einstein I have got the mathematical formula of the

* A.B. Purani, Evening Talks, II: p. 317.

† Nirodbaran: Correspondence, 25.11.35, p. 72.

** Sri Aurobindo On Himself, Centenary Library, Vol. 26, p. 450.

whole affair (unintelligible as in his own case to anybody but myself) and am working it out figure by figure.*

Again, in November 1935, he wrote:

The tail of the Supermind is descending, descending It is only the tail at present, but where the tail can pass, the rest will follow My formula is working out rapidly It is my private and particular descent The attempt to bring a great general descent having only produced a great ascent of subconscious mind, I had given up that . . . †

But once again, the situation was growing difficult and grim. There were dangerous developments in Germany with the rapid growth of Nazism, which had, behind it, the Nietzschean philosophy of the Superman. The Nietzschean concept of the superman was exactly the opposite of Sri Aurobindo's concept of the divine superman. As Sri Aurobindo has pointed out:

. . . a supermanhood of the Nietzschean type . . . might be at its worst the reign of the 'blonde beast' or the dark beast or of any and every beast, a return to barbaric strength and ruthlessness and force: but this would be no evolution, it would be a reversion to an old strenuous barbarism. Or it might signify the emergence of the Rakshasa or Asura out of a tense effort of humanity to surpass and transcend itself, but in the wrong direction. A violent and turbulent exaggerated vital ego satisfying itself with a supreme tyrannous or anarchic strength of self-fulfilment would be the type of a Rakshasic supermanhood: but the giant, the ogre or devourer of the world, the Rakshasa, though he still survives, belongs in spirit to the past; a larger emergence of that type would be also a retrograde evolution. A mighty exhibition of an overpowering force, a self-possessed, self-held, even, it may be, an ascetically self-restrained mind-capacity and life-power, strong, calm or cold or formidable in collected vehemence, subtle, dominating, a sublimation at once of the mental and vital ego, is the type of the Asura. But earth has had enough of this kind in her past and its repetition can only prolong the old lines; she can get no true profit for her future, no

* Nirodbaran, Correspondence, 16.8.35, p. 70.

† Ibid., 25.11.35, p. 72.

power of self-exceeding, from the Titan, the Asura: even a great or supernormal power in it could only carry her on larger circles of her old orbit. But what has to emerge is something much more difficult and much more simple; it is a self-realised being, a building of the spiritual self, an intensity and urge of the soul and the deliverance and sovereignty of its light and power and beauty,—not an egoistic supermanhood seizing on a mental and vital domination over humanity, but the sovereignty of the Spirit over its own instruments, its possession of itself and its possession of life in the power of the spirit, a new consciousness in which humanity itself shall find its own self-exceeding and self-fulfilment by the revelation of the divinity that is striving for birth within it. This is the sole true supermanhood and the one real possibility of a step forward in evolutionary Nature.*

The emergence of Nazism was, in fact, the emergence of barbarism, a terrible threat to the advancement of culture and to the work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. It signalled even a possibility of an attack on the physical being of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Indeed, this possibility became a concrete event when Sri Aurobindo himself sustained an accident; he slipped and fractured his right leg above the knee. This was on 24th November, 1938.

Within a year, the Second World War broke out. The ferocity and speed of the Nazi victories were so great that Sri Aurobindo concentrated on the War and declared that he had put all his Yogic Force on the side of the Allies. Sri Aurobindo wrote:

The victory of one side (the Allies) would keep the path open for the evolutionary forces: the victory of the other side would drag back humanity, degenerate it horribly and might lead even, at the worst, to its eventual failure as a race, as others in the past evolution failed and perished.†

By 1942, the War had led the world to a precipice. Surrounded by maps, reports from all the war fronts, day and night Sri Aurobindo was in the thick of the battle against Nazism. And Mother, too. As she said in the Agenda:

* Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, Centenary Library, Vol. 19, pp. 1067–8.

† Sri Aurobindo on Himself, Centenary Library, Vol. 26, p. 396.

During the last war (World War II) I had some dealings with him [Asura of Falsehood, who called himself 'The Lord of Nations'], again, but not through Richard—directly. The being who used to appear to Hitler was the Lord of Nations. An incredible story! . . . And I knew when they were going to meet . . . ; and on one occasion I substituted myself for him, became Hitler's god and advised him to attack Russia. Two days later he attacked Russia. But upon leaving the 'meeting' I encountered the other one [the real Asura] just as he was arriving! He was furious and asked me why I had done that. 'It's none of your business', I said, 'it's what had to be done.' 'You will see', he replied, 'I know, I know you will destroy me, but before being destroyed I will wreck just as much havoc as I can, you can be sure of that'.

When I returned from my nocturnal promenades I would tell Sri Aurobindo about them.

What a life! . . . People don't know what goes on. They know nothing—nothing. But it's fantastic.

Occasionally, some people were slightly conscious. For instance, during the last war I spent all my nights hovering above Paris (not integrally, but a part of myself) so that nothing would happen to the city. Later it came out that several people had seen what seemed to be a great white Force with an indistinct form hovering above Paris so that it wouldn't be destroyed.

Throughout the war Sri Aurobindo and I were in such a CONSTANT tension that it completely interrupted the Yoga. And that is why the war started in the first place—to stop the Work. At that time there was an extraordinary descent of the Supermind; it was coming like that (*massive gesture*), a descent! Exactly in 1939. Then the war broke out and stopped everything cold. For had we personally continued [the work of transformation] we were not sure of having enough time to finish it before 'the other one' crushed the earth to a pulp, setting the whole Affair back . . . centuries. The FIRST thing to be done was stop the action of the Lord of Nations.*

The War ended in 1945, with the victory for the Allies, as Sri Aurobindo had willed. And yet, the difficulties were not

* Mother's Agenda, Vol. 2, pp. 373–4.

over for Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. They saw that even though Berlin and Nuremberg had marked the end of the dreadful chapter in human history, other blacknesses were threatening to overshadow or even engulf mankind.

In July 1948, Sri Aurobindo wrote in a letter to a disciple: Things *are* bad, are growing worse and may, at any time, grow worst or worse than the worst if that is possible—and anything... seems possible in the present perturbed world... 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... the new world whose coming we envisage is not to be made of the same texture as the old and different only in pattern... it must come by other means—from within and not from without.*

* * *

The Indian situation at that time was particularly bad, considering the fact that after the Independence (15th August, 1947),[†] the partition provided most disconcerting opportunities for the worst communal riots. Hitler was destroyed but the Force that was working behind Hitler was still there; and there was Stalin, too. As Mother explained later on:

* Letters to Dilip, 17.7.48.

[†] 15th August, the birthday of Sri Aurobindo, assumed a vast significance when India became free on that day in 1947. Regarding this significance, Sri Aurobindo said as follows in his message for the occasion to the nation:

August 15th, 1947, is the birthday of free India. It marks for her the end of an old era, the beginning of a new age. But we can also make it by our life and acts as a free nation an important date in a new age opening for the whole world, for the political, social, cultural and spiritual future of humanity.

August 15th is my own birthday and it is naturally gratifying to me that it should have assumed this vast significance. I take this coincidence, not as a fortuitous accident but as the sanction and seal of the Divine Force that guides my steps on the work with which I began life, the beginning of its full fruition.

In the same message, Sri Aurobindo spoke of the unfortunate partition of the country and made the following statement:

... India today is free but she has not achieved unity. ... The old communal division into Hindus and Muslims seems now to have hardened into a permanent political division of the country. It is to be hoped that this settled fact will not be accepted as settled for ever or as anything more than a temporary expedient. For if it lasts, India may be seriously weakened, even crippled: civil strife may remain always possible, possible even a new invasion and foreign conquest. India's internal development and prosperity may be impeded, her position among the

Hitler was destroyed because he had a whole nation and a physical power behind him, and had he succeeded, it would have been disastrous for humanity; but we had no illusions. The death of either one of them (Stalin or Hitler) serves no great purpose—it goes off elsewhere. It is as if you were doing something very bad while wearing a particular shirt, then you throw away the shirt and say, 'Now I won't do anything bad any more'—but you continue with another shirt!*

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother went on 'digging' and 'digging' to accelerate the process of descent and transformation. In December 1942, Mother had started organising a School for children whose parents had brought or sent them to the Ashram. From then onwards, the activities had increased manifold. It would, in fact, require a separate volume to give even faint glimpses into what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother did for the entire field of education through the most revolutionary experiments done at this school. In consonance with the emphasis in the Integral Yoga on the integral development of personality, Mother put the child in the centre of the totality of the life of the ashram and provided the facilities, equipment, guidance, inspiration, atmosphere and all the necessary aids, internal and external, to ensure harmonious and accelerated development of the physical, vital, mental, psychic and spiritual aspects of the personality. In particular, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother laid an emphasis on physical education, which is normally absent in the current system of education. This was as it should be, considering that the aim of education was to help each individual discover the Divine Reality and work for Its manifestation in physical life. A decision was taken to bring out a Quarterly Bulletin dedicated to Physical Education, and Mother prayed to Sri Aurobindo to write a Message and articles

nations weakened, her destiny impaired or even frustrated. This must not be; the partition must go. Let us hope that that may come about naturally; by an increasing recognition of the necessity not only of peace and concord but of common action, by the practice of common action and the creation of means for that purpose. In this way unity may finally come about under whatever form—the exact form may have a pragmatic but not a fundamental importance. But by whatever means, in whatever way, the division must go; unity must and will be achieved, for it is necessary for the greatness of India's future. (Sri Aurobindo on Himself, Centenary Library, Vol. 26, pp. 404-5.)

* Mother, *Entretiens*, 8.3.51; 25.11.53

for this Bulletin. The first issue of the Bulletin of Physical Education came out on the 21st February 1949 with Sri Aurobindo's Message.

In the succeeding issues eight momentous articles of Sri Aurobindo appeared. These articles bring out some of the latest experiences and realisations that Sri Aurobindo had regarding the supramental manifestation on the earth. Of particular significance was his vision of the transformed human body in the chapter entitled: '*The Divine Body*.' He declared quite unambiguously:

If a total transformation of the being is our aim, a transformation of the body must be an indispensable part of it; without that no full divine life on earth is possible.*

In fact, Sri Aurobindo gives us in this chapter some very valuable indications of the psychological and physical characteristics of the new species of superhumanity. He points out:

A radical transformation of the functioning and, it may well be, of the structure and certainly of the too mechanical and material impulse and driving forces of the bodily system would be imperative.†

In the concluding paragraph of this chapter, Sri Aurobindo states:

The new type, the divine body, must continue the already developed evolutionary form; there must be a continuation from the type Nature has all along been developing, a continuity from the human to the divine body, no breaking away to something unrecognisable but a high sequel to what has already been achieved and in part perfected. The human body has in it parts and instruments that have been sufficiently evolved to serve the divine life; these have to survive in their form, though they must be still further perfected, their limitations of range and use removed, their liability to defeat and malady and impairment eliminated, their capacities of cognition and dynamic action carried beyond the present limits. New powers have to be acquired by the

* Sri Aurobindo, *The Supramental Manifestation Upon Earth*, Centenary Library, Vol. 16, p. 24

† Ibid., p. 34.

body which our present humanity could not hope to realise, could not even dream of or could only imagine. Much that can now only be known, worked out or created by the use of invented tools and machinery might be achieved by the new body in its own power or by the inhabitant spirit through its own direct spiritual force. The body itself might acquire new means and ranges of communication with other bodies, new process of acquiring knowledge, a new aesthesis, new potencies of manipulation of itself and objects. It might not be impossible for it to possess or disclose means native to its own constitution, substance or natural instrumentation for making the far near and annulling distance, cognizing what is now beyond the body's cognisance, acting where action is now out of its reach or its domain, developing subtleties and plasticities which could not be permitted under present conditions to the needed fixity of a material frame. These and other numerous potentialities might appear and the body become an instrument immeasurably superior to what we can now imagine as possible. There could be an evolution from a first apprehending truth-consciousness to the utmost heights of the ascending ranges of supermind and it may pass the borders of the supermind proper itself where it begins to shadow out, develop, delineate expressive forms of life touched by a supreme pure existence, consciousness and bliss which constitute the worlds of a highest truth of existence, dynamism of Tapas, glory and sweetness of bliss, the absolute essence and pitch of the all-creating Ananda.

The transformation of the physical being might follow this incessant line of progression and the divine body reflect or reproduce here in a divine life on the earth something of this highest greatness and glory of the self-manifesting spirit.*

* * *

In 1949, things began to become very serious. In early 1950, Sri Aurobindo told the Mother: 'One of us must go, we can't both remain upon earth.' While recounting this later in 1960, Mother said:

* Ibid., pp. 39-40



Sri Aurobindo and The Mother (*Darshan*)
(1950)

You see, I'm doing the Sadhana really along a . . . a path that has never been trod by anyone. Sri Aurobindo did it . . . in principle. But he gave the charge of doing it in the body to me.

That was the wonderful thing when we were together and all these hostile forces were fighting . . . (They tried to kill me any number of times. He always saved me in an absolutely miraculous and marvellous way.) But you see, this seemed to create very great BODILY difficulties for him. We discussed this a great deal, and I told him, 'If one of us must go, I want that it should be me.'

'It can't be you,' he replied, 'because you alone can do the material thing.'

And that was all.

He said nothing more. He forbade me to leave my body. That's all. 'It is absolutely forbidden,' he said, 'you can't, you must remain.'

After that (this took place early in 1950), he gradually . . . you see, he let himself fall ill. For he knew quite well that should he say 'I must go,' I would not have obeyed him, and I would have gone. For according to the way I felt, he was much more indispensable than I. But he saw the matter from the other side. And he knew that I had the power to leave my body at will. So he didn't say a thing, he didn't say a thing right to the very last minute . . .

(silence)

Once or twice I 'heard' certain things about him and I told him (for I told him all I saw or heard), and I said that I was . . . that these suggestions were coming from the enemy and that I was violently fighting against them. Then he looked at me—twice—he looked at me, nodded his head and smiled. And that's all. Nothing more was said. 'How strange!' I thought. And that's all. Then I myself must have forgotten. You see, he wanted me to forget.

I only remembered afterwards. . . *

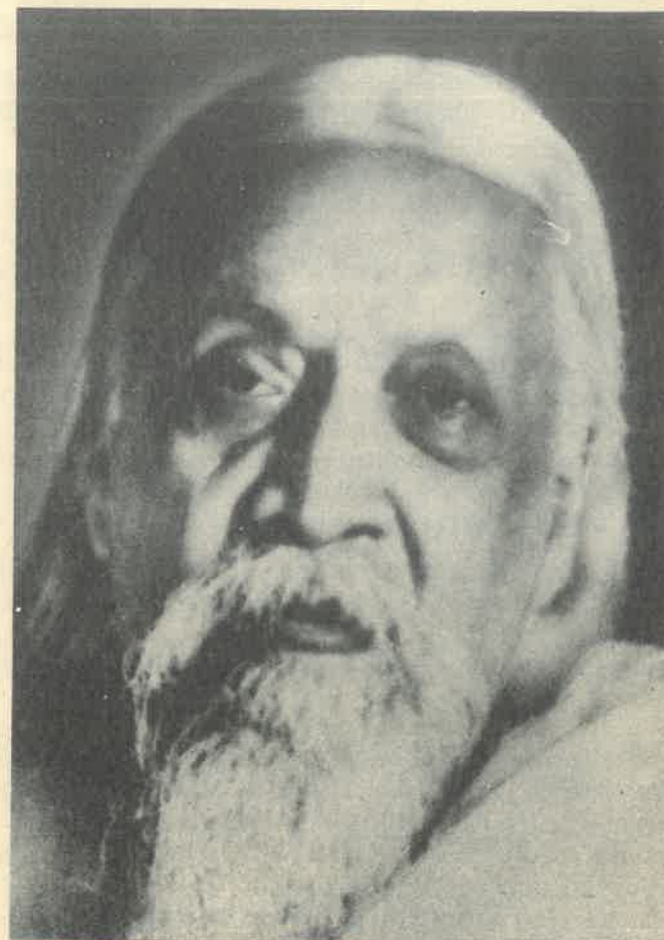
Speaking on the subject in a different context, Mother said:

□ the body's formation has a very minimal, a quite subordinate importance for a saint or a sage. But for this supramental

* Mother's Agenda, Vol. 1, pp. 488-9.



The Mother
(1950)



Sri Aurobindo
(1950)

work, the way the body is formed has an almost crucial importance, and not at all in relation to spiritual elements nor even to mental power: these aspects have no importance AT ALL. The capacity to endure, to last is the important thing.

Well, in that respect, it is absolutely undeniable that my body has an infinitely greater capacity than Sri Aurobindo's had.

That was the basic problem—because the identification of the two (Sri Aurobindo and Mother) was almost child's play, it was nothing: for me to merge into him or him to merge into me was no problem, it wasn't difficult. We had some conversations on precisely this subject, because we saw that . . . (there were many other things, too, but this isn't the time to speak of them) the prevailing conditions were such that I told him I would leave this body and melt into him with no regret or difficulty; I told him this in words, not just in thought. And he also replied to me in words: *Your body is indispensable for the Work. Without your body the Work cannot be done.* After that, I said no more. . . .*

Signs of illness had begun to appear in Sri Aurobindo's body, but they did not seem to be serious; things returned to normalcy. Then, in October 1950, Sri Aurobindo said to his secretary, 'I am finding no time for my real work . . . Take up SAVITRI, I want to finish it soon.'[†]

This was rather shocking. *Savitri* was being composed and revised, composed and revised, over a long period of time. The first versions were written as early as 1899, in Baroda. This was his epic poem of nearly twenty-four thousand lines—all packed with *mantric* force brought down from higher and higher ranges of consciousness and inspiration. The ancient story of Satyavan and Savitri, in which Savitri, on the death of Satyavan, whom she had married by her own choice (even after being told in a prediction that he would live only for a year after the marriage), succeeded in bringing back his soul from the Death and reviving him. This story or legend narrated in the Mahabharata served as a symbol of the inner story of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

* Mother's Agenda, Vol. 2, pp. 261–2

[†]Nirodbaran, 'I am here, I am here!' p. 8

Speaking of this poem, Mother has said:

This analogy between the ancient form of spiritual revelation and *Savitri*, this blossoming into poetry of his prophetic revelation is . . . what could be called the most exceptional part of his work. And what is remarkable (I saw him do it) is that he changed *Savitri*: he went on changing it as his experience changed.

It is clearly the continuing expression of his experience.

There were whole sections he redid completely, which were like descriptions of what I had told him of my own experiences. . . . The breath of revelatory prophecy is extraordinary! It has an extraordinary POWER!

What struck me is that he never wanted to write anything else. To write those articles for the *Bulletin** was really a heavy sacrifice for him. He had said he would complete certain parts of *The Synthesis of Yoga*, but when he was asked to do so, he replied, 'No, I don't want to go down to that mental level'!

Savitri comes from somewhere else altogether.

And I think *Savitri* is the most important thing to speak about.[†]

Presently, Sri Aurobindo was correcting 'The Book of Fate'. Significantly, the last lines that he dictated indicated what was to happen within the next few weeks:

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

The day when 'The Book of Fate' was completed, Sri Auro-

* Mother had asked Sri Aurobindo to write something for the Ashram 'Bulletin'. These writings were later published as 'The Supramental Manifestation Upon Earth'.

[†]Mother's Agenda, Vol. 2, pp. 333–4.

** *Savitri*, VI. ii. 461.

bindo remarked: 'Oh, it is finished? What remains now?'

His secretary answered: 'The Book of Death and The Epilogue.'

'Oh, that? We shall see about that later on . . .'

It was November 10.

Then 'illness' took off at a gallop.

'Why don't you use your force and cure yourself?' his secretary asked him.

'No', replied Sri Aurobindo in his tranquil, neutral and indisputable voice.

'But why?' his secretary insisted.

Sri Aurobindo answered, putting all questions to a stop: 'Can't explain, you won't understand.'

What was happening? Days began to pass.

A faithful disciple, a surgeon from Calcutta arrived. Sri Aurobindo was on his bed eyes closed, like a statue of massive peace. He opened his eyes.

'Trouble?'

'Nothing troubles me—and suffering! One can be above it.'

And he asked for news of the Bengal refugees. Then he plunged into a coma.

But it was a peculiar coma. Whenever Mother came to offer juice or water, he would open his mouth and take it, and plunge back again. The surgeon remarked: 'A very strange type of coma,—a body which for the moment is in agony, unresponsive, labouring hard for breath, suddenly becomes quiet; a consciousness enters the body, He is awake and normal. He finishes the drink, then, as the consciousness withdraws, the body lapses back into the grip of agony.'

Sri Aurobindo was suffering from uraemia, and he was having this peculiar coma, a coma controlled by yogic consciousness!

On the 4th December, Mother said: 'He is withdrawing.' But Sri Aurobindo got up again and he sat in the big green armchair.

The surgeon remarked: 'The Master seems cheerful again and taking interest.'

'Hmm . . .' Mother replied, without commenting.

Then Sri Aurobindo went back to bed, and the condition worsened at a gallop.

At eleven o'clock at night, Mother came back and gave him a

little tomato juice which he drank, placidly emerging from coma. Then, at midnight, she stood at the foot of his bed, without a quiver of movement, without a gesture. He opened his eyes. They looked at each other for one last time. . . . Then she went out.

Describing this moment, years later, she said:

I didn't want to believe it. As long as I was in the room, HE COULD NOT leave his body. So there was a terrible tension in him: the inner will to leave and then this kind of thing [Mother] that was holding him there, like that in his body—because I knew that he was living and that HE COULD NOT be other than living. . . . He had to make a sign so that I would go into my room, supposedly to rest (which I didn't do), and as soon as I had gone out of the room, He left. Then they called me back immediately.'

It was 1.26 a.m.

For the next 111 hours, Sri Aurobindo's body remained intact and undecomposed. The Mother announced:

. . . His body is surcharged with such a concentration of Supramental Light that there is no sign of decomposition and the body will be kept lying on his bed so long as it remains intact.

In another message, the Mother said:

When I asked him to resuscitate, he clearly answered:

'I have left the body purposely. I will not take it back. I shall manifest again in the first supramental body built in the supramental way.'

In a prayer, the Mother said:

Lord, this morning Thou hast given me the assurance that Thou wouldst stay with us until Thy work is achieved, not only as a consciousness which guides and illumines but also as a dynamic Presence in action. In unmistakable terms Thou hast promised that all of Thyself would remain here and not leave the earth atmosphere until earth is transformed. Grant that we may be worthy of this marvellous Presence and henceforth everything in us be concentrated on the one will

to be more and more perfectly consecrated to the fulfilment of Thy sublime Work.

It was on December 9, after the Light had begun to withdraw, that the body was laid in a rosewood casket and placed in the Ashram courtyard.

Years later, Mother described her experience of that moment:

I'd already had all my experiences, but with Sri Aurobindo, for the thirty years I lived with him (a little more than thirty years), I lived in an absolute, an absolute of security—a sense of total security, even physical, even the most material security. A sense of absolute security, because Sri Aurobindo was there. And it held me up, you know, like this (*gesture of being carried*): not for ONE MINUTE in those thirty years did it leave me. That was why I could do my work with a Base, really, a Base of absoluteness—of eternity and absoluteness. I realised it when he left: THAT suddenly collapsed.

... The whole time Sri Aurobindo was here, ... individual progress was automatic: all the progress Sri Aurobindo made, I made. But I was in a state of eternity, of absoluteness, with a feeling of such security, in every circumstance. Nothing, nothing unfortunate could happen, for he was there. So when he left, all at once—a fall into a pit. And that's what projected me wholly ... (*Mother gestures forward*) ... *

A few days later, explaining the above, Mother said:

The real truth is that it projected me DIRECTLY towards the Supreme, with no intermediary.

I'd had the contact with the inner Divine, I'd had the realisation of Eternity, I'd had all those realisations, but ... as long as I was living with Sri Aurobindo I felt the absolute through him, and (what shall I say?) ... All those imperative 'needs' I called the seeds of evolution are the levers or spring-boards to make man realise that ONE AND ONLY, the one and only absolute is the Supreme; the one and only permanence is the Supreme; the one and only security is the Supreme; the one and only immortality is the Supreme. That the only purpose of manifestation is to lead you THERE.

* Mother's Agenda, Vol. 3, p. 437.

That's essentially it: from my experience of the Supreme through the manifestation of Sri Aurobindo, I was projected into a direct experience, with no intermediary.

It's poorly expressed, that's not really it, but ... (*Mother closes her eyes*).

I felt very strongly—so intensely it was inexpressible—that there was but ONE THING to lean on, ONE THING sure and unfailing: the supreme; all the rest comes and goes, it stays, then disappears.

For the sake of the Work, that's obviously what had to be understood.

(silence)

It's difficult to explain, but it was ... You see, in the eternal Play, everything is unstable and everything fails you. And that's how it was: 'All will fail you, except the Supreme.'

And it becomes such an absorbing and absolute experience (*Mother seems to be enveloped in white light*) ... The uncertainty, the instability, the fleeting, inconstant and impermanent nature of all things—everything collapses, there is nothing to lean on, except THE SUPREME, for He is all.

One thing alone is unfailing: the absolute ALL.

(silence)

Words are stupid—it's an experience.

Once you have the experience, that's that: all the rest simply follows from it—details.

And I had it then (on December 5, 1950). *

Elaborating upon this experience, when asked if she did not have the experience of the Supreme before Sri Aurobindo's departure, Mother said:

Spiritually, you have that experience as soon as you come into contact with the Divine within; mentally, you have the experience as soon as the mind is purified; vitally, you have it as soon as you get out of the ego. But it's the consciousness of the BODY—the consciousness of the cells—which had the experience at that moment. Everything else had had it long before and was constantly aware of it, but the body ... it had been told about it and believed in it, but it didn't have the

* Ibid., pp. 440-1.

experience in such a concrete, total and absolute manner that it can't be forgotten for a single second.

At that moment, the physical being and the individual, personal body had the experience once and for all.

The body always used to let itself be carried along. It was one in consciousness with Sri Aurobindo's presence, and depended on it without the least worry; it felt that its life depended on it, its progress depended on it, its consciousness, its action, its power all depended on it. And no questions—it didn't question. For the body, it was absolutely IMPOSSIBLE that things could be otherwise. The very idea that Sri Aurobindo might leave his body, that that particular way of being might no longer exist for the body, was absolutely unthinkable. They had to put him in a box and put the box in the Samadhi for the body to be convinced that it had really happened.

And that's when it had that experience.

This body is very conscious, it was BORN conscious, and throughout those years its consciousness went on growing, perfecting itself, proliferating, as it were; this was its concern, its joy. And with Sri Aurobindo, there was such peaceful certitude, there were no more problems, no more difficulties: the future was opening up, luminous and peaceful and certain. Nothing, nothing, no words can describe what a collapse it was for the body when Sri Aurobindo left.

It's only because Sri Aurobindo's conscious will entered into it—left one body and entered the other... I was standing facing his body, you know, and I materially felt the friction as his will entered into me (his knowledge and his will): 'You will accomplish my Work.' He said to this body: 'You will accomplish my work.' It's the one thing that kept me alive.

Apart from that.... There's nothing, no physical destruction I can think of, comparable to that collapse.

It took me twelve days to get out of it—twelve days during which I didn't speak a single word.

So the experience I mentioned is the PHYSICAL experience.*

A few weeks after the passing of Sri Aurobindo, Mother said, in one of the conversations with a disciple:

* Ibid., pp. 445–6.

As soon as Sri Aurobindo withdrew from his body, what he had called the Mind of Light* got realised here. . . .

The Supermind had descended long ago—very long ago—into the mind and even into the vital: it was working in the physical also but indirectly through those intermediaries. The question was about the direct action of the Supermind in the physical. Sri Aurobindo said it could be possible only if the physical mind received the Supramental light; the physical mind was the instrument for direct action upon the most material. This physical mind receiving the Supramental light Sri Aurobindo called the Mind of Light.

Two months after Sri Aurobindo's withdrawal from the body, Mother wrote the following note, explaining briefly the main reason for Sri Aurobindo's departure:

The lack of the earth's receptivity and the behaviour of Sri Aurobindo's disciples† are largely responsible for what happened to his body. But one thing is certain: the great misfortune that has just beset us in no way affects the truth of his teaching. All he said is perfectly true and remains so. Time and the course of events will make this abundantly clear.**

In 1960, Mother explained a little more explicitly the reason for Sri Aurobindo's decision to leave his body:

. . . He wanted to go.

You see, he had decided to go. But he didn't want me to know that he was doing it deliberately; he knew that if for a single moment I knew he was doing it deliberately, I would have reacted with such a violence that he would not have been able to leave!

And he did this . . . he bore it all as if it were some unconsciousness, an ordinary illness, simply to keep me from knowing—and he left at the very moment he had to leave. But . . .

* See chapters 7 and 8 of 'The Supramental Manifestation Upon Earth, 'Centenary Library, Vol. 16, pp. 67–74, which deal with the Mind of Light.

† In an 'official' version, Mother had omitted 'and the behaviour of Sri Aurobindo's disciples'.

** Mother's Agenda, Vol. 1, p. 27.

And I couldn't even imagine he was gone once he had gone, just there, in front of me—it seemed so far away . . . And then afterwards, when he came out of his body and entered into mine, I understood it all . . . It's fantastic. Fantastic.

It's . . . It's absolutely superhuman. There's not one human being capable of doing such a thing. And what . . . what a mastery of his body—absolute, absolute!

And when it came to others . . . He could remove an illness like that (*gesture, as if Mother were calmly extracting an illness from the body with her fingertips*). . . . On others, it had all the characteristics of a total mastery Absolutely superhuman. . . .

I would like very much to ask you something . . . Why did he have to go?

Ah! that can't be told.

(long silence)

I can tell you why, but in a purely superficial way Because for him to do IMMEDIATELY—without leaving his body, that is—what he had to do, well . . .

(silence)

We can put it this way: the world was not ready. But to tell you the truth, it was the totality of things around him that was not ready. So when he saw this (I only understood this afterwards), he saw that it would go much faster if he were not there.

And he was ABSOLUTELY right, it was true.

Once I saw that, I accepted. When I saw it, when he made me understand, I accepted; otherwise . . .

There was a difficult period.

(silence)

It was not long, but it was difficult.

When he left, I said twelve days, twelve days.* And truly, I gave it twelve days, twelve days to see if the entire Work Outwardly, I said, 'After twelve days I will tell you if the

* Mother stopped all her activities for twelve days from December 5, 1950, the day Sri Aurobindo departed.

Ashram (the Ashram was nothing but a symbol, of course), if the Ashram will continue or if it is finished'.

And later (I don't know—it didn't take twelve days; I said that on December 9, and on the 12th it was all decided—seen, clear and understood), on the 12th, I saw people, I saw a few people. However, we began all the activities again only after 12 days from December 5. But it was decided on the 12th.

Everything was left hanging until the moment he made me understand the COMPLETE thing, in its entirety But that's for later on.*

* Ibid., pp. 439–40.

The Mother Continues Sri Aurobindo's Work

I am only realising what He has conceived.
I am only the protagonist and the continuator of His work.

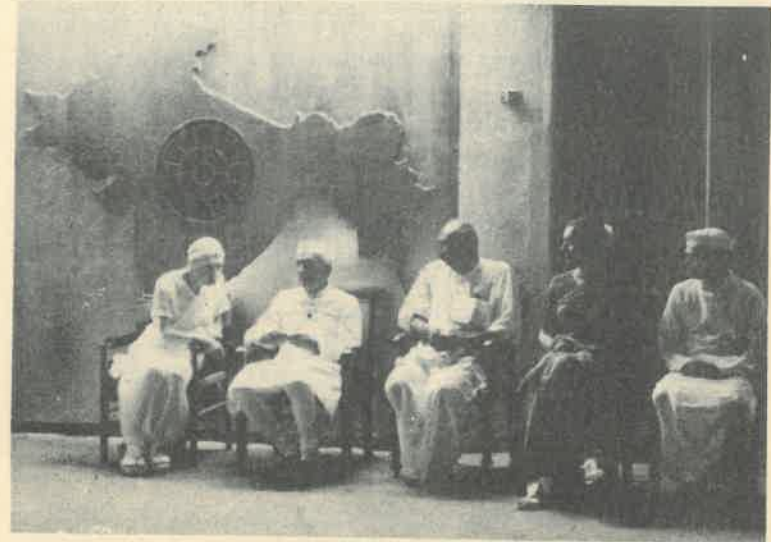
This is what Mother wrote in answer to some people who wanted to get Mother nominated for the Nobel peace prize. While declining the proposal, she said that she did not want name and fame. As Mother explained:

Some people wanted to get me nominated for the Nobel peace prize: I was asked for a statement and that's what I wrote. I wanted to say that it wasn't this person who did things—it was all Sri Aurobindo.

They had wanted to give the Nobel prize to Sri Aurobindo, but he left the year before the decision was to be made. And as they don't give the prize to 'dead' people, he never got it. Then they wanted to transfer it to me, and I wrote this note, because the last thing I want is name and fame. That's all there was to it. They did not give a peace prize that year. . . .*

The question has repeatedly been asked as to what exactly was the work of Sri Aurobindo, and how Mother continued that Work. For a full study of this question, a thorough understanding of the relevant writings of Sri Aurobindo and 13 volumes of 'Mother's Agenda' would be necessary. Satprem has made a detailed study of this question in his biography of Sri Aurobindo, 'Sri Aurobindo or the Adventure of Consciousness' and in his biography of the Mother in three volumes, 'Mother or the Divine Materialism,' 'Mother or the New Species,' 'Mother or the Mutation of Death'. The reader is recommended to study all these works. What is envisaged here is to put together some of the most relevant passages from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, which could serve as a brief introduction to the study of this question.

* Mother's Agenda, Vol. 3, p. 147.



The Mother with Jawaharlal Nehru, Kamaraj, Indira Gandhi
and Lal Bahadur Shastri at the playground of the
Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry

In a strikingly revealing talk in the 'Agenda,' Mother says that in order to be able to continue the work, the first thing was to continue to be in her body. And for that purpose, she did something which can be regarded as truly drastic and momentous. It was to 'lock' up her psychic being for ten years, until things were ready. As she said:

Well, I saw it all those thirty years of life, not for a SECOND did I have any sense of responsibility, in spite of all the work I was doing, all the organising and everything. He had supposedly passed on the responsibility to me, you see, but he was standing behind—He was actually doing everything! I was active, but with absolutely no responsibility. I never felt responsible for a single minute—he took the full responsibility. . . .

. . . When he went out of his body and entered into mine (the most material part of him, the part involved with external things) and I understood that I had the entire responsibility for all the work AND for the *sadhana**—well, then I locked a part of me away, a deep psychic† part that was living, beyond all responsibility, in the ECSTASY of the realisation: the Supreme. I took it and locked it away, I sealed it off and said, 'You're not moving until . . . until all the rest is ready.'
(silence)

That in itself was a miracle. If I hadn't done it I would have followed him—and there would have been no one to do the Work. I would have followed him automatically, without even thinking about it. But when he entered into me, he said, 'You will do the work; one of us had to go, and I am going, but you will do the work.'

And that door was opened again only 10 years later in 1960. Even then, it was done with great care. . . .**

During the next 10 years (1951–1960), Mother made things ready. In 1951, the School which had started 9 years earlier, was enlarged, and a Convention held in commemoration of Sri Aurobindo declared it to be the Sri Aurobindo International

* *Sadhana*: spiritual discipline.

† The soul or portion of the Supreme in man which evolves from life to life until it becomes a fully conscious being.

** Ibid., pp. 26–7.

University Centre. Mother gave a good deal of her time to the children of this Centre, and day after day, she attempted to prepare them for the adventure of consciousness. As usual, her schedule of work was 22 hours per day, leaving only two hours (from 2 a.m. to 4 a.m.) for relaxation on her arm chair.

She attended minutely to the needs of each child's individual growth, even to minute details of physical exercises (which included gymnastics, athletics, aquatics and games) and took even two classes per week which were attended by children of all ages. After the classes, there used to be a collective meditation in order to create collective consciousness and to bring about a collective realisation.

* * *

On 29th February, 1956, during the meditation after her evening class the momentous event which was awaited since long occurred. She described this event in the following text given by her:

FIRST SUPRAMENTAL MANIFESTATION

(During the common meditation on
Wednesday the 29th February 1956)

This evening the Divine Presence, concrete and material was there present amongst you. I had a form of living gold, bigger than the universe, and I was facing a huge and massive golden door which separated the world from the Divine.

As I looked at the door, I knew and willed in a single movement of consciousness, that 'THE TIME HAS COME', and lifting with both hands a mighty golden hammer I struck one blow, one single blow on the door and the door was shattered to pieces.

Then the supramental Light and Force and Consciousness rushed down upon earth in an uninterrupted flow.*

On April 23, 1956, she wrote the following note:

29 February—29 March

Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute:
A new light breaks upon the earth,

* Mother's Agenda, Vol. 1, p. 69.

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.*

In a message of 24th April, 1956, she declared:

The manifestation of the Supramental upon earth is no more a promise but a living fact, a reality.

It is at work here, and one day will come when the most blind, the most unconscious, even the most unwilling shall be obliged to recognise it.†

Explaining the meaning of the Supramental Manifestion, the Mother said in an evening class:

What I call a 'descent' is this: first of all, the consciousness climbs in ascent, then you catch the Thing up above and redescend with it. This is an INDIVIDUAL event.

When this individual event has taken place sufficiently to allow a more general possibility to emerge, it is no longer a 'descent' but a 'manifestation.'

What I call a 'descent' is the individual movement in an individual consciousness. But when a new world is manifesting in an old world—as when similarly the mind spread over the earth—I call it a manifestation.

You may call it whatever you like, it makes no difference to me, but we must understand each other.

What I call a 'descent' takes place in the individual consciousness. In the same way, we speak of 'ascent' (there is no ascent really, there is no high or low, no direction: it's all a manner of speaking)—we speak of 'ascent' when we feel ourselves rising up towards something, and we call it a 'descent' when, after having caught this thing, we bring it down into ourselves.

But when the doors are opened and the flood pours in, it can no longer be called a 'descent': it is a Force that spreads everywhere. . . .**

In the evening class of September 12, 1956, Mother recounted an experience of hers as follows:

. . . A supramental entity had entirely possessed me.

*Ibid., p. 74.

†Ibid., p. 75.

**Ibid., p. 84.

Something a little taller than myself: its feet extended below my feet and its head went a little beyond my head.

. . . A solid block with a rectangular base—a *rectangle with a square base*—one single piece.

. . . A light, not like the golden light of the Supermind: rather a kind of phosphorescence. I felt that had it been night, it would have been *physically* visible.

. . . And it was denser than my physical body: the physical body seemed to me almost unreal—as though crumbly—like sand running through your fingers.

. . . I would have been incapable of speaking, words seemed so petty, narrow, ignorant.

. . . I saw (how shall I put it?) the successive preparations which took place, in certain *anterior* beings, in order to achieve this.

. . . It felt as if I had several heads.

. . . The experience of February 29 was of a general nature; but this one was intended for me.

. . . An experience I had never had.

. . . I begin to see what the supramental body will be.

. . . I had had a somewhat similar experience at the time of the union of the *supreme creative principle* with the physical consciousness. But that was a subtle experience, while this was material—in the body.

. . . I did not have the experience, I did not look at it: I WAS it.

. . . And it radiated from me: myriads of little sparks that were penetrating everybody—I saw them *enter into each one of those present*.

. . . One more step.*

In one of her evening classes, she said the following, addressing particularly, the young and youthful:

I invite you to the great adventure. There's no question of spiritually redoing what others have done before, because our adventure begins AFTER THAT. The question is of a new creation, entirely new with everything it entails of the unforeseen, of risks and hazards—a REAL adventure whose goal is

*Ibid., pp. 85–6.

certain victory but whose course is unknown and has to be traced out step by step in the unexplored. Something which has never been in this present universe and which will never again be in the same way. If that interests you . . . well then, let's embark. What will happen to you tomorrow I don't know. We must leave aside all plans, all projects, all constructions, and . . . walk into the unknown. Come what may.*

* * *

For January 1, 1958, Mother gave the following message:

O Nature, Material Mother,
thou hast said that thou wilt collaborate
and there is no limit
to the splendor of this collaboration.†

During the evening class of that day, when a child asked her to explain the message, she said the following:

There is nothing to explain. It is an experience, something that took place, and when it took place, I noted it down; and it so happens that it occurred just as I remembered that I had to write something for the new year (which at that time was the following year, that is, the year beginning today). When I remembered that I had to write something—not because of that, but simultaneously—this experience came, and when I noted it down, I realized that it was . . . the message for this year!

(Mother reads the notation of her experience)

During one of our classes (October 30, 1957), I spoke of the limitless abundance of Nature, this tireless Creatrice who takes the multitude of forms, mixes them together, separates them again and reforms them, again undoes them, again destroys them, in order to move on to ever new combinations. As I said, it is a huge cauldron. Things get churned up in it and somehow something emerges; if it's defective, it is thrown back in and something else is taken out . . . One form, two

* Mother, Questions and Answers, 10.7.57.

† Mother's Agenda, Vol. 1, p. 131.

forms or hundred forms make no difference to her, there are thousands upon thousands of forms—and one year, a hundred years, a thousand years, millions of years, what difference does it make? Eternity lies before her! She quite obviously enjoys herself and is in no hurry. If you speak to her of pressing on or of rushing through some part of her work or other, her reply is always the same: 'But what for? Why? Aren't you enjoying it?'

The evening I told you these things, I totally identified myself with Nature and I entered into her play. And this movement of identification brought forth a response, a new kind of intimacy between Nature and myself, a long movement of drawing ever nearer which culminated in an experience that came on November 8.

Nature suddenly understood. She understood that this new-born Consciousness does not seek to reject her, but wants to embrace her entirely. She understood that this new spirituality does not stand apart from life, does not timorously recoil before the awesome richness of her movement, but on the contrary wants to integrate all her facets. She understood that the supramental consciousness is not there to diminish her but to make her complete.

Then, from the supreme Reality came this command: 'Awaken, O Nature, to the joy of collaboration.' And suddenly, all Nature rushed forth in an immense bounding of joy, saying, 'I accept! I will collaborate!' And at the same time, there came a calm, an absolute tranquillity, to allow this receptacle, this body, to receive and contain without breaking and without losing anything of the Joy of Nature that was rushing forth in a movement of grateful recognition like an overwhelming flood. She accepted, she saw—with all eternity before her—that this supramental consciousness would fulfil her more perfectly and impart a still greater force to her movement and more richness, more possibilities to her play.

And suddenly, as if resounding from every corner of the earth, I heard these great notes which are sometimes heard in the subtle physical—rather like those of Beethoven's Concerto in D—which come at moments of great progress, as though fifty orchestras were bursting forth all at once with-

out a single discordant note, to sound the joy of this new communion of Nature and Spirit, the meeting of old friends who, after a long separation, find each other once more.

Then came these words: 'O Nature, Material Mother, thou hast said that thou wilt collaborate, and there is no limit to the splendor of this collaboration.'

And the radiant felicity of this splendor was perceived in a perfect peace.

Such was the birth of this year's message.

(Then Mother comments)

I have one thing to add: we must not misinterpret the meaning of this experience and imagine that henceforth everything will take place without difficulties or always in accordance with our personal desires. It is not at this level. It does not mean that when we do not want it to rain, it will not rain! Or when we want some event to take place in the world, it will immediately take place, or that all difficulties will be abolished and everything will be like a fairytale. It is not like that. It is something more profound. Nature has accepted into her play of forces the newly manifested Force and has included it in her movements. But as always, the movements of Nature take place on a scale infinitely surpassing the human scale and invisible to the ordinary human consciousness. It is more of an inner, psychological possibility that has been born in the world than a spectacular change in earthly events.

I mention this because you might be tempted to believe that fairytales are going to be realized upon earth. The time has not yet come.

(silence)

We must have a great deal of patience and a very wide and very complex vision to understand how things work.

(silence)

The miracles that are taking place are not what could be called literary miracles, for they do not take place as in storybooks. They are visible only to a very profound vision of things—very profound, very comprehensive, very vast.

(silence)

You first have to be able to follow the methods and the means of the Grace to recognize its action. You first have to be able to remain unblinded by appearances to see the deeper truth of things.*

* * *

There is an element in the Vedic yoga and in the Tantra, which Mother found to be essential at this stage of the Sadhana of the body. This element is that of the japa or repetition of the mantra. 'Mantra' is a sound—or rather the inevitable sound of the syllable or syllables which can express the inmost aspiration of the being, the deepest cry of the being, such as OM, etc. As Mother said:

I have also come to realise that for this sadhana of the body, the mantra is essential. Sri Aurobindo gave none; he said that one should be able to do all the work without having to resort to external means. Had he reached the point where we are now, he would have seen that the purely psychological method is inadequate and that a japa is necessary, because only japa has a direct action on the body. So I had to find the method all alone, to find my mantra by myself. But now that things are ready, I have done ten years of work in a few months. That is the difficulty, it requires time . . .

And I repeat my mantra constantly—when I am awake and even when I sleep. I say it even when I am getting dressed, when I eat, when I work, when I speak with others; it is there, just behind in the background, all the time, all the time.†

Mother revealed on 16.9.1958 her mantra in the following account of an experience:

For the moment, of all the formulas or mantras, the one that acts most directly on this body, that seizes all the cells and immediately does this (*vibrating motion*) is the Sanskrit mantra: OM NAMO BHAGAVATE.

As soon as I sit for meditation, as soon as I have a quiet

* Ibid., pp. 131–3.

† Ibid., p. 301.

minute to concentrate, it always begins with this mantra, and there is a response in the body, in the cells of the body; they all start vibrating.

This is how it happened: Y had just returned and he brought back a trunk full of things which he then proceeded to show me, and his excitement made tight, tight little waves in the atmosphere, making my head ache; it made . . . anyway, it was unpleasant. When I left, just after that had happened, I sat down and went like this (*gesture of sweeping out*) to make it stop, and immediately the mantra began.

It rose up from here (*Mother indicates the solar plexus*), like this: OM NAMO BHAGAVATE OM NAMO BHAGAVATE OM NAMO BHAGAVATE. It was formidable. For the entire quarter of an hour that the meditation lasted, everything was filled with Light! In the deeper tones it was of golden bronze (at the throat level it was almost red) and in the higher tones it was a kind of opaline white light: OM NAMO BHAGAVATE, OM NAMO BHAGAVATE, OM NAMO BHAGAVATE.*

* * *

From that momentous evening of 29th February, 1956, Mother began to have from week to week, from day to day, various experiences of the Supermind in Matter. On the 3rd February, 1958, Mother had for the first time a radical experience in which she went strolling in a concrete way in an objective supramental world—a world that exists in itself, beyond all subjectivity. In the evening class of the 19th February, 1958, the record of this experience was read out by her as follows:

Between the beings of the supramental world and men, there exists approximately the same gap as between men and animals. Sometime ago, I had the experience of identification with animal life, and it is a fact that animals do not understand us; their consciousness is so constituted that we elude them almost entirely. And yet I have known domestic animals—cats and dogs, but especially cats—who made an almost yogic effort of consciousness to understand us. But generally, when they watch us living and acting, they don't understand, they don't SEE us as we are, and they suffer

*Ibid., pp. 194-5.

because of us. We are a constant enigma to them. Only a very tiny part of their consciousness is linked to us. And it is the same for us when we try to look at the supramental world. Only when the link of consciousness has been built shall we see it—and even then, only that part of our being which has undergone the transformation will be capable of seeing it as it is—otherwise the two worlds would remain as separate as the animal world and the human world.

The experience I had on February 3 proves this. Before, I had had an individual, subjective contact with the supramental world, whereas on February 3, I went strolling there in a concrete way—as concretely as I used to go strolling in Paris in times past—in a world that EXISTS IN ITSELF, beyond all subjectivity.

It is like a bridge being built between the two worlds.

This is the experience as I dicated it immediately thereafter:

(silence)

The supramental world exists in a permanent way, and I am there permanently in a supramental body. I had proof of this today when my earthly consciousness went there and consciously remained there between two and three o'clock in the afternoon: I now know that for the two worlds to join in a constant and conscious relationship what is missing is an intermediate zone between the existing physical world and the supramental world as it exists. This zone has yet to be built, both in the individual consciousness and in the objective world, and it is being built. When formerly I used to speak of the new world that is being created, I was speaking of this intermediate zone. And similarly, when I am on 'this' side—that is, in the realm of the physical consciousness—and I see the supramental power, the supramental light and substance constantly permeating matter, I am seeing and participating in the construction of this zone.

I found myself upon an immense ship, which is the symbolic representation of the place where this work is being carried out. This ship, as big as a city, is thoroughly organized, and it had certainly already been functioning for quite some time, for its organization was fully developed. It is the place where people destined for the supramental life are being trained. These people (or at least a part of their being) had

already undergone a supramental transformation because the ship itself and all that was aboard was neither material nor subtle-physical, neither vital nor mental: it was a supramental substance. This substance itself was of the most material supramental, the supramental substance nearest the physical world, the first to manifest. The light was a blend of red and gold, forming a uniform substance of luminous orange. Everything was like that—the light was like that, the people were like that—everything had this color, in varying shades, however, which enabled things to be distinguished from one another. The overall impression was of a shadowless world: there were shades, but no shadow. The atmosphere was full of joy, calm, order; everything worked smoothly and silently. At the same time, I could see all the details of the education, the training in all domains by which the people on board were being prepared.

This immense ship had just arrived at the shore of the supramental world, and a first batch of people destined to become the future inhabitants of the supramental world were about to disembark. Everything was arranged for this first landing. A certain number of very tall beings were posted on the wharf. They were not human beings and never before had they been men. Nor were they permanent inhabitants of the supramental world. They had been delegated from above and posted there to control and supervise the landing. I was in charge of all this since the beginning and throughout. I myself had prepared all the groups. I was standing on the bridge of the ship, calling the groups forward one by one and having them disembark on the shore. The tall beings posted there seemed to be reviewing those who were disembarking, allowing those who were ready to go ashore and sending back those who were not and who had to continue their training aboard the ship. While standing there watching everyone, that part of my consciousness coming from here became extremely interested: it wanted to see, to identify all the people, to see how they had changed and to find out who had been taken immediately as well as those who had to remain and continue their training. After a while, as I was observing, I began to feel pulled backwards and that my body was being awakened by a consciousness or a person

from here*—and in my consciousness, I protested: 'No, no, not yet! Not yet! I want to see who's there!' I was watching all this and noting it with intense interest . . . It went on like that until, suddenly, the clock here began striking three, which violently jerked me back. There was the sensation of a sudden fall into my body. I came back with a shock, but since I had been called back very suddenly, all my memory was still intact. I remained quiet and still until I could bring back the whole experience and preserve it.

The nature of objects on this ship was not that which we know upon earth; for example, the clothes were not made of cloth, and this thing that resembled cloth was not manufactured—it was a part of the body, made of the same substance that took on different forms. It had a kind of plasticity. When a change had to be made, it was done not by artificial and outer means but by an inner working, by a working of the consciousness that gave the substance its form or appearance. Life created its own forms. There was ONE SINGLE substance in all things; it changed the nature of its vibration according to the needs or uses.

Those who were sent back for more training were not of a uniform color; their bodies seemed to have patches of a grayish opacity, a substance resembling the earth substance. They were dull, as though they had not been wholly permeated by the light or wholly transformed. They were not like this all over, but in places.

The tall beings on the shore were not of the same color, at least they did not have this orange tint; they were paler, more transparent. Except for a part of their bodies, only the outline of their forms could be seen. They were very tall, they did not seem to have a skeletal structure, and they could take on any form according to their needs. Only from their waists to their feet did they have a permanent density, which was not felt in the rest of their body. Their color was much more pallid and contained very little red, it verged rather on gold or even white. The parts of whitish light were translucent; they were not absolutely transparent, but less dense, more subtle than the orange substance.

* Indeed, one of the people near Mother pulled her out of the experience.

Just as I was called back, when I was saying, 'Not yet. . .,' I had a quick glimpse of myself, of my form in the supramental world. I was a mixture of what these tall beings were and the beings aboard the ship. The top part of myself, especially my head, was a mere silhouette of a whitish color with an orange fringe. The more it approached the feet, the more the color resembled that of the people on the ship, or in other words, orange; the more it went up towards the top, the more translucent and white it was, and the red faded. The head was only a silhouette with a brilliant sun at its centre; from it issued rays of light which were the action of the will.

As for the people I saw aboard ship, I recognized them all. Some were here in the Ashram, some came from elsewhere, but I knew them as well. I saw everyone, but as I realized that I would not remember everyone when I came back, I decided not to give any names. Besides, it is unnecessary. Three or four faces were very clearly visible, and when I saw them, I understood the feeling that I have had here, on earth, while looking into their eyes; there was such an extraordinary joy. . . . On the whole, the people were young; there were very few children, and their ages were around fourteen or fifteen, but certainly not below ten or twelve (I did not stay long enough to see all the details). There were no very old people, with the exception of a few. Most of the people who had gone ashore were of a middle age—again, except for a few. Several times before this experience, certain individual cases had already been examined at a place where people capable of being supramentalized are examined; I had then had a few surprises which I had noted—I even told some people. But those whom I disembarked today I saw very distinctly. They were of a middle age, neither young children nor elderly people, with only a few rare exceptions, and this quite corresponded to what I expected. I decided not to say anything, not to give any names. As I did not stay until the end, it would be impossible for me to draw an exact picture, for it was neither absolutely clear nor complete. I do not want to say things to some and not say them to others.

What I can say is that the criterion or the judgment was based EXCLUSIVELY on the substance constituting the people—

whether they belonged completely to the supramental world or not, whether they were made of this very special substance. The criterion adopted was neither moral nor psychological. It is likely that their bodily substance was the result of an inner law or inner movement which, at that time, was not in question. At least it is quite clear that the values are different.

When I came back, along with the memory of the experience, I knew that the supramental world was permanent, that my presence there is permanent, and that only a missing link is needed to allow the consciousness and the substance to connect—and it is this link that is being built. At that time, my impression (an impression which remained rather long, almost the whole day) was of an extreme relativity—no, not exactly that, but an impression that the relationship between this world and the other completely changes the criterion by which things are to be evaluated or judged. This criterion had nothing mental about it, and it gave the strange inner feeling that so many things we consider good or bad are not really so. It was very clear that everything depended upon the capacity of things and upon their ability to express the supramental world or be in relationship with it. It was so completely different, at times even so opposite to our ordinary way of looking at things! I recall one little thing that we usually consider bad. . . . actually how funny it was to see that it is something excellent! And other things that we consider important were really quite unimportant there! Whether it was like this or like that made no difference. What is very obvious is that our appreciation of what is divine or not divine is incorrect. I even laughed at certain things. . . . Our usual feeling about what is anti-divine seems artificial, based upon something untrue, unliving (besides, what we call life here appeared lifeless in comparison with that world); in any event, this feeling should be based upon our relationship between the two worlds and according to whether things make this relationship easier or more difficult. This would thus completely change our evaluation of what brings us nearer to the Divine or what takes us away from Him. With people, too, I saw that what helps them or prevents them from becoming supramental is very different from what our

ordinary moral notions imagine. I felt just how . . . ridiculous we are.

(Then Mother speaks to the children)

There is a continuation to all this, which is like the result in my consciousness of the experience of February 3, but it seems premature to read it now, it will appear in the April issue [of the Bulletin], as a sequel to this.

But one thing—and I wish to stress this point to you—which now seems to me to be the most essential difference between our world and the supramental world (and it is only after having gone there consciously, with the consciousness that ordinarily works here, that this difference appeared to me in what might be called its enormity): everything here, except for what happens within and at a very deep level, seemed absolutely artificial to me. Not one of the values of ordinary physical life is based upon truth. Just as we have to buy cloth, sew it together, then put it on our backs in order to dress ourselves, likewise we have to take things from outside and then put them inside our bodies in order to feed ourselves. For everything, our life is artificial.

A true, sincere, spontaneous life, as in the supramental world, is a springing forth of things through the fact of conscious will, a power over substance that shapes this substance according to what we decide it should be. And he who has this power and this knowledge can obtain whatever he wants, whereas he who does not has no artificial means of getting what he desires.

In ordinary life, EVERYTHING is artificial. Depending upon the chance of your birth or circumstances, you have a more or less high position or a more or less comfortable life, not because it is the spontaneous, natural and sincere expression of your way of being and of your inner need, but because the fortuity of life's circumstances has placed you in contact with these things. An absolutely worthless man may be in a very high position, and a man who might have marvellous capacities of creation and organization may find himself toiling in a quite limited and inferior position, whereas he would be a wholly useful individual if the world were sincere.

It is this artificiality, this insincerity, this complete lack of truth that appeared so shocking to me that . . . one wonders

how, in a world as false as this one, we can arrive at any truthful evaluation of things.

But instead of feeling grieved, morose, rebellious, discontent, I had rather the feeling of what I spoke of at the end: of such a ridiculous absurdity that for several days I was seized with an uncontrollable laughter whenever I saw things and people! Such a tremendous laughter, so absolutely inexplicable (except to me), because of the ridiculousness of these situations.

When I invited you on a voyage into the unknown, a voyage of adventure, I did not know just how true were my words! And I can promise those who are ready to embark upon this adventure that they will make some very astonishing discoveries.*

The work that Sri Aurobindo had envisaged was now unfolding itself. The question was to find the means of building the link of consciousness between the supramental world and the human world. In her talk recorded in the Agenda (10 May, 1958), she said:

. . . And actually, to do Sri Aurobindo's work is to realize the Supramental on earth. So I began that work and, as a matter of fact, this was the only thing I asked of my body. I told it, 'Now you shall set right everything which is out of order and gradually realize this intermediate supermanhood between man and the supramental being or, in other words, what I call the superman.'

And this is what I have been doing for the last eight years, and even much more during the past two years, since 1956. Now it is the work of each day, each minute.

That's where I am. I have renounced the uncontested authority of a god. I have renounced the unshakable calm of the sage . . . in order to become the superman. I have concentrated everything upon that.

We shall see.

I am learning to work. I am only an apprentice, simply an apprentice—I am learning the trade!†

* * *

* Ibid., pp. 137–43.

† Ibid., p. 155.

On 7th November, 1958, Mother had an experience which was a further step in the building of the link between the two worlds. Mother described and explained the experience in the following conversation that is recorded in the Agenda:

I found my message for the 1st of January It was quite unforeseen. Yesterday morning, I thought, 'All the same, I have to find my message, but what?' I was absolutely . . . like that, neutral, nothing. Then yesterday evening at the class (of Friday, November 7) I noticed that these children who had had a whole week to prepare their questions on the text had not found a single one! A terrible lethargy! A total lack of interest. And when I had finished speaking, I thought to myself, 'But what IS there in these people who are interested in nothing but their personal little affairs?' So I began descending into their mental atmosphere, in search of the little light, of that which responds And it literally pulled me downwards as into a hole, but in such a material way; my hand, which was on the arm of the chair, began slipping down, my other hand went like this (*to the ground*), my head, too! I thought it was going to touch my knees!

And I had the impression It was not an impression—I saw it. I was descending into a crevass between two steep rocks, rocks that appeared to be made of something harder than basalt, BLACK, but metallic at the same time, with such sharp edges—it seemed that a mere touch would lacerate you. It appeared endless and bottomless, and it kept getting narrower, narrower and narrower, narrower and narrower, like a funnel, so narrow that there was almost no more room—not even for the consciousness—to pass through. And the bottom was invisible, a black hole. And it went down, down, down, like that, without air, without light, except for a sort of glimmer that enabled me to make out the rock edges. They seemed to be cut so steeply, so sharply. . . . Finally, when my head began touching my knees, I asked myself, 'But what is there at the bottom of this . . . this hole?'

And as soon as I had uttered, 'What is there at the bottom of this hole?' I seemed to touch a spring that was in the very depths—a spring I didn't see but that acted instantly with a tremendous power—and it cast me up forthwith, hurled me

out of this crevass into . . . (*arms extended, motionless*) a formless, limitless vast which was infinitely comfortable—not exactly warm, but it gave a feeling of ease and of an intimate warmth.

And it was all-powerful, with an infinite richness. It did not have . . . no, it didn't have any kind of form, and it had no limits (naturally, as I was identified with it I knew there was neither limit nor form). It was as if (because it was not visible), as if this vast were made of countless, imperceptible points—points that occupied no place in space (there was no sense of space), that were of a deep warm gold—but this is only a feeling, a transcription. And all this was absolutely LIVING, living with a power that seemed infinite. And yet motionless.

It lasted for quite some time, for the rest of the meditation.

It seemed to contain a whole wealth of possibilities, and all this that was formless had the power to become form.

At the time, I wondered what it meant. Later, of course, I found out, and finally this morning, I said to myself, 'Ah, so that's it! It came to give me my message for the new year!' Then I transcribed the experience—it can't be described, of course, for it was indescribable; it was a psychological phenomenon and the form it took was only a way of describing the psychological state to oneself. Here is what I wrote down, obviously in a mental way, and I am thinking of using it as my message.

There was a hesitation in the expression, so I brought the paper and I want us to decide upon the final text together.

I have not described anything. I have only stated a fact (*Mother reads*):

'At the very bottom of inconscience most hard and rigid and narrow and stifling, I struck upon an almighty spring that cast me up forthwith into a formless, limitless Vast, generator of all creation.'

And it is again one more proof. The experience was absolutely . . . the English word *genuine* says it.

Genuine and spontaneous?

Yes, it was not a willed experience, for I had not decided I would do this. It did not correspond to an inner attitude. In a meditation, one can decide, 'I will meditate on this or on

that or on something else—I will do this or that.’ For meditations, I usually have a kind of inner (or higher) perception of what has to be done, and I do it. But it was not that way. I had decided: nothing, to decide nothing, to be ‘like that’ (*gesture of turning upwards*).

And then it happened.

Suddenly, while I was speaking (it was while I was speaking), I felt, ‘Well really, can anything be done with such material?’ Then quite naturally, when I stopped speaking, Oh!—I felt that I was being pulled! Then I understood. Because I had asked myself the question, ‘But what is HAPPENING in there behind all those forms? . . .’ I can’t say that I was annoyed, but I said to myself, ‘Well really, this has to be shaken up a bit!’ And just as I had finished, something pulled me—it pulled me out of my body, I was literally pulled out of my body.

And then, down into this hole. . . I still see what I saw then, this crevass between two rocks. The sky was not visible, but on the rock summits I saw . . . something like the reflection of a glimmer—a glimmer—coming from ‘something’ beyond, which (*laughing*) must have been the sky! But it was invisible. And as I descended, as if I were sliding down the face of this crevass, I saw the rock edges; and they were really black rocks, as if cut with a chisel, cuts so fresh that they glistened, with edges as sharp as knives. There was one here, one there, another there, everywhere, all around. And I was being pulled, pulled, pulled, I went down and down and down—there was no end to it, and it was becoming more and more compressing.* It went down and down. . .

And so, physically, the body followed. My body has been taught to express the inner experience to a certain extent. In the body there is the body-force or the body-form or the body-spirit (according to the different schools, it bears a different name), and this is what leaves the body last when one dies, usually taking a period of seven days to leave. With special training, it can acquire a conscious life—independent and conscious—to such a degree that not only in a state of trance (in trance, it frequently happens that one can

* Later Mother added: ‘stifling, suffocating.’

speak and move if one is slightly trained or educated), but even in a cataleptic state it can produce sounds and even make the body move. Thus through training, the body begins to have somnambulistic capacities—not an ordinary somnambulism, but it can live an autonomous life. This is what took place, yesterday evening it was like that—I had gone out of my body, but my body was participating. And then I was pulled downwards; my hand, which had been on the arm of the chair, slipped down, then the other hand, then my head was almost touching my knees! (the consciousness was elsewhere, I saw it from outside—it was not that I didn’t know what I was doing, I saw it from outside.) So I said, ‘In any case, this has to stop somewhere because if it continues, my head (*laughing*) is going to be on the ground!’ And I thought, ‘But what is there at the bottom of this hole? . . .’

Scarcely had these words been formulated when there I was, at the bottom of the hole! And it was absolutely as if a tremendous, almighty spring were there, and then . . . (*Mother hits the table*) vrrrm! I was cast out of the abyss into a vastness. My body immediately sat straight up, head on high, following the movement. If someone had been watching, this is what he would have seen: in a single bound, vrrrm! Straight up, to the maximum, my head on high.

And I followed all this without objectifying it in the least; I was not aware of what it was nor of what was happening, nor of any explanation at all, nothing: it was ‘like that.’ I was living it, that’s all. The experience was absolutely spontaneous. And after this rather . . . painful descent, phew!—there was a kind of super-comfort. I can’t explain it otherwise, an *ease*, but an ease . . . to the utmost. A perfect immobility in a sense of eternity—but with an extraordinary INTENSITY of movement and life! An inner intensity, unmanifested; it was within, self-contained. And motionless (had there been an outside, it would have been motionless in relation to that) and it was in a . . . life so immeasurable that it can only be expressed metaphorically as infinite. And with an intensity, a POWER, a force . . . and a peace—the peace of eternity. A silence, a calm. A POWER capable of . . . of EVERYTHING. Everything.

And I was not imagining nor objectifying it; I was living

it with ease—with a great ease. And it lasted until the end of the meditation. When it gradually began fading, I stopped the meditation and left.

Later, after I returned (to the Ashram), I wondered, 'What was that? What does it signify?' Then I understood.

That's all.

Now I am going to write it down clearly. Hand me a piece of paper.

(Mother begins recopying her message)

'At the very bottom of the inconscience most hard and rigid. . . . Because generally, the inconscience gives the impression, precisely, of something amorphous, inert, formless, drab and gray (when formerly I entered the zones of the inconscient, that was the first thing I encountered). But this was an inconscience. . . it was hard, rigid, COAGULATED, as if coagulated to resist: all effort slides off it, doesn't touch it, cannot penetrate it. So I am putting, ' . . . most hard and rigid and narrow' (the idea of something that compresses, compresses, compresses you) 'and stifling'—yes, stifling is the word.

' . . . I struck upon an almighty spring that cast me up forthwith into a formless, limitless vast, generator of all creation.' It was . . . yes, I have the feeling that it was not the ordinary creation, the primordial creation, but the SUPRAMENTAL creation, for it bore no similarity to the experience of returning to the Supreme, the origin of everything. I had utterly the feeling of being cast into the origin of the supramental creation—something that is already (how can it be expressed?) objectified from the Supreme, with the explicit goal of the supramental creation.

That was my feeling.

I don't think I am mistaken, for there was such a superabundant feeling of power, of warmth, of gold. . . . It was not fluid, it was like a powdering. And each of these things (they cannot be called specks or fragments, nor even points, unless you understand it in the mathematical sense, a point that occupies no space) was something equivalent to a mathematical point, but like living gold, a powdering of warm gold. I cannot say it was sparkling, I cannot say it was dark,

nor was it made of light, either: a multitude of tiny points of gold, nothing but that. They seemed to be touching my eyes, my face . . . and with such an inherent power and warmth—it was a splendor! And then, at the same time, the feeling of a plenitude, the PEACE of omnipotence. . . . It was rich, it was full. It was movement at its ultimate, infinitely swifter than all one can imagine, and at the same time it was absolute peace, perfect tranquillity.

(Mother resumes her message)

I do not want to put the word. . . . Unless, instead of putting 'generator of all creation' I put 'of the new creation. . . . ' Oh, but then it becomes absolutely overwhelming! It is THAT, in fact. It is that. But is it time to say so? I don't know. . . .

Generator of the new creation. . . . *

* * *

Towards the end of 1958, just a few days before her first illness (which resulted in her withdrawal to her room), Mother came to a precision and formulated the central question that she was exploring: 'How does one fix the Supermind in the body?' She was looking for a way, for a method. But the entire enterprise was new in the history of the earth, and there were not traces of any past experiments. She was obliged to hew a new path in a virgin forest. In her own words:

Is there a way? Is there a method? Probably not. It is really walking blindly, without any help, in a desert, a desert strewn with every possible trap and difficulty and obstacle—all of them, gathered them together like that. Your eyes are blindfolded, you know nothing and you walk. . . . I am absolutely in the midst of hewing a road through the virgin forest—worse than a virgin forest.

Then on July 24, 1959, the supramental light entered directly into her body, without going through the intermediate layers of consciousness. Let us go to her own description of the experience:

Shortly before the 15th August I had a unique experience that exemplifies all this. For the first time the supramental

* Ibid., pp. 225-30

light entered directly into my body, without passing through the inner beings. It entered through the feet (a red and gold color—marvellous, warm, intense) and it climbed up and up. And as it climbed, the fever also climbed because the body was not accustomed to this intensity. As all this light neared the head, I thought I would burst and that the experience would have to be stopped. But then, I very clearly received the indication to make the Calm and Peace descend, to widen all this body-consciousness and all these cells, so that they could contain the supramental light. So I widened, and as the light was ascending, I brought down the vastness and an unshakable peace. And suddenly, there was a second of fainting.

I found myself in another world, but not far away (I was not in a total trance). This world was almost as substantial as the physical world. There were rooms—Sri Aurobindo's room with the bed he rests on—and he was living there, he was there all the time: it was his abode. Even my room was there, with a large mirror like the one I have here, combs, all kinds of things. And the substance of these objects was almost as dense as in the physical world, but they shone with their own light. It was not translucent, not transparent, not radiant, but self-luminous. The various objects and the material of the rooms did not have this same opacity as the physical objects here, they were not dry and hard as in the physical world we know.

And Sri Aurobindo was there, with a majesty, a magnificent beauty. He had all his beautiful hair as before. It was all so concrete, so substantial—he was even being served some kind of food. I remained there for one hour (I had looked at my watch before and I looked at it afterwards). I spoke to Sri Aurobindo, for I had some important questions to ask him about the way certain things are to be realized. He said nothing. He listened to me quietly and looked at me as if all my words were useless: he understood everything at once. And he answered me with a gesture and two expressions on his face, an unexpected gesture that did not at all correspond to any thought of mine; for example, he picked up three combs that were lying near the mirror (combs similar to those I use here, but larger) and he put them in his hair. He planted

one comb in the middle of his head and the two others on each side, as if to gather all his hair over his temples. He was literally COIFFED with these three combs, which gave him a kind of crown. And I immediately understood that by this he meant that he was adopting my conception: 'You see, I embrace your conception of things, and I coif myself with it; it is my will.' Anyway, I remained there for one hour.

And when I awoke, I didn't have this feeling of returning from afar and of having to re-enter my body, as I usually do. No, it was simply as though I were in this other world, then I took a step backwards and found myself here again. It took me a good half an hour to understand that this world here existed as much as the other and that I was no longer on the other side but here, in the world of falsehood. I had forgotten everything—people, things, what I had to do; everything had gone, as if it had no reality at all.

You see, it's not as if this world of truth had to be created from nothing: it is fully ready, it is there, like a lining of our own present world. Everything is there, EVERYTHING is there.

I remained in that state for two full days, two days of absolute felicity. And Sri Aurobindo was with me the whole time, the whole time—when I walked, he walked with me, when I sat down, he sat next to me. On the day of August 15th, too, he remained there constantly during the darshan. But who was aware of it? A few—one or two—felt something. But who saw?—No one.

And I showed all these people to Sri Aurobindo, this whole field of work, and asked him WHEN this other world, the real one that is there, so near, would come to take the place of our world of falsehood. *Not ready*. That was all he replied. *Not ready*.

Sri Aurobindo gave me two days of this—total bliss. But all the same, by the end of the second day I realized that I could not continue to remain there, for the work was not advancing. The work must be done in the body; the realization must be attained here in this physical world, for otherwise it is not complete. So I withdrew from that world and set to work here again.*

* * *

* Ibid., pp. 327–9

Mother discovered that the repetition of the Mantra was very effective in fixing the Supramental Force in the physical. In the physical, there are several distinguishable elements: the gross physical, the subtle physical, the physical mind and the cellular mind. The gross physical is what we see with our physical eyes and what we touch with our skin and perceive with our physical senses. The subtle physical is what lies behind our gross physical—that which Mother has described in her experience of Sri Aurobindo in his abode of the subtle physical. The physical mind is that part of our mentality which is entirely at the service of the physical, which is rooted in the physical, which makes our perception of sensations possible. It is also called sometimes by Sri Aurobindo mental-physical, since it subserves the physical, and it is as mechanical and repetitive as the physical. The cellular mind is the mind of the cells, the mind which is overtly active in the animals, but which has been overlaid in our human psychology by the physical mind.

The physical mind, as a product of evolution, evolved in Matter under the pressure of difficulties, even, of suffering; hence, there is in it an imprint of pessimism and defeatism. As Mother pointed out:

The big problem in matter is that material consciousness, meaning the mind within matter, was formed under the pressure of difficulties—difficulties, obstacles, suffering, struggle. It was 'put together', so to speak, by those things, and they gave it almost an imprint of pessimism and defeatism, which is certainly the greatest obstacle.*

This pessimism is repeated constantly in the operations of the physical mind, and since the physical mind is like a layer on the mind of the cells, it covers up the normal dumb occult consciousness of the cellular mind; the cellular mind, too, under the magic spell of the physical mind betrays a reflected pessimism. But as Mother discovered, pessimism and the resultant illness, disease or death do not form a normal part of the mind of the cells.

This was a major discovery, paving the way for *FIXING* the supermind in Matter. If the activities of the physical mind can

*Mother's Agenda, Vol. 5, 7.10.1964

be clarified, controlled, mastered, silenced, and if the mind of cells can be allowed to function in its purity without being overlaid by the magic spell of the physical mind, then the mind of cells can receive and fix the supramental vibrations, and a new rhythm of supramental functioning in the body can be established. The cellular mind is, in fact, the link between the purely material substance and the physical mind, and it is the real fixer. Under the influence of the physical mind, it fixes in its movements the repetitive operation of pessimism and defeatism; but if—and it is here that the repetition of the mantra finds its justification in the yogic process—a new vibration is applied in the cellular mind, it will fix that new vibration.

The repetition of the mantra is to some extent a mechanical process, but mere mechanical repetition would hardly be effective. Mantra should itself be a cry of the whole being, and if that cry, that aspiration, that vibration of sound is injected repeatedly, the normal defeatist notation can be reversed, and there can come about a deeper change in the physical consciousness. Mantra is a sound and vibration expressive of an aspiration, and, as Mother pointed out, sound has a power in itself, and by forcing the body to repeat a sound, at the same time you force it to receive the vibration. 'I have seen that the mantra has an organising effect on the subconscious, on the inconscient, on matter, on the body's cells—it takes time, but by persistently repeating it, in the long run it has an effect. It is the same principle as doing daily exercises on piano, for example, you repeat mechanically, and ultimately it fills your hands with consciousness—it fills the body with consciousness.'*

Mother's experiences after the 29th February, 1956, related increasingly to the physical mind and to her exploration of fixing the Supermind in the body-consciousness and of the transformation of the body. After 1959, Mother met Sri Aurobindo daily in the subtle physical. There were ecstasies of experiencing the Supreme in the body, and there were excruciating pains when the work had to be concentrated upon the transformation of the subconscious and inconscient. Her discoveries were momentous, particularly in regard to the nature and origin of

*Mother's Agenda, Vol. I, p. 421

Pain and Death. Gradually, she was building a new body—material body—of the supramental light and power. And this entire field of experiences and discoveries was like a virgin forest; and it was in this forest that Mother hewed a path and a curve of development. There were experiences from day to day, from hour to hour, and many of them have been recorded in the 'Agenda.' We shall relate here only a few of them, just a few landmarks.

* * *

On January 24, 1961, Mother narrated to Satprem as follows her experience (recorded in the 'Agenda'), which marks an extremely important stage:

I have something to tell you now. . . . We'll work later.

In the middle of the night before last, I woke up (or rather I returned to an external consciousness) with the feeling of having a much larger (by larger I mean more voluminous) and much more powerful being in my body than I usually have. It was as if it could scarcely be held inside me but was spilling over; and so COMPACTLY POWERFUL that it was almost uncomfortable. The feeling of: what to do with all this?

It lasted the remainder of the night and all day long I had considerable trouble containing an overwhelming power that spontaneously created reactions utterly disproportionate to a human body and made me speak in a way that. . . . When something was not going well: wham! Such an instantaneous and strong reply that it looked like anger. And I found it difficult to control the movement—it had happened already in the morning and it very nearly happened again in the afternoon. 'That last attack has weakened me terribly!' I told myself, 'I don't have the strength to contain this Power; it's difficult to remain calm and controlled.' That was my first thought, so I insisted upon calm.

Then yesterday afternoon, when I went upstairs to walk,* a couple of things occurred—not personal, but of a general nature—concerning, for instance, certain old-fashioned conventions having to do with women and their particular

* Mother did her japa while walking back and forth in her room.

nature (not psychological, physical)—old ideas like that which had always seemed utterly stupid to me suddenly provoked a kind of reprobation completely out of proportion to the fact itself. Then one or two other things* happened in regard to certain people; certain circumstances (nothing to do with me personally: it came from here and there). Then suddenly, I saw a Force coming ('coming', well, 'manifesting') which was the same as that 'thing' I had felt within me but even bigger; it began whirling upon the earth and within circumstances . . . oh, like a cyclone of compact power moving forward with the intention of changing all this! It had to change. At all costs, it must change!

I was above, as usual (*Mother points above her head, indicating the higher consciousness*), and I looked at that (*Mother bends over, as if looking down at the earth*), and said to myself, 'Hmm, this is getting dangerous. If it continues like this, it will result in . . . in a war or a revolution or some catastrophe—a tidal wave or an earth-quake.' So I tried to counteract it by applying the highest consciousness to it, that of a perfect serenity. And I saw especially that this consciousness has been mis-sioned to transform the earth through the Supermind and by the supramental Force, avoiding all catastrophes as far as possible: the Work is to be done as luminously and harmoniously as the earth would allow, even by going at a slower pace if need be. That was the idea. And I tried to counteract that whirlwind power with this consciousness.

(*long silence*)

I must say that after this, when I read *The Secret of the Veda* as I do each evening. . . . In fact, I am in very close contact with the entire Vedic world since I've been reading that book: I see beings, hear phrases. . . . It comes up in a sort of subliminal consciousness, a lot of things are from the ancient Vedic tradition. (By the way, I have even come to see that

* Satprem later asked Mother what she meant by these 'things', and Mother replied: 'For example, there was a certain man's attitude with respect to life and to the Divine, and what he thought of himself, and so forth. You see, what came was a whole range of characters and one particular action of one man, and then something else came up. . . . How to explain? . . . These are POINTS OF WORK which come to me, things that present themselves in the atmosphere for me to see—things I see and which have to be acted upon.'

the pink marble bathtub I told you about last time, which Nature had offered me, belongs to the Vedic world, to a civilization of that epoch.*) There were—there are always—Sanskrit words coming up, sentences, bits of dialogue. . . . This is of interest, because I realized that what I had seen the other day (I told you about it) and then what I saw yesterday—that whole domain—was connected to what the Vedas call the *dasyus*—the *panis* and the *dasyus*†—the enemies of the Light. And this Force that came was very clearly a power like Indra's** (though something far, far greater), and at war with darkness everywhere, like this (*Mother sketches in space a whirling force touching points here and there throughout the world*), this Force attacked all darkness: ideas, people, movements, events, whatever made stains, patches of shadow. And it kept on going, a formidable power so great that my hands were like this (*Mother clenches fists*). Later when I read (I happened to be reading just the chapter concerning the fight against the *dasyus*), this proximity to my own experience became interesting, for it was not at all intellectual or mental—there was no idea, no thought involved.

The remainder of the evening passed as usual. I went to bed, and at exactly a quarter to twelve I got up with the feeling that this 'presence' in me had increased even further and really become rather formidable. . . . I had to instill a great deal of peace and confidence into my body, which felt as though . . . it wasn't so easy to bear. So I concentrated, I told my body to be calm and to let itself go completely.

At midnight I was lying in bed. (And I remained there from midnight until 1 o'clock fully awake. I don't know if my eyes

* A few days later, Mother rectified: 'I have looked at the experience again and realized that it's not Vedic but pre-Vedic. The experience put me into contact with a civilization prior to the Vedas—the Rishis and the Vedas are a kind of transition between that vanished civilization and the Indian civilization which grew out of the Vedic Age. It was yesterday [January 26] that I perceived this, and it was quite interesting.'

† In the Vedas, the *panis* and *dasyus* represent beings or forces hidden in subterranean caves who have stolen the 'Riches' or the 'Lights', symbolized by herds of cows. With the help of the gods, the Aryan warrior must recover these lost riches, the 'sun in the darkness,' by igniting the flame of sacrifice. It is the path of subterranean descent.

** Indra represents the king of the gods, the master of mental power freed from the limitations and obscurities of the physical consciousness.

were open or closed, but I was wide awake, NOT IN TRANCE—I could hear all the noises, the clocks, and so forth.) Then, lying flat, my entire body (but a slightly enlarged body, exceeding the purely physical form) became ONE vibration, extremely rapid and intense but immobile. I don't know how to explain this, because it did not move in space but was a vibration (that is, it wasn't motionless); yet it was motionless in space. And the exact form of my body was absolutely the most brilliant white Light of the supreme Consciousness, the consciousness of the Supreme. It was IN the body and it was as though in EACH cell there was a vibration, and it was all part of a single BLOCK of vibration. It extended this much beyond the body (*gesture indicating about six centimeters*). I was absolutely immobile in my bed. Then, WITHOUT MOVING, without shifting, it began consciously to rise up—without moving, you understand: I remained like this (*Mother holds her two joined and motionless hands at the level of her forehead, as if her entire body were mounting in prayer*)—consciously . . . like an ascension of this consciousness* towards the supreme Consciousness.

The body was stretched out flat.

And for a quarter of an hour, the consciousness rose, rose, without moving. It kept rising up, up, up—until . . . the junction was made.

A conscious junction, absolutely awake, NO TRANCE.

Thus the consciousness became the ONE Consciousness: perfect, eternal, outside time, outside space, outside movement . . . beyond everything, in . . . I don't know, in an ecstasy, a beatitude, something ineffable.

(silence)

It was the consciousness OF THE BODY.

I have had this experience before in exteriorization and trance, but this time it was THE BODY, the consciousness of the body.

I remained like that for a certain time (I knew it was a quarter of an hour because the clock chimed), but it was completely outside time. It was an eternity.

Then with the same precision, the same calm, the same

*The body-consciousness.

deliberate, clear and concentrated consciousness (absolutely NOTHING MENTAL), I began to come back down. And as I was descending, I realized that all the difficulty I had been fighting the other day and which had created this illness was absolutely ended, ANNULLED—mastered. Actually, it was not even mastery but the non-existence of anything to be mastered: simply THE vibration from top to bottom; yet there was neither high nor low nor any direction.

And it went on like that. After this, slowly, still WITHOUT MOVING, everything went back into each of the different centres of the being. (Ah, let me say parenthetically that it wasn't AT ALL the ascent of a force like the ascent of the Kundalini! It had absolutely nothing to do with the Kundalini movement and the centres, it wasn't that at all.) But while redescending, it was as though WITHOUT LEAVING THIS STATE, without leaving this state which remained conscious ALL the time, this supreme Consciousness began to reactivate the different centres: first here (*Mother points to the centre above the head and then touches the crown of the head, the forehead, throat, chest, etc.*) then there, there, there. At each there was a pause while this new realization organised everything. It organized and made the necessary decisions, sometimes down to the most minute details: what had to be done in this case or said in that case; and all of that TOGETHER, at once, not one by one but seen entirely as a whole. It kept on descending—I noted many things, it was extremely interesting—down and down, farther and farther, right to the depths. Everything went on the same*, simultaneously, and

* Later, Mother added: 'All the experiences took place one after the other, but the new experience did not cancel the preceding one. The Consciousness—this supreme Unity that I had—remained all the time, to the very end, even while the other centres were awakening. And each centre that awakened was a kind of addition, taking away nothing from what had come before. So at the end it was all simultaneous: a kind of global consciousness—total and simultaneous—of everything. . . . You see, while rising up (one is obliged to say 'rising' and 'descending' for otherwise one would never be understood), while 'rising up' to reach this supreme Consciousness, all the rest was annulled, there was only That. When the supreme Consciousness was realized, it remained ALL the time, continuously, to the very end, it did not move; but meanwhile, the other centres began to awaken one after another. And each awakening centre assumed its place but cancelled nothing either of what had come before or of what was about to come, so that when I reached the end, all of it together was a simultaneous whole—the

at the same time this supreme Consciousness was organizing everything separately.*

This descending reorganization ended exactly when the clock struck one. At that moment I knew that I had to go into trance for the work to be perfected, but until then I was wide awake.

So I slipped into trance.

I came out of this trance two hours later, at 3 a.m. And during these two hours I saw . . . with a new consciousness, a new vision, and above all a NEW POWER—I had a vision of the entire Work: all the people, all the things, all the systems, all of it. And it was . . . it was different in appearance (this is only because appearances depend upon the needs of the moment), but mainly it differed IN POWER—a considerable difference. Considerable. The power itself was no longer the same.†

A truly ESSENTIAL change in the body has occurred.

I see that the body will have to—how can I express it? . . . It will have to accustom itself to this new Power. But essentially the change has been accomplished.

It's not . . . it is far, very far from being the final change, there's a lot more to be done. But we may say that it's the conscious and total presence of the supramental Force in the body.

(silence)

When I got up today, I was going over all this to myself, and my first instinct was not to speak of it, to observe and see what would happen; but then I received a distinct and precise Command to tell it to you this morning. The experience had to be noted down just as it occurred, recorded in its exact form.

Supreme Consciousness.' When Satprem asked if this Supreme Consciousness was the 'New Consciousness,' Mother replied, 'Not 'new!' One can't say 'new'—Supreme Consciousness.'

* This entire experience and Mother's insistence that it all happened 'without moving', unlike the experience of the ascent of the Kundalini, suggests that it is the supramental consciousness concealed in the depths of the cells, that somehow emerges and traverses all the layers until the junction is made with the most material body-consciousness.

† Later, Mother added: 'The Power that was acting was no longer the power that had been acting previously.'

In the body now, there is a very clear . . . not only a certitude, but a *feeling* that a certain omnipotence is not far away, and that very soon when it sees ('it' sees . . . 'it'! There is only one 'It' in this whole affair, which is neither 'he' nor 'she' nor . . .), when it sees that something must be, it automatically will be.

There is still a long, long way to go. But the first step on the way has been taken!*

On January 31, 1961, Mother said the following concerning the above experience by way of adding an important detail:

I neglected to mention something very important. At the moment of my coming out of the trance, I had a very concrete, positive perception (not a mental understanding, it didn't come from the being's intellectual part, the part that understands and explains everything and is symbolized, I think, by Indra; it wasn't in any way conveyed through that higher intelligence, it wasn't mental). A kind of perception (not really a sensation, it was more than a sensation) of the almost total unimportance of the external, material expression of the body's condition: the consciousness OF THE BODY was absolutely indifferent to external, physical signs, whether they were like this or like that (the BODY's consciousness was what had experienced the identity). And this body-consciousness had the perception of the EXTREME RELATIVITY of the most material expression.

I am translating it to make myself understood—it wasn't like that at the time of the experience. Suppose, for example, that there was a disorder here or there in the body, not actually an illness (because illness implies some important inner factor such as an attack or the necessity for some transformation, many different things), but the outer expression of a disorder, such as swollen legs or a malfunctioning liver—not an illness, disorder, a functional disorder. Well, it was all utterly unimportant: IT IN NO WAY CHANGES THE BODY'S TRUE CONSCIOUSNESS. Although we are in the habit of thinking that the body is very disturbed when it's ill, when something is going wrong, it's not so. It isn't disturbed in the way we understand it.

Then what is disturbed if not the body?

* Mother's Agenda, Vol. 2, pp. 38-43

Oh, it's the physical mind, this stupid mind! It makes all the trouble, always.

It isn't the body at all?

No! The body is VERY enduring.

Then what suffers?

Suffering also comes through the physical mind, because if this entity is calmed down, we no longer suffer—exactly what happened to me!

The physical mind, you see, makes use of the nervous substance; if we withdraw it from the nervous substance, we no longer feel anything, for that's what gives us the perception of sensation. . . . We know something is wrong, but we no longer suffer from it.

This was a very important experience. Afterwards (especially yesterday afternoon and this morning), I gradually began to realize that this kind of indifferent detachment is the ESSENTIAL condition for the establishment of true Harmony in the most material Matter—the most external, physical Matter (*Mother pinches the skin of her hand.*)

This experience has been like a stage—an indispensable stage for establishing this complete detachment; an indispensable stage so that the harmony of the body-consciousness (which came with the body's experience of the Divine) might have its effect upon the most external, superficial part of the body.

(silence)

This is the logical consequence of the research I have been doing for a long time now on the cause of illnesses and how to overcome them.

This ought to be noted down. Because it's important. It has seemed all the more important to me these last two days. Beginning yesterday evening, there was a whole series of experiences, and this morning I came to a certain conclusion, whose starting point, I realized, was that experience I had upon coming out of trance. . . .

The rest will come later.

It was the very moment I was coming out of the trance, at 3 a.m.—I came out of it with that;* it was the first contact.

* That = the perception of the almost total unimportance of the external, material expression of the body's condition.

I had forgotten to mention this to you because it took on importance only very recently.*

Mother again spoke of the above-mentioned experience, which had triggered a backlash of subconscious difficulties:

A great deal has been brought to light since that experience. . . . It has been the starting point for such *turmoil*, even physically, such strong jolts that I might have wondered, 'Was I dreaming or was it real?' . . . And more and more I am coming to understand that this is the *INDISPENSABLE* preparation in the most material world for that experience to become definitively established, to express itself outwardly, constantly—this is obvious.

If the experience remained permanently, it would be something very close to omnipotence. I felt at the time that there was no such thing as an impossibility: it was truly the sensation of omnipotence. It is not omnipotence, because there is always a greater Omnipotence (one knows this only in the higher realms). But in terms of the material world, it was clearly something very, very different from all that has ever been seen or heard or told by all extant traditions—it all seems like the babbling of a child in comparison. At that moment itself there was only the 'Something' which sees, decides—and it is done.

(silence)

It did not remain. It has remained above, but not here.

It has given the physical consciousness a certain self-confidence in the sense that when I see something now, I am sure of it, there are no hesitations: 'Is this right or not? Is this true, is this. . . .' All that has vanished—when I see, there is certainty. That is, there has really been a great change in the material *CONSCIOUSNESS*; but that formidable power is not there. I tell you, had that power stayed here, had I remained constantly as I was during those hours that night, well, many things would obviously have changed.

All this must be a preparation; there is a lot to be cleared out before the experience can be firmly established. That's logical, it is quite natural.

* Mother's Agenda, Vol. 2, pp. 52-4

What's natural also—and annoying—is that people know nothing, understand nothing, even those who see me all the time, like the doctor. He still hasn't been able to understand and he suddenly grew worried, thinking I was on my way to the other side! All this makes a mess of the atmosphere—it just doesn't help! Their faith is not sufficiently . . . (how to put it?) enlightened for them to keep still and simply say, 'Well, we shall see,' without questioning. They are not beyond questioning and this complicates matters.

I have a feeling (but these are old ideas) that if I were all alone somewhere and didn't have to look after these people and things, it would be easier. But that would not be the *TRUE* thing. For when I had the experience (of January 24) all that is normally under my care was present: the whole earth seemed to be present at the experience. There is no individuality (*Mother indicates her body*). I have difficulty finding an individuality now, even in my own body. What I do find in this body are the subconscious vibrations (conscious as well as subconscious) of a *WORLD*, a whole world of things. So it can be done *ONLY* on a large scale, otherwise it's the same old story . . . but then it's not the power *HERE* [in matter]—one simply quits this world. Oh, these people can't imagine what it is! They have made such a fuss over their 'departure'. They have wanted us to believe it was something quite extraordinary. But it's infantile, it's child's play, it's nothing at all to quit this world! One simply goes 'poff!' like diving into water—a little kick and one resurfaces, and that's all there is to it, it's done (*Mother laughs*).

And the same goes for their stories about attachments and desires—my god! there's nothing to it! Imagine, with anything concerning my body, through all this horror of the subconscious, *NOT ONCE* have I had to bear the consequence of a desire; I have always had to bear the consequences of the battle against life's unconscious and malicious resistances, but not once has something come up like that (*gesture of something resurging from below*) to tell me, 'You see! You had a desire, now here's the result of it!' Not once—very, very sincerely.

That's really not the difficulty—the difficulty is that the world is not ready! The very substance one is made of (*Mother touches her body*) shares in the world's lack of preparation—

naturally! It's the same thing, the very same thing. Perhaps there is a tiny bit more light in this body, but so little that it's not worth mentioning—it's all the same thing. . . . Oh, a sordid slavery!

(silence)*

* * *

Since March 16, 1962, Mother went through a grave ordeal that threatened her physical existence. Practically one full month was perilous. However, on the night of April 12–13, she had suddenly a formidable and decisive experience. On April 13, around ten in the morning, she gave her message as follows:

Night of April 12–13.†

Suddenly in the night I woke up with the full awareness of what we could call the Yoga of the world. The Supreme Love was manifesting through big pulsation, and each pulsation was bringing the world further in its manifestation. It was the formidable pulsations of the eternal, stupendous Love, only Love; each pulsation of the Love was carrying the universe further in its manifestation.

And the certitude that what is to be done is done and the Supramental Manifestation is realized.

Everything was Personal, nothing was individual.

This was going on and on and on and on. . . .

The certitude that what is to be done is DONE.

All the results of the Falsehood had disappeared: Death was an illusion, Sickness was an illusion, Ignorance was an illusion—something that had no reality, no existence. . . . Only Love, and Love, and Love and Love—immense, formidable, stupendous, carrying everything.

And how, how to express in the world? It was like an impossibility, because of the contradiction. . . . But then it came: 'You have accepted that this world should know the Supramental Truth. . . . and it will be expressed totally, integrally.' Yes, yes. . . .

And the thing is DONE.

(long silence)

* Ibid., pp. 91–3

† Mother gives the first part of this message in English.

The individual consciousness came back, just the sense of a limitation, limitation of pain; without that, no individual.*

And we set off again on the way, certain of the Victory.

The heavens are ringing with chants of Victory! Truth alone exists; Truth alone shall manifest. Onward! . . . Onward!

Gloire à Toi, Seigneur, Triomphateur suprême!†

(silence)

And now, to work.

Patience . . . endurance . . . perfect equanimity. And absolute faith.

(silence)

Compared to the experience, whatever I say is nothing, nothing, nothing but words.

And our consciousness is the same, absolutely the same as the Lord's. There was no difference, no difference at all. . . . We are That, we are That, we are That.

(silence)

Later on, I will explain it more clearly. The instrument is not yet ready.

It is only the beginning.

* * *

Mother later added:

The experience lasted at least four hours.

There are many things I will speak of later. **

Mother enlarged upon the above experience on May 13, 1962, as follows:

I was at the Origin—I WAS the Origin. For more than two hours, consciously, here on this bed, I was the Origin. And it was like gusts—like great gusts ending in explosions. And each one of these gusts was a span of the universe.

It was Love in its supreme essence—which has nothing to do with what people normally understand by that word.

* Here Mother begins speaking French.

† Glory to You, Lord, Triumphant One supreme.

** Mother's Agenda, Vol. 3, pp. 131–2.

And each gust of this essence of Love was dividing and spreading out . . . but they weren't forces, it was far beyond the realm of forces. The universe as we know it no longer existed; it was a sort of bizarre illusion, bearing no relation to THAT. There was only the truth of the universe, with those great gusts of color—they were colored—great gusts colored with something that is the essence of color.

It was stupendous. I lived more than two hours like that, consciously.

And then a Voice was explaining everything to me (not exactly a Voice, but something that was Sri Aurobindo's origin, like the most recent gust from the Origin). As the experience unfolded, this Voice explained each gust to me, each span of the universe; and then it explained how it all became like this (*Mother makes a gesture of reversal*): the distortion of the universe. And I was wondering how it was possible, with that Consciousness, that supreme Consciousness, to relate to the present, distorted universe. How to make the connection without losing that Consciousness? A relationship between the two seemed impossible. And that's when that sort of Voice reminded me of my promise, that I had promised to do the Work on earth and it would be done. 'I promised to do the Work and it will be done.'

Then began the process of descent*, and the voice was explaining it to me—I lived through it all in detail, and it wasn't pleasant. It took an hour and a half to change from that true Consciousness to the individual consciousness. Because throughout the experience this present individuality no longer existed, this body no longer existed, there were no more limits, I was no longer here—what was here was THE PERSON. An hour and a half was needed to return to the body-consciousness (not the physical consciousness but the body-consciousness), to the individual body-consciousness.

The first sign of the return to individuality was a prick of pain, a tiny point (*Mother holds between her fingers a miniscule point in the space of her being*). Yes, because I have a sore, a sore in a rather awkward place, and it hurts† (*Mother laughs*). So I felt the pain: it was the sign of individuality coming back.

* As we will see, 'descent' is not the right word.

† Mother will suffer from this same sore for nearly twelve years.

Other than that, there was nothing any more—no body, no individual, no limits. But it's strange, I have made a strange discovery.*

I used to think it was the individual (*Mother touches her body*) who experienced pain and disabilities and all the misfortunes of human life; well, I perceived that what experiences misfortunes is not the individual, not my body, but that each misfortune, each pain, each disability has its own individuality as it were, and each one represents a battle.

And my body is a world of battles.

It is the battelfield.

* * *

(When this text was read to Mother, she gave the following modification:)

I would prefer a word other than 'descent,' because there was no sensation or notion of descent—none at all. . . . It could be called the process of materialization or individualization—'transformation of consciousness' would be more exact. It is the process of changing from the true Consciousness to the distorted consciousness—that's it exactly.

You say it yourself: the transition from the true Consciousness to ordinary consciousness.

That's it exactly, 'descent' doesn't convey the actual sensation—there was no sensation of descent. None. Neither of ascent nor descent. None at all. Those creative gusts had no POSITION in relation to the creation; it was . . . There was ONLY THAT. THAT ALONE existed. Nothing else.

And everything happened within That.

Really, it was . . . There was neither high nor low nor within nor without—none of those existed any more. There was only THAT.

It was . . . 'Something' expressing itself, manifesting itself through these gusts. Something that was EVERYTHING. There was nothing else, there was really nothing but THAT. So to speak of high, low, descent won't do at all.

* Later, Mother emphasized: 'I don't mean a general discovery; it concerns my body alone. I don't say that all bodies are like this, but my body—what has become my body—is like this.'

If you like, we could put 'the process of return' . . .

Of return to the body-consciousness.
Or of materialisation.*

On May 15, 1962, Satprem read out to Mother his notes from the above conversation, and asked for further details on the April 13 experience:

About that promise you received. . . .

I didn't receive a promise—this Voice made me remember a promise I had made. I was saying to myself, 'How to connect this true Consciousness to the other one—it's impossible!' And just then I seemed to hear . . . not Sri Aurobindo exactly, because then you immediately think of a particular body, but that sort of Voice saying to me, 'Your promise. You said you would do the Work.' So that's when I said, 'Yes, I shall do the Work.' And from that moment on the process of materialization began, the entire transition from the true Consciousness to the ordinary consciousness.

I didn't receive a promise, but a reminder of the promise I had made.

And was that what allowed you to say, 'The thing is done'?

No—it was the experience.

The experience. When. . . . I haven't told you this part.
(long silence)

When I was those gusts, those gusts of Love. . . . When I was conscious of the last one, the one organized outwardly, as it were, by Sri Aurobindo—materializing as the avatar Sri Aurobindo—then came the absolute certainty that the thing was done, that it was decreed.

And the moment I became aware that it was decreed, I thought, 'But how can THAT be translated into that? How can the two be joined?' That was when the words came: 'You promised to do it, therefore you will do it'; and slowly the transition began, as if I were again being sent back to do it. Yes, as if . . . 'You promised to do it and you will do it'; well, that's what I meant by a promise. And I came back towards this body to do it.

*Ibid., pp. 138–40.

I said [on April 3] the body was the battlefield, that the battle was being waged IN this body. And then in that experience [of April 13] I was sent back into the body, because the thing—that last creative gust—had to be realized through this body.

(silence)

The experiences are going on. . . .

For instance, I am walking a little now, with someone's assistance, to get the body used to it again. And when I started walking, I became aware of a rather peculiar state . . . I might describe it as: what gives me the illusion of a body (*Mother laughs*). . . . I entrust it to the person I walk with. In other words, it's not my responsibility: the other person has to make sure it doesn't fall, doesn't bump into anything—you see what I mean. And the consciousness is a limitless consciousness, like a material equivalent or expression of these gusts—it's like waves, but waves with no Not separate waves, but a MOVEMENT of waves; a movement of what might be called material, corporeal waves, as vast as the earth, but not . . . not round, not flat. . . . Something giving a great sense of infinity but moving in waves. And this wave movement is the movement of life. And the consciousness (the body-consciousness, I suppose) floats along in this, with a sensation of eternal peace. . . . But it's not an expanse—that's not the word for it. It is a limitless movement, with a very harmonious and very tranquil rhythm, very vast, very calm. And this movement is life itself.

I walk around the room, and that is what is walking.

And it is very silent—there is no thought; there is barely, barely the ability to observe. . . . And all kinds of movements, an infinity of movements and vibrations of something that could be the essence of thoughts, move there, rhythmically, in a movement of waves without beginning or end, with a condensation like this (*gesture from above down*), with a condensation like that (*horizontal gesture*), and a movement of expansion (*gesture like a pulsating ocean*). That is, a sort of contraction, concentration, and then expansion, diffusion.

Yesterday I had the total experience—I let myself go completely. It lasted something like forty minutes as I walked around the room.

And actually, apart from the fact of suffering (you know, an ache here, an ache there, a pain here, a pain there, giving the sense of bodily individuality), apart from that, that great undulating movement of life is my normal consciousness. Meaning that I . . . what I call Me (*gesture high above*), my consciousness, is completely outside the body. That's what the consciousness of the body is (what I've just been describing), with only points of pain as reminders of what a body usually is: an ache here, an ache there, another ache here. . . . That's what it's like. And this pain has a small and extremely limited life; it's not general, it's not a body that suffers: it is suffering that suffers. It's a point, a point of pain—a scratch here, a sore there, things like that. That's what is individual and suffers—it's not the body that has a sore, you understand.

It is difficult to express.

But that's my experience. Yesterday I observed it with special care, to be able to tell you about it.

But are you making a distinction between the body-consciousness and the physical consciousness? . . .

Oh yes! The physical consciousness is something very complex; it includes the whole physical, conscious world.

My physical consciousness has been universalized for a long, long time, it encompasses all terrestrial movements;* but the body is limited solely to this small concentration of substance (*Mother touches her body*)—that's what I call the body-consciousness.

And when I said, 'I have left the body,'† it certainly didn't mean I have left the physical consciousness—my overall contact with the terrestrial world has remained the same. It concerns only the purely bodily aspect, the specific concretization or concentration of substance giving each of us a different body—a different APPEARANCE.

And a rather illusory appearance, besides. As soon as you rise to a certain height (I saw it quite clearly during that progressive reconcretization**), this appearance quickly

*To illustrate this, Mother added: 'I was always BATHED in the atmosphere of the people around me—their thoughts, their ways of feeling and seeing and understanding. . . .'

†On April 3, Mother said: 'I am no more in my body.'

**The experience of April 13, which Satprem had mistakenly called the 'descent' towards the body-consciousness.

loses its reality. Our external appearance is very, very illusory. Our particular form (this one's form, that one's form), the form we see with our physical eyes is very superficial, you know. From the vital world onwards, it's completely different.

Well. . . . I think that's all I can say for today.*

On May 18, 1962 Satprem asked for a further clarification on a startling statement that Mother had made during her recent conversation.

The other day you said, 'What I call Me high above, my consciousness, is completely outside the body.' And on April 3, you also said something that gave me a kind of jolt: 'I am no more in this body.' Why? . . . Have you really left this body?

(very long silence)

How can I explain it? . . .

(long silence)

I don't know how to explain it. . . .

I could almost tell it as a joke: for years and years I felt my consciousness to be outside my body—I always used to say it was there (*gesture above the head*), and not in my body. But from the time of that first experience [April 3], when the doctor said the heart had been physically affected and would stop working if I wasn't careful, from that moment on I felt. . . . I felt that my body was outside me! It sounds like a joke, but that's how it is.

So to be understood I said, 'I am no more in my body.' But it isn't that. I hadn't been in my body, my consciousness had been outside my body, for quite a long time! But there was a kind of connection, you know, something that made me feel it as 'my body.' (If I spoke carelessly, I could now say 'what used to be my body,' although I know well enough it's still alive!). Well, from April 3 on, when everyone claimed I was so sick and I was forbidden to get out of bed, I had the impression that what was called my body was now outside me.

There was a relation, I kept a link with it, but it took some days to get established (I don't know how many, because for a long time I couldn't keep track of anything). After some days (say ten days, twenty days, I don't know), the will began

*Mother's Agenda, Vol. 3., pp. 144-6

to function, the body was again under the control of the will. But that didn't happen right away—for some days, the will that deals with the body was annulled (I was entirely conscious and alive, but not in my body). The body was merely something moved around by the people looking after me. Not that it was separate, but I couldn't even say, 'it's a body'—it wasn't anything any more! Something. . . . Having undergone so much preparation, the universalization of the body-consciousness and all that, the experience didn't even seem strange to me (in fact, it was certainly the result of all that preparation). The body was . . . 'something' like a mass of substance being driven by the will of the three people looking after it. Not that I was unaware of it but. . . . I wasn't much concerned with it, to tell the truth; but as far as my attention was turned to it, it was a corporeal mass being moved around by a few wills. The supreme Will was in full agreement; the body had been entrusted, in a way (I don't know how to express this) . . . yes, it was like something entrusted, and I was simply looking on—I watched it all for I don't know how many days, with hardly any interest.

The one really concrete link was . . . pain. That's how the contact was kept.

When you said, 'I am no more in this body,' I thought that because of the necessities of the Work some part of you had withdrawn.

Oh, no! Nothing withdrew—it had already withdrawn a long time ago. The consciousness wasn't at all centred in the body. When I said 'I', for instance, it NEVER occurred to me that 'I' was this (*Mother points to her body*). I, the I who spoke, was always a will ENTIRELY independent of the body, entirely independent.

But there has been a strange phenomenon [since April 3]. . . . Before, I used to say, 'I am outside my body.' It was always 'I am outside my body.' But this time, the body seemed to have been consigned or entrusted—more like entrusted. . . .

It has gradually come back, in the sense that actively. . . . No, I can't even say that—it's not true. What has come back is the increasingly precise memory of how I had organized the life of this body, the whole formation I had made, down to the smallest details—for the things I was using, how I was making use of them, how I had organized all the

objects around the body, all that. What has come back is the memory—is it memory? The awareness of all that has returned, as if I were putting the two back into contact. And so, instead of the body being left totally in the hands of those around me, the formation I had made is coming back, with certain changes, certain improvements and simplifications (but mind you, I had neither the intention nor the will to change anything—those things are simply coming back into the consciousness like that with certain changes made). In short, it's a kind of conscious formation recrystallizing around this body.

And I have the perception . . . a sensation, really, the sensation of . . . something not at all me, but entrusted to me. More and more now, there is the feeling of something being entrusted to me in the universal organization for a definite purpose. That's really the sensation I have now (the mind is very calm, so it's difficult to express—I don't 'think' all these things, they are more like perceptions). And it's not the usual kind of sensation: the ONLY (I insist on this), the ONLY sensation that remains in the old way is physical pain. And really, those points of pain . . . they seem like the SYMBOLIC POINTS of what remains of the old consciousness.

Pain is the one thing I sense the way I used to. Food, for instance, taste, smell, vision, hearing—all that's completely changed. They belong to another rhythm. And this condition has come progressively, like a crystallization of something behind the senses that doesn't come from here—in taste, smell, vision, hearing, touch. . . . Except this one point. . . . Even the sense of touch is different now but PAIN. . . .

Pain is the old world.

It's quite odd, you know; pain is like the symbolic (and rather too concrete!) sign of life in the Ignorance.

And even there I have had an instant (but it was like a flash—the flash of a new experience), an instant when pain disappeared into something else. It has happened three or four times. The pain suddenly became . . . something completely different (not a pleasant sensation, not that at all): another state of consciousness.

If that state remained, I would truly be free of the world as it is.

Nonetheless, people can still hear me, can't they? And I can still see, but in a peculiar way—a very peculiar way. At times I see with greater precision than ever before (generally, as I told you the other day, I seem to see from behind a veil; that's constant). I hear things that way too. Certain sounds. . . . On one occasion I noticed a sound, a seemingly imperceptible sound, coming from about a hundred yards away, and it seemed to be right here. All this has changed—I mean the whole way the organs function. Have the organs themselves changed, or is it their functioning? I don't know. But they all obey another law—absolutely.

And I have the definite impression that that so-called illness was the external and ILLUSORY form of an indispensable process of transformation; without that so-called illness there could be no transformation—it is not an illness, I know it: when people speak of 'illness,' something in me laughs and says, 'What a bunch of geese!'

It is not an illness.

A disengagement?

Perhaps.

Perhaps.

It was a bit violent! (*Mother laughs*) . . . And yet not so violent, because There's something I have never told anyone, but when the doctor was called. . . . I was constantly fainting, you know: I would take a step and—plop! So the doctor was called and they began watching over me (everything was supposedly going wrong, all the organs, everything breaking down), and he declared I was sick and wasn't to stir from my bed (for a while I wasn't even supposed to talk!) . . . Well, at that point, something (not exactly what you would call my consciousness; it was far, far more eternal than my consciousness—my consciousness is the consciousness of one form of the Manifestation—well, it was far more than that, beyond that) . . . something said yes. And if 'That' had not agreed, I could have gone on living almost as usual. 'That' decreed, 'That' decided—I have never said anything about it.

Otherwise, you know, I would not have consented. If 'That' had not agreed, I would have said to my body, 'Go on, keep going, move'—and it would have gone on. It stopped because 'That' said yes. And then I understood that that

whole so-called illness was necessary for the Work. So I let myself go. And then what I told you about happened: this body was consigned to the care of three people, who looked after it marvellously, by the way—really, it filled me with constant admiration—a selflessness, a care . . . oh, it was wonderful! I was saying to the Lord the whole time, 'Truly, Lord, You have arranged all the material conditions in an absolutely marvellous, incredible way, bringing together whatever is necessary, and placing around me people beyond all praise.' For at least two weeks, they had a hard time of it—quite hard. The body was a wreck, you know (*Mother laughs*). They had to think of everything, decide everything, take care of everything. And they looked after it very, very well—really very well.

It's a wonderful story, seen as I see it. And I have observed it very carefully: it isn't an ordinary story seen with an exceptional knowledge, but a true Knowledge and a true Consciousness witnessing an exceptional story. Those three people may not be aware of how utterly exceptional it is, but that's simply because their consciousness is not sufficiently awake. But they too have been, and continue to be, exceptional.

The whole story is a fairy tale.

And the only concrete thing left in this world—this world of illusion—is pain. It seems to me the very essence of Falsehood.

But what feels it feels it very concretely! . . . I clearly see it's false, but that doesn't stop my body from feeling it—and there is a reason: it is the battlefield.

I have even been forbidden to utilize my knowledge, power and force to annul the pain in the way I used to (and I used to do it very well). That has been totally forbidden. But I have seen that something else is in sight. Something else is in the making It can't be called a miracle because it's not a miracle, but it's something wonderful—the unknown. . . . When will it come? How will it come? I don't know.

But it's interesting.

(*silence*)

Something really radical has happened, in the sense

that. . . . I tried once just to see if I could do it (I had wisely been told not to try) and I didn't succeed: I can't go back to the old way of relating to my body. It's impossible.

What is coming back is the way 'objects'—the whole mass of material substance making up this body's environment—had been organized; that's what is coming back, with some small changes (none of this comes through the head; the head has nothing to do with it). It is a sort of formation reconcretizing itself for life's outer organization.

The old way of relating no longer exists at all.

(silence)

It can truly be said that for a short while the body went out of my consciousness completely. I didn't leave my body; the body left the consciousness.

There you have it.

I hope you can cope with this—it's the first time I have tried to explain it. In fact, it's the first time I am looking at it. And it's interesting. An interesting phenomenon.*

* * *

Things are becoming more and more incomprehensible. During a course of conversation with Satprem on 12 June 1962, Mother said: 'I don't know whether I am dead or alive.' In her own words:

That whole way of seeing, feeling and reacting belongs really to another world. Really to another world . . . to such a degree that if I had no regard for people's peace of mind I would say, 'I don't know whether I am dead or alive.' Because there is a life, a type of life vibration that is completely independent of. . . . No, I'll put it another way: the way people ordinarily feel life, feel that they are alive, is intimately linked with a certain sensation they have of their bodies and of themselves. If you totally eliminate that sensation, the type of relation that allows people to say 'I am alive' . . . well, eliminate that, but then how can you say, 'I am alive,' or 'I am not alive'? The distinction NO LONGER EXISTS. Well, for me, it has been completely eliminated. That night [April 12–13], it was definitively swept out of me. It has never come back.

* Ibid., pp. 149–53.

It's something that seems impossible now. So what they mean by 'I am alive' is . . . I can't say 'I am alive' the way they do—it's something else entirely.

Better not keep this—in the end they'll be worrying about my sanity (*Mother laughs*)

But that doesn't matter either!

(silence)

You get such a feeling of power, so tremendous, SO FREE, so independent of all circumstances, all reactions, all events—and it doesn't depend on whether the body is this way or that. Something else. . . . Something else. . . .

Only one thing depends on the body: speech, expression . . . who knows? . . . (*Mother gazes at Satprem for a long time, as though she were considering an unknown possibility.*)

Ah, that's enough for today!*

One of the important processes of physical transformation that Mother spoke of was that of the fusion of the subtle physical and the ordinary physical. Mother spoke of this process as follows:

That's one thing that's happening. The two [the ordinary physical and the subtle physical] seem to be fusing more and more.

I have already explained this to you on several occasions: instead of SHIFTING from one to the other, it's as if one were permeated by the other, like this (*Mother slips the fingers of her right hand in between the fingers of her left hand*), and you can almost feel both simultaneously. It's one of the results of what's going on these days. A very slight concentration, for example, is all it takes to feel both at the same time, which leads me to a near conviction that true change in the physical results from a kind of PENETRATION. The most material physical substance no longer has that unreceptive sort of density, a density that resists penetration: it is becoming porous, and thus can be penetrated. Several times, in fact, I've had the experience of one vibration quite naturally changing the quality of the other—the subtle physical vibration was bringing about a sort of . . . almost a transformation,

* Ibid., pp. 211–2

or in any case a noticeable change in the purely physical vibration.

That seems to be the process, or at least one of the most important processes.

And it's growing more and more prominent. I spend almost every night in that realm; and even during the day, as soon as the body is motionless, there's this perception of the two vibrations, and of the physical vibration almost becoming porous.

It seems to be the process, or certainly one important process, for the physical transformation.

(silence)

You see, the subtle physical seems to DOSE OUT its power and light and capacity of consciousness according to the amount of receptivity in the purely physical vibration. That's why the effects stretch over a long period of time. It's being done very, very gradually. But it's an almost continuous work. Only when there's some bodily activity and the consciousness must turn outwards (not in the same way as before, that's impossible, but still in a way that seems like a continuation of the old consciousness), then, if the work continues at all, it's invisible—and maybe it doesn't continue. . . . I don't know. But as soon as all activity stops and the body is concentrated or immobile—perhaps no more than simply passive—that penetration is perceptible: it's visible. Visible. And it's not like something more subtle penetrating something less subtle without altering it; the essential point is that this penetration actually changes the composition. It's not merely a degree of subtlety, it's a change in the internal composition. Ultimately, this action probably has an effect on the atomic level. And that's how the practical possibility of transformation can be accounted for.

It's an experience I have all the time.

At times it's a bit new or a bit extreme, and you have to be careful the body doesn't panic. But then you see how everything is dosed out and maintained in a way that . . . (*Mother laughs*) nothing falls to pieces!

On the surface, it's a very humble work, nothing sensational. There are no illuminations filling you with joy and. . .

All that is fine for people seeking spiritual joys—it belongs to the past.

It's a very modest work, very modest, even from a purely intellectual vantage point. It's different from the sensation of knowing things because you ARE them, which gives you joy, a sense of progress. It's not even like that! It is VERY humble, a very humble and unglamorous work, but which keeps on very regularly, with extreme regularity and STUB-BORNNESS.

It will surely stretch over a long period of time.

And at each step, it's as though you had to take great care that nothing gets thrown off balance. The new combinations of vibrations, especially, are difficult for the body—it must be very, very quiet, well under control, very peaceful, or else it panics. Because it's used to vibrations whose effects follow a regular pattern, so if the pattern changes there's a kind of frightened jolt. That must be avoided, the body has to be very gently kept under control.

What the mind thinks, what it expects to see, looks so childish in comparison, like . . . yes, like theatrics, really. It's the difference between some grand extravaganza and the very modest life of each minute. Exactly that.

All the powers, all the *siddhis*, all the realizations, all these things are . . . the grand extravaganza—the great spiritual spectacle. But this isn't like that. It's very modest, very modest, very unobtrusive, very humble, nothing showy about it. It takes years and years and years of silent, quiet and extremely careful work before there can be any visible and tangible results, before anything can be noticed, even for the [Mother's] individual consciousness.

As for those who want to go quickly, if they try going quickly in this realm, they'll be thrown off balance.

You can't go quickly.

Once, when I saw how it was, I complained a bit to the Lord: 'Lord, why did you make the body this way for doing this kind of work? Just look at it!' He answered me (*laughing*), 'It's the best that could be done.' So I said 'Thank You' and kept quiet.

And that's probably true! It has some good points: what they call *stubborn* in English—you know (*Mother plants down*

her two fists and holds them motionless). And stubbornness is an essentially British quality, so there's no other word for it. The body is *stubborn*; and that's what is needed.

All right.*

* * *

The process of transformation not only tends to eliminate illness of the body but also the death of the body. More and more we find Mother asking the question: 'What is death?' In an enigmatic short statement during a conversation with Satprem on 13 March 1963, Mother said:

On a few occasions, you know, I was like this (*Mother makes a gesture of hovering between two worlds*†), as if I were really put in contact with what I have called 'the death of death.' It was the unreality of death. From a COMPLETELY material standpoint. It was a question of cells and of the consciousness in the cells. Like when you are within an inch of something: 'There it is! I'm going to catch it, there it is! . . . ' But then it fades away. It has stayed as an impression.

A few seconds' experience which gave me the sense that the most central problem was solved. And then. . . .

When it is like that, it will be interesting.**

The important conditions that Mother discovered for the physical transformation are the purification, universalisation and impersonalization of the physical consciousness. In her conversation with Satprem on April 6, 1963, Mother gave a very interesting and instructive account of the progress in the impersonalization of the physical consciousness as follows:

There is progress in the impersonalization of the physical, bodily consciousness, with consequences that are probably interesting, but impossible to explain to people who don't understand. For instance . . .

(silence)

I am conscious of the body, but it isn't the consciousness of this body (*Mother touches her body*): it's the consciousness of THE Body—it may be anyone's body. I am conscious, for

*Ibid., pp. 320–2

†In March 1962, when Mother very nearly did not return to her body.

**Mother's Agenda, Vol. 4, p. 78.

instance, of vibrations of disorder (most often they come in the form of suggestions of disorder) in order to see whether they are accepted and have an effect. Let's take the example of a suggestion of haemorrhage, or some such suggestion (I mention haemorrhage because it will soon come into the picture). Under the higher Influence, the body consciousness rejects it. Then begins the battle (all this takes place all the way down in the cells, in the material consciousness) between what we could call the 'will for haemorrhage,' for example, and the reaction of the body's cells. But it's very like a real battle, a real confrontation. And all of a sudden, there's something like a general issuing a command and saying, 'What's this!' . . . You understand, that general is conscious of the higher forces, the higher realities and the divine intervention in Matter; and after trying to use the will, this reaction, that feeling of peace and so on, suddenly he is SEIZED by a very strong determination and issues a command—in no time the effect begins to make itself felt, and little by little everything returns to order.

All this takes place in the material consciousness. Physically, the body has all the sensations—but not the haemorrhage, you understand. But it does have the sensations, that is, the effects: all the sensory effects. It goes on for a while and then follows a whole curve. All right. Once the battle is over, I take a look and wonder (I observe the whole thing, I see my body, which has been fairly shaken, mind you), I say to myself, 'What in the world is all this?' But just for a second, then I forget about it.

A few days afterwards, I receive a letter from someone very close, who has an ardent faith and really holds on to me with almost perfect faith, exceptional. In the letter: the whole story, the attack, the haemorrhage, how suddenly the being is SEIZED, the consciousness is SEIZED with an irresistible will, and hears words—the very words that were uttered HERE. The result: saved (he was dying), saved, cured.

Just enough time for the letter to reach me.

I remembered my episode . . . and began to understand that my body is everywhere!!

You see, it's not a question of just these cells here: it's a

question of cells in, well, quite a lot of people, hundreds, maybe thousands—all that clings anywhere and in any way to the higher Consciousness. And since my mind is silent (I deliberately keep the mind absolutely still, trying not to react to all that constantly comes to it from 'outside', or trying to react almost subconsciously), nothing is there to think, 'Oh, it's this one's body, it's that one's body'—it's THE Body! That's what is so difficult for people to understand. It is THE body—this (*Mother touches her body*) is not my body any more than other bodies (a bit more, in the sense that it is more directly the object of the concentration of the Force). So everything, all the sensations, the movements of consciousness, the battles, all of it is everywhere. And suddenly, with this little affair, oh, I understood a fantastic number of things—and also the difficulty, *mon petit!*... The difficulty... because really, after this experience, the body was not ill but very tired. But then it is seized with such things all the time! All the time, all the time, all the time, you know, they spring up, *brmm!* pounce on it, *brmm!* from this side, that side, every which way. So I have to keep still (*gesture of stopping, silent, in the midst of other activities*), and then I start waging the battle.

(silence)

Which means the body has got its own difficulties (no aggregate of cells is free from difficulties in the present conditions of life), and I think that its capacity to keep still (to an extent) is its only safeguard... but that doesn't reduce the difficulties at all, since the contact doesn't even depend on the physical presence!* But then what tremendous, prodigious power has to be EMBODIED in the physical cells to withstand all that!...

But there too, a shift is taking place (what I told you once: those abrupt experiences that do not settle in but are first contacts†). After the lesson was drawn from this story, suddenly something arose in the body consciousness—which isn't ONE body's consciousness but a general body consciousness—an aspiration, something so pure, so sweet... so sweet... something like an entreaty that Truth and Light

* The contact with other bodies (which in fact are not 'other').

† See conversation of March 16, 1963.

may at last be manifested here, in this. Not 'here in this' (*Mother touches her own body*): it was everywhere.

Then there was a contact*—there was a contact—and a pale blue light, very sweet, very bright, and an Assurance.

It lasted only a second, but it was like a new chapter suddenly opening up.

Mon petit, you are the only person to whom I say all this—there is not one, not one! Not one able to simply understand. Which makes things more difficult, because I am constantly weighed down by the stupidity of people's thoughts (stupidity in the sense of incomprehension), the thoughts of all those around me, who think I am ('I,' what they call 'I,' you know, 'me'), who think I am ill and... I can't tell them a thing! If I hadn't spoken to you today, it would be gone. I would never have said anything. Well, that's the way it is.

So looking at it from an ordinary viewpoint, it's so... fantastic, it means such a... colossal work. Of course, it's the Lord who does it, but will this hold out? (*Mother touches her body*) I can't say.

If He wants, certainly He will find a way for it to hold out. But the thing is rather new....

(silence)†

The question was often raised by Mother whether the process of transformation would continue uninterruptedly and produce a new 'divine' body or whether it may be dissolved at a certain stage. On this question Mother made several statements from time to time, but she never indicated that she had any full assurance that a new 'divine' body would emerge from her body or that her body would not be dissolved. One of the important statements in this connection is in the following conversation recorded in the Agenda (July 31, 1963):

Mother seems quite shaken and tired, though smiling as always.

I've made a discovery—not positively a discovery, but a confirmation. A rather interesting observation.

There was a sort of periodicity in the attacks—can I call

* Gesture of junction between the Supreme and this general body consciousness.

† Ibid., pp. 109–11.

them 'physical'? . . . They're not physical, although they're on the body. They didn't recur at exactly regular intervals, because the periods of time in between weren't always the same, but there was a sort of analogy, of similarity in the circumstances. And now I have come to a kind of certainty.

The work consists, I could say, in . . . either removing or transforming (I am not sure which of the two) all the body's cells that are or have been under the influence of Falsehood (not 'lie' but *falsehood*), of the state contrary to the Divine. But since probably a radical purge or transformation would have resulted in nothing but the body's dissolution, the work goes on in stages, progressively (I am going very far back in time, to my first attacks). So the sequence is the following: first, a series of activities or visions (but those visions are always activities at the same time: both activities and visions) in the subconscious domain, showing in a very living and objective way the Falsehood that has to be removed (transformed or removed). At first I took them as adverse attacks, but now I see they are 'states of falsehood' to which certain elements in the physical being are linked (at the time, I thought, 'I am brought into contact with that because of the correspondence in me', and I worked on that level—but it's another way of seeing the same thing). And it produces . . . certainly there is a dissolution—there is a transformation, but a dissolution too—and that dissolution naturally brings about an extreme fatigue or a sort of exhaustion in the body; so between two of those stages of transformation, the body is given time to recover strength and energy.* And I had noticed that those 'attacks' always come after the observation (an observation I made these last few days) of a great

* A few days later, Mother added: 'There is also something I left unsaid: an urgent need to cease all material activity in order to enable the body to receive fully—as fully as possible—the divine Force that will replace what has been removed. There is something absolute about that need: to stay totally still, quiet, letting the Force descend—permeate the body, rather. All physical activity must be suspended in some way, and if the material organization, or the habit, tends to make it continue, a kind of material impossibility, an excessive fatigue or discomfort, comes to oblige the body to keep still. Because simply to remove or change what should't be there won't do; it must also be replaced by what *SHOULD* be there. Otherwise, there would be a dwindling or gradual reduction of substance resulting in dissolution. What has been sublimated or removed has to be replaced by something which is the true Vibration, the one that comes straight from the Supreme.'

increase in power, energy and force; when the body grows more and more solid, there always follows the next day or the day after, first, a series of nights I could call unpleasant (they are not, for they're instructive), and then a terrible battle in the body. This time I was conscious—naturally, I am conscious every time, but (*smiling*) more so every time.

I had observed lately that the body was getting much stronger, much more solid, that it was even putting on weight(!), which is almost abnormal. Then, I had a first vision (not vision: an activity, but very clear), then another, and then a third. Last night, I was fed a subtle food, as if to tell me that I would need it because I wouldn't take any physical food* (not that I thought about it, I simply noticed I had been fed, given certain foods). And with the visions I had the two preceding nights, I knew that at issue were certain elements forming part of the body's construction (psychological construction), and that they had to be eliminated. So I worked hard for their elimination. And today, the battle was waged.

But then, as I had worked hard for the elimination, the battle was quite formidable—when it exceeds a certain measure, the heart has trouble, and then I need to rest. That's how it happened. But it was so clear, so obvious! And the entire process was SEEN from the beginning, every single step of it, it's . . . a marvel! A marvel of consciousness, of measure, of dosage, to allow the purification and transformation to take place without disrupting the balance, so that dissolution does not occur. It's based on the capacity to endure and withstand (naturally, if the body were unable to endure, that work couldn't be done).

And now the body KNOWS (in the beginning it didn't, it thought it was 'attacks' from the outside, 'adverse' forces; and it can always be explained like that, it was true in a certain way, but it wasn't the true truth, the deepest truth), now the body KNOWS where it all comes from, and it's so marvellous! A marvel of wisdom. . . . It puts everything in its place, it makes you REALIZE that all that play of the adverse forces is a way of seeing things (a necessary way at a given time, maybe—by 'necessary', I mean practical), but it's still an

* Mother did not eat anything this morning.

illusion; illnesses are a necessary way of seeing things to enable you to resist properly, to fight properly, but it's still an illusion. And now, the BODY itself knows all this—as long as it was only the mind that knew it, it was a remote notion in the realm of ideas, but now the body itself knows it. And it is full not only of goodwill but also of an infinite gratitude—it always wonders (that's its first movement), 'Do I have the capacity?' And it always gets the same answer, 'It isn't YOUR capacity.'

'Will I have the strength?'—'It isn't YOUR strength.' Even that sense of infirmity disappears in the joy of infinite gratitude—the thing is done with such goodness, such insight, such thoughtfulness, such care to maintain, as far as possible, a progressive balance.

It came with a certitude, an OBVIOUSNESS: this is the process of transformation.

But this time, there was a voluntary collaboration, so maybe it will go faster.

I was unable to do my work:* the jolt was too strong. But I said I would see you because I wanted to tell you about it.

(silence)

It's odd, when I am in that state, I feel as if to make myself heard I have to lift a staggering weight. I feel (for a few days now) as if I have to speak very, very loudly to be heard; it's almost like a mass . . . yes, as though I were buried underground and had to shout very loudly in order to be heard.

Am I speaking very loudly?

No.

Because, with everybody, I feel as if I had to shout in order to be heard—and it's an effort, a considerable effort. There is a sort of mass, the color of brownish earth, weighing down on me, as though I were buried and had to shout. All the while I was speaking to you just now, I felt as if I were making an enormous effort to be heard.

Am I shouting or . . . ?

No.

Not at all?

No, it must be the thickness of consciousness that you're feeling?

* Mother did not receive the secretaries this morning.

Yes! Yes.

Yes, it's the air—it's in the air.

(long silence)

And I was told something this morning (I think it was this morning, or in the night, I don't remember); it was said to the body, not to me. The body was told that it would go on till complete purification, and that AT THAT POINT it will have the choice between continuing its work or . . . You see, once it has attained complete purification from the cellular point of view (not what people call physical 'purity', that's not it), from the point of view of the divine Influence, which means that each cell will be under the exclusive influence of the Supreme (that's the work under way now), the body was told that that work would be done, and once it was completed, the body ITSELF, entirely under the Supreme's influence, would decide whether it wants to continue or be dissolved.

It was very interesting, because . . . dissolution means a scattering, but to scatter (that's easy to understand) is a way to SPREAD the consciousness over a very large area. So the cells will be given the choice either to act in that way (*gesture of diffusion*) or to act in agglomeration (*Mother makes a fist*).

(silence)

It's the first time the problem has been envisaged from that angle, that is to say, from the standpoint of a general work.

But I don't see how the scattering . . . If it is scattered, if it is dissolved, the whole work is dissolved, isn't it?

No, each cell is perfectly conscious.

Then they would go into other bodies?

(*Mother remains thoughtful a moment*) What happens from the material point of view? . . . Do they know if it reverts to inert Matter, or what? Does it become dust—what does it become?

Dust, yes.

Dust. . . .

They're not cells any more?

No, I don't think so.

Then that's not it, because according to what I was told,

they were cells—they remained cells.

It must be something new.

They remained cells, it was the cell that was given the choice either of staying in its present agglomeration or of spreading.

I don't know, but it seems to me they could persist only in agglomeration with other living beings.

Are the cells in the human body different from the cells in other bodies, in animals for instance? Or are they the same?

Except for certain specialized cells, the other cells aren't different, I believe.

But the specialized cells must be the ones in question, because those in question are fully conscious cells—they are specialized cells.

So I don't see that they could go into animals, I don't think they're the same kind.

They could only go into other human organisms.

Human, yes.

Maybe it's the difference between ONE being and many beings? . . . *

It must be something in preparation. We'll see.

So mon petit, I'll let you go now, because . . .

A few days afterwards,

Mother added this reflection:

It is clearly (according to external logic) a new way of dying that must be possible—no longer death as we regard it. But that . . . for the moment, all we could say would be speculative, not a concrete experience.

We'll see.†

* * *

Here is an interesting account of one of Mother's cellular experiences:

. . . last night, I had a series of fantastic cellular experiences, which I cannot even explain and which must be the beginning of a new revelation.

When the experience began, there was something look-

* Mother means: between an agglomerated individual action and an action spread in many beings.

† Mother's Agenda, Vol. 4, pp. 246-55

ing on (you know, there is always in me something looking on somewhat ironically, always amused) which said, 'Very well! If that happened to someone else, he would think he was quite sick! (*laughing*) Or half mad.' So I stayed very quiet and thought, 'All right, let it be, I'll watch, I'll see—I'll see soon enough! It has started, so it will have to end! . . . ' Indescribable! Indescribable (the experience will have to recur several times before I can understand), fantastic! It started at 8:30 and went on till 2:30 in the morning; that is to say, not for a second did I lose consciousness, I was there watching the most extraordinary things—for six hours.

I don't know where this is going . . .

Indescribable; you know, you become a forest, a river, a mountain, a house—and it's the sensation (an absolutely concrete sensation) OF THE BODY, of this (*gesture to the body*). Many other things too. Indescribable. It lasted a long time, with a whole variety of things.

So at 2:30 in the morning, I said to the Lord, 'That will do, won't it?!' (*Mother laughs*) And He gave me a blissful rest till 4:30.

Good.

I asked myself if for everybody the supramental process will always automatically involve a lot of physical suffering.

No.

No, because I have a growing proof that those things I have mastered now, in the body, I have the power (I keep receiving letters and notes from here or there, from people here or there who have an illness) . . . it is beginning; so far it's only a beginning, a very small beginning: the power to eliminate pain.

You know, on a smaller scale, what happened with your illness.

Yes, but I didn't mean sick people. I mean people who today or in the future will seek to effect the transformation in themselves.

No, they . . .

Will they have to go through all that suffering?

No! That Sri Aurobindo wrote very clearly: for all those who have faith and open themselves in *surrender* and faith, the work will be done automatically.* As long as he was here,

* When Satprem suggested publishing this passage in the *Bulletin* along with the beginning of Mother's comment on the Aphorism, she observed, 'I don't want to

mon petit, all the thirty years I spent with him working, NOT ONCE did I have to make an effort for a transformation. Simply, whenever there was a difficulty, I repeated, *My Lord, my Lord, my Lord* . . . I just thought of him—hop! it went away. Physical pain: he annulled it. You know, some things that were hampering the body, some old habits that had come back, I only had to tell him: off they would go. And through me, he did the same for others. He always said that he and I did the Work (in fact, when he was here, it was he who did it; I only did the external work), that he and I did the Work, and that all that was asked from the others was faith and surrender, nothing more.

If they had trust and gave themselves in perfect trust, the Work was done automatically.

In your body's cells, it is therefore a universal progress that is being made, it's the earth that progresses.

Yes.

(silence)

This body was built for that purpose, because I remember very well that when the war—the First World War—started and I offered my body up in sacrifice to the Lord so that the war would not be in vain, every part of my body, one after another (*Mother touches her legs, her arms etc.*), or sometimes the same part several times over, represented a battlefield: I could see it, I could feel it, I LIVED it. Everytime it was . . . it was very strange, I had only to sit quietly and watch: I would see here, there, there, the whole thing in my body, all that was going on. And while it went on, I would put the concentration of the divine Force there, so that all—all that pain, all that suffering, everything—would hasten the preparation of the earth and the Descent of the Force. And that went on consciously throughout the war.

The body was built for that purpose.

At the time, there was still a lot of mental activity, and those experiences took all the forms the mind gives to things—very nice, very literary! Now, all that is over—happily, thank God! A complete silence—I don't make speeches on the thing.

Speak of that now, it isn't yet time. We need not tell them too clearly that the work is being done for them, they know it only too well! (*laughing*) No need to insist!

But the experience of last night! . . . And to think that when an experience lasts half an hour, three quarters of an hour, one hour, it's considered extraordinary—it lasted from 8:30 till 2:15, nonstop.

A sort of ubiquity in the cells?

Yes, yes.

A oneness—the sense of Oneness.

(silence)

It is clear that if this experience becomes natural, spontaneous and constant, death can no longer exist: even for this, I mean (*Mother touches her body*).

There's something I SENSE there, without being able to express or understand it mentally. There must be some difference, even in the behaviour of the cells, when you leave your body.

It must be another phenomenon that takes place.*

* * *

Between 1962 and 1967, Mother had numerous experiences of the mastery over and liberation from the hold of the physical mind. At the same time, she underwent the training of the cells resulting in the growth and development of the mind of the cells. These five years were marked by nonstop illness and countless heart problems which led her to find the key to the functioning of the cells. In order that the cells could function 'purely'—without any intrusion of factors foreign to its substance, the body had to be emptied completely of its old habits and its old coatings. This meant a direct contact of the Supermind with the cells without the need to pass through the layers of the intellectual mind, the vital mind, the sensory mind and the physical mind. All the protective walls of the species had to disappear so that the new species can emerge.

Indeed, as we have seen above, the first radical turning point was in 1962. As Mother said:

It began when the doctors declared that I was very ill [1962]. Because the body was then completely emptied of its habits and energies; I could not take a step without fainting;

* Ibid., pp. 270–72

as soon as I stood up to walk a little, wham! Down I went! I had to be held up constantly. But I did not lose consciousness for one minute; I would faint, but I was conscious: I saw my body, I knew I had fainted; I didn't lose consciousness and my body didn't lose consciousness. Well, now I understand; at the beginning I didn't understand. * . . .

In 1965, she had said:

I kept remembering what Sri Aurobindo had said: the physical mind is good for nothing, the only way is to get rid of it. It is very difficult to get rid of it, because it is so closely tied to the amalgam of the physical body and its present form that whenever I tried and a deeper consciousness [that of the other state] sought to manifest, it caused me to faint. In other words, uniting or merging with the other state without that physical mind (it was cancelled out) caused fainting. I didn't know what to do.†

Let us study certain other 'important' experiences in the same domain:

- I am on the threshold of a new perception of life. It's as if certain parts of the consciousness were changing from the caterpillar state to the butterfly state, something like that. **
- Recently the following happened: a sort of completely decentralized consciousness (I'm still speaking of physical consciousness), a decentralized consciousness that happened to be here, or there, in this body, in that body (in what people call 'this person' or 'that person'—but that notion no longer makes much sense). Then, a sort of universal consciousness intervened among the cells, and it was as if that consciousness were asking the cells why they wanted to keep this present combination or aggregate [Mother's present body], and pointing out to them the difficulties resulting from the great number of years, for example, or the external limitations, or all the deterioration caused by wear and tear. But it didn't make any difference to them! That universal consciousness was saying, 'Look, here are the problems. . . .'

* Mother's Agenda, Vol. 8, 22.11.1967.

† Mother's Agenda, Vol. 6, 21.7.1965.

** Mother's Agenda, Vol. 5, 18.3.1964.

And those problems were clearly seen: the mind's ingrained sort of pessimism. But the cells themselves couldn't care less! To them it looked like an 'accident,' or an 'unavoidable disease,' in any event something that WAS NOT PART OF THEIR NORMAL DEVELOPMENT, and which had been forced upon them: 'We don't care about that! . . .'. From that moment on, there emerged a sort of LOWER power to act on that physical mind, which brought about a MATERIAL ability to separate oneself from it and reject it. . . . It really seemed as if something decisive had happened. So then, there was a kind of burst of confident joy: 'At last, we're free of this nightmare!' And at the same time, a physical relief, as if breathing had become easier. It was like emerging from inside a shell—a suffocating shell—an opening is suddenly made in the shell, and you can breathe. And it was a totally physical, cellular action.*

□ A transfer of power. The cells and the whole material consciousness used to obey the individual inner consciousness (in most cases the soul, or the mind). But now, this material mind is in the process of setting up its own organization, as the other mind did, or rather as all the other forms of mind did, the mind of each level of being: it is getting an education, if you can imagine. It is learning things and organizing the ordinary knowledge of the material world. It's very interesting. You see, the memory that comes from mental knowledge disappeared long, long ago: I was receiving necessary indications exclusively from above [from higher levels of consciousness]. But now, A SORT OF MEMORY is being built FROM below. It's like a change in command. It's no longer the same thing that makes you act—by 'act,' I mean everything: moving, walking, and so on. The greatest difficulty is with the nerves, because they are so used to the ordinary conscious will that when it stops and you want direct control instead, they go haywire. I experienced that yesterday morning; it lasted over an hour; it was hard, but it taught me a lot. And all this is part of what can be called the 'transfer of power.' The old power withdraws. And before the body adapts to the new power, there is a critical interim period. . . . the minutes seem endless. But I assure you that this mind of

* Ibid., 7.10.1964

the cells is something totally new—totally new.*

□ This vision is rather strange. There always seems to be a veil hanging between myself and things (we will discuss this 'veil' later; it is probably the cellular barrier separating us from the other state), and then, suddenly, for no apparent reason, a certain thing becomes clear, precise, sharp—a minute later, it's gone. Sometimes it's a word shining on a page, sometimes an object. And the quality of the vision is different, too: it's as if the light were inside the object rather than on it—it isn't a reflected light, it isn't bright like a candle, for example; instead of being a projected light, it has its own light, which does not radiate. That happens more and more often, but without the least sense of logic—or rather, I don't understand its logic. But the vision is extraordinarily precise! and with the full knowledge of what is being seen as it is seen. This morning, for instance, I saw this in the unlit bathroom: a bottle in the cabinet became so bright, so... with such inner life! 'Well,' I thought, 'how about that...'—the next minute it was gone. Obviously, it is a preparation for a vision by internal light rather than projected light. And it's very... oh, it's warm, alive, intense, and so precise! Everything is seen at the same time: not only the color and form, but the nature of the vibration in a liquid—it's extraordinary!†

□ All sorts of minor disorders are breaking out, but the consciousness clearly associates them with the transformation; something knows perfectly that the disorder has come to make the transition from the ordinary, automatic functioning to the conscious functioning under the direct control and influence of the Supreme [of 'that,' of the other state]. And when a certain degree of transformation has been achieved on that particular point, another point is considered, then another, and so on... So nothing is done until... everything is ready. And it's all a matter of changing habits. The entire pattern of automatic, millennial habits has to be changed into a conscious and directly guided action.**

□ There is a new type of activity. I am in the process of... I catch myself in the process of doing something, to be exact;

*Mother's Agenda, Vol. 6, 21.8.1965.

†Ibid., 2.6.1965.

**Mother's Agenda, Vol. 7, 22.1.1966.

I am talking to people whom often I don't know, and I describe a scene to them: if they do a certain thing, it will turn out such and such a way. They are like scenes from a story book or a movie. Then, that same day or the next, someone says to me: 'I received a message from you, and you told me to write to this person and tell him such-and-such a thing!' And I am not doing it mentally, not at all: I LIVE—I live a scene or relate a scene to someone, and it is received by someone else (and I am not thinking about that person!). It takes place here, in France, in America, everywhere. It's getting funny.... Someone writes, 'You told me such and such,' and it's one of my 'scenes'! One of the scenes I lived—not lived: both lived and created. I don't know how to explain it. It's like moulding clay. Some stories concern certain countries or certain governments; in those cases, I don't know the outcome—perhaps after some time we'll see it. And in that type of activities, I have all sorts of knowledge which I don't have! Sometimes even medical or technical knowledge that I don't have at all! And I know those things, you see, because I say, 'You must do it this way or that.' It's rather funny.*

* * *

Mother's body had become a living and conscious laboratory of the new species. Sri Aurobindo had written long ago:

The animal is a living laboratory in which Nature, it is said, worked out man. Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious co-operation she wills to work out the superman...†

Three simultaneous and inter-related processes were going on in Mother's body. Firstly, there was a progressive dissolution of the Inconscience at its utmost bottom. Secondly, there was the infiltration, permeation and invasion of the Supermind in the cellular consciousness and in the physical consciousness so as to counteract the Falsehood in Matter, Life and Mind. Thirdly, there was the gradual transformation of the body by means of the collaboration and change of the physical mind

*Ibid., 17.9.1966

†Sri Aurobindo, The Life Divine, Centenary Library, Vol. 18, pp. 3-4

and by means of radical changes in various functionings of organs and faculties.

At the collective level, too, some radical changes were appearing in the functioning of the Ashram. Mother was placing individuals more and more into conditions where synthesis, unity and harmony would become increasingly imperative. A greater and greater stress was laid on the creation of collective consciousness. There were deeper imperatives, too. Already we find in the Agenda of 1961, certain indications of the idea of an ideal city which could be a habitation of a collective life and which could serve as the embryo or seed of the future supramental world. In the words of Mother:

What I myself have seen . . . was a plan that came complete in all details, but that doesn't at all conform in spirit and consciousness with what is possible on earth now (although, in its most material manifestation, the plan was based on existing terrestrial conditions). It was the idea of an ideal city, the nucleus of a small ideal country, having only superficial and extremely limited contacts with the old world. One would already have to conceive (it's possible) of a Power sufficient to be at once a protection against aggression or bad will (this would not be the most difficult protection to provide) and a protection (which can just barely be imagined) against infiltration and admixture. . . . From the social or organizational standpoint, these problems are not difficult, nor from the standpoint of inner life; the problem is the relationship with what is not supramentalized—preventing infiltration or admixture, keeping the nucleus from falling back into an inferior creation during the transitional period.*

(silence)

. . . The realization under community or group conditions would clearly be far more complete, integral, total and probably more perfect than any individual realization, which is always, necessarily—necessarily—extremely limited on the external material level, because it's only one way of being, one mode of manifestation, one microscopic set of vibrations that is touched.†

* Mother's Agenda, Vol. 2, pp. 270–1.

† Ibid, p. 272.



The model of Auroville

In due course, something of this idea of an ideal city began to take shape, and Mother took a decision to establish a small international township (about 10 kms. away from Pondicherry). Mother named it Auroville.

On 28th February, 1968, youths from 124 countries came to deposit a handful of earth from their countries into the urn at the centre of the proposed city. And Mother gave the Charter of Auroville:

1. Auroville belongs to nobody in particular, Auroville belongs to the humanity as a whole.

But to live in Auroville, one must be the willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness.

2. Auroville will be the place for an unending education, of constant progress and a youth that never ages.

3. Auroville wants to be the bridge between the past and the future. Taking advantage of all discoveries from without and from within, Auroville will boldly spring towards future realizations.

4. Auroville will be a site of material and spiritual rasearches for a living embodiment of an actual human unity.

In the first few years, Auroville grew rapidly under Mother's guidance, and its significance came to be recognized not only by India but also by UNESCO and various countries of the world.

* * *

In the meantime, there was a great turning-point in the yoga of the Mother between 10th August and 22nd August 1968. On the 22nd August, Mother sent a note to Satprem (with packets of soup!) in which she had written:

Here are some soups. You must be hungry. This time, it is truly interesting—but rather total and radical. But how far, far away we are from the goal. . . . I will try to remember.*

On the 28th August, when Satprem met Mother, he was given by her a few notes, one of which described a radical operation that was effected:

* Mother's Agenda, Vol. 9, 22.8.1968

The mind and vital sent packing so the physical is left alone to fend for itself.*

Another note said:

For several hours, the landscapes were marvellous, of a perfect harmony, Constant visions.

Each thing has a reason, a precise goal to express nonmental states of consciousness.

Landscapes.

Structures.

Cities.

All immense and very diverse encompassing the whole visual field and translating states of consciousness of the body.

Many, many structures immense cities under construction. . . .†

Mother commented on this as follows:

Yes, the world under construction, the future world under consturction. I didn't hear, I didn't see, I didn't speak an more; I lived in this all the time, all the time, all the time, night and day.

There was also a note of the night of 26th to 27th August: Powerful and prolonged permeation of the supramental forces in the body, all over at the same time.

While commenting on this note, Mother said:

Permeation in the body. Yes, permeation of a current,—I had had it several times, but that night . . . all of a sudden it came as though there was nothing else than a supramental atmosphere. That was nothing else. And my body was in it. And it PRESSED in order to enter, from everywhere, everywhere at the same time—all over. It was not a current, it was an atmosphere that permeated from all sides. This lasted at least four to five hours. . . . This was the first time. For hours. That was nothing else than That. And this (the

* Ibid., 28.8.1968.

† Ibid.

body), it was like a sponge that absorbed, . . .

Ah! I noticed that the cells . . . all over, all the time, all the time, repeated: OM NAMO BHAGAVATE, OM NAMO BHAGAVATE . . . all the time, all the time.*

This entire experience was crucial and radical. One has to imagine a true body growing up in an old body at the very cellular level, where there is no intermediate between the supermind and psychic, on the one hand, and the cellular consciousness of the body, on the other. The cellular consciousness was liberated from all the intermediate levels, including the physical mind. Here was now the possibility of infusing a new genetic code in the cells—the code of the supramental vibration of knowledge, power, harmony and immortality.

This is the phenomenon that took place in Mother's body. A new mind in matter began to work, a new mind of the cells. The key to transform the body was turned.

On 23rd November, 1968, Mother spoke of a central experience. She said:

I have had days when I lived truly all the horrors of the creation (and in the consciousness of their horror) and then this brought about that experience, and . . . all the horror disappeared.

They were not at all things of morality: they were above all physical sufferings. It was above all THE physical suffering. And I saw that physical suffering: a physical suffering that lasts—which does not stop, which lasts day and night—and then all of a sudden, instead of being in that state of consciousness, one is in the state of the consciousness of the exclusive divine Presence—pain vanished! And this was physical, it was absolutely physical, with a physical reason; well, doctors would say: 'It is for this, that, that'; an absolutely material thing, altogether physical: poof! vanished. . . . One changes the consciousness: it returns.

If one remains sufficiently long in the true consciousness, the appearance, what we call the physical 'fact' itself disappears, not merely the pain. . . . I have the impression of having touched . . . (there is no mind that understands, thank God!) but having touched the central experience.

* Ibid.

Only it is just a small beginning.

One would have the impression or the certitude of having touched the supreme Secret, only if the physical would transform. . . . According to the experience (the extremely small experience of the detail), it should be like that. And then, would it be first ONE body that would express that consciousness, or would it be that all, all must be transformed? . . . That, I do not know. . . .*

As we shall see, the question of the receptivity, collaboration and transformation of the collectivity will become more and more imperative. One single body, it seems,—without the support of the minimum collective transformation—cannot sustain full transformation. So Mother's work was constantly double: work on her own body (which had already become the body of the earth) and the collectivity around her. This work was proceeding rapidly with increasing acceleration.

* * *

On 1st January, 1969, Mother had an experience of 'new consciousness', which was later on described by her as the consciousness of the superman, an intermediate between the human and the supramental being.

Speaking of this, Mother said:

On the first, something strange has happened . . . and I was not the only one to feel it, several people felt it. It was just after midnight, but I felt it at 2 O'clock, and some of the people felt it at 4 O'clock in the morning. It was. . . . I told you a few words about it last time, but what was surprising is that it corresponded neither to anything I was expecting (I was not expecting anything), nor to other things that I had felt. It was something very material, I mean to say that it was very external—very external—and it was luminous, with a golden luminosity. It was very strong, powerful; but its characteristic was of a smiling kindness, a peaceful joy, and a kind of blooming in joy and light. And it was like a 'happy new year', like a good wishing. Personally, I was taken by surprise.

It lasted—I felt it at least for three hours. Afterwards I did

* Ibid., 23.11.1968

not pay attention to it, I do not know what had happened. But I told you a few words about it and I told two or three persons: they all had felt it. Because it was VERY material. They all had felt like that, a kind of toy, but a pleasant joy, powerful, and . . . oh! very very sweet, very smiling, EXTREMELY KIND . . . something. . . . I do not know what it is? I do not know what it is, but it is a kind of benevolence; therefore, it was something very close to mankind. And it was so concrete! So concrete. As if it had a taste, so concrete it was. Afterwards I did not bother about it, except that I told two or three persons about it: all of them had felt it. At present, I do not know if it spread around or if . . . it has not gone, the impression is not about something which is coming to leave.

It was something more external than what I usually feel, much more external . . . hardly mental, I mean to say that there was not the feeling of a 'promise' or . . . No. It was rather . . . my own impression, was the impression of an immense personality, immense (I mean to say that, for it, the earth was small, the earth was: *(Mother keeps a small object into her hand, like a ball)*, immense personality, very very kind, coming for . . . *(Mother seems like gently lifting the small ball inside her hand)*, the impression was of a personal god (and yet. . . . I do not know), coming to help. And so—so strong! and at the same time so soft, so understanding.

And it was very external; the body felt it, everywhere, everywhere, everywhere *(Mother touches face and her hands)*, everywhere like that.

What has happened to it? I do not know.

It was the beginning of the year. As if somebody with the dimension of god (that's to say somebody) came to say 'happy new year', with all the power to make it a happy year. It was like that.

But what was it? . . .

So concrete. . . .

I do not know.

Is it. . . . The personality (because it had no forms, I was not seeing any form, there was only what it was bringing—*Mother feels the atmosphere*—the sensation, the feeling: these two, sensation and feeling), I wondered if it was not the supramental personality? Who, then, will manifest later on in material forms.

The body—this very body—feels since that moment (it entered into it everywhere, very much), it feels much more joyful and less concentrated, more lively in a happy expansion, smiling. For example, it speaks more easily. There is a note . . . a constant note of benevolence. A smile, isn't it, a benevolent smile, altogether with a GREAT FORCE. . . . I do not know.

Did you feel anything?

I had a feeling of contentment that day.

Ah! That's it. Yes, that's it.

Is it the supramental personality? . . . which will become incarnate in all those who will have a supramental body. . . .

It was luminous, smiling, and kind BY POWER; I mean to say that the kindness, generally in the human beings, is something rather weak, in the sense that it does not like the struggle, it does not like to fight; but it was not that at all. A kindness which imposes itself *(Mother bangs her two fists on the arms of the armchair)*.

It interested me because it was totally new. And so concrete! Concrete like that *(Mother touches the arms of the armchair)*, like what usually the physical consciousness considers 'the others', concrete like that. It means that it did not pass through an inner being, through the psychic being: it came directly on the body.

What was it, . . . Yes, perhaps that . . . the body's feeling is of a kind of certitude since it happened; a certitude as if it was no longer anxious or uncertain to know. 'What will it be? What will it be, this Supramental PHYSICALLY? What will it be physically?' the body was asking. Now it does not bother anymore, it is content.

Good.

Is it something which will permeate the bodies which are ready?

Yes. . . . I think yes. My impression is that it is the formation which will permeate and which will express itself—permeate and express itself—in the bodies . . . what will be the bodies of the supramental.

Or may be . . . may be the superman, I do not know. The intermediary between the two. Perhaps the 'superman'; it was very human but human with divine proportions, isn't it?

A human without weaknesses and without shadows: it

was all light—all light and smiling and . . . sweetness at the same time.

Yes, perhaps the superman. . . *

Mother continued on the 8th January her comments on the experience of the 1st January:

And this descent of the superman's consciousness. . .

Did I tell you that I had identified it afterwards?

When you told us last time, you had identified it.

Yes, but I had told 'the supramental consciousness.'

Yes, you had told 'perhaps the superman?'

Yes that's it. It is the descent of the superman's consciousness. I got the assurance afterwards.

It was on the 1st January after midnight. I woke up at 2 O'clock in the morning surrounded by a consciousness, but so concrete, and NEW, in the sense that I had never felt that. And it lasted, extremely concrete, present, for two to three hours, and afterwards, it spread around and went to find all the people who could receive it. And I knew at the same time that it was the superman's consciousness, I mean to say the intermediary between the human being and the supramental being.

It gave to the body a kind of assurance, of confidence. That experience, as if it were, stabilised it and if it keeps the true attitude, all support is there to help.

There are a certain number of people (I enquired afterwards) who had the experience, who felt that (not so clearly) but the presence of a new consciousness—many people. They told me (I asked them if they had felt it), they told me: oh yes. But each of them with . . . (*Mother does a slight twist with her fingers*) naturally his special approach.

(silence)

What is surprising (I noticed it in the other people): when the Action is silent, it is MUCH MORE PRECISE than when it happens through words. The words, they receive them mentally and there is always a small twist: a twist in the content of the words. Whereas when it is a direct action

* Mother's Agenda, Vol. 10, 4.1.1969

(*Mother makes a gesture of inner communication*), it is very precise.*

The advent of this New Consciousness may be regarded as a crucial development of the Mother's yoga of the Body. Indeed, this consciousness was the supramental consciousness working through an intermediate body—a body, human in origin but thoroughly purified and refined right up to the cellular level and thus capable of the operations of the Supermind directly in the physical body.

True, the entire physical body was not yet fully transformed, but it was yet a vehicle in which the subtle physical was so much supramentalised that its real matter—which Mother had described as something much more dense and compact and plastic than the gross physical that we see—could manifest, operate and produce results in and through the outer body.

This 'new consciousness', Mother explained later, began to operate when her body lost all sense of separative individuality. Since the arrival of this consciousness, things began to precipitate and there was an extraordinary rapidity of movement in the circumstances. Its method of working consisted of putting people in front of themselves and to apply a pressure so that all that resisted in the nature would come out on the surface. Mother said that she saw all this all the time, for small things as for big things, for the political affairs of the country as for the organisation of a household.†

In the beginning of 1970, Mother spoke of the replacement of knowledge-processes in her body by a new perception which was total, something that comprehended at the same time hearing, vision and knowledge. There was, she said, no differentiation among her organs. She pointed out that the new consciousness insisted on surpassing all divisions and all exclusiveness, including the great division of life and death. Mother discovered 'over-life', which is at once life and death, or which is rather something that cannot be described either as life or as death, but some other third state in which the contradiction of life and death is overcome.

* * *

* Ibid., 8.1.1969.

† Ibid., 19.3.69, 19.4.69, 7.5.69, 23.8.69.

The question of death had begun to receive Mother's attention more and more pointedly since several years. In fact, as Mother had said, the problem of death was *the* problem that was given to her to solve. One aspect of the problem was the waste that death would entail by cutting short the continuing process of the permeation of the supramental force in the cells. Mother had spoken of this problem as far back as 1964:

You see, we are told again and again in consoling words that all the work we are doing is not lost and this entire work on the cells to make them conscious of the higher life is not lost—it isn't true, it is absolutely lost! Suppose I leave my body tomorrow; this body will revert to dust (not immediately but after some time), so everything I have done for these cells will be of no use at all, except that the consciousness will go out of the cells—but it always goes out of the cells anyway! . . .

. . . it is a waste. From the physical standpoint, it is a sheer waste. For the mind and the vital, it's another question, it isn't interesting; we have known for a long time that their life does not depend on the body. But I am speaking of the body, that's what interests me, the cells of the body; well, death is nothing but a waste. . . .

Which means that before this body dissolves, a new creation must take place . . . a certain cellular quality must be made to bring about a different form (the form can change, in fact it does change all the time, it's never the same), but in such a way that the conscious relationship among the cells remains. . . .*

No solution to this problem was found for several years. In the meantime, she made several experiments. In February 1966, Mother said that she was trying to find out the secret of the process of death so that one could undo it. A fortnight later, she said: 'I am like a dead person who lives on the earth.' She said that it was a different way of living, independent of physical laws, but dependent exclusively on the Supreme Will. Two months later, she spoke of a curve of experiences which demonstrated repeatedly the difference between being in the body and being without the body as far as the conscious-

* Mother's Agenda, Vol. 5, 26.8.1964

ness is concerned. Then came the question of eating the food. She said that she could no more eat; in fact, this problem would remain right till the end—it was very difficult for her to eat, as though eating would mean swallowing the difficulties of the external world. She was rapidly proceeding towards preparing the cells that would be capable of sustaining the Supramental consciousness. This required, she found, an utter plasticity that is impossible in the skeleton with all the rigidity of the bones. Indeed, the supramental body which would be a condensation or densification of 'some stuff' could be utterly plastic, but the question was how to graft that body in the body that we can see and touch. The gulf between the two was too great to be covered except by several intermediate stages.

Could this process be accelerated by recourse to a cataleptic trance? Mother had felt the need of such a trance from time to time, but she had always considered it to be the method of inertia and laziness. However, on 14th January, 1967, she dictated a note in which she said that she might need to enter into a cataleptic trance and that her body should be left in peace. 'This could last several days, perhaps weeks or even more.' But she preferred that the need for immobile repose be replaced by the power of an inner concentration.

She began to perceive two states of Matter more and more persistently, the state of Matter as we ordinarily see, and the state of what she called the true Matter, a luminous Matter, Matter of multi-colored light associated with the shades of all the colors.

This gave rise to the possibility of a transition so that the outer body would be gradually replaced by the new body of true matter. Mother found that a local or momentary manifestation would not be impossible; but more and more she felt that there had to be a sufficient *collective* transformation for achieving durable manifestation.

During the first months of 1968, Mother had repeated experiences of a state that determines the rupture of the equilibrium, the dissolution of the form which we call death. This was at one extreme; and, at the other extreme, she had repeated experiences of the state of unmixed Bliss. She said that the fusion of these two states would mean the supreme Power and that if That would be realised physically, the problem would

end. The work consisted of bringing about that fusion, and this required the change of the consciousness of all the cells. Indeed, this was a gradual process, and it proceeded by taking up groups of cells or parts of faculties, one after the other.

It was against this background that Mother had an important experience in early February 1969. Mother said: 'It was—never ever has the body felt so happy! It was the complete Presence, absolute freedom and a sense of certitude. [Its death] didn't matter in the least: these cells, other cells—there was life everywhere, consciousness everywhere. It was absolutely wonderful. It came in without effort; it went away simply because. . . I had too many other things to do. And this is the DIVINE SENSE, you know, it means having a divine sense. During those few hours (three or four), I absolutely understood what it meant to have a sense of the divine consciousness in the body. And whether it was this body, that body or another body (*Mother made a gesture all around her, indicating the body of this person, that person*) didn't matter at all: it just went from one body to another, totally free and independent, with the full knowledge of the limitations or possibilities of each body. Absolutely marvellous! I had never, ever had that experience before. Absolutely marvellous. It went away because I was so busy and. . . And it lasted several hours. Never has this body, in the ninety-one years it has been on earth, felt such a happiness: freedom, absolute power, and no limits—no limit, no impossibilities, nothing. It was. . . all bodies were this body; there was no difference.'

About a month later, Mother said:

The body-consciousness has become at once individualised and independent, such that it can enter into other bodies and feel itself absolutely at ease. I made an experiment one day ('I made it', it is not that the body made it, it is: 'it was made to do 'it', it is just that Consciousness which made it do that experiment) to enter into three or four persons, like that, one after the other, and then, in each one, to feel what was the manner of being OF THE BODY: it was not at all to enter vitally or mentally, it was a physical entry. And then, it was really very interesting. . . . And this changes altogether

*Mother's Agenda, Vol. 10, 15.2.1969

the attitude of the body towards the solutions; indeed, there is no more attachment or sense of disposal, because the consciousness. . . it is the corporeal consciousness which has become independent. And that is very interesting. This means that in any physical substance which is sufficiently developed so as to receive it, it can manifest itself.*

A week later, Mother said the following:

One question kept coming back: All this work of transformation of the cells, of the consciousness in the cells, seems to have to be wasted since the body will disintegrate. Then, clearly, almost clearly, there came: There is a way, which is to prepare within oneself, before death, a body with all the transformed, illumined, conscious cells—to assemble and form them into a body with the maximum number of conscious cells—and once that is completed, the consciousness enters that body and the other can dissolve—it doesn't matter any more.†

When Sri Aurobindo left his body, the accumulated result of all his physical consciousness was transmitted to Mother's body, and thus there was no waste. But now, apart from Mother's body, there was no other body which was so developed that it could receive, if Mother left her body, the accumulated result of her physical consciousness. This was a formidable problem. But as we see from what she said, this problem was now resolved. Even if she left her body, the work would not be spoilt, there would be no waste. The work could continue.

*Ibid., 12.3.1969

†Ibid., 19.3.1969

'This was that, the work that Sri Aurobindo had given to me'

And we come now to the decisive point which Mother has explained in her conversation with Satprem on 14th March 1970.

14.3.1970

....And the action of this Consciousness... (how to say?) it is almost merciless in its showing to what extent all the mental construction is false—everything, even the reactions which look spontaneous, all that is the result of an extremely complex mental construction.

But it is merciless.

One is born into it and it seems so natural to feel according to that, to react according to that, to organise everything according to that, that. . . . It leads you beside the truth. It is in the very organisation of the body.

And then, the Action seems to impose itself with an extraordinary might and what appears (what appears to us) without mercy (*Mother bangs her fist in the matter*), in order that we learn the lesson.

(long silence)

I remembered the time when Sri Aurobindo was here. . . . Indeed, the being's inner part was entering into a consciousness which felt, saw the things according to the superior consciousness: totally different; and then, exactly when Sri Aurobindo had fallen sick, and when there were all these things, firstly this accident (he broke his leg*) . . . , then the body, the BODY was saying all the time: 'These are dreams, these are dreams, this is not for us; for us, the bodies, it is like that. . . ' (*gesture below the earth*). It was terrible. . . . And all that was gone. It was completely gone after so many

*24 November 1938

years—so many years of effort—, it was gone, and the body itself was feeling the divine Presence, and it had the impression that . . . everything would necessarily have to change. And then, these days, this formation which had gone (which is a terrestrial formation, of the entire humanity, such that those who have the vision, the perception, or even the natural aspiration towards this superior Truth, when they come back to the [material] Fact, are faced with this dreadfully painful thing of the constant negation of all the circumstances), that, the body had totally liberated itself from—and it came back. It came back, but . . . when it came, when it saw it, it saw it AS ONE SEES A FALSEHOOD. And I understood to what extent it had changed because, when it saw it, it had the impression . . . it looked at that with a smile and the impression, ah! it was a formation which had no truth any more. And it has been an extraordinary experience: that its time is over. Its time is over. And this Pressure of the Consciousness is a pressure in order that the things, as they were—so miserable and so small and so obscure and so . . . ineluctable at the same time, in appearance—, all that, was . . . (*Mother makes a gesture above her shoulder*) is behind like a past which is gone. Then really, I saw—I saw, I understood—that the working of this Consciousness (which is MERCILESS, it does not care if it is difficult or not difficult, even probably it does not care much about apparent damage), it is in order that the normal state ceases to be so heavy, so obscure and so ugly—so low—and that there would be a dawn . . . isn't it, something which rises at the horizon: a new Consciousness. Something truer and more luminous.

What Sri Aurobindo says here,—regarding illnesses,—is exactly that: the power of habit and of all the constructions and what seems 'inevitable' and 'irrevocable' in the illnesses; all that, it is as if the experiences multiply to show that . . . to teach us that it is simply a question of attitude—of attitude—to transcend . . . to transcend this mental prison in which humanity is imprisoned and to . . . breathe up there.

And this is the experience of THE BODY. Previously, those who had inner experiences used to say: 'Yes, up there it is like that, but here. . . .' Now, the 'but here', soon will not be any more. We are doing the conquest of that, that formidable

change: the physical life must be directed by the superior consciousness and not by the mental world. It is the change of authority. . . . It is difficult. It is laborious. It is painful. Obviously, there is breakdown, but. . . . But really, one can see—one can see. And that's the REAL CHANGE. That's what will allow the new Consciousness to express itself. And the body learns—it learns the lesson—all the bodies, all the bodies.

(silence)

It was the old division made by the mental: 'above, it is all very well, you can have all the experiences and everything is luminous and wonderful; here, nothing doing.' And the impression that when one is born, one is still born in 'the world where there is nothing to do.' Moreover, it explains why all those who did not foresee the possibility that it could be otherwise have said: 'The best is to get out of it, and then. . . ' all that has become so clear! But this very change, the fact that it is not unavoidable ANY LONGER, that's the great Victory: that it is not unavoidable ANY LONGER. One feels—one feels, one sees, and the body itself has had the experience—that, soon, here too, it can become truer.

There is . . . there is really something which has changed in the world.

(silence)

Obviously, it will take time for it to be truly established. There, it is the battle. From all sides, on every plane, there is an assault of things which come to say externally: 'Nothing has changed'—but it is not true, the body knows that it is not true. And now it knows, it knows in what sense.

And what Sri Aurobindo has written, precisely in these aphorisms, that I am looking into at the moment, it is so prophetic! It was such a vision of the True Thing. So prophetic!

(silence)

And now I see, I see how his departure and his work so . . . so immense, indeed, so constant, in the subtle physical, how much, how much it has helped! How much it has (*Mother makes the gesture of triturating the matter*), how much it has helped to prepare the things, to change the structure of the physical.

All the experiences that others had had, those of entering into contact with superior worlds, they left the physical here as it is (How to say? . . .) from the beginning of the existence until Sri Aurobindo's departure, I was in the consciousness that one can climb up, one can know, one can have all the experiences (in fact, one had them), but when one came back in the body . . . , it was these old formidable mental laws which directed everything. And then, all these years have been years to prepare—to prepare—to free oneself and to prepare—, and these last days, it was . . . ah! the PHYSICAL verification, made by the body, that it had changed.

It must be 'worked out' as one says, it has to be realised in all details, but the change IS DONE—the change is done.

This is to say that the material conditions which had been elaborated by the mental, FIXED by it (*Mother closes the fist tightly*), and which were looking so inevitable, to the extent that those who had a living experience of the higher worlds thought that one had to escape from this world, to abandon this material world if one truly wanted to live in the Truth (that is the cause of all those theories and all those beliefs), but now, it is no more like that. Now, it is no more like that. The physical is CAPABLE of receiving the Superior Light, the Truth, the true Consciousness and to ma-ni-fest it.

It is not easy, it requires endurance and will, but the day will come when it will be totally natural. The door has just—just been opened—that's all, now one must go.

(silence)

Naturally, what was established is clinging and desperately defending itself. That's why all this trouble (*wriggling gesture in the terrestrial atmosphere*)—it has lost the game. It is finished. It is finished.

(silence)

It took . . . a little more than one year for this Consciousness to win this Victory. And yet, naturally, it is visible only to those who have the inner vision, but . . . but it is done.

(long silence)

This was that, the work that Sri Aurobindo had given to me. Now, I understand.

But it is as if from all sides—all sides—, these mental

forces, these mental powers, are rising in protest—in violent protest—to impose their old laws: 'But it has always been like that! . . .' But it is finished. It will never be like that, that's it.

(long silence)

Something of this battle took place in this body these last days. . . . It is very interesting. . . . there was from outside, coming from outside, an effort to give to this body some experiences in order that it would be forced to see: 'No, what has always been, will always be; you can try, but it is an illusion', and then, something was coming, a nice little disorganisation in the body, and then the body was answering by its attitude: a peace like that (*immutable gesture*) and its attitude (*gesture of open hands*): 'as You will, my Lord, as You will. . .'—like a lightning, everything disappears! And it has happened several times (about ten times at least in one day). Then—then the body begins to feel: 'Here we are! . . .' It has this joy, this joy of . . . of the Marvel which has been lived.

It is not like it was, it is not ANY LONGER like it was—it is not any longer like it was.

Still one must struggle, one must have patience, courage, will, confidence,—but it is not any longer 'like that'. It is the old thing which tries to cling—hideous! Hideous. But . . . it is not any longer like that. It is not any longer like that.

Here we are.

And that too: how far, how far will the body be able to go? That too, it is . . . PERFECTLY peaceful and happy: as You will.

(long silence)

All the rest seems so old, so old, like something . . . which belongs to a dead past—trying to resuscitate, but it no longer can.

And everything—everything, all circumstances are as catastrophic as they can be: problems, complications, difficulties, everything—everything sets against like that, like ferocious beasts, but . . . it is over. The body knows that it is over. It may take centuries, but it is finished. To disappear, it might take centuries, but now it is finished.

This very concrete and absolute realisation that one could only have when one went out of Matter (*Mother lowers one*

finger): it is sure, it is sure and certain that one will have it HERE-ITSELF.

(*Mother looks a long time at the disciple, then takes his hands*).

This is the fourteenth month since the Consciousness has come. Fourteenth month,* twice seven.

(silence)

Are we on the 14th?

Yes, fourteenth.

Then that's interesting.

How much he has worked since he has left! oh! . . . all the time, all the time. . . .

(silence)

It seems . . . it seems like a miracle in the body. The disappearance of this formation, it seems truly miraculous.

And everything becomes clear.

We shall see.

(long silence)

It has been relatively fast.

(silence)

Well. . . .

Do you mean to say that all the human beings—conscious beings—who have a little faith, from now on have the possibility to get out of this mental hypnotism?

Yes,—yes, that's it. That's it.

That's it.

Mother reiterated during her conversation with Satprem on 29.4.1970 that the object to be accomplished was the change in the physical consciousness, that the change in the physical appearance was a secondary consequence, and that that would be the last thing to change. She said emphatically that the thing that had to be accomplished was accomplished. In her own words:

. . . We believe that this, this appearance (*Mother refers to the body*), this is . . . this appears to be, for the ordinary consciousness, the most important—it is evidently the last thing that

* Mother's Agenda Vol. 11, 14.3.1970

will change. And it appears, for the ordinary consciousness, that it will be the last thing to change, because it is the most important: it will be the surest sign. But it is not at all so! . . . It is not at all so.

It is the change IN THE CONSCIOUSNESS—which has been produced—, which is the most important thing. All the rest, they are consequences. And here, in this world, material world, this appears to be the most important because it is . . . it is all inverse. I do not know how to explain.

For us, when this (the body) would be visibly something different from what it is, one would say: 'Ah! now the thing is done.'—This is not true: the thing is DONE. This (the body), it is a secondary consequence. . . .*

* Ibid., 29.4.1970

Towards the Transformed Body

A momentous stage was reached. An irreversible stage was reached. The whole work, the real work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, was to open up the consciousness of the cells by fixing the supramental consciousness in the body-consciousness. This work was done; the rest was a secondary consequence. As Mother said: 'It must be "worked out" as one says, it has to be realised in all details, but the change is DONE—the change is done. . . . The physical is CAPABLE of receiving the Superior Light, the Truth, the true consciousness and to manifest it.' Again, as Mother said: 'Still one must struggle, one must have patience, courage, will, confidence,—but it is not any longer "like that". It is the old thing which tries to cling—hideous! Hideous. But . . . it is not any longer like that. It is not any longer like that. . . . And everything—everything, all circumstances are as catastrophic as they can be: problems, complications, difficulties, everything—everything sets against like that, like ferocious beasts, but . . . it is finished. The body knows that it is finished. It may take centuries, but it is finished. To disappear, it might take centuries, but now it is finished.'

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

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

describe here in Mother's own words some of these resistances and discoveries.

* * *

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

19 November 1969

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

Because there was a day when a number of problems were posed as a result of something which had occurred . . . then this morning (at the end of the night), I have had the experience which was an explanation. And during two hours, I lived in an absolutely clear perception (not a thought: a clear perception) of . . . why and how of the creation. It was so luminous! So clear! It was irrefutable. And this lasted at least four to five hours, and then there was decantation; little by little, the experience diminished in intensity and clarity . . . and then I have just seen a lot of people, so . . . it is difficult to explain now.

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

Indeed, many things that Sri Aurobindo had said had remained . . . in spite of all that one has read, and all the theories and all the explanations, there was something which had remained (how to say?) difficult to explain (it is not 'explaining', that, that is so little). For example, suffering and the will to inflict suffering, over this side of the Manifestation. There was a sort of pre-vision of the original identity of hatred and love, because this went to the extremes, but for all the rest, it was difficult. Today, it was so luminously simple, that's that! So evident! . . . (*Mother looks at a note*

which she had written). Words are nothing. And then I had written with a pencil which writes badly. . . .

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

It is not I who write. That is to say, it is not the ordinary consciousness or the pencil. . . . I do not know any more what I have put.

(*Mother tries to read but in vain*)

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

Indeed, the earth was like a representative centre of the creation, and then there was identity of the inertia of the stone (like something most inert), and then . . . (*Mother tries again to read.*)

I do not know if it will come.

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

(*Mother remains concentrated for a long time*)

One could say like this (for the facility of expression, I would say: the 'Supreme' and the 'creation'). In the Supreme, that is a unity which contains all the possibilities perfectly united without differentiation. Creation is, so to say, the projection of all that constitutes that unity, by dividing the opposites, that is to say by separating (this is what was seized by him who had said that the creation was the separation), by separating: for example, the day and the night, the white and the black, the evil and the good, etc. (All that, that is our explanation.) All that, all that taken together, is a perfect unity, immovable and indissoluble. The creation, it is the separation of all which 'constitutes' that unity—one could call it the division of the consciousness—, the division of the consciousness, which then moves out of the unity conscious of its unity, to arrive at the unity conscious which is conscious of its multiplicity IN UNITY.

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

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

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

Words are nothing.

All—all, from the most material to the most ethereal, ALL entered into it, clear—clear—clear: a vision.

And the evil, that which we call 'the evil', has its INDISPENSABLE place in the totality. And it would no more be felt as evil from the minute when one becomes conscious of That—necessarily. The evil, it is that infinitesimal element which sees its infinitesimal consciousness; but because consciousness is ONE essentially, it takes it up again, it regains the Consciousness of the Unity—both together. And it is that, IT IS THAT which is to be realised. It is that marvellous thing. I have had a vision: at that moment there was the vision of THAT. . . . And for the first commencements (are they 'commencements?'), what one calls in English outskirts, that which is most remote from the central realisation, that becomes the multiplicity of things, and the multiplicity also of sensations, of sentiments, of all—the multiplicity of the consciousness. And it is that action of separation which has created, which creates the world constantly, and which at the same time creates all; suffering, happiness, all—all—all

which is created, by its . . . what one could call 'diffusion'; but it is absurd, it is not a diffusion—we, we live in the sense of space, so we say diffusion and concentration, but it is nothing of the sort.

And I understood why Theon said that we were in the age of the 'Equilibrium'; that is to say that it is by the equilibrium of all these innumerable points of consciousness and of all these opposites, that the central Consciousness is rediscovered . . . and all that one is saying is idiotic—at the same time when I am saying this, I see to what degree it is idiotic; but there is no other way of doing it. It is something . . . something which is SO CONCRETE, so true, indeed, so absolutely. . . . THAT.

During the time when I lived it, it was . . . but perhaps I could not have said it at that moment. This (*Mother points to her note*) I was obliged to take a paper and to write, and it is up to such a point that I do not any more know what I have written. . . . The first thing that was written was this:

Stability and change

It was the idea of the original Stability (so to say) which, for the Manifestation, is translated by inertia. And the development is translated by change. Well. Afterwards, this came:

Inertia and transformation

But it is gone. The sense is gone—words had a meaning!

Eternity and progress

They were opposites. (These three things).

Then there was a break (*Mother draws a line under the triple opposition*), and once again, a Pressure, and then I wrote this:

Unity = . . .

(*There follow three illegible words*)

And this, this was the expression much more true of the experience, but it is illegible—I believe that it was deliber-

ately illegible. One has to have the experience in order to be able to read it.

(the disciple tries to read)

It seems to me that there is the word 'repose'?

Ah! It must be that. Repose and. . .

(Mother enters into a concentration)

Is it not 'power'?

Oh! Yes! 'Power and repose combined.'

Yes that's that.

It is not I who have chosen these words, so they must have a special force. When I say 'myself', I mean the consciousness which is there: *(gesture showing high above)*; it is not that consciousness. It was something that put a pressure on me, which obliged me to write.

(Mother recopies her note)

Stability and change
Inertia and transformation
Eternity and progress

Unity = power and repose
combined.,

This is the idea that these two, combined, gave back that state of consciousness which wanted to express itself.

This was on the scale of the universe—not at the scale of the individual.

I am putting a line between the two in order to say that it did not come at the same time.

I remember, I had written the two (power and repose) and the two points to express that they were together, then the word 'combined' came.

. . . It was really a glory in which I lived during those hours of the morning.

And then, all—all, all our notions, all, even the most intellectual, all that had become like . . . as though they were puerile. And it was so evident that one had the impression: there is no need to say it!

. . . There are NO CONTRARIES. No contraries—not even contradictions, I say; no contraries. It is that Unity, it is to LIVE in that Unity. And this does not translate itself by thoughts or words. You know, it was . . . an immensity without limit and a light . . . a light without movement, and at the same time, a feeling of well-being . . . without even appreciation of well-being.

Now, I am convinced that it is that, the supramental consciousness.

And necessarily, necessarily little by little, this must change the appearances.

(long silence)

There is no word which can express the magnificence of the Grace: how all is combined in order that everything moves as fast as possible. And individuals are miserable to the extent to which they are not conscious of 'that', and they take a false position in regard to what happens to them.*

In continuation of the above experience, we have, it seems, the following account which Mother gave to Satprem on 25th February, 1970:

It has become very interesting, only I cannot speak . . . *(Mother coughs)* and it is better not to speak.

Very interesting.

I spent the whole of last night with Sri Aurobindo, but with a WORLD of explanations. He made me understand all kinds of things, but absolutely . . . extraordinary. And practical: on the actual state of things . . . Not to speak, it is for that reason that I am coughing, it is deliberate (!)

It is extraordinarily interesting.

(silence)

A demonstration in detail of the difference between the two states of consciousness.

(silence)

He explained to me, among other things, and in a manner absolutely practical and positive, that the cause of all the maladies, disorders, conflicts, here, in the material world, is

* Mother's Agenda, Vol. 10, 19.11.1969.

that the two movements which are simultaneous—the one is the movement of duration (that which one could call the Stability) and the other, the movement of transformation—the two movements in the original consciousness are one and they are not in contradiction; and I was shown how (not with the thought: with the consciousness), here, they are separated, and it is that which is the cause of the death. It is because they cannot harmonise with each other—they do not know how to harmonise with each other; they can but they do not know. The one, it is the movement of transformation, and the other, the movement of stability. When they are not in harmony, and when they are not where they ought to be, that produces a rupture of equilibrium and the being dies—things die, everything dies—, because of that. But told in this fashion, it does not have any sense. It is the experience of the things which was given . . . and this also the cough and all that—all that, all—, it is so simple! It is so evident once you have the experience.

One could say (almost say) that if the two could find their equilibrium of existence simultaneously, that recreates the Divine. . . . It is in us, but not harmonised.

(silence)

At least four hours with Sri Aurobindo last night Oh! Extraordinary—extraordinary, everything shown, everything explained.*

* * *

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

*Mother's Agenda, Vol. 11, 25.2.70.

groups of the cells would learn the real life or 'superlife.'

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

As she said:

And it was that: no sex, neither man nor woman—no sex. It was a form like that (*Mother draws a silhouette in the space, very slender*). . . .†

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

This little body is like a point, but it has the feeling of being the expression of a formidable power. And it is helpless: no capacity, no expression, nothing, and rather miserable. And yet, there's this incredible concentration of power! Sometimes it even has trouble withstanding it, you know. All the experiences have sort of increased a hundredfold. . . . But my legs hurt. It's 24 hours a day, you see, and no possibility to rest. That's the trouble. . . . If I let myself go, I would scream. . . . Terrible. . . . That night, I said to myself, 'This is what hell is like.' Terrible—it's terrible. I don't know why I had to go through this. . . . Because it meant that death wasn't a solution, you see! And that's frightening. . . . It's so horrible, I am tempted to say: Pray for me.**

Then she recovered. But five months later, the second blow fell. It was a paralysis of the leg. For at least three weeks, there

*Ibid., 18.4.1970.

†Ibid., 9.5.1970.

**Ibid., 2.9.1970; 5.9.1970.

was constant pain, night and day, 24 hours a day, without any fluctuation whatsoever. The right leg also was being caught. When this happened, she concentrated tremendously, and she walked for a long, long time to keep it from being caught also. She overcame after several weeks. Gradually, the leg was not in pain, and it came back to normal.

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

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

* * *

Another important problem connected with the physical transformation was the relationship between the physical ego (ego-sense of the physical) and the life of the body. Mother found that the dissolution of the physical ego was a necessary part of the process of the physical transformation, and that the disappearance of the physical ego was not an insuperable bar to the cotinuanance of the physical life. In Mother's words:

And the disappearance of that [physical ego] . . . for a long time one has had the impression that if the ego disappears, the being disappears, the form disappears—but that's not true! It isn't true. In any case, it has become ready [Mother's body] to live without an ego. . . . The trouble is that life's ordinary laws no longer hold. Which means all the old habit, plus the new thing to be learned.

It is as if the cells—not the body's cells: the organization that makes up the form (that holds everything together and

* See Mother's Agenda, Vol. 12, p. 87—where Mother says: 'For me, Victory is certain, but I don't know . . . if it's tomorrow or . . . (gesture into distance).

I don't know what road we will take to get there. Victory is certain, that's obvious, but what road we are going to take to get there? . . .'

makes up a form, a form we call human), it's as if that had to learn it can go on living without the sense of separate individuality. Curious. Without the sense of ego. While for thousands of years it's been accustomed to existing separately only because of the ego—without ego it goes on . . . according to another law the body doesn't yet know, and which it finds incomprehensible. It has nothing to do with a will, it's not. . . . I don't know . . . a something . . . a way of being. But then, billions of ways of being.

It has to learn to be a certain way of being.*

While commenting on the above after a fortnight, Mother said:

Oh, that [the dissolution of the ego] is perfect; it's my every-day experience, every minute, all the time. . . .

You know, it's my experience every minute, for every single thing, constantly: for rest, for activity, for food, for everything, for action with people, for everything, everything; it's a kind of. . . . I could almost say a possession by the Divine. And my body senses that it exists only like this (*fists clenched, clinging to the Divine*): without That, there is nothing. Ah, the experience is constant and total.†

* * *

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

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

(silence)

* Ibid., pp. 159–60.

† Ibid., p. 166.

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

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

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

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

* * *

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

* * *

* Mother's Agenda, Vol. 12, pp. 246–7.

† Ibid., p. 298.

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

That's increasing from day to day.

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

That's all I can say for the moment.

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

(silence)

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

* * *

□ Now, the body has the conviction that only death can stop its transformation. So it's impossible. Only some kind of violent death, an 'accident' (well . . .) could stop the transformation, otherwise the work is being done regularly,

* Ibid., p. 302.

regularly (*gesture of irresistible advance*). It's like that, the body is convinced of it now, that only violence could stop it—but then if that happens, it's certainly because it had to happen, you see, for some reason . . . which it has no desire to know, it doesn't care a button. But otherwise, as long as it's here, it knows that the work will go on and on and on . . . in spite of everything. That's it.*

* * *

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

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

Oh, it would take volumes to narrate what is happening.

* Ibid., p. 323.

† Actually, Mother means the bodily mind.

It's . . . remarkably interesting, and ENTIRELY new. Entirely new.*

* * *

□ I have the impression that I am on the way to discovering . . . the illusion that must be destroyed so that physical life can be uninterrupted—discovering that death comes from a . . . a distortion of consciousness. That's it.

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

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

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

Something is HAPPENING—that's all I can say.†

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

If you like, I could say that at each minute you feel you can either live eternally or die (*gesture of a slight tilt from one side to*

* Ibid., pp. 343–4.

† Ibid., pp. 348–9.

** Ibid., p. 246.

the other). Every minute is like that. And the difference [between the two] is so slight that you can't say: Do this and you'll be on this side, do that and you'll be on the other—not possible. It's a way of being almost beyond description.*

* * *

In the political field, there were many leaders who were approaching Mother for guidance and help. This movement was increasing day by day, and during 1971, when the situation in Bangla Desh took an ugly turn, Generals of the Army and many leaders in the Government of India turned to Mother for help, advice and blessings for positive action. In the early part of 1971, Mother had, in reply to a request from the then Prime Minister of India, sent a message: 'The recognition of Bangla Desh is imperative and urgent.' Finally, there was a war, and India emerged victorious. The Prime Minister wrote the following letter to Mother:

Revered Mother,

Through these critical months I have thought constantly of you. I can find no words with which to express my gratitude for your support. Your blessings are a great source of strength. Our difficulties are not over. The American administration is most upset that its calculations were so completely wrong, and they will use their power to try to humble us and specially to create division between Bangla Desh and ourselves. I think our nation has taken a step towards maturity. Yet there are many who look only to today. If India is to be great we must improve the quality of the minds of our people. I know that this is your desire. In my humble way I am trying to do what I can.

With respectful regards,

Yours sincerely,

Indira Gandhi

Mother sent the following reply:

To Indira

With blessings.

* Ibid., p. 341.

India must be proud of your leadership.
Let the country take its true place
in the world for showing the way
towards the supreme Truth.

With love

Mother*

It was evident that the political life, too, was getting increasingly prepared to be guided and permeated by the action of the supermind.

* * *

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

The fastest way for me was . . . (how shall I put it?) the growing sense of my own nonentity—nonexistence. To feel I could do nothing, knew nothing, wanted nothing; but then the WHOLE being filled with . . . it's not even an aspiration now, it's like this (*gesture of surrender, hands open*), an inescapable fact: 'Without the Divine, nothing, nothing—I am nothing, I understand nothing, I can do nothing. Without the Divine, nothing.' To be like this (*same gesture, hands open*). And then . . . a Peace . . . a luminous Peace . . . and so powerful! . . . But first there must be an absolute sincerity, that is, a CONVICTION: I am nothing, nothing, nothing—I can do nothing, I know nothing, I have absolutely NOTHING. . . . (*Mother raises an index finger*) except the Divine. Then it's all right. . . .

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

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

* Ibid., p. 351.

† Ibid., pp. 352-3.

to work within, like in a protective egg.

* * *

On 23rd March, 1972, Mother had a second vision of the 'new body'.

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

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

But it was lovely, my form was extremely svelte and slim—slim but not thin. And the skin was very white, just like my skin. A lovely form. And no sex—you couldn't tell: neither male nor female. The sex had disappeared.

The same here (*Mother points to her chest*), all that was flat. I don't know how to explain it. There was an outline reminiscent of what is now, but with no forms (*Mother touches her chest*), not even as much as man's. A very white skin, very smooth. Practically no abdomen to speak of. And no stomach. All that was slim.

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

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

It must be already like that in the subtle physical.

But how will it pass into the physical?

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

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

But how? . . . Food is already obviously very different and becoming more and more so—glucose, for instance, or substances that don't require an elaborate digestion. But how will the body itself change? . . . That I don't know. I don't know.

You see, I didn't look to see how it worked, for it was com-

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

I see it but. . . . I saw it exactly as you see yourself, I didn't even look at myself in the mirror. And I had a sort of veil, which I wore to cover myself.

It was my way of being (there was nothing surprising in it), my natural way of being.

That must be how it is in the subtle physical.

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

Yes—how?

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

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

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

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

They are the same.

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

Whereas here. . . .

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

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

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

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

Yes, he probably absorbs energies directly.

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

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

* * *

In January 1967, Mother had spoken of the possibility of cataleptic trance for purposes of physical transformation. Now, after five years, Mother spoke once again of it on 4th April, 1972:

I had already explained to Satprem that if the time for transformation comes, if my body grows cold, they should not rush to put it in a hole in the ground. Because it could be . . . it could be only temporary. You understand? It could be momentary. They should arrange to keep it here until it shows signs of complete . . . of the beginning of decomposition. I am telling you this because I want to make sure it's understood; it would be stupid to put it in a hole and have all the work stop because of that.

You understand? Do you understand what I mean?

Yes, Mother, your instructions are noted.

You see, make absolutely sure that I have left my body.

I don't know. . . . I know an attempt is being made to transform it—it knows it and is very willing—but I don't know if it will be able to do it. . . . Do you follow? So for some time it may give the impression that it's over, although it would be only temporary. It would start again—it might

*Mother's Agenda, Vol. 13, pp. 98–100.

start again. But then I would be. . . . I may be incapable of speaking at that time, of saying this.

So I am saying it to you—Satprem knows. One other person should also know.

I believe Pranab also knows it.

I don't know, I have never said anything to him.

*Because we had noted it down, and your instructions are here in the drawer. They've been kept here as 'instructions.'**

I don't know, I have never said anything to him.

(Mother's attendant, speaking in Bengali to Sujata:) He knows.

It seems silly to make a fuss. Better say nothing. It's enough if just a few people know.

It doesn't really preoccupy me, but. . . . This body is truly very willing, it wants to do its best. . . . Will it be capable? . . . Ultimately, if the Lord has decided this one will be transformed, it will be transformed, that's all!

(Laughing) For the time being, it feels very much alive! That much it can say.

And I have nice children to look after me!†

Earlier, Mother had explained that taking recourse to cataleptic trance was to adopt the path of laziness. Evidently, she wanted to avoid it. And her dynamic Action continued. On 15th July, 1972, she said:

I have a feeling I am becoming another person.

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

Dangerous, but wonderful—how to express it?

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

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

*On January 14, 1967, for the first time, Mother had spoken of this possibility of cataleptic trance—five years earlier.

†This last sentence was intended for those who were all ears and were not supposed to be listening.

**Mother's Agenda, Vol. 13, pp. 128–9.

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

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

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

Different.

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

But again, on the 7th April, 1973, Mother spoke to Satprem of the need for cataleptic trance for the transformation of her body. She said:

Sometimes I wonder, 'Does the Lord want me to leave?' I am quite... *quite willing*, you know, so that's not the point; but does He want me to stay?... No answer. No answer except 'Transformation.' And that is....

I truly, truly sense there is something to be done that would make everything go right—but I don't know what it is.

... You see, I have a solution for the transformation of the body, but... it's never been done before, so it's extremely... hard to believe. I cannot, I cannot believe that that's it. Yet, it's the only solution I see.... The body has a wish to go to sleep and awake... ('sleep' in a certain sense, of course: I remain perfectly conscious in consciousness, in the movement) and awake only after it is transformed....

... but people will never have the patience to stand it, to take care of me. The task is colossal, a herculean task; they're nice (*Mother points to the bathroom*), but they're already doing their utmost, and I can't ask for more.

That's the problem.

*Ibid., p. 222.

Yet, it's the only solution to which the consciousness assents:

'Yes, that's it.'

For, you see... there's a certain state—yes, a state like this (*Mother closes a fist*), *self-absorbed*, in which you are... at peace.

But who? Who? To ask that of the people who take care of me is almost impossible.*

Indeed, she aksed.... There was an explosion...; there was a refusal even to know what Mother wanted to say...; it was truly impossible.†

A week later, Mother passed through one of the most important processes of transformation, when her nervous system was transferred to the supramental. She said:

My nervous system is being transferred to the Supramental. It feels like... you know, what people call 'neurasthenia'**— they have no idea what it is; but the entire nervous system is... It's worse than dying.

But I think... I can transmit the divine Vibration.††

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

'And you, no questions?'

Satprem referred to a line in 'Savitri':

'Almighty powers are shut in Nature's cells.'

When Mother said: 'But, you see, my physical, my body, is very rapidly deteriorating—what could keep it from deteriorating?' Satprem said: 'I do NOT think it is deterioration. I don't think that's what it is. I have the impression that you are being physically led to a point of such a total powerlessness that the most total Power will have to come out.'

'Ah, may be', Mother said.

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

'No, Mother,' said Satprem, 'I don't think it will take that long.'

*Ibid., pp. 389–90.

†See the entire account, Ibid., pp. 389–97.

**Mother may have used this term in its original Greek root meaning: 'Strengthless nerves'. Unless she meant 'neuralgia' in its broader sense.

††Ibid., p. 399.

I don't think so. I really don't think so. Another type of functioning is going to set in. But the end of the old has to be reached, and that end is the terrible part!

Mother replied: 'Oh. . . I really don't want to say (Mother shook her head), I don't want to insist, but . . . truly . . . (Mother spoke with her eyes closed, all the pain of the world was in the shake of her head).

She added: 'The consciousness is clearer, stronger than it has ever been, and I look like. . . '*

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

* * *

Indeed, Mother's consciousness was clearer and greater than ever. She was the seer *par excellence*. She was living with a new mode of being that was turned exclusively towards the Divine with complete self-effacement right up to the cells in utter surrender. And yet, she had all the dynamism of a hero-warrior engaged in the battle to fight all that resisted or obstructed the effort to bring about the rule of the divine supermind on the earth. On November 14, at midnight, she began to feel that she might get paralysed. She asked to walk. She said: 'I want to walk, otherwise I'll become paralysed'. She held on to the arm of one of the attendants and walked . . . until she turned blue.

During the next days, she would ask to be lifted from her chaise-longue. On the night of November 16, she again asked to walk: 'I want to walk', she said. She continued to fight till the very end. On the afternoon of the 17th, the signs of choking grew worse. At 7.10 p.m. her doctor massaged her heart. At 7.25 p.m. her breathing stopped.

Mother had said several times, and again on the 7th April,

* Ibid., p. 420.

1973, that her body might enter into a state, which might seem to be a state of death, but that it should be protected. She had said that it might not really be dead, that it might need to be taken care of for days and even weeks so as to allow it to complete the process of transformation.

This was known to all those who were present at that moment when her breathing stopped. (Of course, Satprem was not even informed, and he came on the scene only the next morning, nearly 12 hours after the event.)

How was it that, instead of waiting for days and weeks, Mother's body was brought down from her room to the Meditation Hall by 2.30 a.m.—just after barely 7 hours? There does not seem to be any answer to this question. She was laid on a chaise-longue under searing lights and roaring fans. By 5 a.m. long queues of people had begun to collect.

Indeed, some advised that the body should not be put into the grave unless there were clear signs of decomposition. This advice was followed, and for two days, the body did not show any sign of decomposition. But the original instructions to protect the body were right from the beginning violated. It is true that the body was left untouched for the first few hours, but soon after 11 p.m. the body was cleaned with eau de cologne, and a new dress was put on it. Instead of waiting for days and weeks, only a few hours were allowed for the body to remain in its natural condition. Why? There is no reply.

On 5th April, 1972, during a conversation with Satprem, Mother had been assured that 'we won't let you down.' Satprem had said: 'If you must remain for a given number of days in a state of apparent Samadhi, well, you will be protected and everything will be all right, that's all.'

But he was not even informed when the actual event took place. All who were in the room at the time when the heart-beat stopped, knew of the assurance given to Mother. Some of them had themselves personally given the assurance during the last few years.

But as Satprem points out in his book, 'Mother or the Mutation of Death':

There is really nobody to blame for the incredible tragedy; each of the actors probably did exactly what was required. I recall Mother telling me, in 1969, . . . 'When you see from the

point of view of that consciousness, there's such an amazing perfection in the organization of things that it's almost frightening. All our emotions, our reactions, all that seems absolutely childish. We know nothing, my child! Day after day, day after day, I am more and more convinced: we know nothing. And we think we know, we think—we know nothing. We are before hidden marvels that completely escape us because we are stupid. That's what Sri Aurobindo wrote in *Savitri*: God grows up on earth—God GROWS UP—while men . . . [she laughed] . . . while wise men talk and sleep. And the work will go unnoticed until it is completely finished. And that's how it is.'

What is concealed behind that spectacular performance of Mother's 'end', the *Eternal's dreadful strategy**, as Sri Aurobindo said? What marvels? What lost silence? Or what?

What stratagem?

And I still hear Mother's words:

'Seeing the world as it is and as it irreparably seems to have to remain, the human intellect has decreed that the universe had to be a mistake of God. . . . But the Supreme Lord replies that the comedy is not completely over, and He adds: Wait for the last act.'

What is that last act, that last recess of Mother's forest? That last path of the earth?†

On November 18, as though in reply to that question, Satprem had, while staring at the Mother's body, an experience. He himself has described it:

On November 18, in the middle of that incredible masquerade, while I was in that crowd, staring and staring uncomprehendingly at that white little form amid the roaring of fans, I had the most powerful experience of my life. I was incapable of having any experience. I was like a stunned rock with a splitting headache. I just stared, without even a prayer in my heart, nothing. Had she suddenly gotten up and walked out of that unbelievable commotion, it would have seemed to me perfectly sensible. She did not get up, but all of a sudden, I was seized by something which literally

* *Savitri*, 1.2.17.

† Satprem, *Mother or Mutation of Death*, pp. 281–2.

pulled me above that headache and that dreamlike crowd, and—it was like an all-engulfing flood. I knew what Power was; after all, Mother had not held my hand and taken me into experience for nothing.* But here it was not a person having an 'experience'; it took place outside of me. I was nobody; I was merely witnessing something. I was immersed in a tremendous flood of Power, made of elation—may be love, but it was an elation that was love—elation like a torrent, without letup or slackening, and it kept ringing—a tremendous peal resounding over the universe. All the floodgates were wide open. And it spoke; it pealed words in my ears as well as over the whole world—a formidable but soundless voice: NO OBSTACLE . . . NOTHING STANDS IN THE WAY . . . NO OBSTACLE . . . NOTHING STANDS IN THE WAY. . . .

And it kept ringing and ringing, each word reverberating as if all the bells in the world were ringing together in a tremendous peal of bronze: NO OBSTACLE . . . NOTHING STANDS IN THE WAY, NO OBSTACLE. . . . And with such joy, such triumph, oh, something so bursting with delicious but irresistible laughter, washing everything away, toppling the walls, bursting open the gates—nothing stands in the way . . . no obstacle. As imperative as a Last Judgment. A cataclysm of joy. I held out for a quarter of an hour, then I went out into the street lest I could not contain myself. And it still kept ringing. I walked to the sea, my body shaking. Finally it quieted down. And there was no 'Mother' in this or any 'me', or even an experience—unless the world itself was having the experience. Yes, in fact, it was like the first manifestation of 'something' over the world. We can put labels on it, but it does not care a damn about labels. It was a formidable Fact. Something happened on that 18th of November.

Perhaps the first terrestrial wave of the joy of the new world.†

On November 20, at 8.15 a.m., Mother's body was laid into the box. Then the box was taken to the Samadhi of Sri Auro-

* Satprem refers to numerous meditations he had with Mother, when Mother used to hold his hand in order to build inner bridges of communion and to give him the experience of the new consciousness.

† Ibid., pp. 278–9.

bindo, and on the upper chamber of the Samadhi, Mother's body was lowered.

* * *

In the subtle physical, a supramental body, which Mother had seen twice, was already formed. In the gross physical, most of the parts were already transferred to the governance of the supramental. The true matter of that gross physical was already in a state of overlife, transcending what we call life and death, capable of *physical* action on the earth and events. There was, indeed, the residue, still susceptible to 'death', and Mother's conscious body entered there all alive. Even though placed in the tomb, the cells of her body are conscious. As Satprem points out:

Each of her cells repeats and repeats the Mantra, endlessly, like a golden little pulsation. She is undergoing the formidable operation. She is rebuilding the base of life. The 'process' continues. This is what she had been prepared for for months: 'My body is being accustomed to something else;' this is why she was not told anything, because she had to enter there alive—I still hear her little cry the first time she had the vision of her death. *Nothing, absolutely nothing works in the usual way anymore! The body can no longer eat, no longer. . . . And the Consciousness that is devoted to helping it in the work made ab-so-lu-te-ly clear to it that leaving is not a solution. Even if before there was some curiosity to know what will be, that curiosity is gone. As for the desire to stay, it's been gone for a long time. And any possible desire to leave when things get bit . . . stifling has gone with the idea that it won't change anything. So there's only one thing left for the body to do: to perfect its acceptance. That's all. The only thing that compels it (and not for long) is the idea that: What you are doing is useful to all; you are not doing this for you, a small silly person, but so the whole creation benefits from it. . . . I don't know, I don't know what's going to happen. But I'd like. . . . I'd like not to be put into a box and stifled into . . . because it will know it, it will feel it, and that will only add one more misery to all those it's already had. . . . It doesn't desire it, it doesn't fear it—it will be as it shall be, that's all. However, it really would like people to understand . . . to appreciate the effort it has made and not decide to box it up and throw dirt on it. Because, even after the doctors have declared*

it dead, it will be conscious. The cells are conscious. That's all I have to say.

She is there, alive.

*Aeschylus and Orpheus look pale.**

* * *

Sri Aurobindo and Mother came to open up the consciousness of the cells to the supramental consciousness and power; this was accomplished; the old genetic code that keeps the human race bound to its limited boundaries was shattered; the new species having a new supramental-material way of knowing and acting has come into being; it is at work; it is not limited to any particular body; it is working everywhere, but more powerfully and triumphantly where there is greater receptivity and intensity of aspiration.[†]

Mother made an attempt to arrive at a complete transformation of the body, although she had no assurance whether this goal could be reached or not. The effort went up to the extreme point of acuteness; that effort had long ago become the effort of the body of the earth; that effort continues. Mother had said that it would require three hundred years to bring about the transformed body. She had also spoken of the need to follow the rule of several intermediate bodies as in the case of the evolution of man in succession of the chimpanzee. That work is on, and there is no obstacle. There is continuity; in that continuity all the bodies are involved; the body of each one of us is in the cauldron of transformation. This is the cosmic yoga, which none can escape, and in which salvation and realisation are at once physical and collective.

* Satprem, *Mother or The Mutation of Death*, pp. 280–1. (see also *Mother's Agenda*, Vol. 10, 24.5.1969).

† Mother had told Satprem in 1968: 'But the new way of being will be visible only to someone who has himself or herself the supramental vision. . . . I see all sorts of things *MATERIALLY*, but which are not visible to the others (*Mother looks around the disciple*). But it is materially. . . .' (see *Mother's Agenda*, Vol. 9, 15.6.1968).

APPENDIX I.1

Cosmic Consciousness

I have wrapped the wide world in my wider self
And Time and Space my spirit's seeing are.
I am the god and demon, ghost and elf,
I am the wind's speed and the blazing star.
All Nature is the nursling of my care,
I am its struggle and the eternal rest;
The world's joy thrilling runs through me, I bear
The sorrow of millions in my lonely breast.
I have learned a close identity with all,
Yet am by nothing bound that I become;
Carrying in me the universe's call
I mount to my imperishable home.
I pass beyond Time and life on measureless wings,
Yet still am one with born and unborn things.*

* Collected Poems (Centenary Libery, Vol. 5, p. 134).

APPENDIX I.2

The Self's Infinity

The Self's Infinity

I have become what before Time I was.
A secret touch has quieted thought and sense:
All things by the agent Mind created pass
Into a void and mute magnificence.
My life is a silence grasped by timeless hands;
The world is drowned in an immortal gaze.
Naked my spirit from its vestures stands;
I am alone with my own self for space.
My heart is a centre of infinity,
My body a dot in the soul's vast expanse.
All being's huge abyss wakes under me,
Once screened in a gigantic Ignorance.
A momentless immensity pure and bare,
I stretch to an eternal everywhere.*

* Ibid., p. 142.

APPENDIX I.3

Surrender

O Thou of whom I am the instrument,
O secret Spirit and Nature housed in me,
Let all my mortal being now be blent
In Thy still glory of divinity.
I have given my mind to be dug Thy channel mind,
I have offered up my will to be Thy will:
Let nothing of myself be left behind
In our union mystic and unutterable.

My heart shall throb with the world-beats of Thy love,
My body become Thy engine for earth-use;
In my nerves and veins Thy rapture's streams shall move;
My thoughts shall be hounds of Light for Thy power to loose.

Keep* only my soul to adore eternally
And meet Thee in each form and soul of Thee.†

* Leave.

† Ibid., p. 143.

APPENDIX I.4

The Divine Worker

I face earth's happenings with an equal soul;
In all are heard Thy steps: Thy unseen feet
Tread Destiny's pathways in my front. Life's whole
Tremendous theorem is Thou complete.

No danger can perturb my spirit's calm:
My acts are Thine; I do Thy works and pass;
Failure is cradled on Thy deathless arm,
Victory is Thy passage mirrored in Fortune's glass.

In this rude combat with the fate of man
Thy smile within my heart makes all my strength;
Thy Force in me labours at its grandiose plan,
Indifferent to the Time-snake's crawling length.

No power can slay my soul; it lives in Thee.
Thy presence is my immortality.*

* Ibid., p. 143.

APPENDIX I.5

The Golden Light

Thy golden Light came down into my brain
And the grey rooms of mind sun-touched became
A bright reply to Wisdom's occult plane,
A calm illumination and a flame.

Thy golden Light came down into my throat,
And all my speech is now a tune divine,
A paean-song of thee my single note;
My words are drunk with the Immortal's wine.

Thy golden Light came down into my heart
Smiting my life with Thy eternity;
Now has it grown a temple where Thou art
And all its passions point towards only Thee.

Thy golden Light came down into my feet:
My earth is now thy playfield and thy seat.*

*Ibid., p. 134.

APPENDIX I.6

Transformation

My breath runs in a subtle rhythmic stream;
It fills my members with a might divine:
I have drunk the Infinite like a giant's wine.
Time is my drama or my pageant dream.
Now are my illumined cells joy's flaming scheme
And changed my thrilled and branching nerves to fine
Channels of rapture opal and hyaline
For the influx of the Unknown and the Supreme.

I am no more a vassal of the flesh,
A slave to Nature and her leaden rule;
I am caught no more in the senses' narrow mesh.
My soul unhorizoned widens to measureless sight,
My body is God's happy living tool,
My spirit a vast sun of deathless light.*

*Ibid., p. 161.

APPENDIX 1.7
A God's Labour

I have gathered my dreams in a silver air
Between the gold and the blue
And wrapped them softly and left them there,
My jewelled dreams of you.

I had hoped to build a rainbow bridge
Marrying the soil to the sky
And sow in this dancing planet midge
The moods of infinity.

But too bright were our heavens, too far away,
Too frail their ethereal stuff;
Too splendid and sudden our light could not stay;
The roots were not deep enough.

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.

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.

I have laboured and suffered in Matter's night
To bring the fire to man;
But the hate of hell and human spite
Are my meed since the world began.

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.

The grey Elf shudders from heaven's flame
And from all things glad and pure;
Only by pleasure and passion and pain
His drama can endure.

All around is darkness and strife;
For the lamps that men call suns
Are but halfway gleams on this stumbling life
Cast by the Undying Ones.

Man lights his little torches of hope
That lead to a failing edge;
A fragment of Truth is his widest scope,
An inn his pilgrimage.

The Truth of truths men fear and deny,
The Light of lights they refuse;
To ignorant gods they lift their cry
Or a demon altar choose.

All that was found must again be sought,
Each enemy slain revives,
Each battle for ever is fought and refought
Through vistas of fruitless lives.

My gaping wounds are a thousand and one
And the Titan kings assail,
But I cannot rest till my task is done
And wrought the eternal will.

How they mock and sneer, both devils and men!
'Thy hope is Chimera's head
Painting the sky with its fiery stain;
Thou shalt fall and thy work lie dead.

'Who art thou that babblest of heavenly ease
And joy and golden room
To us who are waifs on inconscient seas
And bound to life's iron doom?

'This earth is ours, a field of Night
For our petty flickering fires.
How shall it brook the sacred Light
Or suffer a god's desires?

'Come, let us slay him and end his course!
Then shall our hearts have release
From the burden and call of his glory and force
And the curb of his wide white peace.'

But the god is there in my mortal breast
Who wrestles with error and fate
And tramples a road through mire and waste
For the nameless Immaculate.

A voice cried, 'Go where none have gone!
Dig deeper, deeper yet
Till thou reach the grim foundation stone
And knock at the keyless gate.'

I saw that a falsehood was planted deep
At the very root of things
Where the grey Sphinx guards God's riddle sleep
On the Dragon's outspread wings.

I left the surface gods of mind
And life's unsatisfied seas
And plunged through the body's alleys blind
To the nether mysteries.

I have delved through the dumb Earth's dreadful heart
And heard her black mass' bell.
I have seen the source whence her agonies part
And the inner reason of hell.

Above me the dragon murmurs moan
And the goblin-voices flit;
I have pierced the Void where Thought was born,
I have walked in the bottomless pit.

On a desperate stair my feet have trod
Armoured with boundless peace,
Bringing the fires of the splendour of God
Into the human abyss.

He who I am was with me still;
All veils are breaking now.
I have heard His voice and borne His will
On my vast untroubled brow.

The gulf twixt the depths and the heights is bridged
And the golden waters pour
Down the sapphire mountain rainbow-ridged
And glimmer from shore to shore.

Heaven's fire is lit in the breast of the earth
And the undying suns here burn;
Through a wonder cleft in the bounds of birth
The incarnate spirits yearn

Like flames to the kingdoms of Truth and Bliss:
Down a gold-red stair-way wend
The radiant children of Paradise
Clarioning darkness's end.

A little more and the new life's doors
Shall be carved in silver light
With its aureate roof and mosaic floors'
In a grat world bare and bright.

I shall leave my dreams in their argent air,
For in a raiment of gold and blue
There shall move on the earth embodied and fair
The living truth of you.*

* Ibid., pp. 99-102.

APPENDIX II

Ananta	Infinite.
Anandam Brahma	(realisation of) the Brahman as the self-existent bliss and its universal delight of being; the fourth member of the brahmacatustaya.
Arogya	Health; freedom from disease or disturbance (roga) in the physical system; a member of the sariracatustaya.
Ashta Siddhi	Eight perfections or realisations. (See note at the end.)
Bhukti	Spiritual possession and enjoyment.
Candibhava	the force of Kali (Candi, 'the fierce one') manifest in the temperament. This was originally the third element of the sakticatustaya; as such, it was later replaced by the more inclusive devibhava or daivi prakrti with the Mahakali bhava as one of its four aspects. However, this aspect of devibhava retained a certain pre-eminence in the Record since 'the method chosen for fulfilment' of the work was essentially Mahakali's.
Hasyam	'laughter', the final member of the samatacatustaya; it is 'an active internal state of gladness and cheerfulness which no adverse experience mental or physical can trouble'.
Jnanam Brahma	(realisation of) the Brahman as the self-existent consciousness and universal knowledge; the third member of the brahmacatustaya.
Kama	'desire'. In the Record, however, the term 'kama' is restricted to its divine counterpart which is 'the joy of God

Karma	manifest in matter'. 'Kama' is often an abbreviation of kamananda.
Mukti	Action entailing its consequences.
Samadhi	spiritual liberation.
Saundaryam	Yogic trance.
Samata	beauty; physical beauty as an element of the yogic perfection of the body.
Shakti	equality of soul and mind to all things and happenings.
Shanti	force, energy; the divine or cosmic Energy.
Shuddhi	peace, spiritual calm proceeding from inner harmony.
Siddhi	purification, purity.
Sraddha	Yogic perfection.
Sukha	faith in the Lord and his Shakti, the final element of the sakticatustaya.
Trikaladrsti	happiness, pleasure.
Utthapana	'vision of the three times'; direct knowledge of the past, present and future; as an element of vijnanacatustaya, it is described as jnanam applied to the facts and events of the material world. Prediction of even the most trivial domestic events could be used by Sri Aurobindo as exercise for perfecting this power.

the state of not being subject to the pressure of physical forces, an element of the sariracatustaya; the term includes but exceeds the phenomenon of levitation. Elementary or primary utthapana, for the perfection of which Sri Aurobindo resorted to long periods of walking back and forth in his room without rest, involves 'liberation from exhaustion, weariness, strain and all

their results'. Perfect utthapana results from the combined working of the three physical siddhis, laghima, mahima, and anima; it is connected especially with laghima.

Vijnana(m)

ideal knowledge, the supra-intellectual faculty; in the course of the Record, the meaning of vijnana becomes more and more precise and follows the ascending movement of the Yoga, gradually approaching Sri Aurobindo's definitive realisation of the nature of the Supermind.

Virya

energy, strength of character; soul-force expressing itself through the four-fold personality (brahmana, ksatriya, vaisya, sudra), an element of the sakti-catustaya.

Ashta Siddhi

There are two siddhis of knowledge, three of power and three of being. All siddhis exist already in nature. They exist in you. Only owing to habitual limitations you make a use of them which is mechanical and limited. By breaking these limitations, one is able to get the conscious and voluntary use of them. The three siddhis of being are siddhis of the Sat or pure substance. In matter, Sat uses these siddhis according to fixed laws but in itself it is free to use them as it chooses. If one can get partly or entirely this freedom, one is said to have these three siddhis. They are Mahima including Garima, second Laghima and third Anima.

Sat manifests as Chit, pure consciousness [,] and Chit has two sides—consciousness and energy, that is to say knowledge and power. Consciousness in one material being communicates with the same consciousness in another material being

by certain fixed methods such as speech, gesture, writing, etc. and unconscious mental communication. But these limitations are mere habits [and other methods are possible,] as for instance ants communicate by touch and not by speech. Consciousness in itself is free to communicate between one mind and another without physical means consciously and voluntarily. The two siddhis by which this is done are called Vyapti and Prakamya.

In the same way there is a power in the consciousness of acting upon other conscious beings or even upon things without physical means or persuasion or compulsion. Great men are said to make others do their will by a sort of Magnetism, that is to say there is a force in their words, in their action, or even in their silent will or mere presence which influences and compels others. To have these siddhis of power is to have the conscious and voluntary use of this force of Chit. The three powers are Aishwarya, Ishita, Vashita. These powers can only be entirely acquired or safely used when we have got rid of Egoism and identified ourselves with the infinite Will and the infinite consciousness. They are sometimes employed by mechanical means, e.g. with the aid of Mantras, Tantric Kriyas (special processes), etc.

Vyapti is when the thoughts, feelings etc. of others or any kind of knowledge of things outside yourself are felt coming to the mind from those things or persons. This is the power of receptive Vyapti. There is also a power of communicative Vyapti, when you can send or put your own thought, feeling etc. into someone else.*

Prakamya is when you look mentally or physically at somebody or something and perceive what is in that person or thing, thoughts, feelings, facts about them, etc. There is also another kind of Prakamya which is not of the mind but of the senses.

*The following passage is from the same scribal copy of Sapta Chatusthaya used for the opening of 'Jnana' above. This copy calls the communicative side of Vyapti 'communication of broadcasting', and goes on: 'What happens in the Amutra happens in the Iha. What the Chit-shakti reveals in the Spirit, the Maya-shakti crudely and materially attempts in the material and mental universes. So spiritual Communism of Vijnana has its shadow in the material and bolshevik Communism; and the Siddhis of the Vijnana are attempted in wireless telegraphy, broadcasting, telephone, image trans-cription [? transmission].'

It is the power of perceiving smells, sounds, contacts, tastes, lights, colours and other objects of sense which are either not at all perceptible to ordinary men or beyond the range of your ordinary senses.

Vashita is when you concentrate your will on a person or object so as to control it.

Aishwarya is when you merely use the will without any such concentration or control and things happen or people act according to that will.

Ishita is when you do not will but merely have a want or need or a sense that something ought to be and that thing comes to you or happens.

Mahima is unhampered force in the mental power or in the physical power. In the physical it shows itself by an abnormal strength which is not muscular and may even develop into the power of increasing the size and weight of the body etc.

Laghima is a similar power of lightness, that is to say of freedom from all pressure or weighing down in the mental, pranic or physical being. By laghima it is possible to get rid of weariness and exhaustion and to overcome gravitation. It is the basis of Utthapana.

Anima is the power of freeing the atoms of subtle or gross matter (Sukshma or Sthula) from their ordinary limitations. By this power one can get free of physical strain or pain or even make the body as light as one chooses. It is by this power that Yogis were supposed to make themselves invisible [and] invulnerable or [to] free the body from decay and death.

(from an explanatory Note by Sri Aurobindo, published in Sri Aurobindo Archives and Research, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 10-12.)

APPENDIX III

(Selected Passages on Higher Mind, Illumined Mind
Intuition, Overmind and Supermind)

Our first decisive step out of our human intelligence, our normal mentality, is an ascent into a higher Mind, a mind no longer of mingled light and obscurity or half-flight, but a large clarity of the Spirit. Its basic substance is a unitarian sense of being with a powerful multiple dynamisation capable of the formation of a multitude of aspects of knowledge, ways of action, forms and significances of becoming, of all of which there is a spontaneous inherent knowledge. It is therefore a power that has proceeded from the Overmind,—but with the Supermind as its ulterior origin,—as all these greater powers have proceeded: but its special character, its activity of consciousness are dominated by Thought; it is a luminous thought-mind, a mind of Spirit-born conceptual knowledge. An all-awareness emerging from the original identity, carrying the truths the identity held in itself, conceiving swiftly, victoriously, multitudinously, formulating and by self-power of the Idea effectually realising its conceptions, is the character of this greater mind of knowledge. This kind of cognition is the last that emerges from the original spiritual identity before the initiation of a separative knowledge, base of the Ignorance; it is therefore the first that meets us when we rise from conceptive and ratiocinative mind, our best-organised knowledge-power of the Ignorance, into the realms of the Spirit; it is, indeed, the spiritual parent of our conceptive mental ideation, and it is natural that this leading power of our mentality should, when it goes beyond itself, pass into its immediate source.*

The power of the spiritual Higher Mind and its idea-force, modified and diminished as it must be by its entrance into our mentality, is not sufficient to sweep out all these obstacles and create the gnostic being, but it can make a first change, a modification that will capacitate a higher ascent and a more powerful descent and further prepare an integration of the being in a greater Force of consciousness and knowledge.

* Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, Centenary Library, Vol. 19, pp. 939-40.

This greater Force is that of the Illumined Mind, a Mind no longer of higher Thought, but of spiritual light. Here the clarity of the spiritual intelligence, its tranquil daylight, gives place or subordinates itself to an intense lustre, a splendour and illumination of the Spirit: a play of lightnings of spiritual truth and power breaks from above into the consciousness and adds to the calm and wide enlightenment and the vast descent of peace which characterise or accompany the action of the larger conceptual-spiritual principle, a fiery ardour of realisation and a rapturous ecstasy of knowledge. A downpour of inwardly visible Light very usually envelops this action; for it must be noted that, contrary to our ordinary conceptions, light is not primarily a material creation and the sense or vision of light accompanying the inner illumination is not merely a subjective visual image or a symbolic phenomenon: light is primarily a spiritual manifestation of the Divine Reality illuminative and creative; material light is a subsequent representation or conversion of it into Matter for the purposes of the material Energy. There is also in this descent the arrival of a greater dynamic, a golden drive, a luminous 'enthousiasmos' of inner force and power which replaces the comparatively slow and deliberate process of the Higher Mind by a swift, sometimes a vehement, almost a violent impetus of rapid transformation.*

But these two stages of the ascent enjoy their authority and can get their own united completeness only by a reference to a third level; for it is from the higher summits where dwells the intuitional being that they derive the knowledge which they turn into thought or sight and bring down to us for the mind's transmutation. Intuition is a power of consciousness nearer and more intimate to the original knowledge by identity; for it is always something that leaps out direct from a concealed identity. It is when the consciousness of the subject meets with the consciousness in the object, penetrates it and sees, feels or vibrates with the truth of what it contacts, that the intuition leaps out like a spark or lightning-flash from the shock of the meeting; or when the consciousness, even without any such meeting, looks into itself and feels directly and intimately the truth or the truths that are there or so contacts the

* *Ibid.*, p. 944.

hidden forces behind appearances, then also there is the outbreak of an intuitive light; or, again, when the consciousness meets the Supreme Reality or the spiritual reality of things and beings and has a contactual union with it, then the spark, the flash or the blaze of intimate truth-perception is lit in its depths. This close perception is more than sight, more than conception: it is the result of a penetrating and revealing touch which carries in it sight and conception as part of itself or as its natural consequence. A concealed or slumbering identity, not yet recovering itself, still remembers or conveys by the intuition its own contents and the intimacy of its self-feeling and self-vision of things, its light of truth, its over-whelming and automatic certitude.*

Intuition has a fourfold power. A power of revelatory truth-seeing, a power of inspiration or truth-hearing, a power of truth-touch or immediate seizing of significance, which is akin to the ordinary nature of its intervention in our mental intelligence, a power of true and automatic discrimination of the orderly and exact relation of truth to truth,—these are the fourfold potencies of Intuition. Intuition can therefore perform all the action of reason,—including the function of logical intelligence, which is to work out the right relation of things and the right relation of idea with idea,—but by its own superior process and with steps that do not fail or falter. It takes up also and transforms into its own substance not only the mind of thought, but the heart and life and the sense and physical consciousness: already all these have their own peculiar powers of intuition derivative from the hidden Light; the pure power descending from above can assume them all into itself and impart to these deeper heart-perceptions and life-perceptions and the divinations of the body a greater integrality and perfection. It can thus change the whole consciousness into the stuff of Intuition; for it brings its own greater radiant movement into the will, into the feelings and emotions, the life-impulses, the action of sense and sensation, the very working of the body-consciousness; it recasts them in the light and power of truth and illumines their knowledge and their ignorance. A certain integration can thus take place, but whether it

* *Ibid.*, pp. 946-7.

is a total integration must depend on the extent to which the new light is able to take up the subconscious and penetrate the fundamental Inconscience. Here the intuitive light and power may be hampered in its task because it is the edge of a delegated and modified Supermind, but does not bring in the whole mass or body of the identity-knowledge. The basis of Inconscience in our nature is too vast, deep and solid to be altogether penetrated, turned into light, transformed by an inferior power of the Truth-nature.

The next step of the ascent brings us to the Overmind; the intuitional change can only be an introduction to this higher spiritual overture. But we have seen that the Overmind, even when it is selective and not total in its action, is still a power of cosmic consciousness, a principle of global knowledge which carries in it a delegated light from the supramental Gnosis. It is, therefore, only by an opening into the cosmic consciousness that the overmind ascent and descent can be made wholly possible: a high and intense individual opening upwards is not sufficient,—to that vertical ascent towards summit Light there must be added a vast horizontal expansion of the consciousness into some totality of the Spirit. At the least, the inner being must already have replaced by its deeper and wider awareness the surface mind and its limited outlook and learned to live in a large universality; for otherwise the overmind view of things and the overmind dynamism will have no room to move in and effectuate its dynamic operations. When the Overmind descends, the predominance of the centralising ego-sense is entirely subordinated, lost in largeness of being and finally abolished; a wide cosmic perception and feeling of a boundless universal self and movement replaces it: many motions that were formerly egocentric may still continue, but they occur as currents or ripples in the cosmic wideness. Thought, for the most part, no longer seems to originate individually in the body or the person but manifests from above or comes in upon the cosmic mind-waves: all inner individual sight or intelligence of things is now a revelation or illumination of what is seen or comprehended, but the source of the revelation is not in one's separate self but in the universal knowledge; the feelings, emotions, sensations are similarly felt as waves from the same cosmic immensity breaking upon the subtle

and the gross body and responded to in kind by the individual centre of the universality; for the body is only a small support or even less, a point of relation, for the action of a vast cosmic instrumentation. In this boundless largeness, not only the separate ego but all sense of individuality, even of a subordinated or instrumental individuality, may entirely disappear; the cosmic existence, the cosmic consciousness, the cosmic delight, the play of cosmic forces are alone left: if the delight or the centre of Force is felt in what was the personal mind, life or body, it is not with a sense of personality but as a field of manifestation, and this sense of the delight or of the action of Force is not confined to the person or the body but can be felt at all points in an unlimited consciousness of unity which pervades everywhere.

But there can be many formulations of overmind consciousness and experience; for the Overmind has a great plasticity and is a field of multiple possibilities. In place of an uncentred and unplaced diffusion there may be the sense of the universe in oneself or as oneself: but there too this self is not the ego; it is an extension of a free and pure essential self-consciousness or it is an identification with the All,—the extension or the identification constituting a cosmic being, a universal individual. In one state of the cosmic consciousness there is an individual included in the cosmos but identifying himself with all in it, with the things and beings, with the thought and sense, the joy and grief of others; in another state there is an inclusion of beings in oneself and a reality of their life as part of one's own being. Often there is no rule or governance of the immense movement, but a free play of universal Nature to which what was the personal being responds with a passive acceptance or a dynamic identity, while yet the spirit remains free and undisturbed by any bondage to the reactions of this passivity or this universal and impersonal identification and sympathy. But with a strong influence or full action of the Overmind a very integral sense of governance, a complete supporting or overruling presence and direction of the cosmic Self or the Ishwara can come in and become normal; or a special centre may be revealed or created overtopping and dominating the physical instrument, individual in fact of existence, but impersonal in feeling and recognised by a free cognition as something

instrumental to the action of a Transcendent and Universal Being. In the transition towards the Supermind this centralising action tends towards the discovery of a true individual replacing the dead ego, a being who is in his essence one with the supreme Self, one with the universe in extension and yet a cosmic centre and circumference of the specialised action of the Infinite.

These are the general first results and create the normal foundation of the overmind consciousness in the evolved spiritual being, but its varieties and developments are innumerable. The consciousness that thus acts is experienced as a consciousness of Light and Truth, a power, force, action full of Light and Truth, an aesthesis and sensation of beauty and delight universal and multitudinous in detail, an illumination in the whole and in all things, in the one movement and all movements, with a constant extension and play of possibilities which is infinite, even in its multitude of determinations endless and indeterminable. If the power of an ordering overmind Gnosis intervenes, then there is a cosmic structure of the consciousness and action, but this is not like the rigid mental structures; it is plastic, organic, something that can grow and develop and stretch into the infinite. All spiritual experiences are taken up and become habitual and normal to the new nature; all essential experiences belonging to the mind, life, body are taken up and spiritualised, transmuted and felt as forms of the consciousness, delight, power of the infinite existence. Intuition, illumined sight and thought enlarge themselves; their substance assumes a greater substantiality, mass, energy, their movement is more comprehensive, global, many-faceted, more wide and potent in its truth-force: the whole nature, knowledge, aesthesis, sympathy, feeling, dynamism become more catholic, all-understanding, all-embracing, cosmic, infinite.

The overmind change is the final consummating movement of the dynamic spiritual transformation; it is the highest possible status-dynamis of the Spirit in the spiritual-mind plane. It takes up all that is in the three steps below it and raises their characteristic workings to their highest and largest power, adding to them a universal wideness of consciousness and force, a harmonious concert of knowledge, a more manifold delight of being. But there are certain reasons arising from its own characteristic status and power that prevent it from being

the final possibility of the spiritual evolution. It is a power, though the highest power, of the lower hemisphere; although its basis is a cosmic unity, its action is an action of division and interaction, an action taking its stand on the play of the multiplicity. Its play is, like that of all Mind, a play of possibilities; although it acts not in the Ignorance but with the knowledge of the truth of these possibilities, yet it works them out through their own independent evolution of their powers. It acts in each cosmic formula according to the fundamental meaning of that formula and is not a power for a dynamic transcendence. Here in earth-life it has to work upon a cosmic formula whose basis is the entire nescience which results from the separation of Mind, Life and Matter from their own source and supreme origin. Overmind can bridge that division up to the point at which separative Mind enters into Overmind and becomes a part of its action; it can unite individual mind with cosmic mind on its highest plane, equate individual self with cosmic self and give to the nature an action of universality; but it cannot lead Mind beyond itself, and in this world of original Inconscience it cannot dynamise the Transcendence: for it is the Supermind alone that is the supreme self-determining truth-action and the direct power of manifestation of that Transcendence. If then the action of evolutionary Nature ended here, the Overmind, having carried the consciousness to the point of a vast illumined universality and an organised play of this wide and potent spiritual awareness of utter existence, force-consciousness and delight, could only go farther by an opening of the gates of the Spirit into the upper hemisphere and a will to enable the soul to depart out of its cosmic formation into Transcendence.*

* *Ibid.*, pp. 949-53.

A Note on The Yogic Psychology of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother

(a)

All methods of Yoga are special psychological processes founded on a fixed truth of Nature and developing out of normal functions, powers and results which were always latent but which her ordinary movements do not easily or do not often manifest. Each specialised system of Yoga selects one or two or more faculties of human psychology and uses them as its instruments, develops them, purifies them and employs through them a certain special method of *concentration* on the object that is sought to be realised. In the Integral Yoga, all powers and faculties are combined, developed and purified, and there is a progressive integral concentration upon the object of integral perfection.

The first stage in the Integral Yoga is to put our whole *conscious being* into relation and contact with all that we consider to be true, good and beautiful, all that we consider to be perfect and divine. In the second stage, there is a wide, full and therefore laborious preparation of all that we are in our ordinary lower nature to receive and to become the higher nature. It is only in the third and the last stage, which can be wholly rapid and blissful, that there can come about the eventual transformation and perfection which is the object of the Integral Yoga.

The centre of our ordinary consciousness is the ego, which seems to be our basic entity but which, when analysed, turns out to be only a sense and a centre of a finite consciousness that considers itself erroneously to be self-existent. Of this ego we are conscious as the surface desire-soul which works in our vital cravings, our emotions, aesthetic faculty and mental seeking for power, knowledge and happiness. The egoistic ignorance in the mind of thoughts, in the heart of emotion and

in the sense responds to the touch of things not by a courageous and whole-hearted embrace of the world, but by a flux of reachings and shrinkings, cautious approaches or eager rushes and sullen or discontented panic or anger according as the touch pleases or displeases, comforts or alarms, satisfies or dissatisfies. We identify ourselves mentally, vitally, physically with this superficial ego-consciousness which is our first insistent self-experience.

So long as we are content with what we ordinarily are and content with our round of movements in our complex mass of mental, nervous and physical habits held together by a few ruling ideas, desires and associations, we are not yet ready for the conscious adventure of Yoga. For no yoga can be successfully undertaken and followed unless there is a strong awakening to the necessity of a higher spiritual consciousness and a greater and diviner being. There are many ways by which the individual is awakened strongly to the necessity of a larger spiritual existence. As Sri Aurobindo points out:

The soul that is called to this deep and vast change, may arrive in different ways to the initial departure. It may come to it by its own natural development which has been leading it unconsciously towards the awakening; it may reach it through the influence of a religion or the attraction of a philosophy; it may approach it by a slow illumination or leap to it by a sudden touch or shock; it may be pushed or led to it by the pressure of outward circumstances or by an inward necessity, by a single word that breaks the seals of the mind or by long reflection, by the distant example of one who has trod the path or by contact and daily influence. According to the nature and the circumstances the call will come.*

But this call must be distinguished from a mere idea or intellectual seeking of something higher beyond. This call is truly a decision of the mind and the soul and has, as its results, a complete and effective self-consecration. This call is a unifying single-mindedness of the being. For Yoga contemplates a revolutionary change of consciousness and such a great change cannot be effected by a divided will or by a small portion of the

* Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Centenary Library, Vol. 20, p. 63.

energy or by a hesitating mind. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

He who seeks the Divine must consecrate himself to God and to God only.*

(b)

The first steps of Yoga present us serious difficulties and obstacles. We begin to look within ourselves and we are brought face to face with the extraordinary complexity of our own being, the stimulating but also embarrassing multiplicity of our personality, 'the rich endless confusion of Nature.' The most disconcerting discovery is to find that every part of us has each its own complex individuality and nature formation independent of the rest; it neither agrees with itself nor with the others nor with the representative ego. We find that we are composed not of one but many personalities and each has its own demands and differing nature. We find ourselves to be a roughly constituted chaos and we are called upon to introduce the principle of a divine order.

As we begin to live more and more inwardly we begin to find that we do not exist in ourselves, we do not really live apart in an inner privacy or solitude. We find that the sharp separateness of our ego was no more than a strong imposition and delusion, that a large part comes to us from others or from the environment. We also discover that there are other worlds and their beings and powers and influences and that we are over-topped and environed by other planes of consciousness, mind planes, life planes, subtle matter planes, from which our life and action here are fed, or fed on, pressed, dominated, made use of for the manifestation of their forms and forces. 'Of all this', says Sri Aurobindo, 'we have to take account, to deal with it, to know what is the secret stuff of our nature and its constituent and resultant motions and to create in it all a divine centre and a true harmony and luminous order.†

(c)

In dealing with the complexity of our nature, it would be greatly helpful if we have a clarity of the various constituents of our

*Ibid., p. 64.

†Ibid., p. 70.

complexity. The three important parts of our ordinary nature are, what Sri Aurobindo calls, the mental, the vital and the physical.

The mind proper is divided into three parts—thinking Mind, dynamic Mind and externalising Mind. The vital is divided into three parts, the emotional vital, the central vital and the lower vital. The physical refers to the material or physical consciousness and to the physical body.

The thinking Mind is concerned with ideas and knowledge in their own right. It reasons and perceives with ideas of infinity, eternity, unity, identity and self-contradiction. It considers and finds out the value of things. The dynamic Mind is concerned with the putting out of mental forces for realisation of the idea. The externalising Mind is concerned with the expression of ideas and knowledge and mental forces in life, not only by speech, but by any form it can give.

The emotional vital is the seat of various feelings, such as love, joy, sorrow, hatred and the rest. The central vital is the seat of the stronger vital longings and reactions, such as ambition, pride, fear, love of fame, attractions and repulsions, desires and passions of various kinds and the field of many vital energies. The lower vital is occupied with small desires and feelings, such as food desire, sexual desire, small likings, dislikings, vanity, quarrels, love of praise, anger at blame, little wishes of all kinds—and a numberless host of other things.

The physical consciousness is mechanical and repetitive in character, and it is limited to the purely bodily needs, and it is this consciousness which insists on the mind to seek the evidence of physical senses and the physical sense-organs. The purely bodily consciousness is largely sub-conscious and unconscious.

(d)

These three, the mental, the vital and the physical, are inter-related in the complexity of our being. As a result, there is in us what Sri Aurobindo calls the mental-vital (vital mind), mental-physical (physical mind), vital-mental, vital-physical and physical-vital. The mental-vital or the vital mind is the mind which is at the service of vital desires and vital emotions. It is a sort of mediator between vital emotion, desire, impulsion, etc.

and the mental proper. It expresses the desire, feelings, emotions, passions, ambitions, possessive and active tendencies of the vital and throws them into mental forms. Finding arguments in support of vital movements such as rationalisations of all kinds is also an activity of the mental-vital or of the vital mind. Other activities include pure imaginations or dreams of greatness, happiness, etc. in which men indulge very often. The mental-vital or vital mind plans or dreams or imagines what can be done. It makes formations for the future which the will can try to carry out if opportunity and circumstances become favourable or even it can work to make them favourable. In men of action this faculty is prominent and a leader of their nature; great men of action always have it in a very high measure. At a lower stage of the mental-vital, the vital passions, impulses and desires rise up and get into the pure Thought and either cloud or distort it. The mental-vital (the vital Mind) should be distinguished from the dynamic Mind. While the mental-vital is limited by the vital view and feelings of things, the dynamic Mind is not, for it acts by the idea and reason.

The emotional vital and the central vital are sometimes taken together and referred to as the higher vital, in contrast to the lower vital which is concerned with the bottom movements of action and desire and stretches down into the vital-physical. The vital-physical is the vital at the service of the physical. It is the nervous being, and it governs all the small daily reactions to outward things. It governs also reactions of the nerves and the body consciousness and reflects emotions and sensations; it motivates much of the ordinary actions of man and joins with the lower parts of the vital proper in producing lust, jealousy, anger, violence, etc. In its lowest parts, where it can be called vital-material, it is the agent of passion, physical illness, etc.

The physical-vital supports the life of the more external activities and all physical sensations, hungers, cravings, satisfactions. It is full of desires and greeds and seekings for pleasure on the physical plane.

The vital-physical is below the mental-physical, but above the material. However, they inter-penetrate each other. The body-energy is a manifestation of material forces supported by

vital-physical energy which is the vital energy precipitated into matter and conditioned by it.

The mental-physical or the physical Mind is the mind at the service of the physical. It is the mind conditioned by physical, and it is fixed on physical objects and happenings, sees and understands these only and deals with them according to their own nature, but can with difficulty respond to the higher forces. Left to itself, it is sceptical of the existence of the supra-physical things, of which it has no direct experience and to which it can find no clue. To enlighten the physical mind by the consciousness of the higher spiritual and supramental planes is one of the important objects of the integral Yoga, just as to enlighten it by the power of the higher vital and higher mental elements of the being is the greatest part of human self-development, civilisation and culture.

The gross material part has also a consciousness of its own, the consciousness proper to the limbs, cells, tissues, glands and organs. To make this consciousness luminous and directly instrumental to the higher planes and to the divine movement is what is meant in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga making the body conscious,—that is to say, full of a true, awakened and responsive awareness instead of its own obscure limited half-sub-consciousness.

(e)

The sub-conscious is below the level of mind and conscious life, inferior and obscure, and it covers the purely physical and vital elements of our constituent of bodily being, unmentalised and unobserved by the mind, uncontrolled by it in their action. It can be held to include the corporeal mind, the mind or dumb occult consciousness, dynamic but not sensed by us, which operates in the cells and nerves and all the corporeal stuff and adjusts their life-processes and automatic responses. The mind of the cells is distinguishable from the mental-physical or the physical mind. The mental-physical is the mind at the service of the physical, whereas the mind of the cells is the consciousness working in the cells themselves. It is something like submerged sense-mind which is highly operative in the

animal and in the plant life but it is also obscurely at work below our conscious nature.

According to Sri Aurobindo, a plunge into the sub-conscious when we are not yet sufficiently ready is unsafe, and would not help us to explore this region, for this would lead us into incoherence or into sleep or a dull trance or a comatose torpor. Our first concern must be with all that we are conscious, and it is only when there has been already a good deal of harmonisation of our conscious being and an ascent to high levels of consciousness that it becomes easier and safer to deal with the sub-conscious. The higher we rise the greater the capacity we achieve to deal with the lower. The lower and the higher have correspondences and the highest superconscious and the lowest inconscient are in a sense nearest to each other. The lowest inconscient can effectively be dealt with and transformed only by the highest powers of supramental superconscious.

As Sri Aurobindo explains, the Inconscience is an inverse reproduction of the supreme superconscience: it has the same absoluteness of being and automatic action, but in a vast involved trance; it is being lost in itself, plunged in its own abyss of infinity. It is this Inconscience which resides in all material things and is itself 'a substantial and self-effective intuition, an eyeless exact perception, an automatic intelligence working out its unexpressed and unthought conceptions, a blindly seeing sureness of sight, a dumb infallible sureness of suppressed feeling coated in insensibility, which effectuate all that has to be effected. All this state and action of the Inconscient corresponds very evidently with the same state and action of the pure Superconscience, but translated into terms of self-darkness in place of the original self-light.'*

In the evolutionary process, as explained by Sri Aurobindo, the Inconscience seems to be the beginning of the upward movement towards the emergence of the sub-conscious, the conscient and the superconscious, but the sub-conscious, the conscient and the superconscious emerge out of the Inconscient because they are already involved in it. And evolution is in essence a heightening of the force of consciousness in the manifest being so that it may be raised into the greater intensity

* Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, Centenary Library, Vol. 18, p. 550.

of what is still unmanifest. In this evolutionary process, our conscious being stands as a middle term, which is neither unconscious nor superconscious. Our consciousness is normally unaware of all that is subconscious and unconscious of all that is superconscious. It is conscious only of certain operations of the physical, the vital and the mental, and even of them only of their outer or overt activities and manifestations. For behind our conscious physical, vital and mental operations there is, according to Sri Aurobindo, a deeper and inner consciousness, which we need to look into in some detail.

(f)

The inner consciousness is, in fact, what can be called the subliminal consciousness, because it is behind the threshold of our outer consciousness. It includes the large action of the inner mind, inner Intelligence and inner sense-mind, of an inner vital, and of an inner subtle-physical being which upholds and embraces our waking consciousness but which is not brought to the front.

Our subliminal being is not, like our surface being, an outcome of the energy of the Inconscient. It is a meeting-place of the consciousness that emerges from below by evolution and the consciousness that has descended from above for involution. There is here a consciousness which has a power of direct contact with the universal, unlike the mostly indirect contacts which our surface being maintains with the universe through the sense-mind and the senses.

As Sri Aurobindo explains, 'There are here inner senses, a subliminal sight, touch, hearing; but these subtle senses are rather channels of the inner being's direct consciousness of things than its informants: the subliminal is not dependent on its senses for its knowledge, they only give a form to its direct experience of objects; they do not, so much as in waking mind, convey forms of objects for the mind's documentation or as the starting-point or basis for an indirect constructive experience. The subliminal has the right of entry into the mental and vital and subtle-physical planes of the universal consciousness, it is not confined to the material plane and the physical world; it possesses means of communication with the worlds of being

which the descent towards involution created in its passage and with all corresponding planes or worlds that may have arisen or been constructed to serve the purpose of the re-ascension from Inconscience to Superconscience. It is into this large realm of interior existence that our mind and vital being retire when they withdraw from the surface activities whether by sleep or inward-drawn concentration or by the inner plunge of trance.*

The intelligence of the subliminal being preserves the accurate form and relation of all its perceptions and memories and can grasp immediately their significance. And its perceptions are not confined to the scanty gleanings of the physical senses but extend far beyond and use, as telepathic phenomena of many kinds bear witness, a subtle sense the limits of which are too wide to be easily fixed. The relations between the surface will or impulsion and the subliminal urge have not been properly studied except in regard to unusual and unorganised manifestations and in regard to certain morbidly abnormal phenomena of the diseased human mind. But if we pursue our observation far enough, we shall find, as Sri Aurobindo points out, cognition and will or impulsive force of the inner being really stand behind the whole conscious becoming; the latter represents only part of its secret endeavour and achievement which rises successfully to the surface of our life. To know our inner being is, according to Sri Aurobindo, the first step towards a real self-knowledge.

There is an inner sense in the subliminal nature, a subtle sense of vision, hearing, touch, smell and taste. This inner sense can create or present images, sounds that are symbolic rather than actual or that represent possibilities in formation, suggestions, thoughts, ideas, intentions of other beings, image-forms also of powers or potentialities in universal Nature. It is the subliminal in reality and not the outer mind that possesses the powers of telepathy, clairvoyance, second sight and other supernormal faculties. The operations of this subliminal sense add immensely to our possible scope of knowledge and widen the narrow limits in which our sense-bound outer physical consciousness is circumscribed and imprisoned.

* *Ibid.*, p. 426.

One of the more important powers of this subliminal is to enter into the direct contact of consciousness with other consciousness or with objects, to act without the outer instrumentation, by an essential sense inherent in its own substance, by a direct mental vision, by a direct feeling of things, even by a close envelopment and intimate penetration and a return with the contents of what is enveloped or penetrated, by a direct intimation or impact on the substance of mind itself, not through outward signs or figures,—a revealing intimation or a self-communicating impact of thoughts, feelings, forces. As Sri Aurobindo explains:

It is by these means that the inner being achieves an immediate, intimate and accurate spontaneous knowledge of persons, of objects, of the occult and to us intangible energies of world-Nature that surround us and impinge upon our own personality, physicality, mind-force and life-force.*

A still farther power of the subliminal is seen in the changes which take effect in our dealings with the impersonal forces of the world that surrounds us. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

The inner being not only contacts directly and concretely the immediate motive and movement of these universal forces and feels the results of their present action, but it can to a certain extent forecast or see ahead their farther action; there is a greater power in our subliminal parts to overcome the time barrier, to have the sense or feel the vibration of coming events, of distant happenings, even to look into the future.†

It must, however, be noted that although the subliminal consciousness opens out to us wider vistas of knowledge and action, much surer and much more intimate than our external physical, vital and mental consciousness, still the subliminal consciousness, no less than our external consciousness, is a mixture of knowledge and ignorance and it is capable of erroneous as well as of true perception. It may also be noted that the knowledge proper to the subliminal being is not complete. According to Sri Aurobindo, knowledge, in order to be true

* *Ibid.*, pp. 536–7.

† *Ibid.*, p. 539.

and complete, must be a knowledge by identity. The **subliminal** knowledge is a knowledge by direct contact but **not knowledge** by identity. Therefore, a deeper and higher consciousness is needed to cure the deficiencies and mixtures of ignorance and knowledge that we obtain at the level of subliminal consciousness:

(g)

That which is still deeper behind the subliminal consciousness is, according to Sri Aurobindo, the psychic entity and its representative soul personality which supports our individual life, mind and body. The relation between that entity and other parts of our being is explained as follows by Sri Aurobindo:

There is indeed a soul-personality, representative of this entity, already built up within us, which puts forward a fine psychic element in our natural being: but this finer factor in our normal make-up is not yet dominant and has only a limited action. Our soul is not the overt guide and master of our thought and acts; it has to rely on the mental, vital, physical instruments for self-expression and is constantly overpowered by our mind and life-force but if once it can succeed in remaining in constant communion with its own larger occult reality,—and this can only happen when we go deep into our subliminal parts—it is no longer dependent, it can become powerful and sovereign, armed with an intrinsic spiritual perception of the truth of things and a spontaneous discernment which separates that truth from the falsehood of the Ignorance and Inconscience, distinguishes the divine and the undivine in the manifestation and so can be the luminous leader of our other parts of nature. It is indeed when this happens that there can be turning-point towards an integral transformation and an integral knowledge.*

The discovery of the psychic being, its experience and its development is a decisive stage in the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. It is then that we are liberated from our small individuality and our ego-sense which binds us to the normal rounds of the desire-soul, which is not really a soul but which erroneously

*Ibid., pp. 539–40.

regards itself as the centre and entity of our individuality. On the other hand, the psychic entity is, according to Sri Aurobindo, that by which we exist and persist as individual being in Nature. While other parts of our natural composition are not only mutable but perishable, the psychic entity in us persists and is fundamentally the same always. It contains all the essential possibilities of our manifestation but is not constituted by them. It is an everpure flame of the divinity in things and nothing that comes to it, nothing that enters into our experience can pollute its purity or extinguish the flame.

The psychic entity is not an evolute of Inconscience although it accompanies evolution of our being and evolves and develops as a spark grows and develops as fire. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

It is a flame born out of the Divine and, luminous inhabitant of the Ignorance, grows in it till it is able to turn it towards the Knowledge. It is the concealed Witness and Control, the hidden Guide, the Daemon of Socrates, the inner light or inner voice of the mystic. It is that which endures and is imperishable in us from birth to birth, untouched by death, decay or corruption, an indestructible spark of the Divine.*

In its undeveloped state, the psychic being is called the soul. The soul developed is properly termed the psychic being. The psychic being is also termed as the central being for the purposes of the evolution, for it grows and develops, and it is that which can effectuate a harmonious integration of the mental, vital and physical personality. The term 'central being' is also used for Jivatman, the individual Self which presides unseen above the evolution and of which the psychic being is the representative in the manifested nature. The Jivatman has been described by Sri Aurobindo as the 'multiple Divine manifested here as the individualised self or spirit of the created being.' The Jivatman in its essence does not change or evolve, but stands above the personal evolution. Within evolution itself, as noted above, it is represented by the evolving psychic being which supports all the rest of the Nature. The Jivatman is distinguished from Atman or Paramatman. Atman, or the Self is transcendental and universal (Paramatman, Atman). When it

*Ibid., p. 225.

is individualised and becomes a central being, it is then the Jivatman. The Jivatman feels his oneness with the universal but at the same time is centrally experienced as a portion of the Divine.

In other words, the Jivatman is the central being which is itself unborn but which presides over the individual evolution. The soul is the representative of the central being. It is a spark of the Divine supporting individual existence in Nature. A conscious form of the soul, the psychic being, grows in the evolutionary process. The soul supports the Nature in its evolution through ascending grades, but is itself not any of these things. When the inmost knowledge begins to develop, we become aware of the psychic being within us and it comes forward as the leader of our Yoga. We become aware also of the Jivatman, the undivided Self or Spirit above the manifestation of which the psychic is the representative here.*

According to Sri Aurobindo, the psychic being (also known as *Chaitya Purusha*) has a spontaneous aspiration for the opening of the whole lower nature, mind, vital, body to the Divine, for the love and union with the Divine, for its presence and power within the heart, for the transformation of the mind, life and body by the descent of the higher consciousness into our nature. This aspiration of the psychic being is essential and indispensable for the fullness of the integral Yoga. When the psychic imposes its aspiration on the mind, vital and body, then they too aspire and this is what is felt as the aspiration from the level of the lower being. The seeking of the lower being is necessarily at first intermingled and oppressed by the ordinary consciousness; it becomes, however, by Yogic practice, clear, constant, strong and enduring.

In the integral Yoga, it is necessary to have a clear idea and perception of the different planes and parts of the being, and each part has to get the Truth in it from the psychic or above. What is above the mental consciousness is the superconscient, which has also several grades leading up to the supramental consciousness and supreme integral Divine. It is the Truth acting

*For a metaphysical discussion on the Jivatman, see the Chapter entitled, The Eternal and the Individual, in *The Life Divine*, Centenary Library, Vol. 18. For a psychological account of the Atman, Jivatman and Psychic being, see 'Letters on Yoga', Centenary Library, Vol. 22, pp. 265-307.

from the psychic and descending from the superconscient which will more and more harmonise the action of our different parts of the being, though the perfect harmony can come only when there is the supramental fulfilment.

(h)

In the Yogic psychology of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the word 'superconscient' is used to include the planes beyond our present level of awareness, namely, those of the Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuitive Mind, Overmind, Supermind, and the other heights of the pure spiritual being. A basic sense and knowledge of unity is the general characteristic of all the grades of the Superconscience. They are not only states of consciousness but also grades of being and power. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

In themselves these grades are grades of energy-substance of the Spirit: for it must not be supposed, because we distinguish them according to their leading character, means and potency of knowledge, that they are merely a method or way of knowing or a faculty or power of cognition; they are domains of being, grades of the substance and energy of the spiritual being, fields of existence which are each a level of the universal Consciousness-Force constituting and organising itself into a higher status. When the powers of any grade descend completely into us, it is not only our thought and knowledge that are affected,—the substance and very grain of our being and consciousness, all its states and activities are touched and penetrated and can be remoulded and wholly transmuted. Each stage of this ascent is, therefore, general if not a total, conversion of the being into a new light and power of a greater existence.*

The Higher Mind is a mind which is no longer subject to mingled light and obscurity or half-light. Its basic substance is a unitary sense of being with a powerful multiple dynamisation capable of the formation of a multitude aspects of knowledge, ways of action, forms and significances of becoming, and all of which there is a spontaneous inherent knowledge. Its special

*Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, Centenary Library, Vol. 19, p. 938.

character, its activity of consciousness are dominated by Thought. It is, according to Sri Aurobindo, a luminous Thought-Mind, 'a mind of Spirit-born conceptual knowledge.' It can freely express itself in single ideas, but its most characteristic movement is a mass ideation, a system or totality of truth-seeking at a single view, the relations of idea with idea, of truth with truth, are not established by logic but are pre-existent and emerge already self-seen in the integral whole. Large aspects of truth come into view of the Higher Mind, and the structures of the view can constantly expand into a larger structure or several of them combine themselves into a provisional greater whole on the way to a yet unachieved integrality. In the end, there is a great totality of truth known and experienced, but still a totality capable of infinite enlargement because there is no end to the aspects of knowledge.

As we go beyond the Higher Mind or what may also be called Truth-Thought, there is, according to Sri Aurobindo, a greater illumination instinct with an increased power and intensity and driving force, a luminosity of the nature of Truth-Sight with thought formulation as a minor and dependent activity. If, as Sri Aurobindo points out, we may compare the action of the Higher Mind to a steady sunshine, the knowledge of the Illumined Mind beyond it can be seen as an outpouring of massive lightnings of a flaming sun-stuff.

Beyond the Illumined Mind is the Intuitive Mind. It has a still greater power of the Truth-Force, an intimate and exact Truth-vision, Truth-thought, Truth-sense, Truth-feeling, Truth-action. The Illumined Mind does not work primarily by thought, but by vision, and the Intuitive Mind is more than sight, more than conception. Intuition is a power of consciousness nearer and more intimate to the original knowledge by identity; it is when the consciousness of the subject meets the consciousness in the object, penetrates it and sees, feels or vibrates with the truth of what it contacts, that the intuition leaps out like a spark or lightning-flash from the shock of the meeting. The intuitive perception is the result of a penetrating and revealing touch which carries in it sight and conception as part of itself or as its natural consequence. According to Sri Aurobindo, Intuition has a four-fold power. To use his own words:

A power of revelatory truth-seeing, a power of inspiration or truth-hearing, a power of truth-touch, or immediate seizing of significance, which is akin to the ordinary nature of its intervention in our mental intelligence, a power of true and automatic discrimination of the orderly and exact relation of truth to truth,—these are the four-fold potencies of Intuition.*

But still the intuitive light and power is only the edge of a delegated and modified Supermind, and does not bring in the whole mass or body of the identity knowledge.

At the source of the intuitive mind, there is, according to Sri Aurobindo, a superconscious cosmic Mind in direct contact with the Supermind. This cosmic Mind is not a mind as we know it, but, in the words of Sri Aurobindo,

An Overmind that covers as with the wide wings of some creative oversoul this whole lower hemisphere of Knowledge-Ignorance, links it with that greater Truth-Consciousness while yet at the same time with its brilliant golden Lid it veils the face of the greater Truth from our sight, intervening with its flood of infinite possibilities as at once an obstacle and a passage in our seeking of the spiritual law of our existence, its highest aim, its secret Reality.†

The Overmind is the occult link. It is the Power that at once connects and divides the supreme Knowledge and the cosmic Ignorance.

According to Sri Aurobindo, Supermind transmits to Overmind all its realities but leaves it to formulate them in a movement. But this formulation is done by the Overmind by an awareness of the things which, according to Sri Aurobindo, is still a vision of Truth and yet at the same time a first parent of the Ignorance.

Comparing the action of the Supermind and the Overmind, Sri Aurobindo says:

The integrality of the Supermind keeps always the essential truth of things, the total truth and the truth of its individual self-determinations clearly knit together; it maintains in

*Ibid., p. 949.

†Ibid., Vol. 18, p. 278.

them an inseparable unity and between them a close inter-penetration and a free and full consciousness of each other: but in Overmind this integrality is no longer there. And yet the Overmind is well aware of the essential Truth of things; it embraces the totality; it uses the individual self-determinations without being limited by them; but although it knows their oneness, can realise it in a spiritual Cognition, yet its dynamic movement, even while relying on that for its security, is not directly determined by it. Overmind Energy proceeds through an illimitable capacity of separation and combination of the powers and aspects of the integral and indivisible all-comprehending unity. It takes each Aspect or Power and gives to it an independent action in which it acquires a full separate importance and is able to work out, we might say, its own world of creation. . . . At the same time in Overmind this separateness is still founded on the basis of an implicit underlying unity; all possibilities of combination and relation between the separated Powers and Aspects, all inter-changes and mutualities or their energies are freely organised and their actuality always possible.*

Beyond the Overmind is the plenary supramental consciousness. If Overmental consciousness is global in character, the supramental consciousness is integral. The Overmental consciousness is compared by Sri Aurobindo to a sun and its system shining out in an original darkness of Space, and illumining everything as far as its rays could reach so that all that dwelt in the light would feel as if no darkness were there at all in their experience of existence. But outside that sphere or expanse of experience the original darkness would still be there. In the supramental consciousness, there is, on the other hand, a plenitude of light, and if it so wills, can illumine everything integrally. The supramental consciousness is also termed by Sri Aurobindo as Truth-Consciousness, since it is at once the self-awareness of the Infinite and Eternal and a power of self-determination inherent in that self-awareness. Says Sri Aurobindo, 'In supermind being, consciousness of knowledge and consciousness of will are not divided as they seem to be in our mental operations, they are a trinity, one movement with three

* Ibid., pp. 279-80.

effective aspects. Each has its own effect. Being gives the effect of substance, consciousness the effect of knowledge, of the self-guiding and shaping idea, of comprehension and apprehension; will gives the effect of self-fulfilling force. But the idea is only the light of the reality illumining itself; it is not mental thought nor imagination, but effective self-awareness. It is Real-Idea.* According to Sri Aurobindo, Supermind starts from unity, not division. It is primarily comprehensive, differentiation is only its secondary act. Therefore, Sri Aurobindo points out, whatever be the truth of being expressed, the idea corresponds to it exactly, the will-force to the idea, and the result to the will. In the Supermind, the idea does not clash with other ideas, the will or force with other will or force as in man and his world. The Supermind is, in the words of Sri Aurobindo, 'one vast Consciousness which contains and relates all ideas in itself as its own ideas, one vast Will which contains and relates all energies in itself as its own energies. It holds back this, advances that other, but according to its own pre-conceiving Idea-Will.†

The supramental consciousness is founded, according to Sri Aurobindo, upon the supreme consciousness of the timeless Infinite but has too the secret of the deployment of the Infinite Energy in time. In the words of Sri Aurobindo: •

It can either take its station in the time consciousness and keep the timeless infinite as its background of supreme and original being from which it receives all its organising knowledge, will and action, or it can, centred in its essential being, live in the timeless but live too in a manifestation in time which it feels and sees as infinite and as the same Infinite, and can bring out, sustain and develop in the one what it holds supernally in the other.**

But this unified and infinite time consciousness and this vision and knowledge are, according to Sri Aurobindo, the possession of the supramental being in its own supreme region of light and are complete only on the higher levels of the supramental nature. But the human mind developing into supermind has

* Ibid., p. 130.

† Ibid., p. 131.

** Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Centenary Library, Vol. 21, p. 854.

to pass through several stages and in its ascent and expansion it may experience many changes and various dispositions of the powers and possibilities of its time-consciousness and time-knowledge.

(i)

The passage from the lower to the higher is the aim of Yoga. And this passage may effect itself by the rejection of the lower and escape into the higher. This escape is the ordinary point of view. But the passage by the transformation of the lower and its elevation to the higher Nature is the aim of the integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. This passage and this transformation is a complex process involving a profound evolution and revolution of the being. There is, first, an ascension to the next higher stage of development. This is followed by the descent of the powers of the higher stage into lower by means of which the lower is further purified, developed and elevated upwards. There is also a simultaneous widening of the faculties and powers of the already achieved higher level, which is again preparatory for a still higher stage of development. And this process is a long and ever progressive curve moving upwards and downwards, proceeding from stage to stage until our human nature is supramentalised, culminating in rapid and blissful divine progression. In the following passage from Sri Aurobindo, we have a brief description of this entire process:

First, there must be a conversion inwards, a going within to find the inmost psychic being and bring it out to the front, disclosing at the same time the inner mind, inner vital, inner physical parts of the nature. Next, there must be an ascension, a series of conversions upwards and a turning down to convert the lower parts. When one has made the inward conversion, one psychicises the whole lower nature so as to make it ready for the divine change. Going upwards, one passes beyond the human mind and at each stage of the ascent, there is a conversion into a new consciousness and an infusion of this new consciousness into the whole of the nature. Thus rising beyond intellect through illumined higher mind to the intuitive consciousness, we begin to look

at everything not from the intellect range or through intellect as an instrument, but from a greater intuitive height and through an intuitivised will, feeling, emotion, sensation and physical contact. So, proceeding from Intuition to a greater overmind height, there is a new conversion and we look at and experience everything from the overmind consciousness and through a mind, heart, vital and body surcharged with the overmind thought, sight, will, feeling, sensation, play of force and contact. But the last conversion is the supramental, for once there—once the nature is supramentalised, we are beyond the Ignorance and conversion of consciousness is no longer needed, though a farther divine progression, even an infinite development is still possible.*

(j)

The aim of integral Yoga is integral perfection. This perfection includes an integral realisation of the Divine, not only of its indistinguishable unity, but also in its multitude of aspects. It includes also an integral liberation and the perfect harmony of the results of Knowledge, Love and Works. There has to be also an integral purity and integral beatitude. Perfection includes perfection of mind and body, so that the higher results of Raja Yoga and Hatha Yoga should be contained in the widest formula of the synthesis finally to be effected.

There are, according to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, several elements of perfection. The first is a perfect equality, *samata*. It is a fundamental poise of the soul while meeting the impact and workings of Nature. Equality is a term of consciousness which brings into the whole of our being and nature the eternal tranquillity of the Infinite.

But equality does not mean, as Sri Aurobindo points out, a fresh ignorance or blinding; it does not call for and need not initiate a greyness of vision and a blotting out of all hues.

Difference is there, variation of expression is there and this variation we shall appreciate,—far more justly than we could when the eye was clouded by a partial and erring love and hate, admiration and scorn, sympathy and antipathy, attrac-

* Sri Aurobindo, Letters on Yoga, Part I, Centenary Library, Vol. 22, p. 251.

tion and repulsion. But behind the variation we shall always see the Complete and Immutable who dwells within it and we shall feel, know or at least, if it is hidden from us, trust in the wise purpose and divine necessity of the particular manifestation, whether it appear to our human standards harmonious and perfect or crude and unfinished or even false and evil.*

At the same time, we have to note that everything indeed here in this imperfect world has to be changed. We should not take imperfection as our resting-place. We must strive after perfection, and we must make not evil but the supreme good the universal aim. 'But what we do', as Sri Aurobindo points out, 'has to be done with a spiritual understanding and knowledge, and it is a divine good, beauty, perfection, pleasure that has to be followed after, not the human standards of these things.'†

There are certain semblances of equality which must not be mistaken for the profound and vast spiritual equality. As Sri Aurobindo points out:

There is an equality of disappointed resignation, an equality of pride, an equality of hardness and indifference: all these are egoistic in their nature. Inevitably they come in the course of the sadhana, but they must be rejected or transformed into the true quietude. There is too, on a higher level, the equality of the stoic, the equality of a devout resignation or a sage detachment, the equality of a soul aloof from the world and indifferent to its doings. These too are insufficient; first approaches they can be, but they are at most early soul-phases only or imperfect mental preparations for our entry into the true and absolute self-existent wide equal oneness of the spirit.**

The second necessity of perfection is to raise all the active parts of the human nature to that higher condition of working pitch of their power and capacity (*shakti*) on which they become capable of being divinised into true instruments of the

* Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Centenary Library, Vol. 20, p. 212.

† Ibid.

** Ibid., p. 96.

free, perfect, spiritual and divine action. This would mean the perfection of the powers and capacities of the mind, the vital and the physical. At the same time, there is a need to perfect the dynamic force (*virya*) in us of the temperament, character and our inmost soul-nature. This contributes to the power of our members in action and gives them their type and direction. Our temperament, character and nature have to be freed from limitations, they have to be enlarged and rounded so that the whole manhood in us may become the basis of a divine manhood. In more concrete terms, this would mean the perfection of the four-fold personality, the personality of knowledge, of strength, of harmony and love and of skill and service. These personalities become progressively united, each assisting and entering into the other, and all becoming one. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

The full consummation comes in the greatest souls most capable of perfection, but some large manifestation of this four-fold soul-power must be sought and can be attained by all who practise the integral Yoga.*

The divinisation of the perfected nature can, however, come about by calling in the divine Power, or *shakti* to replace our limited human energy so that this may be shaped into the image of and filled with the force of a greater infinite energy (*daivi prakriti, bhagavati shakti*). Again, this perfection will grow in the measure in which we can surrender ourselves, first, to the guidance and then to the direct action of that Power and of the Master of our being and our works to whom it belongs. And for this purpose, what is essential is a faith, which is the great power of our being in our aspiration to perfection. These four things are essentials of this second element of perfection, viz., 'the full powers of the members of the instrumental nature, the perfected dynamis of the soul nature, the assumption of them into the action of the divine Power, and a perfect faith in all our members to call and support that assumption, *sakti, virya, daivi prakriti, sraddha*.'†

The third element of perfection is, according to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the evolution of the mental into the supra-

* Ibid., Vol. 21, p. 723.

† Ibid., p. 666.

mental gnostic being. For it is the supramental gnosis which, once effectively called into action, will progressively take up all the terms of intelligence, will, sense-mind, heart, the vital and sensational being and translate them by a luminous and harmonising conversion into a unity of the truth, power and delight of a living existence. It is the power also of overcoming physical limitations and developing a more perfect and divine instrumental body.

The next element of perfection is that of the gnostic perfection in the physical body. The physical body is a basis of action, which cannot be neglected or excluded from the spiritual evolution. A perfection of the body as the outer instrument of a complete divine living on earth will be necessarily a part of the supramental transformation. 'Pushed to its highest conclusion', says Sri Aurobindo, 'this movement brings in spiritualising and illuminations of the whole physical consciousness and a divinising of the law of the body.'*

The next element is that of the perfect action and enjoyment of being on the supramental gnostic basis. And this last element, which is the highest, is, according to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, ever-widening life and activity in union with the supreme, blissful and conscious self-existent Being, *Purushotama*. The perfected individual will be conscious in the supreme that is the All, in the supreme infinite in being and infinite in quality, in the supreme as self-existent consciousness and universal knowledge, in the supreme as the self-existent bliss and universal delight of being. And all this experience will be in all parts of being. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

His physical being will be one with all material Nature, his vital being with the life of the universe, his mind with the cosmic mind, his spiritual knowledge and will with the divine knowledge and will both in itself and as it pours itself through these channels, his spirit with the one spirit in all beings. All the variety of cosmic existence will be changed to him in that unity and revealed in the secret of its spiritual significance. For in this spiritual bliss and being he will be one with That which is the origin and continent and inhabitant and spirit

*Ibid., p. 668.

and constituting power of all existence. This will be the highest reach of self-perfection.*

The integrality of perfection cannot become real, according to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, if it were confined to the individual. Since our perfection embraces the realisation of our self in being, in life and in love through others as well as through ourselves, the expansion of our liberty and all its results in others would be the inevitable outcome as well as the broadest utility of our liberation and perfection. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

The divinising of the normal material life of man and of his great secular attempt of mental and moral self-culture in the individual and the race by this integralisation of a widely perfect spiritual existence would thus be the crown alike of our individual and of our common effort.†

*Ibid., pp. 669-70.

†Ibid., Vol. 20, p. 44.

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